

In poker, a hand's cards do not change—but the rules for deciding who wins can. In a high-hand game, the strongest conventional poker hand wins. In a lowball game, the weakest hand wins under a specific lowball system. In a hi-lo game, the pot can be split between the best high hand and the best qualifying low hand.

That difference affects more than which cards you play. It changes how you value pairs, straights, flushes, aces, and draws. This guide explains Texas Hold'em hand rankings, the main lowball poker rules, Omaha hi-lo basics, and how to read odds and draw chances without mixing up the game types.

High-Hand Poker: The Familiar Rankings

In high hand poker, players aim to make the strongest five-card hand. Texas Hold'em is the best-known example: each player combines their two private cards with the five community cards, using any five-card combination. Suits are equal in rank; a spade does not beat a heart, and a flush in one suit is not inherently stronger than a flush in another.

These are standard high-hand rankings, from strongest to weakest:

1. **Royal flush:** A, K, Q, J, 10 of the same suit. This is the highest possible straight flush.
2. **Straight flush:** Five consecutive ranks of the same suit.
3. **Four of a kind:** Four cards of the same rank, plus a kicker.
4. **Full house:** Three of a kind plus a pair.
5. **Flush:** Five cards of the same suit, not in sequence.
6. **Straight:** Five consecutive ranks of mixed or matching suits. An ace can be high or low: A-K-Q-J-10 or A-2-3-4-5.
7. **Three of a kind:** Three cards of the same rank.
8. **Two pair:** Two different pairs.
9. **One pair:** Two cards of the same rank.
10. **High card:** No pair or better; the highest card plays.

When two players have the same hand category, compare the relevant ranks and then the kickers. For example, K-K-9-6-2 beats K-K-8-7-6 because the first kicker, 9, beats 8. If the best five-card hand is identical, the pot is split. A kicker is not an extra card that always matters: in Hold'em, if the board already provides the best five cards for both players, neither player's unused hole card can break the tie.

Odds depend on which poker game you mean

Hand-frequency figures vary with the number of cards dealt and whether you are looking at a five-card hand or the best five cards made from seven. xn--pokerhands-bcb.com For a standard five-card hand drawn from a 52-card deck, the odds of four of a kind are **0.0240% (1 in 4,164)**—also commonly stated as **about 1 in 4,165**, depending on rounding. Do not apply that figure directly to Texas Hold'em: Hold'em players see seven cards in total, and the chance of making a particular hand category is different.

Hand Five-card frequency, approximately What to remember Royal flush 0.000154% One specific type of straight flush Straight flush 0.00139% Includes royal flushes in this total Four of a kind 0.0240% About 1 in 4,164; also stated as about 1 in 4,165 Full house 0.1441% Three of one rank and two of another Flush 0.1965% Excludes straight flushes Straight 0.3925% Excludes straight flushes

These are frequencies for a randomly dealt five-card hand, not the chance of completing a draw from a particular flop. For live decisions, your actual outs and the cards already exposed matter more than a general hand-frequency table.

Lowball: The Goal Is to Make a Low Hand

Lowball reverses the objective: the lowest hand under the game's rules wins. But it's not a one-size-fits-all solution. But "low" does not mean the same thing in every game. Before drawing or calling, check how the variant treats aces, straights, flushes, and the order of low hands. A hand that is excellent in one lowball game can be poor in another.

Ace-to-five lowball

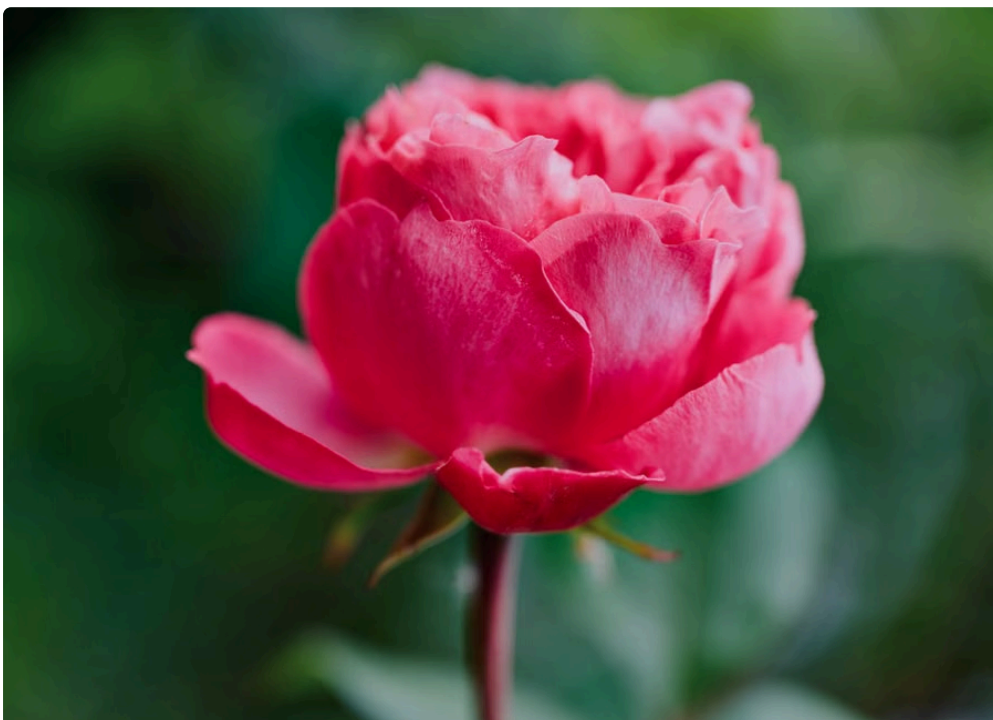
In ace-to-five lowball, aces count as low, and straights and flushes do not count against your low hand. Players compare their five cards from highest rank downward; the lowest sequence wins. The best possible hand is A-2-3-4-5, often called a wheel or a five-low. Suits do not break ties.

