

Giancarlo's Home Poker Tournament Guidelines

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This document does not explain the rules of Poker or Texas Hold'em. Instead, it details the rules and guidelines specific to a home tournament.

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. A player must run out of chips before re-buying. **Re-buys are half the cost of the initial buy-in for half the amount of the chips.**

Add-ons

If re-buys are allowed and after the end of the re-buy period, you have **not re-bought** you will have the option to add-on regardless the size of your chip stack. **Add-ons will be half the price of the initial buy-in for half the size of the starting chip stack.**

Note: Amount of re-buy and add-ons may affect your all time poker rankings.

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 decreasing/increasing the pot.

Table and Seat Assignment

Table and seat assignments will be decided randomly on request.

Dealer Button Assignment

Players at a table shall draw for the button.

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.

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. This can be overlooked if players involved simply agree to let one or the other have the odd chip. This will be overlooked if coloring up would bust out a player.

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

If you are going to be late, you must notify the Tournament Director or host of this. Registration is from 7pm to 7:30pm. Cash will be taken around 7:30pm. Actual game starts between 7:30pm and no later than 8pm. If you are late and let the TD or host know, you will be informed of the following. Either there is a player on the waiting list, which will be taking your spot at 8pm, or we will put in a chip stack and will take blinds out as it comes around.

Late players are responsible for all small and large blinds missed before they joined the game. Without this rule, they have potentially gained an advantage by arriving late. If the late player doesn't arrive by the time the first round of a *tournament* ends, then the remaining chips are removed.

Money In View

Every player at the table has the right to know how much money every other player at the table has in play. All money in play shall be in full view at all times.

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-third to two-thirds 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. Blind levels expire at the end of the hand of that blind and the timer has been reset for the next one. (E.g. There are 30 seconds left in round 3 and the small and big blind are on the table. Time expires. Clock restarts. You still do the hand with the blinds for round 3 even as round 4 counts down).

Missed Big 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.

Adjusting Blinds for Players Who Leave On Their Small Blind

Occasionally a player pays his big blind and leaves the table when it is his turn to post the small blind. If he has permanently left the table there shall be a dead small blind for that hand. On the subsequent hand the dealer button shall be advanced through the seat of the player who has missed his small blind, and the player whose turn it is to post the small blind shall post it on the button, to avoid a dead button.

Missed Big Blind and Leaving Early.

If you are in the middle of a game and all of the sudden you need to leave for any reason, your stack will be blinded out. If your stack is out and places in the money, then you will get the money. When the last portion of the stack is in the blinds, it will be as if the player is all-in and can win whatever portion of the pot they contributed. Also for this purpose the empty chair can win if this scenario happens. Empty chair is in the big blind; there are calls, but no raises. We go to the flop and everyone checks. Go to the turn and everyone checks. Go to the river and everyone checks. Cards are turned and the empty chair has the winning hand.

Blind Levels

Blinds will go up every 20 minutes. This should be ample time to make a play or fold with doing your “poker facial features”. Please be considerate of other players and play your hand when your turn comes around. Would like everyone to play at least once per level of blinds when the blinds come to them. *Last thing I want to do is bring out the kitchen timer for 30 seconds to play or fold at the sound of the ding if there are major complaints of this. Please respect those around you and play when it's your turn.*

Breaks

Breaks will take place every *playing* hour unless everyone still playing wishes to forgo the break at that hour. If you leave any other time and you are not around to place your bets, you will be folded. Any other breaks other than specified is at the discretion of the tournament director.

Buy-in

Buy in is \$20.00 for determined amount of chips (between 600 to 1000). The game is No Limit Texas Hold Em. You must bet the amount of the big blind to begin playing and then you can raise on **any** amount big or small. You can go all-in on the first hand if you want. If there are 10 players or less playing, there will be a re-buy option of \$10.00, which will expire at the end of the final hand, at the end of the 3rd round. A playing hand is in progress when the small and big blind are on the table. The last chance for re-buys occurs at the end of the hand. Once all re-buys have taken place if applicable, round 4 starts and there is no more rebuys.

Adjusting Blinds for Players Who Leave on Their Button

Deleted as it does not apply to our games and there is a section for posting blinds for absent players.

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

Limit Play

Except for a player going all-in, each bet and raise is defined by the structure of the game.

There are up to 5 bets (1 bet and 4 raises) per round.

For example, in a \$2/\$4 game (blinds of \$1 and \$2), the bet in the first two rounds is set at \$2 while the bet/raise in the last two rounds is set at \$4. In each of the first two rounds, the maximum outlay for any player is \$2 x 5 bets or \$10 (and therefore \$20 for each of the second two rounds.)

No-Limit Play

There is no limit on the amount a player may bet up to everything he has in front of him. *On 4-2-2007 all votes that were counted indicated there is no minimum bet once the big blind has been met.*

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

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 better 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.

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.

An example of a verbal string raise is when player A bets 500 and player B responds, "That's a nice bet fella. I'm gonna see your 500...and raise it 1000."

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.”
- One player per hand. No poker advice on the table during the hand. To a 3rd party still playing this can either help him, which will upset the poker player who received ill advisement or upset the 3rd party player because he lost a hand to a conspiring pair.

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 who made the last raise. If for some reason it can not be determined between the two player in hand, and the dealer cannot determine who made the last raise, the chip 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.

For this case when the first player declares they are all-in and a player in turn calls, the calling player is obligated to match the initiating all-in player's chips or all his chips should it be less then the initiating play. If a 3rd player calls, then that player is obligated to the exact same obligation as the initiating player.

(e.g. Giancarlo goes all in and his total chips are 6000. Marty calls and his total amount is 3500. Mark calls and his chips are 7000. Marty gets the best hand. He collects 3500 from Giancarlo and 3500 from Mark. Giancarlo went all In for 6000. Mark, after paying Marty, is still obligated to pay Giancarlo 2500)

(e.g. Marty goes all in with 3500. Mark has 7000 and says, "I call." Giancarlo has 6000 and says "I call." Mark has the winning hand. Mark gets 3500 from each player. Had Mark said, "I'm all in," instead and Giancarlo said, "I call." Mark wins the hand and now Giancarlo loses his entire stack.)

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 may become the permanent dealer until the second player is eliminated, and so on.

Basic Dealer Procedures

When dealing the cards, please keep the deck low so nobody sees the bottom card. Also all burn cards will be face down, on the table for everyone to see. Please keep cut cards at the bottom of the deck when dealing.

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.

Tournament Director

Host

The Tournament Director is usually the host unless the host decides to relinquish the duties to another person. Tournament Director's decisions on disputes are final.

Table Leader

Is designated by the Tournament Director for each table to handle disputes at that table. If the Table Leader himself is involved in a dispute, then the Tournament Director is called. The Table leader may be called if there is a dispute involving the Tournament Director. Decisions are final.

And finally....

No cheating of any sort!!! A Smith and Wesson still beat 5 aces.

Credits

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

- Robert's Rules of Poker
- Hold'em Forum – Running a Home Poker Tournament
- Dr. Neau's Poker Tournament Guidelines