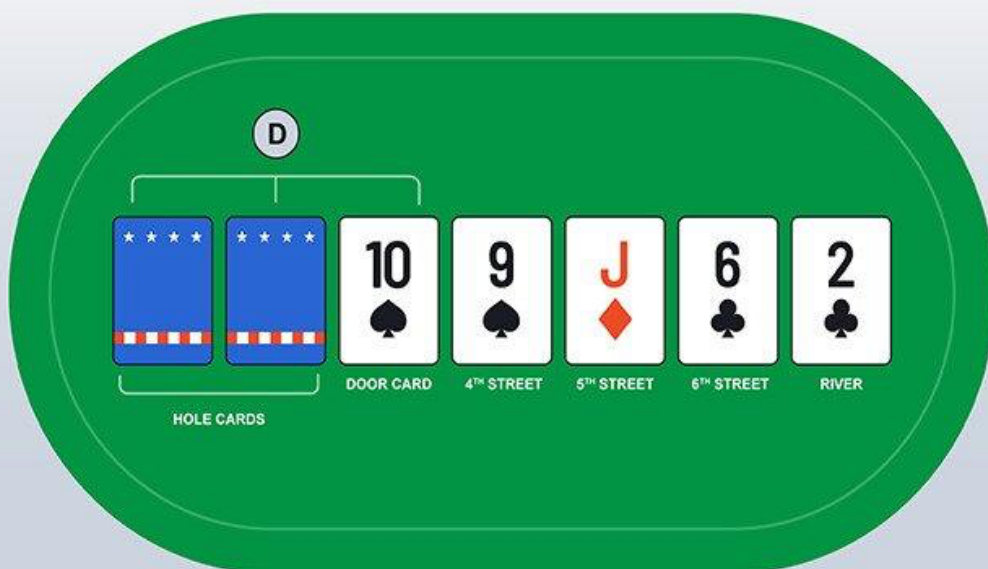




7-Card Stud — Simple Explanation

The objective

Make the **best five-card poker hand** from the **seven cards** you receive.



How the deal works

Each player starts with **3 cards**:

- **2 cards face down** — only you can see them
- **1 card face up** — everyone can see it

Then there is a betting round.

After that, you receive:

4th Street: One card face up → betting

5th Street: One card face up → betting

6th Street: One card face up → betting

7th Street: One card face down → final betting

So you finish with:

3 face-down cards + 4 face-up cards = 7 cards

You use the **best 5 of those 7** to determine the winner.

💰 How a tournament differs from a cash game

In a **tournament**, you don't buy chips whenever you want. You start with a set number of tournament chips.

For example:

Starting stack: 10,000 chips

The blinds/antes increase as the tournament progresses.

If you lose all your chips, **you're eliminated**.

The last player remaining wins, with prizes generally awarded to the top finishers.

🎯 The most important difference from Texas Hold'em

In Hold'em, you can see your opponents' community cards.

In Stud, **your opponents' face-up cards are extremely important**.

For example:

You have:

A♠ A♥ 7♣

An opponent has:

K♦ 9♣ 2♠

You have a pair of aces, while your opponent has three unrelated cards.

That's generally a strong start for you.

But suppose another opponent has:

A♣ K♣ Q♣

That's potentially dangerous because they have three cards toward a strong hand, particularly a flush or straight.

★ Simple Starting-Hand Cheat Sheet

If you're new to 7-Card Stud tournaments, this is a good rule of thumb.

● Play aggressively

Three of a kind

- A-A-A
- K-K-K
- etc.

High pairs

- A-A-x
- K-K-x
- Q-Q-x

Three cards to a flush

- Especially three cards of the same suit with high cards.

Three cards to a straight

- Particularly connected high cards such as:

- 10-J-Q
- 9-10-J
- 8-9-10

🟡 Play cautiously

Medium pairs

- 10-10-x
- 9-9-x
- 8-8-x

Three connected cards

- 7-8-9
- 6-7-8

These can become good hands, but you need favorable cards on later streets.

🔴 Usually fold

- Three completely unrelated low cards
- Small pair with poor side card
- Hands where the cards you need are already showing in opponents' hands

👁️ One HUGE Stud Poker Rule

Pay attention to the cards that are showing.

Suppose you're trying to make a flush in hearts.

You have:

♥A ♥8 ♥4

But you see several opponents showing:

♥K ♥Q ♥J ♥10

That's bad news.

Many of the hearts you need are already in opponents' hands.

This is called **"dead cards."**

In Stud, keeping track of dead cards can make a **very big difference.**

Tournament Strategy

Because this is a tournament, don't play every hand just because you have chips.

Early tournament

Play relatively conservative.

