

PREFACE

Because these rules have been downloaded thousands of times and I feel the need to clarify one thing. These are the rules I use to govern our No-Limit tournament play with. These are not the one stop shop for all rules. Please use this set of compiled rules as a guide for your own play. For example, we are very strict when it comes to playing out of turn. You may want to be more lenient.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOLDING A TOURNAMENT

You need to find chip values that work with the number of chips you have at your disposal taking into account whether or not you will be playing with ante and/or blinds. Personally, we use the following chip structure for the 1000 dollars in chips total (not individual but total) we have and knowing how many players will come on average.

16 chips with a denomination of \$5
12 chips with a denomination of \$10
8 chips with a denomination of \$25
6 chips with a denomination of \$50
3 chips with a denomination of \$100

We play with only Blinds. The small blind starts off at 5 and the big blind starts off at 10. They increase every 15 minutes until level five and then they increase every 30 minutes.

Most people do not have hundreds of decks of playing cards at their disposal. You should. Go on E-Bay and search for "poker playing cards" and use at least two if not four decks of cards per table. Rotate the decks every round, thirty minutes, or at some set interval. Count the cards and suit them up prior to play as well. We had an incident where someone dropped a deck and upon counting it we found the deck was missing one card. There were 52 cards at the beginning of play that night and the card was never found. Draw your own conclusions, but always rotate at least two decks.

Advise people to shuffle the cards face down on the table. By picking them up someone can easily shuffle track and watch where the bottom card goes after a cut. Often this can be used to the player's advantage.

When you hold a tournament consider the cost of food as well. After all, people will be playing at your place for hours on end and will get hungry at some point. We have a \$50 buy-in with a \$10 food and prize fee, pizza works the best.

Prior to kick off the lead organizer should compile a list of the most important rules and announce them so everyone is clear. My list includes:

1. A Texas Hold'em hand consists of the best five cards made up of the cards you have in your hand and on the board. It is possible that the best five cards are on the board.
2. Verbal declarations are binding and are the only way action can be made with the exception of a knock on the table for a check or tossing your cards face down to the dealer for a fold.
3. There are no string bets.
4. Do not splash the pot.
5. Check-raising is legal.
6. Explain the chip value and values of the blinds and when they raise.
7. Explain what happens when a player plays out of turn (refer to rule 9 and 10 in the Betting and Raising" section).
8. Instruct people when dealing to NOT show any card after the hand is won. If someone buys the pot on the flop DO NOT flip over 4th and 5th street.
9. Explain when breaks and lunch and/or dinner will be.
10. Explain what happens when it gets down to two people.

11. There are no re-buys.
12. The number of raises in any betting round is unlimited.
13. If the player does not have enough to cover a blind they are considered all-in and cannot win more than their all-in amount from each player who calls.
14. The person who bets last is the first person who must show their cards at showdown. A bet is considered placing the opening bet, a raise, a re-raise, a re-re-raise, etc.
15. The minimum bet pre-flop and after the flop is equal to the amount of the small blind. The amount of a bet on 4th and 5th street is equal to the amount of the big blind.

By participating in any tournament, you agree to abide by the rules and behave in a courteous manner. A violator may be verbally warned, suspended from play for a specified length of time, or disqualified from the tournament. Chips from a disqualified participant will be removed from play.

HOW TEXAS HOLD'EM WILL BE PLAYED

1. One player is the dealer. The two players to the left of the dealer make "blind" bets. The first player makes a bet that is equal to the minimum bet at the table. This is known as the "small blind". The second player makes a bet equal to double the minimum table bet. This is the "big blind".
2. Two cards are dealt face down to each player on the table.
3. The player to the left of the big blind begins the play. He/she may choose to call (which means match the bet on the table in this case the big blind's post), raise, or fold. This continues to the left until the betting round is completed. The raise must be equal to at least the amount of the small blind. If the small blind is 5 then the person must raise to at least 10.
4. The dealer then takes the top card and burns it. Burning is the action referred to taking the top card and discarding it. The dealer then deals the next three cards face up at the same time. This is known as the "flop".
5. The next betting round begins with player to the left of the dealer and continues to the left. If there is no bet on the table, a player may bet or check (which means to neither bet, nor fold - the turn simply passes to the next player). If there is a bet on the table, a player may call, raise or fold. Again, the minimum bet is equal to the small blind.
6. After the close of the betting round, the top card is burned and the next card is dealt face up. This card is called the "turn" or "fourth street". The minimum bet is now equal to the big blind.
7. The next round of betting occurs with player to the left of the dealer and continues to the left.
8. After the close of the betting round, the final card is dealt. This card is known as "the river" or "fifth street".
9. The final betting round takes place with player to the left of the dealer and continues to the left. The minimum bet is equal to the big blind.
10. As soon as the betting is over showdown comes. At the showdown the player with the best combination of cards (two pocket cards and three community cards, one pocket card and four community cards or five community cards) wins the pot.

