

Poker Tournament Directors Association 2009 Rules

The PokerTDA is comprised of poker room personnel from around the world whose objective is to draft a standardized set of rules for poker tournaments. The TDA has developed the following tournament poker rules, which supplement the standard or "house rules" of this card room/casino. If there is a conflict between these rules and the rules and regulations of the applicable gaming agency, the gaming agency rules apply.

General Concepts

1. Floor People

Floor people are to consider the best interest of the game and fairness as the top priority in the decision-making process. Unusual circumstances can on occasion dictate that decisions in the interest of fairness take priority over the technical rules. The floorperson's decision is final.

2. Official Language

The English-only rule will be enforced in the United States during the play of hands. English will be used in international play along with the local or native language.

3. Communication

Players may not talk on the phone while at the poker table. House rules apply to all other forms of electronic devices.

Seating Players; Breaking & Balancing Tables

4. Random Seats

Tournament and satellite seats will be randomly assigned. Accommodations for players with special physical needs will be made when possible.

5. Breaking Tables

Players going from a broken table to fill in seats assume the rights and responsibilities of the position. They can get the big blind, the small blind, or the button. The only place they cannot get a hand is between the small blind and the button.

6. Balancing Tables

In flop and mixed games when balancing tables, players will be moved from the big blind to the worst position, including taking a single big blind when available, even if that means the seat will have the big blind twice. Worst position is never the small blind. The table from which a player is moved will be as specified by a predetermined procedure. In stud-only games, players will be moved by position (the last seat to open up at the short table is the seat to be filled). Play will halt on any table that is three or more players short.

7. Number of Players at Final Table

In flop games, the final table will consist of ten (10) players. In stud-type games, the final table will consist of nine (9) players.

Pots / Showdown

8. Declarations

Cards speak. Verbal declarations as to the content of a player's hand are not binding; however, any player deliberately miscalling his or her hand may be penalized.

9. Face Up

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

10. Killing Winning Hand

Dealers cannot kill a winning hand that was tabled and was obviously the winning hand. Players are encouraged to assist in reading tabled hands if it appears that an error is about to be made.

11. Showdown

At the end of last round of betting, the player who made the last aggressive action in that betting round must show first. If there was no bet, the player to the left of the button shows first and so on clockwise. In stud games, the player with the high board must show first. In razz, the lowest board shows first.

12. Odd Chips

The odd chip will go to the high hand. In flop games when there are two or more high hands or two or more low hands, the odd chip(s) will go to the left of the button. In stud games, the odd chip will go to the high card by suit. However, when hands have identical value (e.g., a wheel in Omaha/8) the pot will be split as evenly as possible.

13. Side Pots

Each side pot will be split separately.

14. Playing the Board

A player must show both cards when playing the board in order to get part of the pot.

15. Disputed Pots

The right to dispute a hand ends when a new hand begins. (See rule #18.)

General Procedures

16. Chip Race

When it is time to color-up chips, they will be raced off with a maximum of one chip going to any player. The chip race will always start in the No.1 seat. A player cannot be raced out of a tournament: a player who loses his or her remaining chip(s) in a chip race will be given one chip of the smallest denomination still in play. Players are encouraged to witness the chip race.

17. Deck Changes

Deck changes will be on the dealer push or level changes or as prescribed by the house. Players may not ask for deck changes.

18. New Limits

When time has elapsed in a round and a new level is announced by a member of the tournament staff, the new level applies to the next hand. A hand begins with the first riffle. If an automatic shuffler is being used, the hand begins when the green button is pushed.

19. Re-buys

A player may not miss a hand. If a player announces the intent to rebuy before a new hand, that player is playing chips behind and is obligated to make the re-buy.

20. Calling for a Clock

Once a reasonable amount of time has passed and a clock is called for, a player will be given a maximum of one minute to make a decision. If action has not been taken before time expires, there will be a 10-second countdown. If a player has not acted by the time the countdown is over, the player's hand will be dead.

21. Rabbit Hunting

No rabbit hunting is allowed. Rabbit hunting is revealing any of the cards "that would have come" if the hand had not ended.

Player Present / Eligible for Hand

22. At Your Seat

A player must be at his or her seat by the time all players have been dealt complete initial hands in order to have a live hand. A player must be at his/her seat to call time.

23. Action Pending

A player must remain at the table if he has a live hand.

Button / Blinds

24. Dead Button

Tournament play will use a dead button.

25. Dodging Blinds

A player who intentionally dodges any blind when moving from a broken table will incur a penalty.

