



TOURNAMENT GUIDELINES

Including general guidelines for a poker tournament, house rules, and dealer errors.

Credits

Much of the information in this document was lifted and paraphrased from the following websites:

DrNeau Tournament Manager software, drneau.com

Mike Caro University of Poker

Robert's Rules of Poker

Hold'em Forum – Running a Home Poker Tournament

Last revision February 15, 2010

Starting the Tournament

Re-buys

If re-buys are allowed, a player may not request a re-buy during the course of a hand. A player can only play with the money that was on the table at the beginning of the hand.

Payouts

The approximate payout structure shall be clearly indicated before the beginning of the tournament. The final payout structure may be modified due to re-buys or late players increasing the pot.

Table and Seat Assignment

Table and seat assignments will be decided randomly, either by draw of cards or tournament management software.

Dealer Button Assignment

Player assigned to seat number one by random seating assignment shall be given the button for the first hand.

Tournament Progression

Switching Tables

As players are eliminated, tables may become imbalanced. If this happens, a player from a larger table will be shifted to a smaller table. Ideally, the shifted player should sit in the same position as his old table relative to the button.

Example: Shift the player just to the right of the button so that at the new table he is just to the right of the button.

Combining Tables

When two or more tables are combined into one, the seat selection and button placement will proceed as if it were a new game.

Changing Seats at the Same Table

Players may not change seats at the same table.

Chips

The lowest denomination of chip in play will be removed from the tournament when it is no longer needed in the blind structure. All lower-denomination chips that are of sufficient quantity for a new chip will be changed up directly. The method for removal of odd chips is to deal one card to a player for each odd chip possessed. Cards are dealt clockwise starting with the 1-seat, with each player receiving all cards before any cards are dealt to the next player. The player with the highest card remaining will receive a new chip.

Example: Steve has 41 \$1 chips and Jeff has 39 \$1 chips. Steve trades in 40 of his \$1 chips for 8 \$5 chips (leaving 1), and Jeff trades in 35 of his \$1 chips for 7 \$5 chips. Steve receives 1 card and Jeff receives 4. Steve's Ace beats Andy's K-Q-J-10. Steve gets the extra \$5 chip, but Jeff still wins the tournament.

Late Players

Late players that had confirmed attendance shall be blinded off until their arrival.

Blinds and the Button

We will play with two blinds. The player to the left of the button will post the small blind. The player to the left of the small blind will post the big blind. The small blind will constitute one-half of the big blind.

Blinds will rise at periodic intervals throughout the evening to ensure that the tournament ends in a reasonable amount of time. The schedule for blind progression will be decided upon before the tournament.

Dead Button

Dead button – The big blind is posted by the player due for it, and the small blind and button are positioned accordingly, even if this means the small blind or the button is placed in front of an empty seat, giving the same player the privilege of last action on consecutive hands.

Missed Blind

In the normal course of play all players shall post their blinds in turn. If a player leaves the game temporarily and it is his turn to post a blind, the blind must still be posted.

Head's Up Play

In head's-up play, the small blind shall be posted by the player with the button and the large blind by the other player. The player who does not have the button shall be dealt the first card, and shall be the first to act on all betting rounds except the initial round. On the initial betting round, because the big blind in effect has already acted, the player on the button who has posted the small blind shall be first to act.

Betting Structures

No-Limit Play

There is no limit on the amount a player may bet up to everything he has in front of him.

There is no limit on the number of raises in any betting round.

Except for a player going all-in, all bets must be for no less than the minimum bring-in designated for the structure. Further, all raises must be equal to or greater than the size of the previous bet or raise on that round, except when making an all-in wager.

Betting

Acting in Turn

A player shall act on his hand when it is his turn and only when it is his turn. Acting out of turn gives some players an advantage at the expense of other players.

Splashing the Pot

When placing chips in the pot, a player shall place them in front of him so that there is no confusion as to who placed the chips in the pot and the amount of the chips. This enables all other players at the table to know who has made what action, and enables the dealer to always be aware that the correct number of chips is in the pot. The dealer is in charge of scooping all bets into the pot.

Action out of Turn

A player who makes action out of turn shall be held to that action when it is his turn, unless intervening action changes the action the out-of-turn actor is facing. If a player checks or bets out of turn he may not then change his action when the action comes to him in turn. If a player checks out of turn he must check when it comes to him. If a player bets out of turn he must bet when the action comes to him. If a player calls out of turn and a player in between the caller and the caller raises then the calling player may have the option to act on his hand as if he had not acted out of turn.

Oversized Chip or Bill

If when responding to action a player puts a single chip or bill in the pot that is larger than the bet, but does not announce a raise, he shall be deemed to have only called. Putting a single chip or bill in the pot with a denomination larger than the bet itself is only a call unless a raise is announced.

