

Button and Blind Use

In button games, a non-playing dealer normally does the actual dealing. A round disk called the button is used to indicate which player has the dealer position. The player with the button is last to receive cards on the initial deal and has the right of last action after the first betting round. The button moves clockwise after a deal ends to rotate the advantage of last action. One or more blind bets are usually used to stimulate action and initiate play. Blinds are posted before the players look at their cards. Blinds are part of a player's bet, unless the structure of a game or the situation requires part or all of a particular blind to be dead. Dead chips are not part of a player's bet. With two blinds, the small blind is posted by the player immediately clockwise from the button, and the big blind is posted by the player two positions clockwise from the button. With more than two blinds, the little blind is normally left of the button (not on it). Action is initiated on the first betting round by the first player to the left of the blinds. On all subsequent betting rounds, the action begins with the first active player to the left of the button.

RULES FOR USING BLINDS

1. Each round every player must get an opportunity for the button, and meet the total amount of the blind obligations. Either of the following methods of button and blind placement may be designated to do this:
 - (a) Moving button The button always moves forward to the next player and the blinds adjust accordingly. There may be more than one big blind.
 - (b) Dead button The big blind is posted by the player due for it, and the small blind and button are positioned accordingly, even if this means the small blind or the button is placed in front of an empty seat, giving the same player the privilege of last action on consecutive hands. [See Section 16 Explanations, discussion #1, for more information on this rule.]
2. A player who posts a blind has the option of raising the pot at the first turn to act. (This does not apply when a "dead blind" for the collection is used in a game and has been posted).
3. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is on the button.
4. A new player entering the game has the following options:
 - (a) Wait for the big blind.
 - (b) Post an amount equal to the big blind and immediately be dealt a hand. (In lowball, a new player must either post an amount double the big blind or wait for the big blind.)
5. A new player who elects to let the button go by once without posting is not treated as a player in the game who has missed a blind, and needs to post only the big blind when entering the game.
6. A person playing over is considered a new player, and must post the amount of the big blind or wait for the big blind.
7. A new player cannot be dealt in between the big blind and the button. Blinds may not be made up between the big blind and the button. You must wait until the button passes. [See Section 16 Explanations, discussion #3, for more information on this rule.]
8. When you post the big blind, it serves as your opening bet. When it is your next turn to act, you have the option to raise.
9. A player who misses any or all blinds can resume play by either posting all the blinds missed or waiting for the big blind. If you choose to post the total amount of the blinds, an amount up to the size of the minimum opening bet is live. The remainder is taken by the dealer to the center of the pot and is not part of your bet. When it is your next turn to act, you have the option to raise.
10. If a player who owes a blind (as a result of a missed blind) is dealt in without posting, the hand is dead if the player looks at it before putting up the required chips, and has not yet acted. If the player acts on the hand and plays it, putting chips into the pot before the error is discovered, the hand is live, and the player is required to post on the next deal.
11. A player who goes all-in and loses is obligated to make up the blinds if they are missed before a rebuy is made. (The person is not treated as a new player when reentering.)
12. These rules about blinds apply to a newly started game:
 - (a) Any player who drew for the button is considered active in the game and is required to make up any missed blinds.
 - (b) A new player will not be required to post a blind until the button has made one complete revolution around the table, provided a blind has not yet passed that seat.
 - (c) A player may change seats without penalty, provided a blind has not yet passed the new seat.
13. In all multiple-blind games, a player who changes seats will be dealt in on the first available hand in the same relative position. Example: If you move two active positions away from the big blind, you must wait two hands before being dealt in again. If you move closer to the big blind, you can be dealt in without any penalty. If you do not wish to wait and have not yet missed a blind, then you can post an amount equal to the big blind and receive a hand. (Exception: At lowball you must kill the pot, wait for the same relative position, or wait for the big blind; see Section 11 Lowball, rule #7.)
14. A player who "deals off" (by playing the button and then immediately getting up to change seats) can allow the blinds to pass the new seat one time and reenter the game behind the button without having to post a blind.
15. A live straddle bet" is not allowed at limit poker except in specified games.

Hold'em

In hold'em, players receive two downcards as their personal hand (holecards), after which there is a round of betting. Three boardcards are turned simultaneously (called the flop) and another round of betting occurs. The next two boardcards are turned one at a time, with a round of betting after each card. The boardcards are community cards, and a player may use any five-card combination from among the board and personal cards. A player may even use all of the boardcards and no personal cards to form a hand (play the board). A dealer button is used. The usual structure is to use two blinds, but it is possible to play the game with one blind, multiple blinds, an ante, or combination of blinds plus an ante.

RULES FOR HOLD'EM

These rules deal only with irregularities. See the previous chapter, Button and Blind Use, for rules on that subject.

1. If the first or second holecard dealt is exposed, a misdeal results. The dealer will retrieve the card, reshuffle, and recut the cards. If any other holecard is exposed due to a dealer error, the deal continues. The exposed card may not be kept. After completing the hand, the dealer replaces the card with the top card on the deck, and the exposed card is then used for the burncard. If more than one holecard is exposed, this is a misdeal and there must be a redeal.
2. If the flop contains too many cards, it must be redealt. (This applies even if it were possible to know which card was the extra one.)
3. If the flop needs to be redealt because the cards were prematurely flopped before the betting was complete, or the flop contained too many cards, the boardcards are mixed with the remainder of the deck. The burncard remains on the table. After shuffling, the dealer cuts the deck and deals a new flop without burning a card. [See Section 16 Explanations, discussion #2, for more information on this rule.]
4. If the dealer turns the fourth card on the board before the betting round is complete, the card is taken out of play for that round, even if subsequent players elect to fold. The betting is then completed. The dealer burns and turns what would have been the fifth card in the fourth card's place. After this round of betting, the dealer reshuffles the deck, including the card that was taken out of play, but not including the burncards or discards. The dealer then cuts the deck and turns the final card without burning a card. If the fifth card is turned up prematurely, the deck is reshuffled and dealt in the same manner. [See Section 16 Explanations, discussion #2, for more information on this rule.]
5. If the dealer mistakenly deals the first player an extra card (after all players have received their starting hands), the card will be returned to the deck and used for the burncard. If the dealer mistakenly deals more than one extra card, it is a misdeal.
6. You must declare that you are playing the board before you throw your cards away; otherwise you relinquish all claim to the pot.

Rules quoted from Robert's Rules of Poker (v4)