26. Button in Heads-up

In heads-up play, the small blind is on the button and acts first. When beginning heads-up play, the button may need to be adjusted to ensure no player takes the big blind twice in a row.

Dealing Errors

27. Misdeals

In stud-type games, if any of the player's two down cards are exposed due to dealer error it is a misdeal. In flop games, exposure of one of the first two cards dealt is a misdeal. Players may be dealt two consecutive cards on the button.

28. Four-Card Flop

If the flop contains four (rather than three) cards, whether exposed or not, the dealer shall scramble the 4 cards face down. A flooperson will be called to randomly select one card to be used as the next burn card and the remaining three cards will become the flop.

Play: Bets & Raises

29. Verbal Declarations / Acting in Turn

Verbal declarations in turn are binding. Players are required to act in turn. Action out of turn will be binding if the action to that player has not changed. A check, call or fold is not considered action changing.

30. Methods of Raising

In no-limit or pot-limit, a raise must be made by (1) placing the full amount in the pot in one motion; or (2) verbally declaring the full amount prior to the initial placement of chips into the pot; or (3) verbally declaring "raise" prior to the placement of the amount to call into the pot and then completing the action with one additional motion. It is the player's responsibility to make his intentions clear.

31. Raises

A raise must be at least the size of the previous raise. If a player puts in a raise of 50% or more of the previous bet but less than the minimum raise, he or she will be required to make a full raise. The raise will be exactly the minimum raise allowed. In no-limit and pot limit, an all-in bet of less than a full raise does not reopen the betting to a player who has already acted.

32. Oversized Chip

A single oversized chip will be considered a call if the player does not announce a raise. If a player puts an oversized chip into the pot and states raise but does not state the amount, the raise will be the maximum allowable up to the size of that chip. After the flop, an initial bet of an oversized chip without comment will constitute the size of the bet. To make a raise with a single oversized chip, a verbal declaration must be made before the chip hits the table surface.

33. Multiple Chips

Unless a raise has been declared, placing multiple chips in the pot that add to less than double the bet one is facing will be deemed a call if removal of any one chip leaves less than the bet the player could have called.

34. Number of Raises

There is no cap on the number of raises in no-limit games. In limit events there will be a limit to raises even when heads-up until the tournament is down to two players; the house limit will apply.

35. Pot Size

Players are entitled to be informed of the pot size in pot-limit games only. Dealers will not count the pot in limit and no-limit games.

36. String Bets and Raises

Dealers will be responsible for calling string bets and raises.

Play: Other

37. Chips on the Table

Players must keep their higher denomination chips visible and identifiable at all times.

38. Chips in Transit

Players may not hold or transport tournament chips in any manner that takes them out of view. A player who does so will forfeit the chips and will face disqualification. The forfeited chips will be taken out of play.

39. Unprotected Hands

If a dealer kills an unprotected hand, the player will have no redress and will not be entitled to a refund of bets. However, if a player had raised and the raise had not yet been called, the raise will be returned to the player.

Etiquette & Penalties

40. Penalties and Disqualification

A penalty MAY be invoked if a player exposes any card with action pending, throws a card off the table, violates the one-player-to-a-hand rule, or similar incidents take place. Penalties WILL be invoked in cases of soft play, abuse, or disruptive behavior. Penalties available to the TD include verbal warnings and "missed hand" penalties. Except for a one-hand penalty, missed hand penalties will be assessed as follows: The offender will miss one hand for every player, including the offender, who is at the table when the penalty is given multiplied by the number of rounds specified in the penalty. For the period of the penalty, the offender shall remain away from the table but will continue to be dealt in.

Tournament staff can assess a one-hand penalty, one-, two-, three-, or four-round penalties or disqualification. A player who is disqualified shall have his or her chips removed from play. Repeat infractions are subject to escalating penalties.

41. No Disclosure

Players are obligated to protect the other players in the tournament at all times. Therefore, players, whether in the hand or not, may not:

1. Disclose contents of live or folded hands,
2. Advise or criticize play at any time,
3. Read a hand that hasn't been tabled.

The one-player-to-a-hand rule will be enforced.

42. Exposing Cards

A player who exposes his cards with action pending may incur a penalty, but will not have a dead hand. The penalty will begin at the end of the hand.

43. Ethical Play

Poker is an individual game. Soft play will result in penalties, which may include forfeiture of chips and/or disqualification. Chip dumping and/or all other forms of collusion will result in disqualification.

44. Etiquette Violations

Repeated etiquette violations will result in penalties. Examples include, but are not limited to, unnecessarily touching other players' cards or chips, delay of the game, repeatedly acting out of turn or excessive chatter.