

# Texas Hold Em (Tournament) Game Procedures

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*Note: Procedures are same as cash games except for last section*

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## Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this Section, shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

"All-in" means a player who has no funds remaining on the poker table to continue betting in a round of play but who still retains the right to contend for that portion of the pot in which the player has already placed a bet.

"Ante" means a predetermined wager, which each player is required to make in some poker games prior to any cards being dealt in order to participate in the round of play.

"Bet" means an action by which a player places gaming chips into the pot on any betting round.

"Betting round" means a complete wagering cycle in a hand of poker after all players have called, folded or gone all-in.

"Blind bet" means a mandatory wager in some poker games which only players sitting in specific betting positions at the poker table shall be required to place prior to looking at any cards.

"Burn card" means a card taken from the top of a deck which is discarded face down, which is not in play and the identity of which remains unknown.

"Button" means an object that is moved clockwise around the table to denote an imaginary dealer and thereby determine the betting and dealing sequence.

"Call" means a wager made in an amount equal to the immediately preceding wager.

"Check" means that a player waives the right to initiate the betting in a betting round but retains the right to act if another player initiates the betting.

"Common card" means, in any game of stud poker, a card which is dealt face upward if there are insufficient cards left in the deck to deal each player a card individually and which can be used by all players at the showdown.

"Cover card" means a yellow or green plastic card used during the cut process and then to conceal the bottom card of the deck.

"Draw" means, in any game of draw poker, an exchange by a player of cards held in his or her hand, after the initial round of betting, for an equal number of new cards from the deck.

"Fold" means the withdrawal of a player from a round of play by discarding his or her hand of cards during a betting round and refusing to equal a wager.

"Forced bet" means a wager which is required to start the wagering on the first betting round.

"Fouled hand" means a hand that either has an improper number of cards or has come into contact with other cards in such a way as to render it impossible to determine accurately which cards are contained in the hand.

"Hole card" means any card dealt to a player face down.

"Opening bet" means the first bet in a round of play.

"Pot" means the amount which is awarded to the winning player or players at the conclusion of a round of play and is equal to the total amount anted and bet by the players during the round of play, less any rake extracted.

"Protected hand" means a hand of cards which the player is physically holding or has placed under one or more gaming chips.

"Raise," means a bet in an amount greater than the immediately preceding bet in that betting round.

"Rake," means the amount of gaming chips, gaming plaques or coin collected by the dealer as poker revenue.

"Round of play" means, for any game of poker, the process by which cards are dealt, bets are placed and the winner of the pot is determined and paid in accordance with the rules of this Section.

"Showdown" means the action of revealing the hands of each player in order to determine who shall win the pot.

"Side pot" means a separate pot formed when one or more players are all-in.

"Stub" means the remaining portion of the deck after all cards in a round of play have been dealt.

"Suit" means one of the four categories of cards, that is, diamond, spade, club or heart.

"Table stakes" means the currency and gaming chips on the table is in play and a payer may not subtract from his or her currency/gaming chips at any time during ongoing play.

"Up-card," means, in a game of stud poker, any card dealt to a player face up.

## Cards, Number of Decks

Poker shall be played with one deck of cards with backs of the same color and design and one additional cover card. The cover card shall be opaque and in a solid color readily distinguishable from the color of the backs and edges of the playing cards. Two decks of cards shall be maintained for use at each poker table at all times. Each deck maintained at the poker table shall be visually distinguishable in some manner from the other deck. While one deck is in use, the other deck shall be stored in a designated area.

