Pool Rummy 101 vs 201 in Numbers: How Long a Pool Lasts

> **OVERVIEW**
>
> Complete Pool 101 and 201 games between computer players: hands per pool, when the first player goes out, how many drops are taken and the winning score.

How long does a game of Pool Rummy last, and how different are 101 and 201 in practice? We played 2,000 two-player pools of each kind and 600 six-player pools of each, from the first deal until one player was left. Every seat was played by the computer player from our free Pool Rummy 101 and Pool Rummy 201 games, under the normal rules, drops included.

Key findings

- A two-player Pool 101 lasted a median of 4 hands . A two-player Pool 201 lasted 9 .
- At six-player tables, Pool 101 took a median of 5 hands and Pool 201 8 . The first player was out after a median of 2 hands in 101 and 4 in 201.
- The winner rarely escaped untouched: their median final score was 38 in two-player 101 and 109 in two-player 201.
- Drops were a normal part of play: on average 1.3 first drops per six-player pool of 101 and 2.3 per pool of 201. Our computer players took no middle drops.

How many hands a pool lasts

With two players, Pool 201 lasted about twice as long as Pool 101: a median of 9 hands against 4. In a two-player pool the first elimination ends the game, so the two rows match.

With six players the first player went out very early, after a median of only 2 hands in 101. Five players lose every hand, and one full count of 80 plus one more losing hand is enough to pass 101. After that the table thins out quickly, so a six-player pool of 101 was barely longer than a two-player one.

Drops and scores

A drop costs 20 (first) or 40 (middle) in Pool 101, and 25 or 50 in Pool 201. Relative to the limit, drops are cheaper in 201: from zero you can take five first drops in 101 (100 points) but eight in 201 (200 points). Pool 201 also absorbs two full 80-point counts with room to spare, where 101 absorbs only one. How many drops you can afford at each score is set out in our Pool Rummy strategy guide .

What this means for your game

- Pool 101 leaves little room. At a full table a single 80 takes most of your budget, so the 20-point first drop is your main defence. Use it on hands with no pure sequence and no joker.

- Pool 201 rewards patience. You can survive a full count and still play normally, and the pool lasts long enough for a slow start to recover.
- Expect to win with a score. The winner's median final total was 71 in six-player 101 and 162 in six-player 201. Few players get through a pool without a big hand against them.
- Decide at the start of the hand. Our computer players took every drop before drawing and no middle drops at all; the cheaper first drop did all the work.

Method

- Rules: our Pool Rummy rules: 13 cards, two decks with two printed jokers, 80-point cap per hand, elimination on reaching 101 (or 201), drops at 20/40 (101) or 25/50 (201). No rejoining after elimination.
- Players: every seat was played by our "Hard" computer player. It drops when its hand is poor, but never takes a drop that would eliminate it.
- Sample: 2,000 pools each of 101 and 201 with two players, and 600 each with six players. All pools finished.
- Randomness: every pool was shuffled from a fixed seed (1403 plus the format, table size and pool number), so the run can be repeated exactly. We keep the scripts and raw results with the site's source.

Limitations. Computer players are steadier than people: they make no grouping mistakes and every declaration they make is valid. They also never took a middle drop. Real pools, with wrong shows and players rejoining, tend to run longer. The six-player figures come from fewer pools, so treat their medians as accurate to about one hand.

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In our simulations a two-player Pool 101 lasted a median of 4 hands and a Pool 201 9. With six players, 101 took 5 and 201 took 8.

With two players, nearly: a median of 9 hands against 4. With six players, 201 took a median of 8 hands and 101 took 5.

It depends on your score. Each first drop costs 20 and you are out at 101, so from zero you could drop five times and still be in, but only if you never lose a hand. Our Pool Rummy strategy guide has the full table.

Yes. Our computer players made 0 wrong shows in the two-player 101 pools, because they only declare a hand the checker has confirmed.

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