
Guide to Pernese Dragon Poker

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Overview

The following is a guide to the Pernese game of dragon poker. I often RP a dragon poker game on PernMUSH (where each player just 'makes up' their hand) and I thought a guide would be useful so that others could join in. I don't make any guarantee about the accuracy of this information as Anne McCaffrey might see it. I'm just relaying how I play the game.



The Deck

A dragon poker deck consists of three suits of seventeen cards each. In addition, there are three 'wild' cards which may be added. Each suit has four face cards (which I'll refer to as F1, F2, F3, and F4) and thirteen numerical cards labeled from Ace to 13.



The Suits

There are three suits in dragon poker, representing the three main areas of Pern: Holds, Crafts, and Weyrs. The suits are Sheaves (Hold), Hammers (Craft), and Dragons (Weyr). The ace of each suit is represented by a dragon. For Dragons, the ace is a gold dragon, Sheaves is a bronze, and Hammers is a brown.



The Face Cards

The face cards of each suit have a special drawing to signify their importance. F1 of Holds is the Lord Holder. F2 of Holds is the Lady Holder. Then there's F3 and F4, which are the Steward and holder respectively. For the Hammers, the face cards are CraftMaster, journeyman, apprentice, and student. And for Dragons, they are Weyrwoman, Weyrleader, WingSecond, and weyrling.



Wild Cards

The wild cards are called Harpers, of which none, one, two or all three can be used in the game.

Special Names for Cards

Some of the cards have special names. The thirteen of Hammers (Crafts) is the Baker's card because of the baker's dozen. The five of Dragons is known as the Clutch, for the five colors of dragonkind. A hand containing three elevens is considered to be bad luck, though the exact reason for this, the legends do not say.



The Hands

As in Terran poker, the purpose of dragon poker is to form certain hands and place bets on whether you have the hand with the most strength (or to bluff with a weak hand in the hopes that the others will fold). The following are valid hands, with their Pernese and Terran names, and are listed from weakest to most strong (or most common to most rare):

- **Impression** (One Pair) - Two cards with the same value (ex. two F2s or two fives or an eight and a Harper)
- **Hatching** (Two Pair) - Two sets of two cards that have the same value
- **Conclave** (Three of a Kind) - Three cards with the same value (ex. three sixes or two aces and a Harper)
- **Wedding** (Straight) - Five cards which can be a mixture of suits but which are in numerical order without skipping (ex. the three, four, five, six, and seven of any mixture of suits)
- **Gather** (Flush) - Five cards of a single suit which can be in any numerical order (ex. the three, eight, and eleven of Sheaves, plus the holder and Lady Holder)
- **Full Hold** (Full House) - It is a Conclave and an Impression (i.e. a three of a kind and a pair)
- **High Conclave** (Four of a Kind) - Four cards with the same value. Since in Pernese dragon poker there are only three suits, this requires at least one Harper
- **Wedding Gather** (Straight Flush) - Five cards of the same suit and which are also in numerical order (ex. the ten, eleven, and twelve of Hammers, the Baker's card, and the student)
- **Master Conclave** (Five of a Kind) - Five cards of the same value. Since in Pernese dragon poker there are only three suits, this requires at least two Harpers



The Games

The most common dragon poker games to play are five card draw and seven card stud. In five card draw you ante, are dealt five cards, bet, discard and replace cards, and bet again. With seven card stud, there's more betting phases. You ante and then are dealt three cards (two face down, one face up). Then you bet. Another card is dealt face up and you bet again. A third card is dealt face up and betting occurs again. A fourth card is also dealt face up followed by another betting round. The last card is dealt face down, the final round of betting occurs, and then the cards are shown.



The End

That ends the general overview of Pernese dragon poker. Things get easier after you RP a couple of hands.

If you have any comments about this text, please e-mail them to: donethat@primenet.com

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