

## FLOP POKER

### **1. Definitions**

The following words and terms, when used in the Rules of the Game of Flop Poker, shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

*Ante--* or “ante wager” means the initial wager, required to be made by a player prior to any cards being dealt, that the player’s hand will qualify for a posted payout.

*Community cards--* means the three cards dealt face down in the center of the table, two of which shall be used by each player with his or her own three cards to form the best possible player hand.

*Flop wager--* means the optional additional wager, equal in amount to the player’s ante wager and placed prior to exposure of the community cards by the dealer, that the player’s hand will qualify for a posted payout.

*Hand--* or “player hand” means the highest ranking five-card poker hand that can be formed using two of the three community cards and the three cards dealt to a player.

*Pot wager--* means the initial wager, required to be made by a player prior to any cards being dealt, that the player’s hand will be the highest ranking player hand at the table during the round of play.

*Rank--* or “ranking” means the relative position of a card or hand as set forth in Section 5.

*Round of play--* or “round” means one complete cycle of play during which all players playing at the table have placed their wagers, been dealt a hand and had their wagers paid or collected in accordance with the Rules of the Game of Flop Poker.

*Stub--* means the remaining portion of the deck after all cards in the round of play have been dealt.

*Suit--* means one of the four categories of cards: club, diamond, heart or spade, with no suit being higher in rank than another.

*Surrender--* means the decision of a player to forfeit his or her ante wager prior to the dealer exposing the community cards.

*Tie hand--* means a five-card poker hand that is of equal rank with another five-card poker hand during a round of play.

### **2. Cards; number of decks**

(a) Except as provided in (b) below, the game of flop poker shall be played with one deck of cards that meets the requirements of 205 CMR 146.48 and one additional solid yellow or

green cover card.

- (b) If an automated card shuffling device is used, a gaming licensee shall be permitted to use a second deck of cards to play the game provided that:
  - (1) Each deck of cards complies with the requirements of 205 CMR 146.48;
  - (2) The backs of the cards in the two decks are of different color;
  - (3) One deck is being shuffled by the automated card shuffling device while the other deck is being dealt or used to play the game;
  - (4) Both decks are continuously alternated in and out of play, with each deck being used for every other round of play; and
  - (5) The cards from only one deck shall be placed in the discard rack at any given time.

### **3. Opening of the table for gaming**

- (a) After receiving the cards at the table in accordance with 205 CMR 146.49, the dealer shall, as applicable, comply with the requirements of either 205 CMR 146.49 and (b) through (d) below or the requirements of 205 CMR 146.50.
- (b) Following the inspection of the cards by the dealer and the verification by the floorperson assigned to the table, the cards shall be spread out face up on the table for visual inspection by the first player to arrive at the table. The cards shall be spread out in horizontal fan shaped columns by deck according to suit and in sequence. The cards in each suit shall be laid out in sequence within the suit.
- (c) After the first player is afforded an opportunity to visually inspect the cards, the cards shall be turned face down on the table, mixed thoroughly by a “washing” or “chemmy shuffle” of the cards and stacked. Once the cards have been stacked, they shall be shuffled in accordance with Section 4.
- (d) If a gaming licensee uses an automated card shuffling device to play the game and two decks of cards are received at the table pursuant to 205 CMR 146.49 and Section 2, each deck of cards shall be separately sorted, inspected, verified, spread, inspected, mixed, stacked and shuffled in accordance with the provisions of (a) through (c) above.

### **4. Shuffle and cut the cards**

- (a) Immediately prior to the commencement of play, unless the cards were pre-shuffled pursuant to 205 CMR 146.50, and after each round of play has been completed, the dealer shall shuffle the cards, either manually or by use of an automated card shuffling device, so that they are randomly intermixed. Upon completion of the shuffle, the dealer or device shall place the deck of cards in a single stack, provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be deemed to prohibit the use of an automated card shuffling device which, upon completion of the shuffling of the cards, inserts the stack of cards directly into a dealing shoe.
- (b) After the cards have been shuffled and stacked, the dealer shall:
  - (1) If the cards were shuffled using an automated card shuffling device, deal or deliver the

cards in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 7-9; or  
(2) If the cards were shuffled manually or were pre-shuffled pursuant to 205 CMR 146.50, cut the cards in accordance with the procedures set forth in (c) below.

(c) If a cut of the cards is required, the dealer shall:

(1) Cut the deck, using one hand, by:

(i) Placing the cover card on the table in front of the deck of cards;

(ii) Taking a stack of at least 10 cards from the top of the deck and placing them on top of the cover card;

(iii) Placing the cards remaining in the deck on top of the stack of cards that were cut and placed on the cover card pursuant to (c)(1)(ii) above; and

(iv) Removing the cover card and placing it in the discard rack; and

(2) Deal the cards in accordance with the procedures set forth in Sections 7-9.

