



**POKER TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS ASSN.
2015 Rules, Version 1.0, Aug. 20, 2015
Includes Recommended Procedures
& Illustration Addendum**

The Poker TDA is a voluntary poker industry association founded in 2001. The TDA mission is to increase global uniformity of poker tournament rules. TDA Rules supplement the rules of this house. In case of conflict with a gaming agency, the agency rules apply.

General Concepts

1: Floor Decisions

The best interest of the game and fairness are top priorities in decision-making. Unusual circumstances occasionally dictate that decisions in the interest of fairness take priority over technical rules. Floor decisions are final.

2: Player Responsibilities

Players should verify registration data and seat assignments, protect their hands, make their intentions clear, follow the action, act in turn, defend their right to act, keep cards visible and chips correctly stacked, remain at the table with a live hand, speak up if they see a mistake, call for a clock when warranted, transfer tables promptly, follow one player to a hand, know and comply with the rules, practice proper etiquette, and generally contribute to an orderly event.

3: Official Terminology of Tournament Poker

Official betting terms are simple, unmistakable, time-honored declarations like: bet, raise, call, fold, check, all-in, complete, and pot (pot-limit only). Regional terms may also meet this test. Also, players must use gestures with caution when facing action; tapping the table is a check. It is the responsibility of players to make their intentions clear: using non-standard terms or gestures is at player's risk and may result in a ruling other than what the player intended. See also Rules 2 & 42.

4: Electronic Devices and Communication

Players may not talk on a phone at the table. Ring tones, music, etc. should be inaudible to others. House rules apply to other types of electronic devices and communication.

5: Official Language

English-only will be enforced in the U.S. during play of hands. At non-U.S. venues, the house will post & announce acceptable language(s).

Seating, Breaking & Balancing Tables

6: Random Correct Seating

Tournament and satellite seats will be randomly assigned. A player who started in the wrong seat with a correct chip stack will move to the correct seat & take his current total chip stack with him.

7: Alternates, Late Registration, & Re-Entries

Alternates, players registering late, and re-entries will be sold full stacks, randomly seated at any position, and dealt in except between SB and button.

8: Special Needs

Accommodations for players with special needs will be made when possible.

9: Breaking Tables

Players from a broken table will be assigned new tables and seats by a 2-step random process. They can get any seat including a blind or button and be dealt in except between the small blind and button. See Illustration Addendum.

10: Balancing Tables and Halting Play

A: To balance in flop & mixed-games, the player who will be big blind next is moved to the worst position, including taking a single big blind when available, even if that means the seat has the big blind twice. Worst position is never the small blind. In stud-only, players move by position (last seat to open at the short table is the seat filled).

B: In mixed games (ex: HORSE), when the game shifts from hold'em to stud, after the last hold'em hand the button moves to the position it would be if the next hand was hold'em and is frozen there during stud. The player moved in stud is the player who would be big blind if the game were hold'em for that hand. Shifting to hold'em the button starts where it was frozen.

C: The table from which a player is moved will be specified by a predetermined procedure.

D: Full-table play will halt on tables 3 or more players short of the table with the most players. Play halts on other formats (ex: 6-hand and turbos) at TDs discretion. TDs may waive halting play and waiver is not a misdeal. As the event progresses, at TD's discretion tables may be more tightly balanced.

11: Number of Players at Final Table

Final tables will have a full table for the event, plus one. (9-handed events seat 10 at the final table, 8-handed stud seats 9, 6-handed seats 7, etc.). No final table should seat more than 10. This rule does not apply to heads-up events.

Pots / Showdown

12: Declarations. Cards Speak at Showdown

Cards speak to determine the winner. Verbal declarations of hand value are not binding at showdown but deliberately miscalling a hand may be penalized. Any player in the hand or not, should speak up if he thinks a mistake is being made in reading hands or awarding the pot.

13: Tabling Cards & Killing Winning Hand

A: Proper tabling is both 1) turning all cards face up on the table and 2) allowing the dealer and players to read the hand clearly. "All cards" means both hole cards in hold'em, all 4 hole cards in Omaha, all 7 cards in 7-stud, etc.

B: At showdown a player must protect his hand while waiting for it to be read (See also Rule 60). If a player does not fully table his cards, then mucks thinking he has won, he does so at his risk. If the cards are not 100% identifiable and the TD rules the hand was not clearly read, the player has no claim to the pot. The TDs decision on whether a hand was sufficiently tabled is final.

C: Dealers cannot kill a hand that was properly tabled and obviously the winner.

14: Live Cards at Showdown

Discarding non-tabled cards face down does not automatically kill them; a player may change his mind and table his cards if they remain 100% identifiable. Cards are killed by the dealer when pushed into the muck.

15: Face Up for All-Ins

All hands will be tabled without delay once a player is all-in and all betting action by all other players in the hand is complete. No player who is either all-in or has called all betting action may muck his hand

without tabling. All hands in both the main and sidepot(s) must be tabled and are live. See Illustration Addendum.

