



Cooke's Rules of Real Poker

Roy Cooke, John Bond

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A big part of poker's appeal is that, at its essence, the rules are same everywhere. For the most part, you play with a deck of fifty-two cards, four suits, and thirteen ranks. The best five card hand takes the money. There are (some wild home game variations notwithstanding) only five combinations of actions: check, bet, call, raise, and fold. The purpose of this book is to provide a uniform set of rules for the most popular poker games spread in public cardrooms. Some rules apply to all games. Some apply to particular games. In deciding upon which rules to use, the rulebooks of nearly every major cardroom in the country have been consulted. Where rules differ, the authors have given preference to the rule that best serves the interest of fairness in the game. Indeed that is one of the first rules of the game: that all rules should be interpreted with the spirit of the game in mind. Beyond the issue of fairness, which is paramount, the next greatest weight has been given to the efficiency of the game--getting more hands out per hour benefits everyone: players get more hands, the house gets more rake, dealers get more tips. After fairness and efficiency, the next most important factor is simplicity. All other things being equal, where there is a simple and a complicated way to do things, the simpler rule has been chosen. Lastly, tradition has been considered. The game has a great history, and the aforementioned variables being equal, the traditional rule has been given preference. Fairness, Efficiency, Simplicity and Tradition: the foundations of the Rules of Poker. An additional factor in establishing rules is inducing action. Although it is not as important as the other influences, action is important to the game. Rules can be constructed and interpreted to encourage action, or to inhibit it. All other things being equal, when one rule would limit action and another would induce it, the authors have given preference to the rule that will encourage players to get involved and play the hand. That said, there are other reasons for preferring one rule to another. When several different rules applying to a certain situation meet the tests of fairness, efficiency, simplicity and tradition, the preferred rule is listed first, and an alternate rule--or rules, if there are several--are listed afterward as Alternate Rules. At times, explanatory notes and/or examples are added after a rule. When interpreting a rule, the explanatory notes and examples should be taken into consideration. These notes and examples, together with the Definitions and Appendices for suggested procedures at the end of the Rules, are the components of Cooke's Rules of Real Poker. While some players and cardroom managers may not agree with all the rules included, it is hoped that the comprehensiveness of Cooke's Rules of Real Poker will result in it being used as a standard in cardrooms across the country. The inclusion of alternate rules that may be used in lieu of the preferred rule at the discretion of cardroom management is an attempt to address the legitimate differences of opinion regarding exactly what rule should be in force at a given establishment. Cardrooms will have the choice of adopting Cooke's Rules exactly as they stand, or Cooke's Rules as modified by house policy. There are many thousands of variants of poker, however, this book is limited to those which are commonly spread in public cardrooms: Texas Hold'em, Seven-Card Stud, Seven Card Stud High-Low Split, Razz, Five-Card Stud, Omaha Hold'em High, Omaha Hold'em High-Low Split, Draw and Lowball. Five-Card Stud, Draw and Lowball are not frequently spread any more, but they are included because they have an important place in the development of the history and rules of modern poker. Also, Draw is a variation of the game most Americans are quite familiar with, and it can be useful as a reference point in understanding the

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