START TIME AND BREAKS

1. Play will start at 11:00 a.m. EST on the designated day.
2. Money will be accepted promptly at 10:30 a.m. EST and the first 16 persons to arrive will be allowed to play.
3. Play in the tournament is by invitation only.
4. Seats will be awarded on a first come first serve basis. Priority will be given to those who have played in the Wednesday night Texas Hold'em limit game on a regular basis. In the event there are more people than available seats a lottery will be drawn amongst the last people to arrive.
5. There will be a 10 minute break every hour with a one hour lunch break at 1:00 p.m. EST and a one hour dinner break at 6:00 p.m.

CONDUCT CODE

The house will attempt to maintain a pleasant environment for players, but is not responsible for the conduct of any player. We have established a code of conduct, and may deny play to anyone who violates it. The following is not permitted:

1. Collusion with another player or any other form of cheating.
2. Verbally or physically threatening anyone.
3. Creating a disturbance by arguing, shouting, or making excessive noise.
4. Throwing, tearing, bending, or crumpling cards.
5. Destroying or defacing property.
6. Carrying a weapon.
7. Cell phones must be turned off during play.

POKER ETIQUETTE

The following actions are improper, and grounds for warning, suspending, or barring a violator:

1. Deliberately acting out of turn.
2. Deliberately splashing chips into the pot.
3. Agreeing to check a hand out when a third player is all-in.
4. Reading/Turning over a hand for another player at showdown before it has been placed face-up on the table.
5. Revealing the contents of a live hand in a multi-handed pot before the betting is complete.
6. Needlessly stalling the action of a game.
7. Deliberately discarding hands away from the muck.
8. Stacking chips in a manner that interferes with dealing or viewing cards.
9. Making statements or taking action that could unfairly influence the course of play, if the person is not involved in the pot.
10. Any player, dealer who sees an incorrect amount of chips put into the pot, or an error about to be made in awarding a pot, has an ethical obligation to point out the error. Please help us keep mistakes of this nature to a minimum.

TOBACCO USE

1. Smoking is not allowed in doors.

DECISIONMAKING

1. The proper time to draw attention to an error or irregularity is when it occurs or is first noticed
2. A ruling may be made regarding a pot if it has been requested before the next deal starts. Otherwise, the result of a deal must stand. The first riffle of the shuffle marks the start for a deal.
3. If a pot has been incorrectly awarded and mingled with chips that were not in the pot, but the time limit for a ruling request given in the previous rule has been complied with, the house may determine how much was in the pot by reconstructing the betting, and then transfer that amount to the proper player.

PROCEDURES

1. The House will decide when to start, close or pause any game.
2. Payment for the tournament must be made prior to the first hand being dealt. Exception may occur if the person lets the tournament organizer know they will be late. However there is a penalty equal to 4x the big blind and all blinds will be posted for the player in the absence.
3. Cash is not permitted on the table.
4. Only one person may play a hand. If another person purposely flips over another players cards those cards are dead. Only the dealer or player whose cards they are can do so.
5. No one is allowed to play another player's chips with the exception of the dealer when the player is absent from the table and must post an ante/blind.
6. Players must keep cards in full view. This means above table-level and not past the edge of the table. The cards should not be covered by the hands in a manner to completely conceal them.
7. Any player is entitled to a clear view of an opponent's chips. Higher denomination chips should be easily visible.
8. There will be a 10 minute break every hour.
9. Looking through the discards or deck stub is not allowed.
10. After a deal ends, dealers are asked to not show what card would have been dealt.
11. The blinds and ante will double every two hours.

SEATING

1. The final head table will be merged together consisting of the last eight active players.
2. A player may not hold a seat in more than one game and may not switch tables without the consent of the house.
3. The house reserves the right to require that any two players not play at the same table (husband and wife, relatives, business partners, and so forth).
4. When a button game starts, active players will draw a card for position of the dealer button.

THE FEES/BUY-IN

1. When you enter a game, you must make a full buy-in for that game.
2. The buy-in is \$60 U.S. dollars only
3. \$5.00 will be charged to each person to cover lunch and dinner.
4. \$5.00 will be charged to each person to cover prizes besides the cash prize.
5. The total fee is \$60 which covers your buy-in, food and prizes.
6. There are no re-buys.

