POLISH POKER

OFFICIAL RULES

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1. COMPONENTS

Polish Poker uses a **25-card short deck**:

- 24 standard cards: 9, 10, J, Q, K and A in all four suits
- 1 Joker

2. OBJECTIVE

Be the last player remaining by eliminating all opponents.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Polish Poker is designed for **2–6 players**, with **4 players recommended** for the best experience. For 7 or more players, use the **Tournament Format** (see 8.4).

4. HANDS

4.1 Notes on the Short Deck

Unlike traditional poker, Polish Poker uses a **short deck** (9 through Ace, plus a Joker). This changes how likely each poker hand is, so the hand ranking is different. Key differences from traditional poker:

- **Three of a Kind ranks higher than a Straight**.
- **Two Pair ranks higher than a Straight**.
- **Flush ranks higher than a Full House**.
- The Joker makes **Five of a Kind** possible – the strongest hand in the game.

No ties occur – every round is resolved through RAISE and CALL.

4.2 Hand Rankings (Strongest to Weakest)

Polish Poker uses 11 hand rankings, from Five of a Kind (#1) to High Card (#11). Card ranks go from **9 (lowest)** to **Ace (highest)**. Within the same hand, **higher cards beat lower ones** (see 4.3).

Hand	Example
#1 Five of a Kind Four cards of the same rank plus the Joker. Five Aces is the strongest hand.	A♠ A♥ A♦ A♣ Joker
#2 Royal Flush Five consecutive cards of one suit, from 10 to Ace	10♥ J♥ Q♥ K♥ A♥

Hand	Example
#3 Straight Flush Five consecutive cards of one suit, from 9 to King	9♦ 10♦ J♦ Q♦ K♦
#4 Four of a Kind Four cards of the same rank	K♠ K♥ K♦ K♣
#5 Flush Five cards of one suit, in any order	9♣ J♣ Q♣ K♣ A♣
#6 Full House Three cards of one rank plus two of another	Q♠ Q♥ Q♦ 9♣ 9♠
#7 Three of a Kind Three cards of the same rank	J♠ J♥ J♦
#8 Two Pair Two cards of one rank plus two of another	A♠ A♦ 10♥ 10♣
#9 Straight Five consecutive cards of any suits: Small (9 to King) or Big (10 to Ace)	9♠ 10♥ J♦ Q♣ K♠ 10♦ J♠ Q♥ K♣ A♠
#10 One Pair Two cards of the same rank	10♠ 10♦
#11 High Card One card of the declared rank, declared as “King high”	K♥

4.3 How to Declare and Compare Hands

Every declaration **names the hand and the cards** that make it. A declaration is true if those cards exist among **all cards in play** – all players’ personal cards plus the community card. For example, “King high” is true if at least one King is in play, and “Pair of 10s” if at least two 10s are.

Hand	How to declare	Which is higher
Five of a Kind	The rank: “Five Kings”	Higher rank
Royal Flush	The suit: “Royal Flush, Hearts”	Suits are equal (see 4.5)
Straight Flush	The suit: “Straight Flush, Spades”	Suits are equal (see 4.5)
Four of a Kind	The rank: “Four Jacks”	Higher rank
Flush	The suit: “Flush, Clubs”	Suits are equal (see 4.5)
Full House	The three, then the pair: “Full House, Kings over 9s”	Higher three; if the three is the same, the higher pair
Three of a Kind	The rank: “Three Queens”	Higher rank
Two Pair	Both pairs: “Two Pair, Aces and 10s”	Higher top pair; if it is the same, the higher second pair
Straight	Small or big: “Small Straight” “Big Straight”	Big Straight beats Small Straight
One Pair	The rank: “Pair of 10s”	Higher rank
High Card	The rank + “high”: “King high”	Higher rank

4.4 Joker

The Joker is a **wild card**: it can replace **exactly one card** of any rank and suit to complete a declared hand. The Joker can also be the **community card**.

