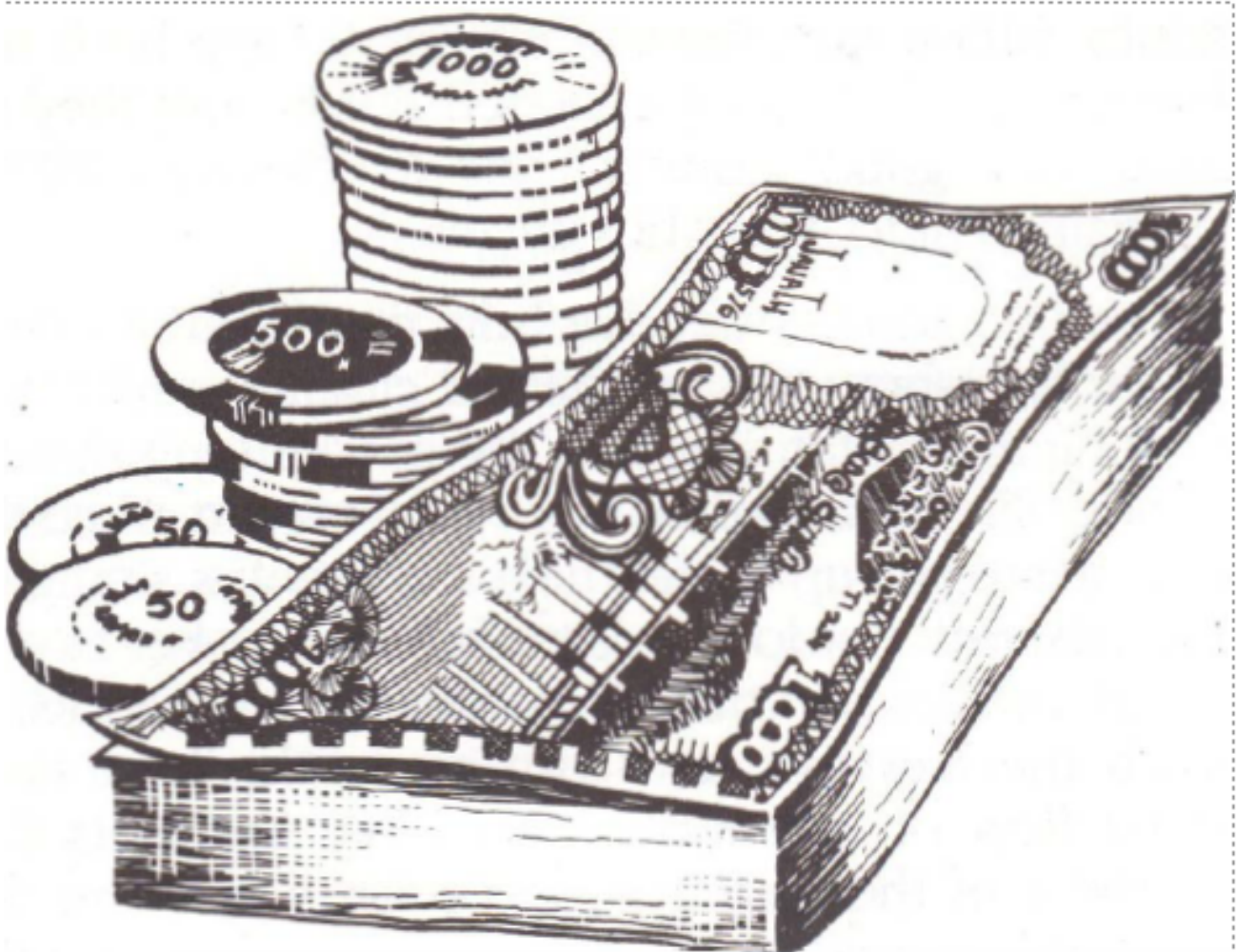


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Mention the word “Poker” in America and it conjures up images of card games played in smoke-filled saloons in the Wild West, or in modern-day elegant card rooms which continue in the tradition of the Old West to perpetuate Poker as one of the all-time most popular card games in the United States. Elsewhere, however, Poker has yet to achieve such prominence as in America; but at last Poker is making an impact on the international gambling scene. More and more casinos and clubs around the world are including Poker in their repertoire of card games, and the popularity of Poker has consequently become highly contagious—even here in Colombo. So what is “Poker”? At first sight, Poker seems a deceptively simple game, the rules and concepts of which anyone can pick up quickly. There are practically unlimited forms of Poker but, common to all, five cards are used to determine the winner. Although some versions six or seven cards are dealt, it is still the best five-card combination that

decides who wins the pot (the total amount of money bet during the game), and the ranking of cards is always the same:

Straight Flush - five consecutive cards in the same suit (e.g. 56789 of hearts). An ace, king, queen, jack and straight flush is known as a Royal Flush.

Four of a Kind - four cards of the same rank (e.g. four nines) and an odd card.

Full House - three cards of one rank and two of another (e.g. three kings and two queens).

Flush - five cards of same suit (e.g. five spades). Straight - five consecutive cards of different suits (e.g. 34567 of a combination of suits).

Three of a Kind - three cards of same rank and two unmatched cards ( e.g. three fives plus a three and a four).

Two Pair - two cards of one rank and two cards of another rank in addition to an odd card ( e.g. two threes, two fives plus another different card).

One Pair - two cards of same rank and three unmatched cards ( e.g. two sevens plus three other odd cards).

No Pair - no two cards of same rank.

Out of the myriad varieties of Poker, the most popular games played today are Stud, Draw, and Hold 'Em.. In turn, each of these has its own variations, the most common modifications being "high" and "low" - which simply means that the winning hand is either the highest or the lowest combination. One cannot help but wonder what it is about Poker that makes people so addicted to it that they spend days on end glued to their seats in marathon sessions of play. The answer for many is money - the potential for profits - particularly for the professional player. For others Poker offers endless entertainment as well as a chance to win and win big if you play your cards right. But whether you are a professional Poker player, a novice or a newcomer to the game, the surest method to enhance your Poker skill and strategy is by soaking up experience through playing and watching others play. And to do that you need to find a good game. In Colombo there is only one casino which organizes regularly scheduled Poker tournaments: The Palm Beach Club, where every Saturday night at 8.30 p.m. you can experience the entertainment, excitement and fun of joining in their tournament in which you could win substantial amounts of guaranteed prize money by placing among the top eight players; and you can enjoy a delicious buffet dinner during the break period. Complimentary drinks and snacks are also served throughout the tournament.

Participating in a tournament offers not only a pleasant atmosphere in which to play against a variety of people but can also give you invaluable exposure to the intricacies of the game. Tournaments are where and how one learns to win. Additionally, during the week Poker is a regular feature at the Palm Beach where each player in turn chooses the game to be played for that round. A minimum of one hour's play also entitles you to ten chances in the nightly Lotto Draws - whether you're winning or not or just breaking even. No matter how much you read about Poker, you simply cannot learn it all from a book alone. You must practise, and you can only do that by playing. So join in the action - there are pots of money to be won playing Poker!