

Poker Razz | Learn the Rules for Razz Poker

Razz Poker Tips and Rules

Razz is a lowball variation of the popular poker game Seven Card Stud. Because players in Razz are only looking to make low hands, it is also sometimes referred to as Stud Low. Like Omaha poker, Razz is known for often producing large pots and big swings, making it an entertaining and captivating poker game.

The objective of Razz is to make the lowest ranking five card poker hand, using any five cards of the seven that are ultimately dealt to you. The high hands for games such as Texas Hold'em are not applicable. To learn how poker hands are ranked, you should first read the poker hand rankings.

Unlike split pot games like Omaha Hi/Lo and Stud Eight or Better, a player's hand does not have to qualify to make a low. It does not matter how high any of your cards rank - as long as your hand is lower than your opponents' hands, you will win the pot.

When making a low hand in Razz, straights and flushes are ignored but pairs will certainly count against you. The best hand possible in Razz is A, 2, 3, 4, 5 because these are the lowest cards possible and the straight is ignored. This hand is called a 'wheel'.

Razz Betting Instructions

Like other Stud games, there will typically be eight players at a full Razz table. Razz is usually played as a limit game, which means the bets are structured in predetermined amounts. There are five rounds of betting, and the betting limits will double after the first two rounds, and remain higher for the last three betting rounds.

For instance, if you are playing in a \$2/\$4 Razz game, the small bet would be \$2 and the big bet would be \$4. You must bet and raise in increments of \$2 (small bets) for the first two betting rounds of the hand, and then double your bets and raises to \$4 (big bets) for the last three rounds.

Razz Antes

If you want to be dealt into a hand of Razz, you must first post an ante. All players who wish to take part in the hand are required to post antes before the cards can be dealt. An ante is a small predetermined amount that serves to seed the pot.

Razz 3rd Street Action

Once the antes have been posted and collected, every player is dealt three cards; two will be face down and private from all other players (called hole cards or down cards) and one will be face up for all other players to view (called an up card or door card). These first three cards are called Third Street.

The player showing the up card of the highest rank will be assigned the bring-in, which means they must start the action by putting in a specific amount (which depends on the stakes of the game). The bring-in player does not have the option to fold and must post the bring-in amount.

If there are two or more players at the table whose up cards tie for the highest rank, the bring-in will be assigned to the player whose card has the highest ranking suit. Suits are ranked from lowest to highest in alphabetical order, with clubs being the lowest, then diamonds, followed by hearts, and spades being the highest.

If the player who is showing the highest ranking up card was all in for their ante and cannot afford to post the bring-in, the bring-in is then assigned to the player seated to their immediate left, no matter what up card they are showing.

The action begins with the player to the immediate left of the bring-in player. This player has the option to call the bring-in amount, increase the amount of the bring-in to a full sized bet - which is called 'completing the bring-in', or fold their hand. Checking is not an option on Third Street because every player must at least call the bring-in amount to remain active in the hand.

Once any player completes the bring-in, their opponents must decide to call that amount, raise the amount of the specified small bet (e.g. \$2 in a \$2/\$4 game), or forfeit their hand by folding. The action continues clockwise around the table until all players have an opportunity to act.

Limit poker games are typically 'capped' at a certain point on each street, which means there are only a certain number of bets allowed. At PokerStars, a pot is capped once the fourth bet has been made. For example, if one player bets and there are three more raises, the pot is now capped and no more raises are allowed on that street.

Razz 4th Street Action

After the third street round of betting is over, one additional up card called Fourth Street is dealt to all remaining players. Each active player will now hold two face down hole cards and two exposed up cards.

Unlike Third Street, the Fourth Street action begins with the player whose exposed up cards create the best two-card poker hand, remembering that the best hands in Razz are low and not high. Therefore, if one player showed 2-4 and another player showed 7-7, the player with the 2-4 would start the action.

The player beginning the Fourth Street action may either check (pass on the action) or make a small bet (e.g. \$2 in a \$2/\$4 game). The action then continues around the table clockwise and every player may check (if facing no bet), or bet or raise in small bet increments. Once all players have acted, Fourth Street is complete.

Razz 5th Street Action

Another up card, called Fifth Street, is now dealt to every active player remaining in the hand. All players now hold two face down hole cards and three exposed up cards.

Again, the action begins with the player holding the best exposed low hand and another round of betting ensues. This time, the bets are doubled to big bets (e.g. \$4 in a \$2/\$4 game) and all bets and raises must be made in these larger increments for the remainder of the hand.

Razz 6th Street Action

The last up card, called Sixth Street, is now received by all remaining players. They each now hold two down cards and four exposed up cards. Once again, the player holding the lowest ranking exposed hand will act first and the betting continues clockwise in big bet increments.

Razz 7th Street Action

Finally, the last card of the hand is dealt face down to each active player. This card is called Seventh Street, and often referred to as The River. Each player now holds three face down hole cards and four exposed up cards. Seventh Street is their last chance to bet and they will not receive any more cards in the hand.

The player whose exposed cards are lowest will start the action. The betting is continued clockwise and all bets and raises must again be made in big bet increments.

Because there are only 52 cards in a deck, there are rare occasions when Seventh Street cannot be dealt. In these instances, a single card is dealt and is shared by all players to complete their hands.

Razz Showdowns

Once the final betting round is over, a winner will be determined by comparing the players' hands. This comparison is called a Showdown. The pot will be awarded to the player who holds the lowest five card poker hand, or divided ('chopped') between two or more players if they show identical winning hands.

Play Razz Online

Learning to play Razz is straightforward, especially if you are already familiar with other Stud variations. Now you can test your skills with any of the free and real money poker games offered on PokerStars daily. Download the free PokerStars software and start playing Razz.