4.5 Suit Rule

Suit-based hands (#2 Royal Flush, #3 Straight Flush, #5 Flush) may be raised by declaring the **same hand in a different suit**. This is the **only exception** to the rule that every new declaration must be higher (see 6.2).

- **All suits are equal** – no suit ranks higher than another.
- Each suit may be declared **only once per hand type** during a round.
- Once all four suits have been declared for a hand type, the next RAISE must be a **higher-ranking hand**.

5. SETUP & TURN ORDER

5.1 Casino Wash

All 25 cards are spread **face-down** on the table and mixed by sliding them around with both hands. Any player may do it. The cards stay spread out – they are **not stacked or squared into a deck**.

5.2 First Player

Before the first round, the cards are mixed with a Casino Wash (see 5.1) and **every player draws one card**. **The highest card starts**; **the Joker counts as the highest card**. Players who tie **draw again** until one remains. After that, **the loser of each round starts the next one** (see 6.4).

5.3 Starting Cards

Every player starts the game with **1 personal card**. Card counts **carry over** from round to round – also when the game switches to another format (see section 8).

5.4 Direction of Play

Players **agree on the direction of play** before the game. Usually the first game goes **clockwise** and the next game goes the other way.

6. GAMEPLAY

6.1 Starting a Round

At the beginning of each round, the cards are mixed with a Casino Wash (see 5.1).

- Each player draws **as many cards as they currently hold**, directly from the spread (**no dealer**).
- Once everyone has drawn, the starting player reveals one remaining card from the center as the **community card**. It counts when checking declared hands.
- All other undrawn cards stay face-down and are **not in play**.

This method keeps the game fast and gives every player responsibility for their own draw.

6.2 Declarations: RAISE or CALL

The starting player declares a poker hand they claim exists among all cards in play (**truth or bluff**). The next player in the direction of play must choose one of two actions:

- **RAISE** → declare a higher hand.
- **CALL** → challenge the previous declaration.

A higher hand means a **higher-ranking hand**, or the **same hand with higher cards** (see 4.3). The only exception is the Suit Rule (see 4.5). As declarations escalate, the claimed hands become harder to achieve, which encourages strategic bluffing.

> **Special Rule – Five Aces (A-A-A-A-Joker)**
> Five Aces is the highest possible hand. If a player declares Five Aces, **all cards are revealed immediately**, without waiting for a CALL. The next player in the direction of play is **treated as the CALLER**, and the round is resolved by the normal CALL rules (see 6.3).

6.3 Resolving a CALL

After a CALL, all players reveal their cards. The declared hand is checked using **all players' personal cards together with the community card**, no matter which player holds which cards.

- Declared hand exists → **the CALLER loses**.
- Declared hand does not exist → **the DECLARER loses**.

6.4 Penalties and Elimination

The player who loses a round **receives one additional card** and **starts the next round**.

If a player loses while already holding the maximum number of cards for the current format (5 in the Standard Format – see section 8), **they are eliminated**. In that case, **the winner of that final showdown starts the next round** instead.

The game continues until **only one player remains**.

6.5 Strategy Note: How the Game Develops

In early rounds, **fewer cards are in play**, making stronger poker hands less likely. As players collect penalty cards, **stronger combinations become more likely**, increasing the tension and strategic depth of each round.

When a player is eliminated, their personal cards are **removed from play** (5, 4 or 3 cards, depending on the game format). This changes the chances of every hand, so players have to adjust their bluffing, raising and calling.

6.6 Irregularities & Disputes

- **One card too many:** if a player has drawn one card too many, the starting player takes one of that player's cards at random and reveals it as the community card. If the community card has already been revealed, the round is replayed.
- **Two or more cards too many in play:** the round is replayed.
- **Too few cards:** the player draws the missing card before the community card is revealed. If it is noticed later, the round is replayed.
- **Card exposed by accident:** players may agree that the exposed card becomes the community card (if it was a player's card, that player draws a replacement). If anyone disagrees, the round is replayed.
- **Declaration out of turn:** it does not count; the player whose turn it is continues.
- **Cards revealed instead of a CALL:** if the player whose turn it is reveals their cards without saying "CALL", it **counts as a CALL**.
- **Unclear declaration:** it must be clarified before the next player acts – for example, a Full House must name the three and the pair.
- **Disputes:** players decide together. In a tournament, the tournament director has the final say.