16: Non All-In Showdowns

A: In a non all-in showdown, if cards are not spontaneously tabled or discarded, the TD may enforce an order of show. The last aggressive player on the final betting round (final street) must table first. If there was no bet on the final street, the player who would act first if it were a betting round must table first (i.e. first seat left of the button in flop games, high hand showing in stud, low hand in razz, etc.).

B: A non all-in showdown is uncontested if all but one player mucks face down without tabling. The last player with live cards wins and he is not required to show his cards.

17: Asking to See a Hand

A: Players not still in possession of cards at showdown, or who have mucked their cards face down without tabling, lose any rights or privileges to ask to see any hand.

B: If there was a river bet, any caller has an inalienable right to see the last aggressor's hand on request ("the hand he paid to see") provided the caller retains or has tabled his cards. TDs discretion governs all other requests such as to see the hand of another caller, or if there was no river bet. See Illustration Addendum [adopted 2013].

18: Playing the Board at Showdown

To play the board, a player must table **all** hole **cards** to get part of the pot (See Rule 13-A).

19: Awarding Odd Chips

First, odd chips will be broken into the smallest denomination in play. A) Board games with 2 or more high or low hands: the odd chip goes to the first seat left of the button. B) Stud, razz, and if 2 or more high or low hands in stud/8: the odd chip goes to the high card by suit in the best 5-card hand. C) H/L split: the odd chip in the total pot goes to the high side. D) If identical hands win both high and low (ex: 2 Omaha/8 wheels) the pot is split as evenly as possible. See Illustration Addendum.

20: Side Pots

Each side pot will be split separately.

21: Disputed Pots

The right to dispute a finished hand ends when a new hand begins (see Rule 22). If a hand finishes during a break, the right to dispute ends 1 minute after the pot is awarded.

General Procedures

22: New Hand & New Limits

A new level will not be announced until the clock reaches zero. The new level applies to the next hand. A hand begins on the first riffle, push of the shuffler button, or on the dealer push.

23: Chip Race, Scheduled Color Ups

A: At scheduled color-ups, chips will be raced off starting in seat 1, with a maximum of one chip awarded to a player. Players can't be raced out of play: a player losing his last chip(s) in a race will get 1 chip of the lowest denomination still in play.

B: Players must have their chips fully visible and are encouraged to witness the chip race.

C: If after the race, a player still has chips of a removed denomination, they will be exchanged for current denominations only at equal value. Chips of removed denominations that do not fully total at least the smallest denomination still in play will be removed without compensation.

24: Cards & Chips Kept Visible, Countable, & Manageable. Discretionary Color-Ups

A: Players are entitled to a reasonable estimation of an opponent's chip count; thus chips should be kept in countable stacks. The TDA recommends clean stacks of 20 chips each as a standard. Higher denomination chips must be visible and identifiable at all times.

B: TDs control the number & denomination of chips in play and may color up at their discretion. Discretionary color ups are to be announced.

C: Players must keep live hands in plain view at all times.

25: 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.

26: Re-buys

Players may not miss a hand. If a player declares intent to rebuy before a hand, he is playing chips behind and must make the re-buy.

27: Calling for a Clock

A clock will be approved only after reasonable time passes. Any player in the event may request a clock. If the floor approves the request, a player has up to 50 seconds to act. If action is not taken before time expires, there will be a 10-second count. If the player does not act by the end of the count, the hand is dead. A tie goes to the player. TDs may reduce the time allowed to act and take other steps to fit the game format and stop persistent delays. See also Rules 2 and 65.

28: Rabbit Hunting

Rabbit hunting or revealing cards that would have come if the hand had not ended is not allowed.

Player Present / Eligible for Hand

29: At Your Seat

A player must be at his seat when the last card is dealt on the initial deal in order to have a live hand. A player not then at his seat is dealt in, he may not look at his cards, and the hand is immediately killed after the initial deal. His blinds and antes are posted and if dealt the stud bring-in card he posts the bring-in. A player must be at his seat to call time. "At your seat" means within reach of your chair. This rule is not intended to encourage players being out of their seats while in a hand. In stud, house rules may require additional cards be dealt to the killed hand in some situations.

30: At the Table with Action Pending

Players with live hands (including players all-in or otherwise finished betting) must remain at the table until the showdown concludes. Leaving the table is incompatible with protecting your hand and following the action, and is subject to penalty.

Button / Blinds

31: Dead Button

Tournament play will use a dead button.

32: Dodging Blinds

Players who intentionally dodge any blind when moving from a broken table will incur a penalty.

33: Button in Heads-up

When heads-up, the small blind has the button, is dealt the last card, and acts first pre-flop and last on all other betting rounds. When starting heads-up play, the button may need to be adjusted to ensure no player has the big blind twice in a row.

