

The Numbers Booth

Starting hands, useful percentages and the kind of arithmetic normally remembered one card too late.

OPENING HANDS

TOP BILLING	AA, KK, QQ, AKs	Usually delighted
MAIN RING	JJ, TT, AQs, AKo, KQs	Often worth aggression
MIDWAY	99-22, AJs-ATs, KJs-QJs, JTs, T9s, 98s	Position helps
TRAPDOOR	Weak offsuit Aces, weak Kings, big gaps	Easy to dominate

s = suited. o = offsuit. Position lets you play more hands; early seats need stronger ones. These are useful buckets, not sacred instructions.

CLASSIC RACES

Match-up	Favourite	Underdog
Pocket pair vs 2 overcards	Pair ~55%	Overs ~45%
Higher pair vs lower pair	Higher ~81%	Lower ~19%
AK vs AQ (shared ace)	AK ~73%	AQ ~27%

Rounded heads-up equities. Suits, ranks and dead cards shift the exact result. About 55/45 is the useful lesson; the fortune teller refuses appeals.

POT ODDS WITHOUT A CRYSTAL BALL

Pot odds tell you the break-even chance needed to call. Divide the amount you must call by the total pot after your call.

$$\text{CALL} / \text{CURRENT POT} + \text{CALL} = \text{REQUIRED EQUITY}$$

Example: 100 is already in the middle and the call costs 25. Your price is $25 / (100 + 25) = 20\%$. A clean draw that wins more than 20% of the time has the raw odds to continue.

Pot is offering	Break-even chance
2 to 1	33.3%
3 to 1	25.0%
4 to 1	20.0%
5 to 1	16.7%

CLEAN OUTS ONLY

Count only clean outs that are likely to make the winning hand. Future betting, opponent ranges and dirty outs can make a mathematically tidy call less tidy in real life.

21 NOVEMBER 2026

ROYAL FLUSH RUMPÉ V



CARNIVAL OF CARDS

TEXAS HOLD 'EM

POCKET GUIDE TO THE MAIN RING

BEST FIVE OF SEVEN

CHECK / BET / CALL / RAISE / FOLD

KEEP YOUR TICKET CLOSE AND YOUR ALLEGATIONS CLOSER.
No refunds from the fortune teller.

Hand Strengths

#	Hand	What it means	Example
1	Royal Flush	A K Q J 10, same suit	AH KH QH JH 10H
2	Straight Flush	Five in sequence, same suit	9S 8S 7S 6S 5S
3	Four of a Kind	Four cards of one rank	QS QH QD QC
4	Full House	Three of a kind plus a pair	8S 8D 8C KH KC
5	Flush	Five cards of one suit	AD JD 8D 5D 2D
6	Straight	Five cards in sequence	8S 7H 6C 5D 4S
7	Three of a Kind	Three cards of one rank	7C 7H 7D
8	Two Pair	Two separate pairs	JS JD 4C 4H
9	One Pair	Two cards of one rank	AC AH
10	High Card	Nothing else: highest card wins	AS JD 8C 5H 2S

USEFUL NOTES

Use any combination of your two hole cards and the five community cards. You may use both, one or neither hole card.

An Ace can be high or low in a straight, but it cannot wrap around. A-2-3-4-5 works; Q-K-A-2-3 does not.

When players have the same hand category, compare the ranks that make the hand, then any kickers. For flush against flush, compare the highest card in each flush, then the next highest, until one player is higher. If all five cards match, split the pot.

If the best five cards are identical, split the pot. Suits do not break ties in Texas Hold 'Em - even at High Noon. Jamie and Violet's matching pocket Aces have already tested the paperwork.

POSITION: YOUR SEAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

EARLY	Least information. Start with stronger hands and expect more players to act behind you.
MIDDLE	More information is available, but several players may still act. Widen carefully.
LATE	See most opponents act first. More hands become playable when fewer surprises remain.

The button acts last after the flop and is the strongest position. The blinds act last pre-flop, then first on later streets.

READ THE BOARD

DRY - KS 7H 2C Few obvious draws.	CONNECTED - 9S 8H 7C Many straight draws.
PAIRED - QD QS 4C Trips, full houses and quads are possible.	FLUSH-HEAVY - AH 9H 3H A flush is already possible.

Stages of Play

Win the pot by making the best hand at showdown - or by convincing everybody else to fold first.

STAGES	ACTIONS
PRE-FLOP Two private cards, then betting	CHECK Pass without betting
FLOP Three community cards	BET Put chips in first
TURN The fourth community card	CALL Match the current bet
RIVER The fifth and usually least welcome card	RAISE Increase the current bet
SHOWDOWN Best five-card hand takes the pot	FOLD Abandon the hand with dignity

DRAWING ODDS

Outs	Typical draw	From flop: by river	After turn: one card
9	Four-flush	35.0%	19.6%
8	Open-ended straight	31.5%	17.4%
7/10	Flopped set to full house/quads**	33.4%	21.7%
6	Two overcards*	24.1%	13.0%
5	One pair to trips/two pair	20.3%	10.9%
4	Gutshot straight	16.5%	8.7%

*Two overcards are only six clean outs when pairing one is genuinely likely to win.

**A flopped set has seven turn outs, then ten river outs after a blank turn. The one-card figure assumes the turn missed.

RULE OF 4	After the flop, outs x 4 approximates your chance to hit by the river.
RULE OF 2	With one card to come, outs x 2 approximates your chance on the next card.

Compare your draw percentage with the pot-odds percentage. If the chance to improve is higher than the price of calling, the raw maths supports a call. Poker will still find a way to be rude about it.

BEFORE YOU ACT

DECISION CHECKLIST	BET WITH A REASON
1. What is my best five-card hand now? 2. What stronger hands fit this board? 3. Which draws could change the winner? 4. What must I call, and what could I win? 5. What does the opponent's action suggest?	VALUE Worse hands can call. BLUFF Better hands can fold. DENY Draws must pay to see another card. If none apply, checking may be best.