## Poker Rankings

- (1) The rank of the cards used in all types of poker other than low poker, for the determination of winning hands, in order of highest to lowest rank, shall be: ace, king, queen, jack, 10, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three and two. All suits shall be considered equal in rank. Notwithstanding the foregoing, an ace may be used to complete a "straight flush" or a "straight" formed with a two, three, four and five (in a five card poker hand).
- (2) The permissible high poker hands in poker games that result in a five card hand, in order of highest to lowest rank, shall be:
  - (i) "Royal flush" is a hand consisting of an ace, king, queen, jack and ten of the same suit;
  - (ii) "Straight flush" is a hand consisting of five cards of the same suit in consecutive ranking, with king, queen, jack, 10 and nine being the highest ranking straight flush and ace, two, three, four and five being the lowest ranking straight flush;
  - (iii) "Four-of-a-kind" is a hand consisting of four cards of the same rank regardless of suit, with four aces being the highest ranking four-of-a-kind and four twos being the lowest ranking four-of-a-kind;
  - (iv) "Full house" is a hand consisting of "three-of-a-kind" and a "pair," with three aces and two kings being the highest ranking full house and three twos and two threes being the lowest ranking full house;
  - (v) "Flush" is a hand consisting of five cards of the same suit;
  - (vi) "Straight" is a hand consisting of five cards of consecutive rank, regardless of suit, with an ace, king, queen, jack and 10 being the highest ranking straight and an ace, two, three, four and five being the lowest ranking straight; provided, however, that an ace may not be combined with any other sequence of cards for purposes of determining a winning hand (e.g., queen, king, ace, two, three);
  - (vii) "Three-of-a-kind" is a hand consisting of three cards of the same rank regardless of suit, with three aces being the highest ranking three-of-a-kind and three twos being the lowest ranking three-of-a-kind;

- (viii) "Two pairs" is a hand consisting of two "pairs," with two aces and two kings being the highest ranking two pair and two threes and two twos being the lowest ranking two pair; and
  - (ix) "One pair" is a hand consisting of two cards of the same rank, regardless of suit, with two aces being the highest ranking pair and two twos being the lowest ranking pair.
- (3) When comparing two hands which are of identical poker hand rank, as applicable, or which contain none of the poker hands authorized for that game, the hand which contains the highest ranking card, whichever is applicable, which is not contained in the other hand shall be considered the higher ranking hand. If the hands are of identical rank after the application of this section, the hands shall be considered tied and the pot shall be equally divided among the players with the tied hands.
  - (4) In all games of poker, a hand shall be ranked according to the cards actually contained therein and not by the player's opinion or statement of its value.

### **Opening the Table for Gaming**

- (1) After receiving two decks of cards at the table, the dealer shall sort and inspect the cards.
- (2) Following the inspection of the cards by the dealer, the cards shall be spread out face up on the table for visual inspection. The cards shall be spread out according to suit and in sequence.
- (3) Immediately prior to the commencement of play, each deck shall be separately turned face down on the table, mixed thoroughly by a "washing" of the cards and stacked. Each deck of cards shall be shuffled.

### **Shuffle and Cut of the Cards**

Immediately prior to commencement of play and after the completion of each round of play, the dealer shall shuffle the entire deck of cards. Upon completion of the shuffle, the dealer or device shall place the deck of cards in a single stack.

### **Poker Overview; General Dealing Procedures for All Types of Poker**

- (1) Poker shall be played by a minimum of two players and a maximum of 11 players. Poker shall be dealt by a dealer at a poker table. For all types of poker, the dealer shall not participate in the playing or outcome of the game in any way except as otherwise authorized in this Section.
- (2) A player shall wager on the cards that the player holds in his or her hand. All bets by a player shall be placed by the dealer in the designated area of the table known as the pot. A player may be required to ante or place a blind bet prior to the receipt of any cards. After each round of cards is dealt, a betting round shall be conducted. Each player shall decide whether to continue contending for the pot by calling or raising the bet of the other players.

- (3) The object of the game shall be for a player to win the pot either by making a bet that no other player elects to call, or by having the hand of highest rank at the showdown. If two or more players are still in contention for a pot after all cards have been dealt and the final betting round has been completed, there shall be a showdown among the players still in contention to determine which player has the hand of highest rank. Based on the type of poker being played, the winning player may be the player who holds the highest ranking high poker hand, the highest ranking low poker hand or both the highest ranking high and low poker hands.
- (4) The following procedures shall be utilized by the dealer when dealing the game of poker:
  - (i) The dealer shall choose the hand in which he or she will hold the cards. Once the dealer has chosen a hand, the dealer must use that hand whenever holding the cards. The cards held by the dealer shall, at all times, be held in front of the dealer, as level as possible and over the poker table.
  - (ii) The dealer shall verbalize or physically indicate the action, which is occurring at the poker table with regard to the conduct of the game and instruct each player as to his or her various turns to act and options.
  - (iii) All burn cards required by this Section shall be kept separate from the pile of discarded cards.
  - (iv) At the completion of a round of play, the dealer shall award the pot to the winning player or players after a showdown or to the last remaining player if all other players have folded. Prior to pushing the pot to the winner and collecting the winning hand, the dealer shall first collect the cards from all losing players.
  - (v) All side pots shall be awarded before the dealer awards the pot in the center of the poker table.
  - (vi) The dealer shall collect the rake.