Dealing Rules

34: Misdeals

A: Misdeals include but are not necessarily limited to: 1) 2 or more boxed cards on the initial deal; 2) first card dealt to the wrong seat; 3) cards dealt to a seat not entitled to a hand; 4) a seat entitled to a hand is dealt out; 5) In stud, if any of the first 2 down cards are exposed by dealer error; 6) In flop games, if either of the first 2 cards dealt off the deck or any other 2 downcards are exposed by dealer error. House standards apply for draw games (ex: lowball).

B: Players may be dealt 2 consecutive cards on the button.

C: In a misdeal, the re-deal is an exact re-play: the button does not move, no new players are seated, and limits stay the same. Cards are dealt to players on penalty or who were not at their seats for the original deal, then their hands are killed. The original deal and re-deal count as one hand for a player on penalty, not two.

D: Once substantial action occurs a misdeal cannot be declared; the hand must proceed (See Rule 35).

35: Substantial Action

Substantial Action is either A) any 2 actions in turn, at least one of which puts chips in the pot (i.e. any 2 actions except 2 checks or 2 folds) or B) any combination of 3 actions in turn (check, bet, raise, call, fold). See Rules 34-D & 40-B.

36: Four-Card Flops and Premature Cards

If the flop has 4 rather than 3 cards, exposed or not, the floor will be called. The dealer then scrambles the 4 cards face down, the floor randomly selects one as the next burn card and the other 3 are the flop. For prematurely dealt cards, see Recommended Procedure 5.

Play: Bets & Raises

37: Methods of Betting: Verbal and Chips

A: Bets are by verbal declaration and/or pushing out chips. If a player does both, whichever is first defines the bet. If simultaneous, a clear and reasonable verbal declaration takes precedence, otherwise the chips play.

B: Verbal declarations may be general ("call", "raise"), a specific amount only ("one thousand") or both ("raise, one thousand").

C: For all betting rules, declaring a specific amount only is the same as silently pushing out an equal amount. Ex: Declaring "two hundred" is the same as silently pushing out 200 in chips.

38: Acting in Turn

A: Players must act in turn verbally and/or by pushing out chips. Action in turn is binding and commits chips to the pot that stay in the pot.

B: Players must wait for clear bet amounts before acting. Ex: NLHE, A says "raise" (but no amount), and B quickly folds. B should wait to act until A's raise amount is clear.

39: Binding Declarations / Undercalls in Turn

A: General verbal declarations in turn (such as “Call” or “Raise”) commit a player to the full current action. See Illustration Addendum

B: A player undercalls by declaring or pushing out less than the call amount without first declaring “call”. An undercall is a mandatory full call if made in turn facing 1) any bet heads-up or 2) the opening bet on any round multi-way. In other situations, TD’s discretion applies. The posted BB is the opening first round bet in blind games. All-in buttons greatly reduce undercall frequency (See Recommended Procedure 1). This rule addresses when a player must make a full call and when, at TDs discretion, he may forfeit the underbet and fold.

40: Action Out of Turn (OOT)

A: Any action out of turn (check, call, or raise) is subject to penalty and is binding if action to the OOT player does not change. A check, call or fold by the rightful player does not change action. If action changes, the OOT action is not binding; any bet or raise is returned to the OOT player who has all options including: calling, raising, or folding. An OOT fold is binding.

B: A player skipped by OOT action must defend his right to act. If there is reasonable time and the skipped player does not speak up before substantial action (Rule 35) OOT occurs to his left, the OOT action is binding. The floor will rule on how to treat the skipped hand. See Illustration Addendum.

41: Methods of Calling

Standard and acceptable forms of calling include: A) saying “call”; B) pushing out chips equal to a call; C) silently pushing out an overchip; or D) silently pushing out multiple chips equal to a call under the multi-chip rule (Rule 46). Silently betting chip(s) relatively tiny to the bet (ex: blinds 2k-4k. A bets 50k, B then silently puts out one 1k chip) is non-standard, strongly discouraged, subject to penalty, and will be interpreted at TDs discretion, including being ruled a full call.

42: Methods of Raising

In no-limit or pot-limit, a raise must be made by A) pushing out the full amount in one motion; B) verbally declaring the full amount prior to pushing out chips; or C) verbally declaring “raise” prior to pushing out the exact call amount then completing the raise in one additional motion. In option C, if other than the exact call amount but less than a minimum raise is first put out, it will be ruled a minimum raise. It is the responsibility of players to make their intentions clear.

43: Raise Amounts

A: A raise must be at least equal to the largest prior bet or raise of the current betting round. If a player raises 50% or more of the largest prior bet but less than a minimum raise, he must make a full minimum raise. If less than 50% it is a call unless “raise” is first declared. Declaring an amount or pushing out the same amount of chips is the same (See Rule 37-C). Ex: NLHE, opening bet is 1000, verbally declaring “Fourteen hundred” or silently pushing out 1400 in chips are both calls unless raise is first declared. See Illustration Addendum.