Look for:

- Big pairs
- Three-card flush possibilities
- Three-card straight possibilities
- Three of a kind

Middle tournament

As antes become larger, stealing pots becomes more important.

Pay attention to:

- Who is playing too many hands
- Who is folding frequently
- Which players have short stacks

Late tournament

Stack size becomes extremely important.

If you're short-stacked, you generally need to find good opportunities rather than slowly bleeding chips away through antes.

If you're one of the big stacks, you can put pressure on players who are trying to survive.

The easiest way to remember 7-Card Stud

Think:

3 → 4 → 5 → 6 → 7 You start with **3 cards**.

Then you receive one card at a time:

3 cards → bet

4 cards → bet

5 cards → bet

6 cards → bet
7 cards → final bet

Then: **Best 5 cards win.**

7-Card Stud Tournament Cheat Sheet

1. Your 3-card starting hand

When you receive your first three cards, use this rule:

Your starting cards	What to do
Three of a kind	 RAISE
High pair (A-A, K-K, Q-Q)	 RAISE
Medium pair (J-J, 10-10, 9-9)	 RAISE/CALL
Small pair (8-8 or lower)	 CALL cautiously
3 cards to a flush	 CALL/RAISE if cards are reasonably high
3 connected cards (8-9-10, 9-10-J, etc.)	 CALL
3 unrelated cards	 FOLD

Example

A♠ A♦ 7♣ →  Excellent — play aggressively.

K♥ Q♥ J♥ →  Excellent — three cards toward a high flush/straight.

8♣ 4♦ 2♠ →  Usually fold.

2. Watch your opponents' cards

This is probably the **#1 skill** in 7-Card Stud.

Suppose you have:

♥A ♥9 ♥4

You are hoping to make a heart flush.

But you can see opponents holding:

♥K, ♥Q, ♥J, ♥10

That's terrible for you because many of the hearts you need are already gone.

Simple rule:

If the cards you need are showing in other players' hands → FOLD more often.

If the cards you need are **not showing**, your hand is more attractive.

3. Fourth Street

You now have four cards:

2 down + 2 up

Ask yourself:

Did I improve?

A-A-7 → A-A-7-2

Still a pair of aces →  Keep playing.

8-9-10 → J

Now you have **8-9-10-J** →  Very promising.

♥A ♥9 ♥4 → ♥K

Now you have four hearts →  **Very strong draw.**

Did I get worse?

If you started with:

8♠ 8♦ 4♣

and your next card is:

K♥

That's still a pair of 8s. If opponents are showing stronger hands, you should be willing to fold.

4. Fifth Street — IMPORTANT

By the fifth card, you should have a pretty good idea whether you're going anywhere.

 **Strong**

- Three of a kind
- High two pair

- High pair with a strong draw
- Four cards to a flush
- Four cards to a straight

Be careful

- One small pair
- Weak straight draw
- Weak flush draw

Usually fold

- Nothing
- Weak pair against strong opponents
- Your draw has several **dead cards**

5. Sixth Street

You now have **six cards**.

At this point, don't chase hopeless hands.

If you have:

A♠ A♦ 7♣ 2♥ 9♣ K♦

You still have only a pair of aces.

That's a good pair, but if an opponent is showing:

9♥ 9♦ 9♠ K♣ Q♣

you're probably in serious trouble.

Simple rule:

If your opponent's board looks much stronger than yours, get out.

6. Seventh Street

Your final card is face down.

You now have seven cards.

Choose the **best five-card poker hand** you can make.

Poker hand rankings:

1. 🏆 **Royal Flush**
2. **Straight Flush**
3. **Four of a Kind**
4. **Full House**
5. **Flush**
6. **Straight**
7. **Three of a Kind**
8. **Two Pair**
9. **One Pair**
10. **High Card**

💰 **Tournament Betting Cheat Sheet**

This is especially useful if you're playing your first tournament.

You have a strong hand

Raise.

Don't be afraid to bet your good hands.

You have a good draw

Call if the price is reasonable.

Raise if you have a strong draw plus additional strength.

You have a weak hand

Fold.

Don't keep putting chips into a hand simply because you've already invested chips.

🚫 **The "Don't Chase" Rule**

This is one of the biggest mistakes new Stud players make.

You have:

♥A ♥8 ♥3

You need another heart or two to make your flush.

But three opponents are showing several hearts.

Don't automatically chase the flush.

The cards you need may already be in their hands.

★ My 10 Simple Rules for 7-Card Stud

If you remember nothing else, remember these:

1. Start with good three-card hands.
2. Play big pairs aggressively.
3. Three of a kind is a monster — bet it.
4. Three cards to a flush can be very good.
5. Connected cards can make strong straight draws.
6. WATCH EVERYONE'S UP CARDS.
7. Remember the cards that are "dead."
8. Don't chase a draw when too many needed cards are showing.
9. As the tournament progresses, protect your chips.
10. **Fold when you're probably beat.** Saving chips is just as important as winning them.