(d) Notwithstanding (c) above, after the cards have been cut and before any cards have been dealt, a casino supervisor may require the cards to be recut if he or she determines that the cut was performed improperly or in any way that might affect the integrity or fairness of the game.

(e) Whenever there is no gaming activity at a flop poker table that is open for gaming, the cards shall be spread out on the table either face up or face down. If the cards are spread face down, they shall be turned face up once a player arrives at the table. After the first player is afforded an opportunity to visually inspect the cards, the procedures outlined in Section 3(c) and, if applicable, (d) shall be completed.

## **5. Flop poker hand rankings**

(a) The rank of the cards used in flop poker, for the determination of winning hands, in order of highest to lowest rank, shall be: ace, king, queen, jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 and 2.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, an ace may be used to complete a "straight flush" or a "straight" formed with a 2, 3, 4 and 5. An ace may not be used, however, with any other sequence of cards to form a "straight" (for example, queen, king, ace, 2 and 3).

(b) The permissible hands at the game of flop poker, in order of highest to lowest rank, shall be:

(1) "Royal flush" is a hand consisting of an ace, king, queen, jack and 10 of the same suit;

(2) "Straight flush" is a hand consisting of five cards of the same suit in consecutive ranking, with king, queen, jack, 10 and 9 being the highest ranking straight flush and ace, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being the lowest ranking straight flush;

(3) "Four-of-a-kind" is a hand consisting of four cards of the same rank, with four aces being the highest ranking four-of-a-kind and four twos being the lowest ranking four-of-a-kind;

(4) "Full house" is a hand consisting of "three-of-a-kind" and a "pair," with three aces and two kings being the highest ranking full house and three twos and two threes being the lowest ranking full house;

(5) "Flush" is a hand consisting of five cards of the same suit, not in consecutive order, with ace, king, queen, jack and 9 being the highest ranking flush and 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 being the

- lowest ranking flush;
- (6) "Straight" is a hand consisting of five cards of consecutive rank, not all of the same suit, with ace, king, queen, jack and 10 being the highest ranking straight and ace, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being the lowest ranking straight;
  - (7) "Three-of-a-kind" is a hand consisting of three cards of the same rank, with three aces being the highest ranking three-of-a-kind and three twos being the lowest ranking three-of-a-kind;
  - (8) "Two pairs" is a hand consisting of two "pairs," with two aces and two kings being the highest ranking two pairs and two threes and two twos being the lowest ranking two pairs; and
  - (9) "Pair" is a hand containing two cards of the same rank, with two aces being the highest ranking pair and two twos being the lowest ranking pair.
- (c) When comparing two hands which are of identical rank pursuant to the provisions of this section, or which contain none of the hands authorized in this section, the hand that contains the highest ranking card as provided in (a) above which is not contained in the other hand shall be considered the higher ranking hand. If the hands are of identical rank after the application of this subsection, the hands shall be considered a tie.

## **6. Wagers**

- (a) All wagers at flop poker shall be made by placing gaming chips or plaques, and, if applicable, a match play coupon on the appropriate betting areas of the table layout. A verbal wager accompanied by cash shall not be accepted.
- (b) Except as provided in Section 10, all wagers shall be placed prior to the dealer announcing "No more bets" in accordance with the dealing procedure in Sections 7-9, and no wager shall be made, increased, or withdrawn after the dealer has announced "No more bets."
- (c) Each player shall be required to place an ante wager and, unless there is only one player at the flop poker table, a pot wager.
- (d) The outcome of the ante wager and any flop wager made by a player shall have no bearing on the pot wager of that player.
- (e) Only players who are seated at a flop poker table may place a wager at the game. Once a player has placed a wager and received cards, that player must remain seated until the completion of the round of play.

## **7. Procedure for dealing the cards from a manual dealing shoe**

- (a) If a gaming licensee chooses to have the cards dealt from a manual dealing shoe, the dealing shoe shall meet the requirements of 205 CMR 146.51 and shall be located on the table in a location as approved by the Commission. Once the procedures required by Section 4 have been completed, the stacked deck of cards shall be placed in the dealing shoe either by the dealer or by the automated card shuffling device.