B: Without other clarifying information, declaring raise and an amount is the total bet. Ex: A opens for 2000, B declares “Raise, eight thousand.” The total bet is 8000.

44: Re-Opening the Bet.

In no-limit and pot limit, an all-in wager of less than a full raise does not reopen betting for a player who has already acted and is not facing at least a full raise when the action returns to him. In limit, at least 50% of a full raise is required to re-open betting for players who have already acted. See Addendum.

45: Oversized Chip Betting

When facing a bet or blind, pushing out a single oversized chip is a call if raise isn’t first declared. To raise with an oversized chip, raise must be declared before the chip hits the table surface. If raise is

declared but no amount, the raise is the maximum allowable for the chip. When not facing a bet, pushing out an oversized chip without declaration is a bet of the maximum for the chip.

46: Multiple Chip Betting

When facing a bet, unless raise is declared first, a multiple-chip bet is a call if every chip is needed to make the call; i.e. removal of just one of the smallest chips leaves less than the call amount. Example: preflop, 200-400 blinds: A raises to 1200 total (an 800 raise), B puts out two 1000 chips without declaring raise. This is just a call because removing one 1000 chip leaves less than the amount to call (1200). If the single removal of just one of the smallest chips leaves the call amount or more, the bet is governed by the 50% standard in Rule 43. See Addendum.

47: Previous Bet Chips Not Pulled In

A: If a player bets when facing a raise and has chips in front of him not yet pulled in from a prior bet, the “prior” chips (and any change due) may affect whether his action is ruled a call or re-raise. Because several possibilities exist, players should declare their bets before putting out new chips on top of prior-bet chips not yet pulled in.

B: If facing action, clearly pulling back prior bet chip(s) binds a player to call or raise.

48: Number of Allowable Raises

There is no cap on the number of raises in no-limit and pot-limit. In limit play there is a limit to raises even when heads-up until the event is down to 2 players; the house limit applies.

49: Accepted Action

Poker is a game of alert, continuous observation. It is the caller’s responsibility to determine the correct amount of an opponent’s bet before calling, regardless of what is stated by others. If a caller requests a count but receives incorrect information from a dealer or player, then pushes out that amount, the caller has accepted the full correct action & is subject to the correct wager or all-in amount. As with all situations, Rule 1 may apply at TD’s discretion.

50: Pot Size & Pot-Limit Bets

A: Players are entitled to a pot count in pot-limit only. Dealers will not count the pot in limit and no-limit.

B: Pre-flop a short all-in blind will not affect calculation of the maximum pot limit bet. Post-flop, bets are based on actual pot size.

C: Declaring “I bet the pot” is not a valid bet in no-limit but it does bind the player to making a valid bet (at least a minimum bet), and may be subject to penalty. If the player is facing a bet he must make a valid raise.

51: String Bets and Raises

Dealers will call string bets and raises.

52: Non-Standard & Unclear Betting

Players use unofficial betting terms and gestures at their own risk. These may be interpreted to mean other than what the player intended. Also, if a declared bet can reasonably have multiple meanings, it will be ruled the lesser value. Ex: NLHE 200-400 blinds, player declares “I bet five.” If it is unclear whether “five” means 500 or 5,000, the bet is 500. See Rules 2, 3 & 42. See Illustration Addendum.

53: Non-Standard Folds

Anytime before the end of the ***final*** betting round, folding in turn if there’s no bet to you (ex: facing a check or first to act post-flop) or folding out of turn are binding folds subject to penalty.

54: Conditional Statements

Conditional statements of future action are non-standard and strongly discouraged. At TDs discretion they may be binding and/or penalized. Example: "if – then" statements such as "If you bet, I will raise."

55: Count of Opponent's Chip Stack

Players are entitled to a reasonable estimation of opponents' chip stacks (Rule 24). A player may only request a more precise count if the action is on him and he faces an all-in bet. The all-in player is not required to count; on request the dealer or floor will count it. Accepted action applies (See Rule 49). The visible and countable chipstack rule (Rule 24) greatly helps accuracy in counting.

56: Over-Betting Expecting Change

Betting should not be used to obtain change. Pushing out more than the intended bet can confuse everyone at the table. All chips pushed out silently are at risk of being counted **in** the bet. Example: The opening bet is 325 to A and he silently puts out 525 (one 500 and one 25), expecting 200 change. This is a raise to 650 under the multiple chip rule (Rule 46).

57: All-In with Chips Found Behind Later

If A bets all-in and a hidden chip is found behind after a player has called, the TD will determine if the chip behind is part of accepted action (Rule 49). If not part of the action, A will not be paid off for the chip(s) if he wins. If A loses he is not saved by the chip(s) and the TD may award the chip(s) to the winning caller.