Verbal Declarations of Action

In Turn: A verbal declaration of action is binding if when it is a player's turn to act he announces a fold, check, bet, call, or raise. The player shall be held to that action to the exclusion of all other actions.

Out of Turn: A player who makes a verbal declaration of action out of turn shall be held to that action when it is his turn, unless intervening action changes the action the out-of-turn actor is facing, in which case the player may act on his hand as if he had made no declaration.

String Raises

Chips should be placed in the pot in a single hand motion. A player who places chips in the pot shall not return to his stack for additional chips to raise, as this shall constitute a string raise, which is expressly prohibited. To protect the right to raise regardless of the number of chips in hand, a player shall either declare his intention to raise or place the proper amount of chips in the pot. Placing a full bet plus a half bet or more into the pot shall be deemed a raise, and the raise must be completed. Putting more chips in the pot than a full bet, but less than a bet and a half shall be deemed a call, and a player who does this shall not be permitted to raise. Note again that placing an oversized chip in the pot without declaring one's intention constitutes a call.

Motions Constituting a Check or Raise

The dealer and other players shall have the right to rely on a player's hand motions. Any tapping of the table or other hand signal that the dealer might reasonably construe to be a check shall be deemed a check. A player who makes an upward motion with his hand, a thumbs up signal or other signal that might be reasonably construed by the dealer to indicate a raise shall be deemed a raise.

All-in

All hands will be turned face up whenever a player is all-in and betting action is complete.

A player who declares all in and loses the pot, then discovers that one or more chips were hidden, is not entitled to benefit from this. That player is eliminated from the tournament if the opponent had sufficient chips to cover the hidden ones (A rebuy is okay if allowable by the rules of that event). If another deal has not yet started, the director may rule the chips belong to the opponent who won that pot, if that obviously would have happened with the chips out in plain view. If the next deal has started, the discovered chips are removed from the tournament.

Player Conduct

Commentary/Inadvertently Taking Away Someone's Advantage

At no time should any player or non-player make comments on a hand which may aid one or more players. Examples of unacceptable comments include:

Folding before the flop, and then proclaiming upon seeing the flop, "Rats, I should've stayed in the hand." – In this example, that player just gave information to the other players regarding what cards he may have held, and potentially taken away someone's advantage.

Upon seeing the full board, exclaiming, "Wow, a 7-2 looks pretty good now." – That person has just pointed something out to players who may otherwise not have noticed and thereby potentially taken away someone's advantage.

Upon seeing the board, announcing, "Two hole spades makes a flush!" – In this case, a player may have thought he had the nuts with three of a kind, and now he realizes that someone else could actually beat him.

Upon seeing the board, exclaiming, "Wow, there are a ton of different ways to have a really good hand!"

Upon seeing the board, announcing, "There's no way that anyone can have a straight or flush."

Upon seeing the board, announcing, "Looks like three of a kind is the best possible hand."

A common response to this guideline might be, "I'm only pointing out what is obvious to everyone." A) In many cases, it actually wasn't obvious to those involved in the hand because they are concentrating on their hand. B) If it's obvious, then it doesn't need to be said.

The only exception to this rule is when two players are involved in heads up play. Those two players, and only those two players, may use whatever techniques they wish to win the hand. If they make a comment, they can only hurt themselves.

Winning the Pot

A player wins the pot either through an unmatched raise or a showdown.

Order of Showdown

Upon completion of action on the final betting round, the dealer shall ask the players to show their hands. If more than one player contests a pot through the final betting round, the pot will be awarded to the best hand pursuant to the rules of the game upon a showdown of hands. If there has been a bet but no raise on the final betting round, then the player who made the bet shall show his hand first, followed by other players still contesting the pot, in clockwise rotation. If there has been a bet and raise or multiple raises on the final betting round, then the person who made the final raise shall show his hand first. If there has been no bet on the final round then the showdown begins with the player who had the obligation of first action on the final betting round--the player under the gun in draw and board games or the player with the highest board in stud games.

Cards Speak

A hand that is turned over at the showdown is ranked according to the cards that are in it. If the hand is turned over then an incorrect assessment of a hand's rank or a verbal concession is not binding at showdown.

Tied Hands

In the case of one or more tied hands at the showdown, the pot shall be divided accordingly proportionately, with odd chips allocated as set forth in the next section. Suits shall in no way influence awarding any part of a pot.

Odd Chip

In all games where dividing the pot results in an odd-chip when the pot is split the odd chip--In increments of the minimum betting unit--will go to the player with the least advantageous position in button games (the player closest to the left of the dealer button).

Showdown with Side Pots

If one or more players are all-In in a multi-way contested pot, then the side Pots shall be awarded first. If there is one all-In player eligible for the main pot only then he shall show his hand last. If there are multiple side pots then those participating for the last side pot shall show their hands down first, followed by those involved in the next-to-last side pot, etc., until the main pot is awarded.