- (b) The dealer shall announce “No more bets” prior to dealing any cards.
- (c) Each card shall be removed from the dealing shoe with the hand of the dealer that is the closest to the dealing shoe and placed on the appropriate area of the layout with the opposite hand.
- (d) The dealer shall, starting with the player farthest to his or her left and continuing around the table in a clockwise manner, deal the cards as follows:
  - (1) One card face down to each player;
  - (2) One card face down to the area designated for the community cards;
  - (3) A second card face down to each player;
  - (4) A second card face down to the area designated for the community cards;
  - (5) A third card face down to each player; and
  - (6) A third card face down to the area designated for the community cards.
  - (7) All card will be dealt in a manner as to not disclose the value of the cards.
- (e) After three cards have been dealt to each player and to the area designated for the community cards, the dealer shall remove the stub from the manual dealing shoe and, except as provided in (f) below, place the stub in the discard rack without exposing the cards.
- (f) The dealer shall be required to count the stub at least once every five rounds of play in order to determine that the correct number of cards are still in the deck. The dealer shall determine the number of cards in the stub by counting the cards face down on the layout.
  - (1) If the count of the stub indicates that 52 cards are in the deck, the dealer shall place the stub in the discard rack without exposing the cards.
  - (2) If the count of the stub indicates that the number of cards in the deck is incorrect, the dealer shall determine if the cards were misdealt. If the cards were misdealt (a player or the area designated for the placement of the community cards has more or less than three cards) but 52 cards remain in the deck, all hands shall be void pursuant to Section 12. If the cards have not been misdealt, all hands shall be considered void and the entire deck of cards shall be removed from the table pursuant to 205 CMR 146.49.

## **8. Procedure for dealing the cards from the hand**

- (a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of 205 CMR 146 or this chapter, a gaming licensee may, in its discretion, permit a dealer to deal the cards used to play flop poker from his or her hand.
- (b) If a casino chooses to have the cards dealt from the dealer’s hand, the following requirements shall be observed:
  - (1) The gaming licensee shall use an automated shuffling device to shuffle the cards.
  - (2) Once the procedures required by Section 4 have been completed, the dealer shall place the stacked deck of cards in either hand.
    - (i) Once the dealer has chosen the hand in which he or she will hold the cards, the dealer shall use that hand whenever holding the cards during that round of play.

- (ii) The cards held by the dealer shall at all times be kept in front of the dealer and over the table inventory container.
  - (3) The dealer shall announce “No more bets” prior to dealing any cards. The dealer shall deal each card by holding the deck of cards in the chosen hand and using the other hand to remove the top card of the deck and place it face down on the appropriate area of the layout.
- (c) The dealer shall, starting with the player farthest to his or her left and continuing around the table in a clockwise manner, deal the cards as follows:
- (1) One card face down to each player;
  - (2) One card face down to the area designated for the community cards;
  - (3) A second card face down to each player;
  - (4) A second card face down to the area designated for the community cards;
  - (5) A third card face down to each player; and
  - (6) A third card face down to the area designated for the community cards.
  - (7) All card will be dealt in a manner as to not disclose the value of the cards.
- (d) After three cards have been dealt to each player and the area designated for the community cards, the dealer shall, except as provided in (e) below, place the stub in the discard rack without exposing the cards.
- (e) The dealer shall be required to count the stub at least once every five rounds of play in order to determine that the correct number of cards are still in the deck. The dealer shall count the stub in accordance with the provisions of Section 7(e)-(f).

## **9. Procedures for dealing the cards from an automated dealing shoe**

- (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of 205 CMR 146 or this chapter, a gaming licensee may, in its discretion, choose to have the cards used to play flop poker dealt from an automated dealing shoe which dispenses cards in stacks of three cards, provided that the shoe, its location and the procedures for its use are approved by the Commission.
- (b) If a gaming licensee chooses to have the cards dealt from an automated dealing shoe, the following requirements shall be observed:
  - (1) Once the procedures required by Section 4 have been completed, the cards shall be placed in the automated dealing shoe.
  - (2) The dealer shall then announce “No more bets” prior to the shoe dispensing any stacks of cards.
- (c) The dealer shall deliver the first stack of three cards dispensed by the automated dealing shoe face down to the player farthest to his or her left who has placed a wager in accordance with Section 6. As the remaining stacks are dispensed to the dealer by the automated dealing shoe, the dealer shall, moving clockwise around the table, deliver a stack face down to each of the other players who has placed a wager in a manner as to not disclose the value of the cards in accordance with Section 6. The dealer shall then deliver a stack of three cards face down to the area designated for the community cards in a manner

as to not disclose the value of the cards.

- (d) After each stack of three cards has been dispensed and delivered in accordance with this section, the dealer shall remove the stub from the automated dealing shoe and, except as provided in (e) below, place the stub in the discard rack without exposing the cards.
- (e) The dealer shall be required to count the stub at least once every five rounds of play in order to determine that the correct number of cards are still in the deck. The dealer shall count the stub in accordance with the provisions of Section 7(e)-(f).
- (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of (e) above, the counting of the stub shall not be required if an automated card shuffling device is used that counts the number of cards in the deck after the completion of each shuffle and indicates whether 52 cards are still present. If the automated card shuffling device reveals that an incorrect number of cards are present, the deck shall be removed from the table in accordance with the provisions of 205 CMR 146.49.