Play: Other

58: Chips Out of View and in Transit

Players may not hold or transport chips in a way that takes them out of view. A player who does so will forfeit the chips and may be disqualified. The forfeited chips will be taken out of play. The TDA recommends the house provide racks or bags to transport chips when needed.

59: Lost and Found Chips

Lost and found chips will be taken out of play and returned to tournament inventory.

60: Accidentally Killed / Fouled Hands

A player must protect his hand at all times, including at showdown while waiting for the hand to be read. If the dealer kills a hand by mistake or if in TDs judgement a hand is fouled and cannot be identified to 100% certainty, the player has no redress and is not entitled to a refund of called bets. If the player initiated a bet or raise and hasn't been called, the uncalled amount will be returned to him. If a hand is fouled but can be identified, it remains in play despite cards exposed in the process.

61: Dead Hands and Mucking in Stud

In stud poker, if a player picks up the upcards while facing action, the hand is dead. Proper mucking in stud is turning down all up cards and pushing them all forward face down.

Etiquette & Penalties

62: No Disclosure

Players must protect other players in the tournament at all times. Therefore players, whether in the hand or not, must 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.

One-player-to-a-hand is in effect. Among other things, this rule prohibits showing a hand to or discussing strategy with another player, advisor, or spectator.

63: Exposing Cards and Proper Folding

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. When folding, cards should be pushed forward low to the table, not deliberately exposed or tossed high ("helicoptered"). See also Rule 61.

64: Ethical Play

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

65: Etiquette Violations

Repeat etiquette violations will result in penalties. Examples include but are not limited to: persistent delay of the game, unnecessarily touching other players' cards or chips, repeatedly acting out of turn, betting out of reach of the dealer, abusive conduct, and excessive chatter.

66: Warnings, Penalties, & Disqualification

A: Penalty options include verbal warnings, one or more "missed hands", one or more "missed rounds", and disqualification. Missed rounds are assessed as follows: the offender will miss one hand for every player (including him) at the table when the penalty is given multiplied by the number of penalty rounds. Repeat infractions are subject to escalating penalties. Players away from the table or on penalty may be anted or blinded out of a tournament.

B: A penalty may be invoked if a player exposes any card with action pending, throws a card off the table, violates one-player-to-a-hand, or similar incidents occur. Penalties will be invoked for soft play, abuse, disruptive behavior, or cheating.

C: A player on penalty must be away from the table. Cards are dealt to his seat, his blinds and antes are posted, and the hand is killed after each initial deal. In stud games if he is dealt the bring-in card he must post the bring-in.

D: Chips of a disqualified player shall be removed from play.



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TDA Recommended Procedures are policy suggestions to reduce errors and improve event management. They also may apply to situations with too many variations to address in one universal rule. The fairest ruling in these cases may require use of multiple rules, evaluation of all circumstances, and reliance on Rule 1 as a primary guide.

RP-1. All-In Buttons

It is advisable to use an all-in button to clearly indicate that a player's bet is "all-in." The buttons should be kept by the dealer (rather than each player). When a player bets all-in, the dealer will place the all-in button in front of the player, in full view of the rest of the table.

RP-2. Bringing in Bets is Discouraged

Routinely bringing in chips as betting and raising proceeds around the table is poor dealing practice. The reduction in bet stacks may influence the action, create confusion & increase the risk of error. The TDA recommends that dealers do not touch a player's bet unless a count is needed. Only the player currently facing action may ask the dealer to bring-in chips.

RP-3. Personal Belongings

The table surface is vital for chipstack management, dealing, and betting. The table and spaces around it (legroom & walkways) should not be cluttered by non-essential personal items. Each cardroom should clearly display its policy on items that may or may not be allowed in the tournament area.

RP-4. Disordered Stub

When cards remain to be dealt on a hand and the stub is accidentally dropped and appears it may be disordered: 1) it is first preferable to try to reconstruct the original order of the stub if possible; 2) If not possible, try to create a new stub using only the stub cards (not the muck & prior burn cards). These should be scrambled, shuffled, cut, & play then proceeds with the new stub; 3) If when the stub is dropped it becomes mixed in with the muck & burncards, then scramble the stub, muck & burncards together, shuffle, and cut. Play then proceeds with the new stub.

RP-5. Prematurely Dealt Cards

Board and burn cards are sometimes dealt prematurely by mistake, before action on the preceding round is finished. The following are general procedures for dealing with these situations:

A: For a premature flop, the flop burncard is left in place as the burn. The premature flop board cards are returned to the deck stub and reshuffled. The flop is then re-dealt (without another burn card) from the newly shuffled stub.

B: A premature turn card is put to the side. Another card is burnt, and the normal river card is used as the new turn card. After action on the turn, the premature turn card is placed back in the stub, the stub is reshuffled and a river card is dealt without an additional burn.

C: A premature river card is placed back into the remaining stub, and the premature river burn card is left in place as the river burn. Once action on the turn is completed, the stub is reshuffled and the river is dealt without a new burn card.