7. EXAMPLE ROUNDS

7.1 Unsuccessful CALL – Truth Confirmed

Cards in play (4 players, 1 card each):
A: **K♠** · B: **J♥** · C: **K♦** · D: **10♣** · Community card: **K♥**

Declarations:

- Player A: "Pair of 9s"
- Player B (RAISE): "Pair of Jacks"
- Player C (RAISE): "Three Kings"
- Player D: CALL!

Result: all cards are revealed. Three Kings exist (**K♠**, **K♦**, **K♥**) – Player C's declaration was correct.
→ Player D (CALLER) loses.

7.2 Successful CALL – Bluff Caught

Cards in play (3 players):
A: **K♣** **9♦** · B: **J♠** · C: **K♥** **Q♦** · Community card: **J♦**

Declarations:

- Player A: "Pair of Kings"
- Player B (RAISE): "Three Jacks"
- Player C: CALL!

Result: all cards are revealed. Only two Jacks are in play (**J♠**, **J♦**) – Player B was bluffing.
→ Player B (DECLARER) loses.

7.3 Suit-over-Suit Play

Cards in play (4 players, later in the game):
A: **9♠** **10♦** **Q♥** · B: **9♦** **K♣** · C: Joker **A♠** · D: **9♥** **J♣** · Community card: **10♣**

Declarations:

- Player A: "Full House, 9s over 10s"
- Player B (RAISE): "Flush, Spades"
- Player C (RAISE): "Flush, Diamonds"
- Player D (RAISE): "Flush, Hearts"
- Player A (RAISE): "Flush, Clubs" – all four Flush suits have now been used.
- Player B (RAISE): "Four of a Kind, 9s"
- Player C: CALL!

Result: all cards are revealed. Four 9s exist: **9♠**, **9♦**, **9♥** and the Joker – Player B's declaration was correct.
→ Player C (CALLER) loses.

8. PLAYER COUNT & TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

The maximum number of personal cards depends on the number of players remaining in the game.

8.1 Standard Format (2–4 Players)

- **Maximum:** 5 personal cards per player.

- A player who loses while already holding 5 cards **is eliminated**.
- The game continues until **only one player remains**.

8.2 Five Players

- **Maximum:** 4 personal cards per player.
- A player who loses while already holding 4 cards **is eliminated**.
- Once 4 players remain, the game switches to the **Standard Format** (max 5 cards). **Players keep their current cards**.

Maximum cards in play: 5 players × 4 cards + 1 community card = **21 cards**.

8.3 Six Players – Stage Format

The game moves through three stages as players are eliminated:

- **Stage 1 – 6 players:** max 3 cards. Losing with 3 cards means elimination.
- **Stage 2 – 5 players:** max 4 cards. Losing with 4 cards means elimination.
- **Stage 3 – 4 players:** Standard Format (max 5 cards).

The game moves to the next stage automatically as players are eliminated. Maximum cards in play (Stage 1): 6 players × 3 cards + 1 community card = **19 cards**.

8.4 Tournament Format (7 or More Players)

Divide the players into **tables of 4** whenever possible; use **tables of 3 or 5 only when needed**. **Tables of 6 are not used** in tournaments, because the game gets very long. Each table plays independently, using the format for its number of players.

