

JOKER POKER

Dario De Toffoli

For 2 to 4 players aged 10 or up

Piatnik No. 712333

© 2007, Piatnik, Vienna, printed in Austria

Contents

A deck of 52 poker cards, plus 3 jokers.

36 betting cards (in 4 sets of 4 different colours; each sets is composed of 9 cards, with values from 0 to 4).

Preparation

Each player takes a set of betting cards and puts them face down in front of him. A dealer should be chosen, but his position does not affect the game. The value of a "hand" is the same as in a normal poker game. A list is included at the end of the rules.

The Aim

To produce as many winning poker hands as you can during 3 games, thus securing more betting cards of higher value than the other players. The player with the highest combined value of their betting cards at the end of the "match" is the winner.

How to play

The dealer shuffles the deck (including the 3 jokers) and deals 15 cards per player (if 4 players are taking part only 13 cards should be dealt per player: see later -"the 4-players game").

Each player divides their cards into 3 "hands" composed of 5 cards each. Then they put the 3 hands face down on the table in front of them, in order of decreasing poker value: on the left the strongest poker hand (first hand), followed by the next strongest hand (second hand) and at last on the right the weakest poker hand (third hand).

Let's make an example. You have the following 15 cards:

A K K K Q J 10 10 6 6 5 5 4 3 2
♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥ ♠ ♦ ♠ ♠ ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥

You could divide them as follows:

first	K J 10 3 2 ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥	(flush, King high)
second	K K 6 6 4 ♦ ♣ ♦ ♠ ♣	(two pairs, Kings and 6s)
third	5 5 A Q 10 ♠ ♣ ♠ ♣ ♠	(one pair, 5s)

But you also could divide them in another way:

first	K K K 10 10 ♥ ♦ ♣ ♠ ♥	(full house, Kings full of 10s)
second	5 4 3 2 A ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥ ♠	(straight, 5 high)
third	6 6 Q J 5 ♦ ♠ ♣ ♥ ♠	(one pair, 6s)

Or again in another way:

first	A K Q J 10 ♠ ♥ ♣ ♥ ♥	(straight, Ace high)
second	6 5 4 3 2 ♦ ♠ ♣ ♥ ♥	(straight, 6 high)
third	K K 10 6 5 ♣ ♦ ♠ ♠ ♣	(one pair, Kings)

After choosing your 3 hands, you must bet one of your betting cards on each of them; the betting cards are put face down onto the corresponding cards. You can choose how you play the betting cards, no matter what the value of the hands is (for example you can bet 0 on your first hand and 4 on the third one). When everybody is ready, all players reveal their "first hand" and these are compared with each other player: the player with the highest poker hand cashes all the bets (including theirs), that is they take all the betting cards which have been bet on the first hands. You then go on to compare the second hands: the players reveal them, compare them to each other and the highest one takes the betting cards. Finally you do the same with the third hands: the players reveal them, compare them to each other and the highest takes the betting cards.

In the rare case of a tie between winning hands, every winning player wins their own betting cards and the other betting cards are discarded.

Important. The value of the cashed betting cards are victory points, so keep them separately from the betting cards you still have at your disposal for the betting.

Note that the 3 hands have equal importance, that is the third hand can enable you to win (or lose) as much or even more than the first hand; and this is already a strategic tip: when distributing your cards among the 3 hands, give them the same consideration. Sometimes it could be better sacrificing a card in the first 2 hands, resulting in the 3rd hand being relatively strong.

Using the jokers

There are 3 jokers: 1 red, 1 black and 1 red/black.

If you have a joker among your cards, you can use it to replace any card, with the following limitations:

- the red joker can only be used to replace a red card (hearts or diamonds)
- the black joker can only be used to replace a black card (spades or clubs)
- the red/black joker can be used to replace any card
- if you have 2 (or even 3) jokers, they have to be distributed in different "hands", but all of them have to assume the same value (if you decide that one works as a king, the others have to work as kings), choosing the suits accordingly with the colour of the jokers.

The match

A complete game (match) is composed by 3 games, so it ends when the players have used all their 9 betting cards. At the end of the third game, you add up the values of the betting cards that each player has won, and the player with the highest total is the winner.

THE 4-PLAYER GAME

The dealer deals 13 cards per player instead of 15. The third hand, the weakest one, is composed by 3 cards instead of the regular 5. *Important.* In the third hand, (with only 3 cards), flushes and straights are not possible, so 3 Aces is the highest possible hand.

Let's make an example. You have the following 13 cards:

A K K K Q J 10 10 5 5 4 3 2
♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥ ♠ ♠ ♣ ♣ ♥ ♥

You could divide them as follows:

first K J 10 3 2 (flush, King high)
♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

second K K 5 5 4 (two pairs, Kings and 5s)
♦ ♣ ♠ ♣ ♣

third A Q 10 (Ace high)
♠ ♣ ♠

But you also could divide them in another way:

first K K K 10 10 (full house, Kings full of 10s)
♥ ♦ ♣ ♠ ♥

second 5 4 3 2 A (straight, 5 high)
♣ ♣ ♥ ♥ ♠

third Q J 5 (Queen high)
♣ ♥ ♠

Or again in another way:

first A K Q J 10 (straight, Ace high)
♠ ♥ ♣ ♥ ♥

second K K 4 3 2 (one pair, Kings)
♣ ♥ ♣ ♥ ♥

third 5 5 10 (one pair, 5s)
♠ ♣ ♠

FLUSH

Five cards of the same suit, same as Queen high flush in the example:

Q 9 8 5 2
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The highest card wins, suits don't count; in case of a tie you consider the second highest card and so on.

FULL HOUSE

It consists in 3 cards in one value and 2 cards in another one, same as the 10s and 5s in the example:

10 10 10 5 5
♣ ♠ ♥ ♣ ♦

The highest 3 of a kind wins.

FOUR OF A KIND

Four cards of the same value, same as the four 6s in the example:

6 6 6 6 4
♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ ♣

The highest value wins.

STRAIGHT FLUSH

A straight with all the cards in the same suit, same as the Queen high straight flush in the example:

Q J 10 9 8
♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

The highest card wins, suits don't count.

You are allowed to use the Ace before the 2, for a 5 high straight flush (in this case the Ace is the lowest valuable card).

The strongest straight flush,

A K Q J 10
♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

is the strongest poker hand, and is called a **Royal flush**.

FLUSH

Five cards of the same suit, same as Queen high flush in the example:

Q 9 8 5 2
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The highest card wins, suits don't count; in case of a tie you consider the second highest card and so on.

FULL HOUSE

It consists in 3 cards in one value and 2 cards in another one, same as the 10s and 5s in the example:

10 10 10 5 5
♣ ♠ ♥ ♣ ♦

The highest 3 of a kind wins.

FOUR OF A KIND

Four cards of the same value, same as the four 6s in the example:

6 6 6 6 4
♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ ♣

The highest value wins.

STRAIGHT FLUSH

A straight with all the cards in the same suit, same as the Queen high straight flush in the example:

Q J 10 9 8
♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

The highest card wins, suits don't count.

You are allowed to use the Ace before the 2, for a 5 high straight flush (in this case the Ace is the lowest valuable card).

The strongest straight flush,

A K Q J 10
♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

is the strongest poker hand, and is called a **Royal flush**.