### **Wagers**

- (1) Only players who are seated at the poker table may be permitted to receive cards and participate in each betting round.
- (2) Depending upon the particular type of poker game being dealt, a player may be required to:
  - (i) Place an ante prior to receiving any cards;
  - (ii) Place a predetermined blind bet prior to receiving any cards.
- (3) A player may only participate in the wagering during a round of play with the gaming chips which were already on the poker table in front of the player when the round of play commenced.

- (i) A player may only add to his or her gaming chips between rounds of play and may not remove any of his or her gaming chips from the poker table at any time during ongoing play.
- (ii) A player who depletes his or her funds on the poker table prior to the completion of a round of play shall be deemed to be "all-in."
  - (A) An "all-in" player shall retain financial interest in the outcome of the round of play, but shall only be eligible to win the amount of the pot to which he or she contributed;
  - (B) An "all-in" player shall continue to receive any cards to which he or she would normally be entitled; and

- (C) Betting shall continue unimpeded among the other players by generating a separate secondary pot, which only those players shall be eligible to win.
- (4) A verbal statement of "fold," "check," "call," "raise," or an announcement of a specific size wager by a player, assuming it is within the rules of the poker game being played and the minimum and maximum wager limits for the poker table, shall be binding on the player if it is that player's turn to act.
- (5) A player who announces a bet or raise of a certain amount but places a different amount of gaming chips in the pot shall be required to correct his or her bet or raise to the announced amount in accordance with the instructions of the dealer.
- (6) A player shall be considered to have placed a bet if the player:
- (i) Pushes gaming chips forward to indicate the intent of placing a bet;
  - (ii) Releases gaming chips into the pot; or
  - (iii) Releases gaming chips at a sufficient distance from the player and towards the pot to make it obvious that it is intended as a bet.
- (7) A player shall not be permitted to make a bet and thereafter attempt to increase the amount of that bet.
- (i) If the player wishes to add additional gaming chips to the bet, the player must indicate at the time the bet is being made that the bet is not yet complete.
  - (ii) A player who puts the proper amount of gaming chips into the pot to call a bet, without indicating his or her intention to raise, may not thereafter raise the previous bet.
- (8) It shall be the dealer's responsibility to ensure that no player touches any of the gaming chips placed into the pot.
- (9) Unless a raise has been verbally announced by that player, a player who puts into the pot a single gaming chip that is larger than required is assumed to have only called the preceding bet and to be awaiting change from the dealer.
- (10) Unless specifically posted to the contrary, a player shall be permitted to raise after he or she has previously checked in a betting round.

### **Hold 'em Poker; Procedures for Dealing of Cards; Completion of Each Round of Play**

- (1) Hold 'em poker shall be played to determine a winning high hand only.
- (2) Each poker table shall be restricted to a maximum of eleven players. Each player who elects to participate in a round of play may be required to place an ante.