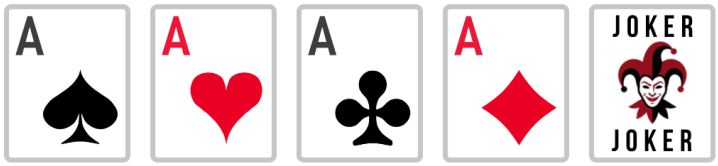
- The **top 1 or 2 players** from each table advance. "Top 2" means the table **plays until only 2 players remain**.
- Every new stage **starts fresh**: all players begin again with 1 card.
- Seats at every stage are **drawn at random**.
- The Final Table **always has 4 players** and uses the Standard Format (max 5 cards).

Players	First stage	Advance	Second stage	Final Table
6 (optional, instead of 8.3)	2 tables of 3	Top 2	–	4
7	4 + 3	Top 2	–	4
8	4 + 4	Top 2	–	4
9	5 + 4	Top 2	–	4
10	5 + 5	Top 2	–	4
11	4 + 4 + 3	Top 2 (6 players)	2 tables of 3, top 2	4
12	4 tables of 3	Winner	–	4
13–20	4 tables of 3–5	Winner	–	4
21+	6 or more tables of 3–5	Winner	Continue with the row for the number of winners	4

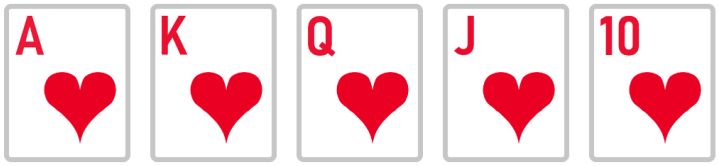
Example: 30 players → 6 tables of 4 + 2 tables of 3 → 8 winners → 2 tables of 4, top 2 → Final Table of 4. Plan yours at **polishpoker.org/tournament-planner**.

POLISH POKER

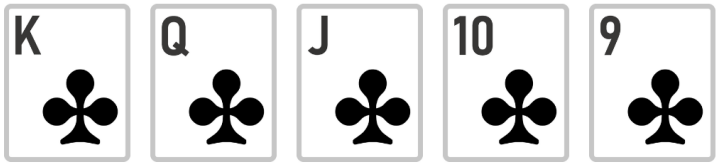
FIVE OF A KIND



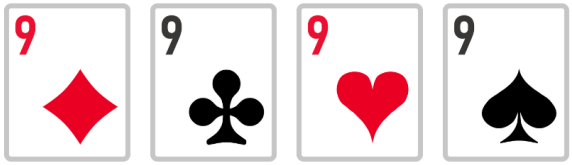
ROYAL FLUSH



STRAIGHT FLUSH



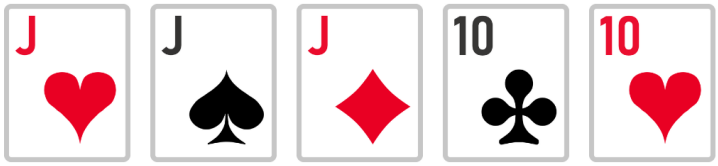
FOUR OF A KIND



FLUSH



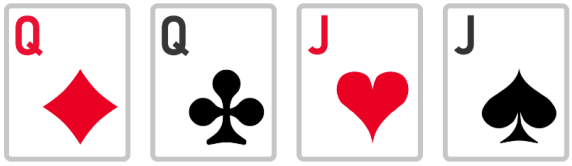
FULL HOUSE



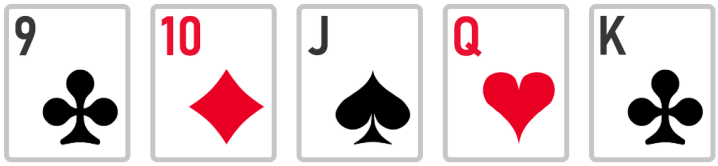
THREE OF A KIND



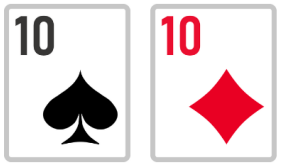
TWO PAIR



STRAIGHT



ONE PAIR



HIGH CARD