🎯 The easiest beginner strategy

If you're playing your **first 7-Card Stud tournament**, I'd suggest this:

Play fewer hands, but play your good hands aggressively.

Don't try to win every pot. Let the other players make the mistakes.

Here is a **one-page version** you can keep beside you while playing.

7-Card Stud Tournament — Quick Cheat Sheet

7-CARD STUD TOURNAMENT

QUICK PLAYING CHEAT SHEET

STARTING HAND — YOUR FIRST 3 CARDS

Hand	Beginner Action
3 of a kind	● RAISE
A-A-x	● RAISE
K-K-x / Q-Q-x	● RAISE
J-J-x / 10-10-x	● RAISE or CALL
9-9-x / 8-8-x	● CALL if cards are favorable
3 cards same suit	● PLAY if cards are fairly high
3 connected cards	● PLAY if cards are reasonably high
3 unrelated low cards	● FOLD

★ BEST STARTING HANDS

● PLAY AGGRESSIVELY

A-A-x

Example: A♠ A♥ 7♣

K-K-x / Q-Q-x

Three of a kind

Example: 8♠ 8♥ 8♦

Three high cards of the same suit

Example: A♥ J♥ 8♥

● PLAY WITH CAUTION

Medium/small pairs

Three cards toward a straight

Example: 8-9-10

Three cards toward a flush

The important question is:

"Are the cards I need still available?"

If several of your needed cards are showing in opponents' hands, your draw becomes much weaker.

WATCH THE UP CARDS!

This is the most important Stud skill.

Example:

You have:

♥A ♥9 ♥4

You want a heart flush.

But opponents are showing:

♥K ♥Q ♥J ♥10

BAD DRAW

Many of the cards you need are already gone.

Remember:

Cards showing in opponents' hands are "dead" cards.

4TH STREET

You now have **4 cards**.

Continue if:

- You have a strong pair
- You improved to trips
- You have 4 cards toward a flush
- You have 4 cards toward a straight
- Your board looks stronger than your opponents'

🔴 Consider folding if:

- You have not improved
 - Your opponent has clearly improved
 - The cards you need are showing elsewhere
-

5TH STREET

🔴 THIS IS THE BIG DECISION POINT

You now have **5 cards**.

🟢 BET/RAISE

- Three of a kind
- Strong two pair
- Strong pair with a good draw
- Four-card flush draw
- Four-card straight draw with good outs

🟡 CALL

- Reasonable pair
- Reasonable draw
- You're getting a good price

🔴 FOLD

- Weak pair
 - No pair
 - Bad draw
 - Too many needed cards are dead
-

6TH STREET

You have **6 cards**.

Ask:

"If I don't improve on 7th Street, am I probably losing?"

If YES → 🟡/🔴 FOLD

If NO → 🟢 CONTINUE

Don't keep investing chips simply because you've already put chips into the pot.

7TH STREET

Your final card is face down.

You now have **7 cards**.

Make your best **5-card poker hand**.

HAND RANKINGS

1. Royal Flush
2. Straight Flush
3. Four of a Kind
4. Full House
5. Flush
6. Straight
7. Three of a Kind
8. Two Pair
9. One Pair
10. High Card

💰 TOURNAMENT RULES

Early Tournament

Be selective.

Don't play too many hands.

Middle Tournament

Antes become important.

Look for opportunities to win pots when opponents show weakness.

Late Tournament

Stack size matters.

- Short stack → look for good opportunities before the antes eat you up.
- Big stack → put pressure on players who are trying to survive.
- Medium stack → avoid unnecessary large confrontations.

5 BEGINNER MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Playing too many starting hands
 2. Ignoring opponents' up cards
 3. Chasing a flush when too many cards are dead
 4. Continuing with a hand simply because you've already invested chips
 5. Being afraid to fold
-

SIMPLE FORMULA

GOOD START + GOOD UP CARDS

→ **PLAY**

GOOD START + BAD LATER CARDS

→ **SLOW DOWN**

BAD START

→ **FOLD**

STRONG HAND

→ **BET/RAISE**

WEAK HAND + STRONG OPPONENT

→ **FOLD**

REMEMBER:

PLAY FEWER HANDS.

WATCH EVERYONE'S UP CARDS.

BET YOUR GOOD HANDS.

DON'T CHASE BAD DRAWS.

SAVE YOUR CHIPS FOR GOOD OPPORTUNITIES.