Dealing

Who Deals?

Before players are eliminated from the game, the dealing is done by the player with the button. After the first player is eliminated, he becomes the permanent dealer until the second player is eliminated, and so on.

Basic Dealer Procedures

Beyond the shuffle, cut and deal the dealer is responsible to maintain the game as quickly and efficiently as possible. The dealer shall make sure that all pre-deal money (blinds and antes) is posted. The dealer shall prompt players to act when it is their turn, and when necessary to act in turn. At the beginning of each betting round the dealer shall announce how many active players are in the hand. The dealer shall make sure the proper amount of money goes into the pot. The dealer shall ensure that all proper procedures are followed, especially regarding showdown and awarding the pot.

In games with blinds the dealer shall verbally confirm whether any live blind elects to exercise his option to raise.

If a player Splashes the pot the dealer shall verify that the correct number of chips have been placed in the pot and push them back in front of the player who has made the action so that they are clearly distinguishable from the pot and from chips placed in the pot by other players. The dealer shall not scoop until he has verified that each player has placed the proper number of chips in the pot and received proper change from the pot. Players shall never make their own change from the pot or from other players' bets.

Tournament Anomalies

Two or More Players Eliminated on the Same Hand

The player who had the higher chip stack before the hand finishes higher than the player who had the lower chip stack.



HOUSE RULES

Cards and chips don't leave the table.

Keep your cards and chips on the table and in plain view, with larger denominations out front.

No slow rolling!

Hands must be turned over in a timely fashion and not one at a time.

The minimum bet is the big blind. The minimum raise is the amount of the previous bet or raise.

E.g. Bet of 100, raise of 100 to 200 total. Next minimum raise is 100 to 300 total.

E.g. Bet of 100, raise of 300 to 400 total. Next minimum raise is 300 to 700 total.

Verbally announce your betting action.

If you put a single chip in the pot that is larger than the bet but do not announce a raise, you are assumed to have only called.

Verbal declarations are binding in turn. String raises are not allowed.

To protect your right to raise, you should either declare your intention verbally or place the proper amount of chips into the pot in one motion.

Do not splash the pot.

Place bets in front of you so that they can be counted and verified. Dealer should rake bets into pot after betting round is complete.

Cards speak for themselves. No comments on the community cards.

If you think you have a losing hand but actually have the nuts – you win (as long as none of your hand has been mucked). Comments on the board cards can influence betting and are not allowed.

Players not in the hand should refrain from influencing the play.

Show one, show all.

Players are entitled to receive equal access to information about the contents of another player's hand. After a deal, if cards are shown to another player, every player at the table has a right to see those cards. During a deal, cards that were shown to an active player who might have a further wagering decision on that betting round must immediately be shown to all other players. Cards shown to a person who has no more wagering decisions on that betting round but might use the information on a later betting round, should be shown to the other players at the conclusion of that betting round.

Never reveal another player's mucked cards, unless part of a ruling by the TD.

Tournament blinds will be run using the dead button rule.

No rabbit hunting.

These house rules supersede RROP and TDA rules where conflicting rules govern a situation.

House rulings are final.



DEALER RULES AND ERRORS

A player is dealt whether they are present at the table or not,

until the blinds reach them. If action comes around to them and they aren't present, the player's hand is folded.

If the cut card mixes into the deck and is dealt,

continue the deal with the next card.

If the first or second hole card is exposed,

the hand is dead and declared a misdeal. The dealer will retrieve the card(s) and reshuffle the deck.

If any other cards are exposed,

the deal continues and the player whose card was exposed is dealt last. The player may not keep the exposed card and the card will be used as the first burn card.

If more than one card is exposed,

the hand is dead and declared a misdeal. The dealer will retrieve the cards and reshuffle the deck.

If the dealer fails to burn a card or burns too many cards

and the error is caught before any action is made; the burn cards and the board cards are put back into the deck, reshuffled, and the cards are re-dealt with the proper burn card. If action was made then the card(s) dealt stand. If no burn card was dealt then the hand continues normally with the next card dealt. If too many cards were burned the extra burn card(s) are put back into the deck and reshuffled, and the hand continues normally with the next card dealt.

If the dealer deals a board card before a round of betting is complete,
the cards dealt may not be used, even if it results in a player folding.

If the dealer deals early on the fourth board card,
the burn card and card dealt are put to the side, betting is completed, and the next two cards are used as the burn card and fourth board card. Before the fifth board card is dealt the two cards that were dealt early are placed back into the deck and the deck is reshuffled.

If the dealer deals early on the fifth board card,
the burn card is left on the table and the card that was dealt early is placed back into the deck and reshuffled, then the fifth board card is re-dealt.