PRIZES

\$50 of the buy-in is used to payout the prizes. Since each person stakes \$50 the prizes will be awarded as a stakes (1 stake = \$50). We want to guarantee the last 3rd or 4th place person at least the cost of their chips back.

If there are an odd number of players the odd stake is added to on the total prize for 1st place.

<i>Players</i>	8	%	10	%	12	%	14	%	16	%
<i>1st</i>	5	62.50%	6	60.00%	7	58.33%	8	57.14%	9	56.25%
<i>2nd</i>	2	25.00%	3	30.00%	4	33.33%	4	28.57%	4	25.00%
<i>3rd</i>	1	12.50%	1	10.00%	1	8.33%	1	7.14%	2	12.50%
<i>4th</i>	x		x		x		1	7.14%	1	6.25%

MISDEALS

1. The following circumstances cause a misdeal, provided attention is called to the error before one player has acted on their hand. Once action occurs, a misdeal can no longer be declared. The hand will be played to conclusion and no money will be returned to any player whose hand is fouled.
 - (a) One or more cards have been exposed by the dealer before the flop. If this occurs after the flop #11 of the irregularities.
 - (b) One or more boxed cards (improperly faced cards) are found.
 - (c) One or more extra cards have been dealt in the starting hands of a game.
 - (d) An incorrect number of cards have been dealt to a player, except the top card may be dealt if it goes to the player in proper sequence.
 - (e) Any card that has been dealt out of the proper sequence (except an exposed card may be replaced by the burn card).
 - (f) The first card was dealt to the wrong position.
 - (g) Cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand.
 - (h) A player has been dealt out who is entitled to a hand. This player must be present at the table or have posted a blind or ante.

DEAD HANDS

1. Your hand is declared dead if:
 - (a) You fold or announce that you are folding when facing a bet or a raise.

- (b) You throw your hand away in a forward motion (even if not facing a bet).
- (c) The hand does not contain the proper number of cards for that particular game.
- 2. Cards thrown into another player's hand are dead, whether they are face-up or face-down.
- 3. Cards throw into the muck are considered dead.
- 4. Another player purposely turns a hand over that is not his own.

IRREGULARITIES

1. In button games, if it is discovered that the button was placed incorrectly on the previous hand, the button and blinds will be corrected for the new hand in a manner that gives every player one chance for each position on the round (if possible).
2. You must protect your own hand at all times. Your cards may be protected with your hands, a chip, or other object placed on top of them. If you fail to protect your hand, you will have no redress if it becomes fouled or the dealer accidentally kills it.
3. If a card with a different color back appears during a hand, all action is void and all chips in the pot are returned to the respective bettors. If a card with a different color back is discovered in the stub, all action stands.
4. If two cards of the same rank and suit are found, all action is void, and all chips in the pot are returned to the players who wagered them (subject to next rule) and the decks will be reconciled.
5. A player who knows the deck is defective has an obligation to point this out. If such a player instead tries to win a pot by taking aggressive action (trying for a freeroll), the player may lose the right to a refund, and the chips may be required to stay in the pot for the next deal.
6. If you play a hand without looking at all of your cards, you assume the liability of having an irregular card or an improper joker.
7. One or more cards missing from the deck does not invalidate the results of a hand.
8. Before the first round of betting, if a dealer deals one additional card, it is returned to the deck and used as the burn card.
9. If you drop a card on the floor out of your hand, you must still play that card.
10. If the dealer prematurely deals any cards before the betting is complete, those cards will not play, even if a player who has not acted decides to fold.
11. If a burn card is mistakenly shown by a dealer, that card is shown to everyone and is held off to the side, not burned. The dealer then burns another card and places the following card face up. After 4th street, the mistakenly shown card held off to the side is shuffled into the deck. The dealer DOES NOT burn a card for 5th. The top card is then shown for 5th street/the River.

BETTING AND RAISING

1. The small blind at 5 and the big blind at 10.
2. Check-raise is permitted.
3. Unlimited raising is allowed.
4. Any wager must be at least the size the small blind pre-flop and after the flop. On 4th/the turn or 5th/the river the wager must be at least the size of the big blind. At any point a player can go all-in.
5. A verbal statement denotes your action and is binding. If in turn you verbally declare a fold, check, bet, call, or raise, you are forced to take that action.
6. String raises are not allowed. A string raise is where someone says "I see your bet and..." or "I call and..." or you place one stack of chips in front of you and then another and then some more. If you are going to raise you must announce the amount of the raise and state that you are going to "raise".
7. A wager is not binding until the chips are actually released into the pot, unless the player has made a verbal statement of action.
8. Rapping the table with your hand will be considered a check.