7-Card Stud Tournament — Street-by-Street Betting Guide

FIRST — REMEMBER THE DEAL

3rd Street: 2 cards DOWN + 1 card UP → BET

4th Street: 1 card UP → BET

5th Street: 1 card UP → BET

6th Street: 1 card UP → BET

7th Street: 1 card DOWN → FINAL BET

You finish with **7 cards** and use your best **5 cards**.

3RD STREET — YOUR FIRST DECISION

You receive:

A♠ A♥ 7♣

 **RAISE**

A pair of aces is a very strong starting hand.

Another example:

K♠ Q♠ J♠

 **RAISE/CALL**

You have three high cards of the same suit and significant straight/flush potential.

Example:

8♠ 8♦ 2♣

 **CALL**

A pair of 8s can win, but don't get carried away.

Example:

9♣ 5♦ 2♠

 **FOLD**

Nothing much going for you.

4TH STREET — DID YOU IMPROVE?

You now receive another face-up card.

Example:

You started:

A♠ A♥ 7♣

Fourth card:

A♦

You now have:

A♠ A♥ A♦ 7♣

 **RAISE**

You have three aces — a monster.

Example:

You started:

♥A ♥9 ♥4

Fourth card:

♥K

You now have four hearts.

 **BET/CALL**

You have a very strong flush draw.

Example:

You started:

8♠ 9♥ 10♣

Fourth card:

J♦

You now have: **8-9-10-J**

 **CONTINUE**

You have a strong straight draw.

Example:

You started:

8♠ 8♦ 2♣

Fourth card:

K♥

You still have only a pair of 8s.

 **CALL or FOLD**

Look at what your opponents are showing.

5TH STREET — THE BIG DECISION

This is where you should become much more selective.

 **BET/RAISE**

If you have:

- Three of a kind
 - Two pair
 - A strong pair
 - A strong flush/straight draw
-

Example:

Your cards:

A♠ A♥ 7♣ A♦ 2♠

 BET/RAISE

Three aces.

Example:

Your cards:

♥A ♥9 ♥4 ♥K ♥2

You have five hearts.

 BET/RAISE

You have a made flush.

Example:

Your cards:

8♣ 9♦ 10♠ J♥ Q♣

You have five cards toward a straight.

 BET/RAISE

You have a made straight.

6TH STREET — PROTECT YOUR STACK

You now have six cards.

At this point ask:

"What do I realistically expect to win with?"

If the answer is **"not much"**, fold.

Example:

Your board shows:

A♠ — 7♣ — 2♥ — 9♦ — K♣

Your hidden cards include another ace.

You have a pair of aces.

Opponent shows:

K♥ — K♦ — 8♣ — 4♠ — 3♥

They have a pair of kings showing.

 **BE CAREFUL**

Your pair of aces may still be ahead, but watch how the betting develops.

7TH STREET — FINAL CARD

Your seventh card is face down.

You now have seven cards.

Strong hand?

 **BET/RAISE**

Reasonable hand?

 **CHECK/CALL** if possible.

Weak hand?

 **CHECK/FOLD**

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING: READ THE BOARD

Suppose you have:

A♠ A♥ 7♣

And an opponent is showing:

K♠ K♦ 9♣ 4♥

They have two kings showing.

You have two aces.

You are probably ahead.

Don't be afraid to bet.

Now suppose you have:

9♠ 9♥ 4♣

And an opponent is showing:

K♠ K♥ 7♦ 2♣

 **Be careful.**

Your pair of 9s is probably behind their pair of kings.

SIMPLE BETTING RULE

Use this at the table:

 **STRONGER THAN THEIR BOARD**

BET/RAISE

 **ABOUT THE SAME**

CALL/CHECK

 **THEIR BOARD LOOKS MUCH STRONGER**

FOLD

TOURNAMENT STACK RULE

Your chips become more valuable as the tournament progresses.

You have a BIG stack:

You can apply pressure.

You have a MEDIUM stack:

Avoid unnecessary big pots.

You have a SHORT stack:

Look for a good hand and an opportunity to double up.

VERY SHORT STACK:

Don't wait forever for aces. Antes can rapidly reduce your stack.

★ THE "5-SECOND" DECISION

Before calling a bet, ask yourself these 5 questions:

- 1. What is my best hand right now?**
- 2. What hand does my opponent probably have?**
- 3. What cards do I need to improve?**
- 4. Are those cards already showing?**
- 5. Is this bet worth risking my tournament chips?**

If you can't answer #5 confidently:

FOLD.

🏆 BEGINNER'S WINNING APPROACH

3rd Street

Start with good cards.



4th Street

Did I improve?



5th Street

Decide whether I'm really in the hand.



6th Street

Don't chase hopeless hands.



7th Street

Make your best 5-card hand and value-bet strong hands.

ONE SENTENCE TO REMEMBER

In 7-Card Stud, don't just play your cards — play the cards you can see in everyone else's hands.