

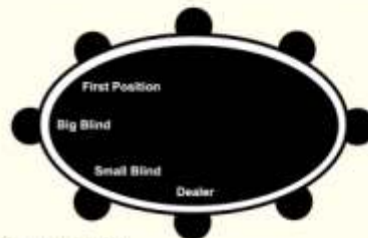
Poker

INTRODUCTION

A hand of Texas Holdem starts with the two players of the left of the dealer putting in **BLINDS**-or, forced bets. Some games will require that all players at the table put in **ANTES** too.

There's a **SMALL BLIND** and a **BIG BLIND**. The big blind is usually twice as much as the small blind, but not always. The blinds are determined before the hand starts.

The **REASON** for blinds is to encourage action. As you'll see, without blinds, players could just fold, fold, fold until they got pocket Aces (the best hand possible).



The dealer position usually has a small, round "button" in front of him, to signify positioning.

That's why you'll often hear the words "on the button"... that's the dealer position.

When you play online poker, your blinds will usually be put in the pot automatically. You can turn this option off, but there's no real reason to do so (unless you plan on leaving the table).

After two players put in their blinds, each player is dealt **TWO CARDS** face-down. These are called your "hole cards".

Now, each player has the opportunity to **CALL THE BLINDS, MAKE A RAISE, OR FOLD**. If someone makes a raise, the next player will have to call the raise to stay in the hand. The action always moves clockwise.

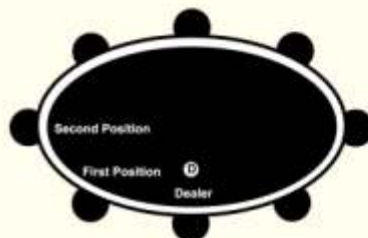
The person to the **IMMEDIATE LEFT** of the big blind is first to act. This player is known to be in **FIRST POSITION**... commonly referred to as "under the gun" (or "UTG").

If no one raises the pot, the last person to act is the player who puts in the big blind. He can either **CHECK** (and let the flop come out) or he can **bet** (and start another round of action at the table). This position of big blind (when no one has raised the pot) is said to have the "option".

Once everyone has called the bets and raises (or folded), it can be said that "the pot is good". Now it's time for the "flop".

The dealer places three cards face-UP on the center of the table...

Now another round of betting begins. For the rest of the hand, the action will start with the person to the **IMMEDIATE LEFT** of the dealer and move clockwise... with the dealer acting **LAST** in any round of action.



Once the second round of betting is finished, the dealer places a **FOURTH** card on the table. This card is known as the "turn card" or "fourth street". Once again, players are allowed to bet.

Then, the dealer lays out the fifth and final card known as "fifth street" or the "river". Then, the final round of betting begins. When this round of betting ends, the players who haven't folded turn over their cards and the best cards win.

The winner is the person with the strongest five card hand. Even though there are seven cards in each player's hand, only the best five card hand counts.

Please note that the above guidelines are general guidelines and may vary according to game type.

Winners know when to stop.



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