9. Deliberately acting out of turn will not be tolerated. A player who checks out of turn must call the actual bet that is made in turn and cannot raise or fold. An action or verbal declaration out of turn may be ruled binding if there is no bet, call, or raise by an intervening player acting after the infraction.
10. If a player bets or raises out of turn and the player whose turn it is happens to be positioned immediately before the out of turn player checks, the player acting out of turn must also check.
11. To retain the right to act, a player must stop the action by calling "time" before the second person before him has acted or the table agrees to call time.
12. All wagers and calls of an improperly low amount must be brought up to proper size if the error is discovered before the betting round has been completed.
13. The number of raises in any betting round is unlimited.
14. A player who has already checked or called may not subsequently raise an all-in bet that is less than the full size of the last bet or raise.
Ex: Player 1 posts the SB of 100. Player 2 posts the BB of 200. Player 3 calls the BB. Player 4 calls. Player 5 folds. Player 1 folds. Player 2 raises all-in for an additional 50 or total of 250. Player 3 cannot re-raise the all-in since it is for less than the small blind pre-flop which is the minimum anyone can bet at this point.
15. In all no-limit games, the house has the right to place a maximum time limit for taking action on your hand (approximately THREE MINUTES). The clock may be put on someone by the dealer if a player requests it. If the clock is put on you when you are facing a bet, you will have one additional minute to act on your hand. You will have a ten-second warning, after which your hand is dead if you have not acted.

SIDE BETS

1. A side bet is made when there are three or more players and the player who acts first is short stacked and bets all of their chips. The player who acts second raises the first person's bet and the third person to act calls the second person's bet.
2. The amount of the raise can only be won between the second and third player.
3. The first player can only win the amount of their bet from each player.

ALL-IN

1. A person can go All-in at any point during a game providing it is their turn to act.
2. If the player does not have enough to cover the big blind they are considered all-in and cannot win more than their all-in amount from each player who calls.

THE SHOWDOWN

1. A player must show all cards in the hand face-up on the table to win any part of the pot.
2. The cards speak for themselves. The dealer assists in reading hands, but players are responsible for holding onto their cards until the winner is declared. Although verbal declarations as to the contents of a hand are not binding, deliberately miscalling a hand with the intent of causing another player to discard a winning hand is unethical and may result in forfeiture of the pot.
3. All losing hands will be killed by the dealer before a pot is awarded.
4. If a player other than the pot winner asks to see a hand that has been folded, that hand is dead and cannot be shown.
5. If you show cards to anyone during or after a deal, any player at the table has the right to see those exposed cards.
6. If everyone checks on the final betting round, the player who acted first is the first to show the hand. If there is wagering on the final betting round, the last player to take aggressive action by a bet or raise is the first to show the hand.
7. The person who bets last is the first person who must show their cards.

TIES

1. A hand ties when the best five cards are the same. For example, two players have a pair of Kings and the board has the next highest single cards, there is a straight on the board and the remaining players have a weaker hand, etc.
2. If two or more hands tie the chips will be broken up evenly.
3. An odd chip will be broken down to the smallest unit used in the game. If it cannot be, it will be left in the pot.

KICKER

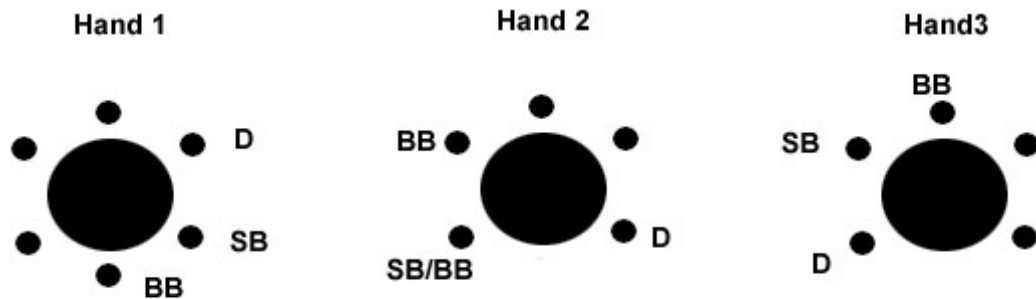
1. A kicker is used in the event of two or more players having the same hand with four or less cards. If both players would have had the same hand with five cards it would be considered a tie. For example, two players have a pair of Kings the board has a Queen but one player has an Ace in his hand. The player with the Ace would win as the other players high card is the Queen on the board.