- (3) The order in which the cards shall be dealt and the order in which players shall be required or have the option to bet shall be determined as follows:
  - (i) A flat disk called the "button" shall be used to indicate an imaginary dealer;
  - (ii) At the commencement of play, the button shall be placed in front of the first player to the right of the dealer; and
  - (iii) Thereafter, the button shall rotate around the table in a clockwise manner after each round of play.
- (4) The player (Player A) to the immediate left of the button shall be required to initiate the first betting round by placing a blind bet (small blind) in accordance with the posted table requirements. The player immediately to the left of Player A will be required to place a blind bet double the size of player A's blind bet (big blind).
- (5) Starting with the player to the immediate left of the button and continuing in a clockwise rotation around the poker table, the dealer shall deal two rounds of cards face down to each player, with the player with the button being the last player to receive a card each time.
- (6) Following the placement of the blind bet(s), each player shall in turn, in a clockwise rotation around the poker table, either fold, call or raise the bet. The option to raise shall also apply to the player who made the blind bet(s). After the last player has responded to the most recent bet, the betting round shall be considered complete.
- (7) The dealer shall then burn the top card of the deck and proceed to deal three community cards face up in the center of the table. The next betting round shall commence with the option to bet or check belonging to the first player to the left of the button who has not folded. Each subsequent player may, in clockwise rotation, fold, call, raise the bet or, if preceding players have not made a bet, make an opening bet or check. The betting round shall be considered complete when each player has either folded or called in response to the most recent bet.
- (8) Upon completion of the betting round, the dealer shall again burn the top card of the deck and then deal a fourth community card face up in the center of the table. The next betting round shall be commenced and completed in accordance with the requirements of (7) above.
- (9) Upon completion of the betting round required by (8) above, the dealer shall again burn the top card of the deck and then deal a fifth and final community card face up in the center of the table. The final betting round shall be commenced and completed in accordance with the requirements of (7) above.
- (10) If more than one player remaining in the round of play after the final betting round has been completed, a showdown shall be used to determine the winner of the pot. Each player remaining in the game shall form his or her highest-ranking five-card high poker hand by using two of the five community cards available on the table. The winner of the pot shall be the player with the highest ranking poker hand. If the highest ranking five card high poker hand that each of the remaining players can form is comprised of the five community cards, all players remaining in the round of play shall share equally in the pot.

## **Texas Hold 'Em - Object of the Game**

- (1) In Texas Hold 'Em, players receive two cards face down and five community cards are displayed, face up, on the board. Players make the best five-card poker hand out of their two cards and these five board cards. There are four separate betting rounds in Texas Hold 'Em.
- (2) In Texas Hold 'Em there is a "Dealer Button" which is passed around the table. The player at whose seat the "Dealer Button" rests has the last action on the betting round.
- (3) There are two "Blind" bets in Texas Hold 'Em. These bets are designed to stimulate action and are placed in the two positions immediately to the left of the "Dealer Button". The second of these "Blind" bets (the "Big Blind") is the larger of the two blinds. Both blinds are considered "live" and a raise may be made when the player's betting turn is reached.

## **General Operating Rules for All Types of Poker; Handling of Irregularities**

- (1) It shall be the responsibility of each player to ensure that his or her hand has lost to the other hands at the table before discarding the hand
- (2) In all disputes in which a ruling, interpretation clarification or intervention is required, the decision of the poker shift supervisor shall be final.
- (3) Each player shall be required to keep all cards dealt to the player in full view of the dealer at all times. The dealer shall ensure compliance with this requirement.
- (4) At the showdown, a "winning hand must be clearly displayed in its entirety and property identified. The player initiating the final wager shall be the first player to show his or her hand at the showdown; all other players who have not folded shall then reveal their hands in a clockwise rotation. Any player holding hand may concede his or her rights to the pot and discard the hand; provided, however, that the poker room may require the disclosure of any discarded hands.
- (5) Misdeals shall cause all the cards to be returned to the dealer for a reshuffle. The following errors shall be cause for a misdeal:
  - (i) Failure to shuffle and cut the cards;
  - (ii) Dealing to an incorrect starting position if the error has been detected prior to two players voluntarily placing wagers into the pot;
  - (iii) If more than one card is found face-up in the deck; and
  - (iv) Failure to deal to an eligible seated player, if the error has been detected prior to two or more players voluntarily placing wagers into the pot.