D: For a premature card in stud, additional cards are dealt and placed to the side along with the premature card(s) to represent an entire round of cards for the remaining live players. Once action on the round is complete, the next street is burned and dealt as normal. Once the final street is reached, the premature and additional cards set to the side are placed back into the stub. The stub is re-shuffled then the final street is dealt.

RP-6. Efficient Movement of Players

Moving players for breaking and balancing should be expeditious so as not to unduly miss blinds or otherwise delay the game. If possible, players should have racks for chip transport and sufficient color-ups should be conducted so players do not carry unnecessarily large quantities of chips (see Rules 9, 10, & 58).

RP-7. Timing of Dealer Pushes

The TDA recommends that dealers hold up the push 90 seconds prior to a scheduled break or a level change. This avoids having time expire in crucial stages of the game.



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Rule 9: Breaking Tables, 2-Step Random Process.

A 2-step random or “double-blind” process assures that there is no favoritism in distributing new seat assignments. An example of one such process: 1) show players at the breaking table the new seat cards then scramble the cards face down and form a stack; 2) the dealer then deals one playing card face up to each player. The seat cards are then dealt out with the first seat card going to the player with the highest playing card by suit showing.

Rule 15: Face Up for All-Ins. *“All cards will be tabled without delay once a player is all-in and all betting action by all other players in the hand is complete”*. This rule means that all downcards of all players will be turned up at once when at least one player is all-in and there is no chance of further betting action by the other player(s). Do not wait for the showdown to turn the cards up; do not wait for sidepots to be divided before turning up the all-in who is only in for the main pot; if betting action is finalized on any street prior to the showdown, turn the cards up at that point and then run out the remaining cards.

Example 1. NLHE. Two players remain. On the turn, Player A (the shorter stack) pushes all-in and is called by B. Turn both A and B's downcards up at this point, then burn and turn the river and proceed to showdown.

Example 2. NLHE. Three players remain.

Pre-flop, Player A (the shortest stack) pushes all-in and is called by both B and C. Do not turn cards up yet because B and C both have chips so further betting action is possible.

On the flop B and C check; betting is still possible so don't turn the cards up yet.

On the turn B pushes all-in and C calls. Turn all hands up now (A, B, and C) because no further betting is possible. Burn and turn the river then proceed to showdown. Award the sidepot between B and C first, then award the main pot. Notice: you do not keep A's cards face down until the sidepot between B and C is awarded.

Example 3. NLHE. Three players remain.

Pre-flop, Player A (the shortest stack) pushes all-in for 700 and is called by both B and C who have several thousand each left. Do not turn cards up yet because B and C both have chips so further betting action is possible.

On the flop B and C check; betting is still possible so don't turn the cards up yet.

On the turn B bets 1000 and C calls. Since both B and C still have chips and the river remains to be dealt, betting is still possible so don't turn the cards up yet.

On the river both B and C check. Turn all hands up now (A, B, and C) because betting is over and the hand is moving to showdown. Award the 2000 sidepot between B and C first, then award the main pot. Notice: do not keep A's cards face down until the sidepot between B and C is awarded.

Rule 17: Asking to See a Hand

Example 1: NLHE. 3 players remain in the hand. There is no betting on the river and no player is all-in. At showdown Player A mucks his cards face down and they are pushed into the muck by the dealer. B tables his hand, showing trips. C pushes his cards forward face-down. B may ask to see C's hand because B has tabled his cards. However, B's request is at TDs discretion; B has no inalienable right to see it because there was no bet on the river thus he did not "pay to see C's hand." Neither A nor C may ask to see a competitor's hand because they have neither tabled their cards nor retained them.

Example 2: NLHE. 4 players remain in the hand. On the river A bets 1000, B calls, C raises to 5000, and D, A and B all call. No player is all-in. B tables his hand, showing trips. D instantly discards face down and the dealer kills his hand into the muck. C begins to push his cards forward face-down. Both A and B have an inalienable right to see C's hand on request because 1) they paid to see it as C was the last aggressor on the river and 2) both A and B retain their cards. D (who also called C) relinquished his right to see C's hand when he discarded without tabling. All other requests in this situation are at TD's discretion, such as B asking to see A's cards (the cards of another caller).

Rule 19: Awarding Odd Chip(s). F: When hands have identical value (ex: a wheel in Omaha/8) the pot will be split as evenly as possible.

Example 1: Omaha High/Low split. Two players win both high and low with 2-3-4-5-6 rainbow. A has 2-3-4-5-6s. B has 2-3-4-5-6c. The pot contains 66 chips total after being broken to smallest denominations. Right way to split: **as evenly as possible**; 33 to A and 33 to B. Wrong way to split: Divide entire pot 33 high, 33 low. Then give A the odd chip from the high pot for the high card by suit (6s), and give A the odd chip from the low pot for high card by suit (6s). A ends up with 34 chips while B gets 32.