BUTTON AND BLIND USE

1. A round disk called the button is used to indicate which player has the dealer position. The player with the button is last to receive cards on the initial deal and has the right of last action after the first betting round. The button moves clockwise after a deal ends to rotate the advantage of last action.
2. One or more blind bets are usually used to stimulate action and initiate play. Blinds are posted before the players look at their cards.
3. Blinds are part of a player's bet.
4. Dead chips are not part of a player's bet.
5. If the upcoming dealer, big or little blind is eliminated the button is moved accordingly. Everyone **MUST** post the blind(s) that they are responsible for. No one should ever be skipped because someone busted out.

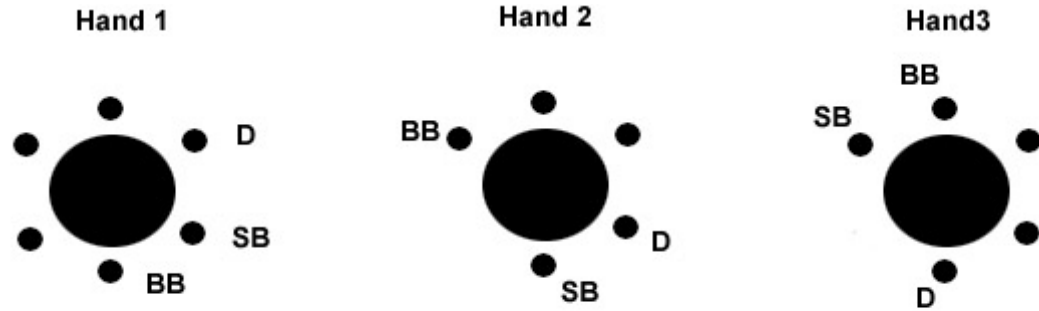
Small Blind Eliminated Example:

If the upcoming small blind is eliminated the small blind is moved to the next player. The small blind then posts the small blind and the big blind. They **MUST** do this otherwise the big blind would have skipped over them. The person to the left of the SB/BB must also post the BB which they are responsible for on the current hand.



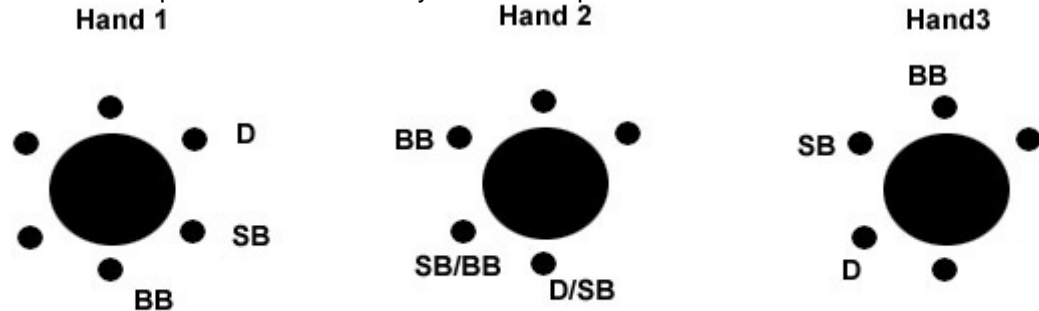
Big Blind Eliminated Example:

If the upcoming big blind is eliminated the big blind is moved to the next player.



Dealer Eliminated Example:

If the upcoming dealer is eliminated the dealer button is moved to the next player. The new dealer must post the SB which he normally would have been responsible for and the small blind must post the SB which they are now responsible for and the BB which they would have been responsible for. This ensures that no one is skipped. The person next to the SB/BB must post the BB which they are now responsible for.



BUTTON AND BLIND USE WITH THE FINAL TWO PLAYERS

1. The person acting as the dealer has the Small Blind is the first person to act pre-flop.
2. The person who has the Big Blind acts first post-flop.

RULES FOR USING BLINDS

1. Each round every player must get an opportunity for the button, and meet the total amount of the blind obligations. The following methods of button and blind placement may be designated to do this:
Moving button – The button always moves forward to the next player and the blinds adjust accordingly.
2. The person after the big blind has the option of raising the pot as the first turn to act.
3. In heads-up play with two blinds, the small blind is the first player to the left of the dealer and the big blind is the player second to the left of the dealer.
4. If the player does not have enough to cover the big blind they are considered all-in and cannot win more than their all-in amount from each player who calls.