

**Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo**

Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo is a technically demanding poker game where the best traditional ‘high’ poker hand and the best Ace to Five lowball hand split the pot at showdown. In Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo poker, players are individually dealt seven cards throughout the course of the hand, but only the best five-card hand possible for each player is used to determine the winner.



In Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo, the low hand is played with an ‘eight or better’ qualifier, which means that a low hand must be, at worst, an eight-low to be eligible to win the low portion of the pot. (Low hands in Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo are determined in the same way as in [Omaha Hi/Lo](http://www.pokerstars.com/poker/games/omaha/high-low/)). If there is no qualifying low hand, the high hand wins the entire pot.

Stud Hi/Lo uses the ‘Ace to Five’ or ‘California’ system for ranking low hands. Straights and flushes do not count against a hand, and Aces are always low, so the best possible hand is a "wheel": 5, 4, 3, 2, A. To help understand the ranks of low hands, the following sample qualifying low hands are ranked from least powerful (#1, will rarely win the low half of the pot) to most powerful (#10, the nuts):

1. 8, 7, 6, 5, 4
2. 8, 7, 6, 5, 3
3. 8, 6, 4, 2, A
4. 8, 4, 3, 2, A
5. 7, 6, 5, 4, 2
6. 7, 6, 5, 2, A
7. 7, 5, 4, 3, 2
8. 6, 5, 4, 3, 2
9. 6, 4, 3, 2, A
10. 5, 4, 3, 2, A

Note that a low hand is always ranked from its highest card downwards. So for example, hand #9 is known as a ‘Six-low’ because its highest card is a Six. Hand #5 is a ‘Seven-low’, and Hand #1 is an ‘Eight-low’. In poker slang, you distinguish between close low hands by going further down the ranks, so hand #9 would be called a ‘Six-Four low’, which beats hand #8 a “Six-Five low”.

Also remember that straights and flushes do not count against your low hand, so making a qualifying low that is also a straight or a flush is a very powerful hand, that could win both the high and low halves of the pot. That’s called a ‘scoop’.

**Rules for Playing Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo:**

**Ante**

Before a game of Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo begins, all players ante a nominal amount (the exact amount depends on the game). This is the cost of being dealt into the hand. For example, in the image shown above the ante is $0.05 in a $0.50/$1 game.

**Third Street**

Each player is initially dealt three cards, two hidden hole cards and one face up. The player with the lowest exposed card is the ‘bring-in’, and is forced to start the action. They must make either another nominal bet (again, the exact size of the bring-in depends on the game) or, if they choose, a full bet of the lower betting increment. Action continues clockwise around the table until betting is complete for the round.

Note: For the purposes of determining the bring-in in Seven Card Stud, ties in card rank are broken by suit, with the order from highest to lowest being spades, hearts, diamonds and clubs. The lowest suit brings in, so if the deuce of hearts and deuce of clubs are visible at the beginning of the hand, then the deuce of clubs would have the bring-in.

**Fourth Street**

Each poker player now receives another exposed card, called ‘Fourth Street’. The first player to act is the individual whose exposed cards have the highest poker value. By rule, this player may either check or bet. Unlike in Seven Card Stud, there is no double-sized bet allowed if a player makes a pair on Fourth Street – all bets are in the lower increment ($2 in a $2/$4 game).

For example, in the image shown above, the player with the Ace high acts first, as their exposed cards are stronger than the King high and Eight high shown by other two players. This player may either check or bet the lower betting amount (in this case, $0.50 in a $0.50/$1 game).

There is a round of betting.

**Fifth Street**

Each player now receives another exposed card, called ‘Fifth Street’. Again by rule, the first player to act is the individual whose exposed poker hand has the highest poker value. There is a round of betting.

Starting on Fifth Street and for the rest of the hand, all bets and raises are in big bet increments ($4 in a $2/$4 game).

**Sixth Street**

Each poker player now receives another exposed card, called ‘Sixth Street’. Again, the first player to act is the individual whose exposed cards have the highest poker value. There is a round of betting.

**Seventh Street, or The River**

Each player now receives a seventh and final card, which is dealt face-down and known only to the player to whom the card is dealt. The first player to act is the individual whose exposed cards have the highest poker value. There is a final betting round, and if more than one player remains, we reach the Showdown.

**The Showdown - Determining the Hi and Lo Winners**

If there is more than one remaining player when the final betting round is complete the last bettor or raiser shows his or her cards first. If there was no bet on the final round, the player in the earliest seat shows his or her cards first (Seat 1, then Seat 2, and so on). Further hands involved in the Showdown are exposed clockwise around the table.

The player with the best five-card hand for the high (‘"Hi’") wins half the pot, and the player with the best hand for low (‘"Lo’") wins the other half of the pot. In the event that no hand qualifies for low, the best hand for high wins the entire pot.

Remember that in Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo, there is an ‘eight or better’ requirement to win the low, so a player must have an *unpaired* five-card hand that consists of all cards less than or equal to an 8. If no player can meet this requirement, no low qualifies.

In the event of two or more players have the same high or low hands, the pot halves will be split accordingly.

After the pot is awarded, a new game of Seven Card Stud Hi/Lo poker is ready to be played.

**Player Betting Options**

In Stud, as with other forms of poker, the available actions are ‘fold’, ‘check’, ‘bet’, ‘call’ or ‘raise’. Exactly which options are available depends on the action taken by the previous players. Each poker player always has the option to fold, to discard their cards and give up any interest in the pot. If nobody has yet made a bet, then a player may either check (decline to bet, but keep their cards) or bet. If a player has bet, then subsequent players can fold, call or raise. To call is to match the amount the previous player has bet. To raise is to not only match the previous bet, but to also increase it. Bets and raises in Limit games are in pre-determined amounts.

**Additional Rules and Situations**

* For the purpose of determining the bring-in in Seven Card Stud, ties in card rank are broken by suit. The suits are ranked in alphabetical order – clubs (lowest), diamonds, hearts and spades (highest). The lowest suit breaks a tie, so if the deuce of hearts and deuce of clubs are visible at the beginning of the hand, then the deuce of clubs would have the bring-in. (Note: The ranking of equal hands at the Showdown is not determined by this rule.)
* If the player with the lowest card showing on Third Street is all-in for the ante and they are consequently unable to make the required bring-in bet, the bring-in moves clockwise to the next player at the table, regardless of the value of that player’s exposed card.
* Because Stud games are played with eight players but there are only 52 cards in the deck, it’s possible to run out of cards before Seventh Street can be dealt. In this very rare instance, a single ‘community card’ will be dealt face-up on the table, which will be shared by all remaining players.