Example 2: 7-Card Stud High/Low split. Two players win both high and low with 2-3-4-5-6. A has 2-3-4-5-6s. B has 2-3-4-5-6c. A has high card by suit (6s). The pot contains 66 chips total after being broken to smallest denominations. Right way to split: **as evenly as possible**; 33 to A with high card by suit, and 33 to B. Wrong way to split: See Example 1

Rule 39: Binding Declarations / Undercalls in Turn

Example 1: NLHE, blinds 1000-2000. Post-flop, A opens for 2000, B raises to 8000, C pushes out 2000 silently. C has undercalled B's bet. Per Rule 39-B, because B is not the opener (A is) and the round is still multi-way, at TD's discretion C may be required to make a full call or allowed to forfeit the 2000 undercall and fold.

Example 2: NLHE, blinds 1000-2000. Post-flop 4 players remain. A opens for 8000, B silently pushes out 2000. Per Rule 39-B, B has undercalled the opening bet and must make a full call of 8000.

Example 3: NLHE, blinds 1000-2000. Post-flop, A opens for 2000, B raises to 8000, C declares "call". Per Rule 39-A, C has made a general verbal declaration ("call") in turn. C is obligated to call B's full bet of 8000.

Rule 40-B: Substantial Action Out of Turn (OOT). A player skipped by OOT action must defend his right to act. If there is reasonable time and the skipped player has not spoken up by the time substantial action (see Rule 35) OOT occurs to his left, the OOT action is binding. The floor will be called to render a decision on how to treat the skipped hand.

Example 1: NLHE, blinds 100-200. UTG (Seat 3) makes it 600. Seat 4 is skipped when Seat 5 calls 600 OOT. Seat 6 thinks for a moment then folds. There are now two players acting with chips involved to the left of Seat 4. Two players with chips qualifies as substantial action (Rule 35). Also, Seat 4 has had reasonable time to speak up and bring it to the dealer's attention that he has been skipped. The OOT call by Seat 5 is now binding due to substantial action OOT, and the OOT fold by Seat 6 is binding (Rule 53). The floor is called to make a decision on the fate of Seat 4's hand.

Example 2: NLHE, blinds 100-200. Three players remain to see the turn. After the dealer tables the turn card, the UTG (Seat 3) opens betting for 600. Seat 4 is skipped when Seat 5 checks and Seat 6 calls 600 OOT. The floor is called to make a decision on the fate of Seat 4's hand.

Rule 43: The largest *prior* bet or raise of the current betting round.

This line refers to the largest additional action or "last legal increment" by a preceding bettor in the current round. The current round is the "current street", i.e. pre-flop, flop, turn, river in board games; 3rd – 4th – 5th – 6th – 7th street in 7-stud, etc.

Example 1: NLHE, Blinds 100-200. Post-flop, A opens with a bet of 600. B raises 1000 for total of 1600. C re-raises 2000 for total of 3600. If D wants to raise, he must at least raise the "largest bet or raise of the current round", which is C's raise of 2000. So D must re-raise at least 2000 more for a total of 5600. Note that D's minimum raise is not 3600 (C's total bet), but only 2000, the additional raise action that C added.

Example 2: NLHE, Blinds 50-100. Pre-flop A is under the gun and goes all-in for a total of 150 (an increase in the bet of 50). So we have a 100 blind bet and an all-in wager that increases

the total by 50. Which is larger? The 100 is still the “largest bet or raise of the current round”, so if B wants to re-raise he must raise at least 100 for a total of 250.

Example 3: NLHE, Blinds 100-200. On the turn A bets 300. B pushes out two 500 chips making the total 1000 (a 700 raise). It is 1000 to C to call. If C wants to raise, it must be “at least the largest bet or raise of the current round”, which is B’s raise of 700. So C’s minimum raise would be 700 for a total of 1700. Note his minimum raise is **not** 1000, B’s total bet.

Example 4-A: NLHE, Blinds 25-50. A raises 75 to 125 total. NOTICE that 125 total = 50 (bet) plus 75 (raise). The next raise on this street must be “at least the size of the largest previous bet or raise”, which is 75. B now raises the minimum (75) to 200 total. C then re-raises 300 for total of 500. We now have a bet of 50, two raises of 75 and a raise of 300 for total 500. If D wants to re-raise, “the raise must be at least the size of the largest previous bet or raise of the current betting round”, which is now 300. So D would have to raise at least 300 to a total of 800.

Example 4-B: Same as 4-A. It’s the same 500 to D, but there’s just been one raise of 450 by A to a total of 500 and B and C have both called. So there’s a blind bet of 50 and a raise of 450. “A raise must be at least the size of the largest previous bet or raise of the current betting round”, which is A’s raise of 450. So it’s 500 for D to call, and if D wants to re-raise he must raise at least 450 for a total of 950.

Rule 44: Re-opening the bet.