#### **10. Procedure for completion of each round of play; collection and payment of wagers**

- (a) After the dealing procedures required by Sections 7-9 have been completed, each player shall examine his or her cards without exposing them to any person, replace the cards face down on the layout and either place a flop wager or surrender the ante wager.
  - (1) If a player chooses to place a flop wager, the wager shall be placed in the designated flop wager betting area.
  - (2) If a player chooses to surrender his or her ante wager, the player's ante shall be collected by the dealer and placed in the table inventory container.
- (b) Once each player has either placed a flop wager or surrendered his or her ante wager, the dealer shall turn the three community cards (the flop) face up in the designated area for the community cards.
- (c) Starting with the player farthest to the dealer's right and proceeding in a counterclockwise manner around the table, the dealer shall, one player at a time, turn the three cards of each player face up, announce the best possible five-card hand that can be formed using the three cards of the player and two of the three community cards, and collect or pay any ante and flop wagers remaining on the table.
  - (1) Ante and flop wagers shall lose if the best possible five-card hand that can be formed has a rank lower than a pair of jacks. Losing ante and flop wagers shall be collected by the dealer and placed in the table inventory container.
  - (2) Ante and flop wagers shall win if the best possible five-card hand that can be formed has a rank of jacks or better. Winning ante and flop wagers shall be paid by the dealer in accordance with the payout odds set forth in Section 11.
- (d) After settling all remaining ante and flop wagers, the dealer shall determine the player at the table with the highest ranking five-card hand and award that player the pot bets of all players. If the five-card hands of two or more players are of equal rank, the hand of each such player

shall be a tie hand. In such case, the dealer shall award the pot wagers of all players in equal amounts to those players with a tie hand.

- (e) After the pot wagers of all players have been awarded in accordance with (d) above, the dealer shall immediately collect the cards of all players and the community cards and place them in the discard rack. All cards collected by the dealer shall be picked up in order and placed in the discard rack in such a way that they can be readily arranged to reconstruct each hand in the event of a question or dispute.

**11. Payout odds**

- (a) The payout odds for winning ante and flop wagers printed on any sign or in any brochure or other publication distributed by a gaming licensee shall be stated through the use of the word “to” or “win,” and no odds shall be stated through the use of the word “for.”
- (b) Each winning ante wager shall be paid at odds of 1 to 1.
- (c) Each winning flop wager shall be paid once for the highest ranking qualifying hand that can be formed and at no less than the odds set forth below:

<u>Hand</u>	<u>Payout Odds</u>
Royal flush	1000 to 1
Straight flush	500 to 1
Four-of-a-kind	100 to 1
Full house	30 to 1
Flush	20 to 1
Straight	10 to 1
Three-of-a-kind	4 to 1
Two pair	2 to 1
Pair, jacks or better	1 to 1

- (d) Notwithstanding the payout odds set forth in (b) and (c) above, the aggregate payout limit for a player on winning ante and flop wagers on any hand shall be \$50,000.00 or the maximum amount that one patron could win per round when betting the minimum wager, whichever is greater.

**12. Irregularities**

- (a) If any community card is exposed after each player has placed an ante and pot wager but prior to each player having either placed a flop wager or surrendered his or her ante wager, all ante and flop wagers shall be void. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the pot wagers of all players shall be awarded in accordance with the provisions of Section 10.
- (b) A card that is found face up in the shoe or the deck while the cards are being dealt shall not be used in the game and shall be placed in the discard rack. If more than one card is found face up in the shoe or the deck during the dealing of the cards, all hands shall be void and the



cards shall be reshuffled. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the card(s) are found face up after all cards have been dealt, the pot wagers of all players shall be awarded in accordance with the provisions of Section 10.

- (c) A card drawn in error without its face being exposed shall be used as though it was the next card from the shoe or the deck.
- (d) If a player is dealt an incorrect number of cards, that player's hand shall be void.
- (e) If an automated card shuffling device is being used and the device jams, stops shuffling during a shuffle, or fails to complete a shuffle cycle, the cards shall be reshuffled in accordance with procedures approved by the Commission.
- (f) If an automated dealing shoe is being used and the device jams, stops dealing cards, or fails to deal cards during a round of play, the round of play shall be void and the cards shall be removed from the device and reshuffled with any cards already dealt, in accordance with procedures approved by the Commission.
- (g) Any automated card shuffling device or automated dealing shoe shall be removed from a gaming table before any other method of shuffling or dealing may be utilized at that table.

**13. Prohibition against a player wagering on more than one player position**

A player shall not be permitted to wager on more than one player position at a flop poker table.