- (6) If one or more cards are mistakenly dealt to an ineligible player, only those cards dealt to that player shall be discarded and the round of play shall be continued.
- (7) If at any time during a round of play, missing cards are discovered or additional cards are found, the round of play shall be called dead, all gaming chips in the pot shall be returned to the appropriate player and the deck shall be replaced.
- (8) A card found face-upwards in the deck shall not be used in the game and shall be placed with the pile of discarded cards.
- (9) A player who fails to take reasonable means to protect his or her hand shall have no redress if his or her hand becomes a fouled hand or the dealer accidentally collects the hand.
  - (i) If a protected hand comes into contact with discarded cards, every effort shall be made to reconstruct the hand and complete the round of play.
  - (ii) A player who has a protected hand collected by the dealer or fouled by discarded cards shall be entitled to a refund from the pot of all monies that he or she put in the pot if the player has been a victim of and not a contributor to the error.
  - (iii) A player who leaves the table without comment and has an unprotected hand shall be assumed to have no interest in the pot, and his or her cards shall be collected and discarded
- (10) Verbal statements which are clearly audible by and directed to the dealer shall always have precedence over actions and gestures and are considered binding on the player whose turn it is to act.
  - (i) A player shall be deemed to have folded if, when faced with making or calling a wager, he or she discards his or her hand face-down towards the pile of discarded cards or the pot.
  - (ii) If a player is obligated to place a wager by virtue of a verbal statement or forced betting situation, throwing away his or her cards does not relieve the player of that obligation.
- (11) If a card is accidentally dealt off the table, it shall not be used in that round of play and shall be placed with the pile of discarded cards after a thorough examination by the dealer.

### **Conduct of Players**

- (1) Each player in a poker game shall play the game solely to improve his or her chance of winning and shall take no action to improve another player's chance of winning. No player may communicate any information to another player, which could assist the other player in any manner respecting the outcome of a poker game.
- (2) A poker room which has reasonable cause to believe that a player has acted or is acting in violation of (1) above shall require the player to leave the game.

## **Poker Tournament; Tournament Overview; Entry Fees; Registration**

MTT - A tournament where each player begins with the same number of chips and play is conducted at more than one table until, eventually, one player wins all the chips. Payouts of prizes are based on the number of players entering the tournament.

### **See game schedule for weekly list of all MTT games and times**

#### **Registration:**

1) Before playing in any multi table tournament (MTT) player must acquire a NO LIMITS VIP player card by showing id at the cage. Cage employee enters player data (Name, City, State, DOB) into computer and prints out a NO LIMITS VIP card containing player name and unique player id #. Player is now eligible to register for any MTT or Sit N Go (SNG).

2) Registration signup is held at the cage. Player hands buy-in dollar amount and NO LIMITS VIP player card to cage employee. Cage employee scans player id # into computer and generates table and seat # for player. Then a three ply registration slip (RS) (white, pink, and yellow copy) is printed out. On RS is player name, date, time of tournament, table and seat number. Also on RS is respective buy-in amount, and if a re-buy/add on multi table tournament (RMTT), the respective amount for a single re-buy/add on for that particular RMTT. Player receives both white and yellow copy of RS, cage keeps pink RS for record. Player is allowed to register for a MTT one hour before start of tournament through one to two hours after start of tournament depending on blind structure. When there is a bounty tournament, the player will keep the pink slip and must display at poker table while playing. This pink slip represents player's bounty.

#### **Seating:**

At table player hands white RS to dealer (dealer checks to confirm player is in correct tournament, table and seat). Dealer returns white RS to player. Player can only buy-in once at the cage to each MTT. The cage keeps the pink RS unless it is a bounty tournament. Should any discrepancies arise, management can check pink RS to determine who registered to play in a MTT. When a player is participating in a non re-buy MTT, the player keeps the yellow RS for their records. Once MTT play is complete, the player also keeps the white RS for their records. When a player is participating in an RMTT, both the yellow and white RS are required to be presented to the dealer for the re-buy/add on process.

#### **Playing MTT:**

At start of MTT, tournament director (TD) announces details of tournament including any pertinent rules. Players receive scheduled breaks during each MTT.

#### **Prize Payouts:**

The TD is responsible for paying out all winners. Prize payouts will be posted in a convenient viewing area for all players to see.