Example 1. Series of short all-in wagers that add up to a full raise and thus re-open betting:

NLHE, Blinds 50-100. Postflop, A opens betting for the 100 minimum.

B goes all in for a total of 125. C calls the 125,

D goes all in for 200 total and E calls 200.

Action returns to A who is facing a total raise of 100. Since 100 is a full raise, the betting is re-opened for A who can fold, call, or raise here. Note that neither B’s increment of 25 or D’s increment of 75 is by itself a full raise, but when added together they total a full raise and thus re-open the betting to “a player who is facing at least a full raise when the action returns”.

Example 1-A: At the end of Example 1 above, A smooth calls the 200 total (another 100 to him). The bet is now on C who is only facing a 75 increment. C called the 125 previously and is now facing 200 total (a 75 increment). Because 75 is not a full raise, the betting for C is not re-opened and C can either put out an additional 75 or fold, he cannot raise.

Example 1-B: At the end of Example 1 above, A raises the minimum (100), and makes it 300 total to C. C already has called 125 so it’s an additional 175 for C to call. 175 is more than a full raise. Since C already acted and is “now facing at least a full raise”, the betting is re-opened to C who can fold, call, or re-raise here.

Example 2. Short all-in, 2 scenarios.

NLHE, Blinds 2000-4000. Pre-flop A calls the BB and puts out 4000. B folds and C pushes all-

in for 7500 total (an increment of 3500 above the 4000 BB). It's folded around to the SB who also folds.

Example 2-A. It's 3500 more to the BB who has not yet acted on his option. The BB can fold, smooth call the 3500, or raise by at least 4000 for a total of 11,500. The BB smooth calls and it's 3500 more to A. A has already acted and is facing 3500 which is not a full raise. Therefore A can only fold or call the 3500, he cannot raise because it is not "at least a full bet when the action returns to him".

Example 2-B. The BB raises the minimum (4000), for a total of 11500. It is now 7500 to A and because 7500 is more than a full minimum raise, betting is now re-opened for A who can fold, call, or re-raise.

Rule 46: Multiple Chip Betting.

"When facing a bet, unless raise is declared first, a multiple-chip bet is a call if every chip is needed to make the call; i.e. removal of just one of the smallest chips leaves less than the call amount... If the single removal of just one of the smallest chips leaves the call amount or more, the bet is governed by the 50% standard in Rule 43."

Example 1: There is not one chip that can be removed and still leave the call amount.

1-A: Player A opens post flop for 1200, B silently puts out two 1000's. This is a call because neither chip can be removed and still leave at least 1200.

1-B: NLHE, blinds 250-500. Preflop the UTG raises 600 to total of 1100. The UTG+1 silently puts out one 500 chip and one 1000. This is a call because neither the 500 nor the 1000 can be removed and still leave at least 1100.

Example 2: Same as 1-B above except the UTG+1 puts out one 1000 and five 100s silently. Four of the 100s could be removed and still leave the 1100 call amount. Therefore this would be subject to Rule 41. The minimum raise is 600. 50% of 600 is 300. Therefore if the UTG+1 puts out 1400 or more, he will be held to making a full raise to 1700 total. Since the UTG put out 1500 he must raise in this example.

Example 3: Same as 2 above except the UTG+1 puts out one 1000 and three 100s silently. Two of the 100s can be removed and still leave the 1100 call amount therefore this is subject to Rule 41. Since the player did not put out at least 50% of a minimum raise, this bet is ruled a call and 200 is returned to the player.

Rule 52: Non-Standard and Unclear Betting

"Also, whenever a declared bet can reasonably have multiple meanings, it will be ruled the lesser value."

If a declared bet technically has multiple values, TDs may use discretion to determine what value is most reasonable and in the best interest of the game. Decision factors may include but are not limited to such considerations as: 1) keeping it the lower amount to enforce betting discipline, 2) recent betting increments and 3) bet values relative to the current pot size.

Example 1: NLHE 75-150 blinds. Players A and B are SB / BB. Players C, D, and E call the 150 BB. There is 675 in the pot. Player F declares "Raise, five", then slowly reaches for a 5000 chip and tosses it forward. The declaration precedes the chip push, so the declaration of "five" governs the bet. The preceding betting increments are all in the 100's, and the pot is only slightly larger than 500. While both 500 and 5000 are technically viable bets here, 500 is much more in keeping with recent betting action and pot size, and it enforces betting discipline.

Example 2: NLHE 75-150 blinds. Pre-flop there is 3200 in the pot. Post flop Player A opens for 2000. Players C, D, and E call. There is now 11,200 in the pot. On the turn Player A declares "Bet, five", then tosses out a 5000 chip. While both 500 and 5000 are technically viable bets here, 5000 is much more in keeping with recent betting action (which is in increments of 1000) and pot size which at 11,200 is more than double the maximum amount of A's bet. This said, the TD may determine it is in the best interest of the game to enforce betting discipline and rule the bet is 500.