For example, 7-5-4-3-A beats 8-4-3-2-A because the first hand's highest card is a 7, lower than an 8. If both hands share the same highest card, compare the next-highest card, and continue until one hand is lower. Pairs are usually a disadvantage because duplicate ranks make it harder to form five distinct low cards.

Deuce-to-seven lowball

In deuce-to-seven lowball, the best low hand is 7-5-4-3-2, not A-2-3-4-5. Aces count high, and straights and flushes count as high hands, which makes them bad for your low. So a player cannot assume that a five-card sequence is desirable simply because it looks low. This is a key example of why lowball poker rules must be checked before assessing a hand.

Lowball rankings also should not be confused with a high-hand ranking chart. A pair that is weak in high poker may still be a losing feature in lowball, and the ace's value can change by variant. Use a game-specific reference rather than trying to memorize one universal "low hand" order.



Hi-Lo Poker: One Pot, Two Possible Winners

In hi-lo poker, the pot may be divided between the strongest high hand and the best qualifying low hand. If no one makes a qualifying low, the high hand takes the whole pot. If the same player wins both halves, that player “scoops” the pot.

Omaha hi-lo basics

Omaha hi-lo, often called Omaha 8-or-better, is a common split-pot game. Each player receives four hole cards and must use exactly two of them, plus exactly three community cards, to make a high hand. The same two-hole-card and three-board-card requirement applies when making a low hand.

A low hand must qualify with five distinct ranks of 8 or lower. Aces count as low, and straights and flushes do not disqualify a low. The best possible low is A-2-3-4-5. The low is compared from its highest card downward, so 6-4-3-2-A beats 7-3-2-A-8: the first hand’s top card is a 6, below the second hand’s 8. In common Omaha 8-or-better rules, suits do not determine which low wins.



Not every board allows a low. For example, a board with only two cards ranked 8 or lower cannot supply the three qualifying board cards needed for a low hand. And even with enough low cards on the board, a player still needs two suitable low hole cards. A high hand and a low hand can use different combinations, but each must follow Omaha’s exact-two-and-exactly-three rule.

In a split pot, an odd chip is awarded according to the poker room’s rules, often to the high half. Check the house rules. Also, do not assume that holding a low draw means you are safe: a rival may hold the same low and split that half, while another player wins high.

Draw Odds: Flop, Turn, and River

Draw odds count the unseen cards that improve your hand. An *out* is a card that appears to help, but it is only a true out if it gives you a hand that is likely to win. A card that completes your flush may also give an opponent a full house, for instance, so raw outs can overstate your practical chance.

In a typical Hold’em calculation after the flop, 47 cards are unseen: 52 cards, minus your two hole cards and the three-card flop. If you have a four-card flush draw, there are usually nine unseen cards of that suit. The chance to

hit one on the turn is 9/47, or about **19.1%**. If you miss the turn, the chance to hit on the river is 9/46, or about **19.6%**. The chance to hit by the river is about **35.0%** ($1 - 38/47 \times 37/46$).

Typical draw after the flop Approximate outs Hit on turn Hit by river Four-card flush draw 9 19.1% 35.0% Open-ended straight draw 8 17.0% 31.5% Gutshot straight draw 4 8.5% 16.5%

These figures assume the listed outs are clean and you will see both remaining cards. If you are facing a bet, compare the chance of improving with the price you are being offered; do not call automatically just because a draw has “nine outs.” Also, a flush draw is not a straight draw: the former needs a matching suit, while the latter needs a sequence of ranks. Some hands have both draws, but their outs overlap and should not simply be added together.. Pretty simple.

For low draws in Omaha hi-lo, count cards that can help you make a qualifying five-card low using the required two hole cards and three board cards. The count changes with the board, your hole cards, and what opponents may hold. A new low card can also counterfeit a card you were relying on, or enable an opponent to make the same low. Treat low draw estimates as situation-specific rather than borrowing a Hold'em flush-draw percentage.

How to Use Cheat Sheets and Equity Charts

Printable cheat sheets are useful for quick reference at a home game or while learning a new variant. Keep a high-hand ranking sheet beside a separate lowball or Omaha hi-lo rules chart. That prevents common mix-ups, such as treating an ace as low in every lowball game or forgetting Omaha's exactly-two-hole-card rule.

Equity charts can show how often a hand wins, loses, or ties against another hand or range. They are not the same as hand-ranking lists or draw-odds tables. Equity depends on the specific cards, the board, the number of opponents, and whether the pot is high-only or split. In hi-lo, a hand may have strong high equity but little chance to win low—or vice versa—so look for charts designed for the actual game and rules.

- **For Texas Hold'em:** Keep a standard high-hand ranking chart and a draw-odds reference handy.
- **For lowball:** Confirm ace treatment and whether straights and flushes count against you.
- **For Omaha hi-lo:** Check the qualifying-low rule, exact card-use requirements, and split-pot procedure.
- **For any game:** Use equity charts as estimates for a stated matchup, not as a guarantee about a particular hand.

Quick Takeaway

This reminds me of something that happened thought they could save money but ended up paying more.. High-hand poker rewards the strongest conventional five-card hand. Lowball rewards the lowest hand according to that variant's rules. Hi-lo may award half the pot to each, but only if a qualifying low exists. Learn the rules first, compare kickers when they matter, and calculate draw odds from your actual outs and remaining cards. A printable cheat sheet can help you remember the rankings; a game-specific equity chart can help you understand how often a hand is likely to win.