#### **Accounting for Chips:**

At the end of the tournament TD will account for all tournament chips by counting chips at the conclusion of play (normally the final table). Total number of chips will be cross checked against number of players in tournament, how many chips each player started with and how many re-buys, if any. For example, at the end of a no re-buy MTT consisting of 43 players each starting with 5000 chips the total number of chips

should be close to or exactly 215k chips. There is a chance total chips may not total exactly because of the coloring up process of chips (see below).

### **Color Up Process:**

In order to prevent players from developing chip stacks that are too large to manage, as the blinds increase the smaller denomination chips are removed in exchange for more valuable chips in a process known as coloring up. A tournament is using \$25, \$100, \$500, and \$1000 chips with starting blinds of 25-50. Once the blinds reach 100-200, there is no longer a need for a \$25 chip. If you have a quantity of four \$25 chips, they are exchanged (colored-up) for one \$100 chip. If you have an odd quantity of \$25 chips, say 1 through 3, then the Chip Race method is used to determine what happens to the odd chips. One card is dealt for each odd chip that players are unable to change up to the next value chip. Cards are dealt clockwise starting with the first seat, with each player receiving all cards before moving to the next player. All the odd chips are colored-up and then divided between the players based on the results of the Chip Race. The player with the highest card (ties decided by suit rank) is awarded one chip, the second highest card is awarded the next chip, and so forth, until all the lower denomination chips are exchanged (each player may only receive one chip). For the purpose of the chip race, the suit rank is spades (highest), hearts, diamonds and clubs. If an odd number of lower denomination chips are left the player with the highest card remaining receives a new chip if he or she has half or more of the quantity of lower denomination chips needed, otherwise nothing. A player may not be eliminated from the event by the Chip Race process. If a player has no chips after the race cards have been dealt, he is given a chip of the higher denomination before anyone else is awarded a chip.

Therefore, the color up process can lead to a final chip count that is close to but not the true final chip total.

### **Re-buy MTT:**

During RMTT each player is allowed a specific number of re-buys/add on based on that tournament. In order to perform a re-buy/add on, the player will hand both yellow and white RS copies to the dealer and/or tournament director. Players are allowed to re-buy after the first hand and up until end of the first break. During an add on tournament players can only add on at the first break.

### **Re-buy/Add on Process:**

Player will notify dealer when a re-buy/add on is desired. Player will then hand over their yellow and white RS copies to the dealer or tournament director and both yellow and white RS copies will be stamped by the dealer or tournament director for each re-buy/add on. After the max re-buy amount is reached by a player the dealer will keep the yellow RS copy for tracking purposes. The player retains the white RS copy.

### **End of re-buy period:**

At the end of the re-buy period, players are given a 10 minute break. Players are allowed to re-buy during break only from the dealer at their respective seated table. The re-buy period is over at end of break. Re-buy dealer at each table will retrieve all yellow RS copies with stamps or no stamps on them. Once RMTT play is complete, the players keep only the white RS copy for their records.

### **Accounting for re-buys/add ons:**

The TD accounts for re-buys/add ons by monitoring three items: 1) The number of re-buy/add on chips sold, 2) the number of stamps on the yellow re-buy/add on slips and 3) the amount of re-buy/add on money retrieved. Step 1): At start of MTT, each dealer is given the same amount of re-buy chips in their dealer tray. At end of re-buy period, the TD counts within each tray the remaining non sold re-buy chips. TD then subtracts that total from starting re-buy amount to determine number of re-buy chips sold at each table. Step

2): TD collects from each table all the re-buy slips (stamped or not) and counts number of stamps on each slip to determine number of re-buys. Step 3): TD collects all re-buy money from all tables. Example: 31 re-buys, 3k in chips at \$30 each = 93k chips sold = 31 stamps = \$930 re-buy money.

**Bounty Process:**

A **bounty** is a feature in some poker tournaments that rewards a player for eliminating another player. When a player is eliminated, player A must hand over pink slip to player B who knocked him out. Player B may knock out other players and accumulate number of pink bounty slips. When player B is eliminated, he can retrieve his bounty money at the cage by converting his pink bounty slips into money.

**Policy for No Shows:**

If a player has registered for a MTT but is a late arrival or does not return, player's chips will be put into play and blinded off accordingly.

