



Poker Tavern Manual

Last Updated: February 20, 2005

Maximizing your return .....	3
2 Tournaments Per Night .....	3
Recommendations .....	3
Salty Snacks .....	4
Food Specials between tournaments .....	4
Drink Specials (for states that allow drink specials) .....	4
Discounts Cards .....	4
Ladies Night .....	4
Radio .....	4
Open Tables .....	4
SEASONS .....	5
SET UP .....	5
The tables .....	5
Sign In & Seating the Players .....	5
Decks of Cards .....	5
The Chips .....	6
RUNNING THE TOURNAMENT .....	7
Starting the Tournament .....	7
Late Arrivals .....	8
The Blinds .....	8
Described .....	8
Increasing the Blinds .....	8
The Dealer .....	9
Who gets the deal first? .....	9
Playing a Hand .....	9
The Dealer .....	9
The Little Blind .....	9
The Big Blind .....	10
Sitting Out a Hand .....	10
Occasional Scenarios .....	10
Betting & Raising .....	10
Poker Hands .....	11
Combing Tables .....	11
Keep Making Money from Players who have been knocked out (Marketing Tip) .....	12
Final 16 Players .....	12
Final Table (8 – 10 players) .....	13
Points .....	13
Tournament Points .....	13
Heads Up Play 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	13
Prizes .....	13
TIPS .....	14

NOTES: Game and Tournament are synonymous with each other they can and will be used throughout this document.

## **Maximizing your return**

First and foremost we'll talk about maximizing your return with your investment of PokerTaverns.com. Tournaments should be held on nights that are typically slow nights for your tavern.

Holding a tournament does take up some space, people are sitting down that could otherwise be standing (if you are limited on space) so you don't want to push away patrons that would be there otherwise. However if you have the space to fill even on busy nights then we'd suggest trying a tournament on a busy night. We've seen occasions where a bar had a DJ in with a packed dance floor in one room and a poker tournament in the next. As soon as the DJ mentioned the poker tournament, half of the room emptied into the poker tournament. At first this looked horrible however after about 30 minutes the dance floor filled back up with new patrons coming in as well as those knocked out of the tournament. In the end it was a win/win, the dance floor kept the poker players entertained until the next tournament.

## **2 Tournaments Per Night**

You should run a minimum of two tournaments in the same night. The first game players will take fairly seriously which means they most likely won't spend much money on alcohol. The first game should start around 6 PM or 7 PM depending on local conditions such as traffic and patrons proximity to your tavern. This becomes a judgment call on your end and it could require some tweaking. For now understand that a tournament regardless of the playing size will take about 3 hours. We'll discuss this more under the section of *Running the Tournament*

By the second tournament they will be looking to have a good time. They will be in a much looser mood. You will see sales on average at 30% higher for the second game than you would on the first game.

If you are running weekend games you can start as early as the market allows (meaning when will your patrons show up). Running weekend games gives you the opportunity to run more than 2 tournaments per night. You could conceivably run as many as 4 or 5 in a given day.

## **Recommendations**

The following are recommendations for maximizing your return. Holding a tournament will pack your bar but now you need to do more... you need to make money too.

## **Salty Snacks**

Have free salty snacks, which will bring in more revenue from drinks,

## **Food Specials between tournaments**

Have food specials during the tournament. Remember you want to keep the player around for the next tournament so give them a reason to stay instead of heading out for a couple of hours.

## **Drink Specials (for states that allow drink specials)**

Great drink specials are advised against. It is good to have a simple draft beer special. It doesn't need to be a great special just take a quarter off what you would normally charge. Talk to your alcohol/beer reps about this. They will almost always provide T-shirts, hats, etc... that you can give out as prizes which will help you out even more. Remember your patrons have come out to play poker not because of the drink specials.

## **Discounts Cards**

By Season 2 of 2005 we will have player's cards for all players who register online. You should consider giving a discount to players when they present their players card. Please see your local sales rep for more information.

## **Ladies Night**

In addition to your normal weekly tournaments you should consider have a ladies night tournament. You'll be surprised at the number of ladies who will show up. And if the women show up to play you'll soon have men coming in to watch the women. Note that only women can participate in the ladies night tournament. This also gives them an extra chance to win a seat into the finals (See the section under Seasons for more information about the Finals). With ladies night you may want to only hold one game and slow the play down. This is entirely up to you.

## **Radio**

Radio stations are getting on the buzz about poker. Try to hook up with your radio rep. and see if they would like to partner on a season or just one tournament night. This way they can be part of the poker craze and you can get free radio advertisements.

## **Open Tables**

At players get knocked out of the tournament you will have open tables. Allowing players to use extra chips and play at a "FUN TABLE" keeps the players at your establishment and purchasing items from you. You will be surprised on how many players may leave in between tournaments if they have nothing to do. Open a fun table and give them a reason to hang out and have fun.

## **SEASONS**

Each season is 10 weeks long. The first 8 weeks are qualifiers to the finals which are during week 9 and Regionals during week 10. The point leaders are invited to play in the finals. If your tavern can accommodate 80 players then the top 80 point leaders at the end of the qualifiers will get to play in the finals. A waiting list of the next 8-10 will be created incase you have no shows for the finals. See more later in the document on running the Finals

## **SET UP**

### ***The tables***

Table set up takes about 30 minutes so make sure you have the staff available to help. You'll also be surprised at the number of people who will help volunteer to set up.

Table size 3' x 3'

Three 3' x 3' tables are perfect for 10 players (combine two so that you make along rectangle of 6'x 3'

Round Tables or Square tables 4' x 4' or 3' x 3'

Round tables can typically accommodate 8 players (although some only 6). If you have Felt or Fold out table tops then lay these out now. Use the octagon fold out table tops for this type of table and you can easily make a normal 4 seat table into 8 seats (the octagon table top are the best price and make the best use of space).

### ***Sign In & Seating the Players***

You can print out your sign-in sheets from your account online. Go to your account and select print registration. Find the link next to the day and time of the event you want to print a registration for.

As the players sign in you should assign them a table (allow them to pick their seat). You may want to create a smoking and non-smoking table. We've seen this go over quite well at other taverns.

The easiest way to assign a seat is to make a tick mark next two table information on the sign in sheet. This way you know how many players are at each seat. Also put a table number next to the player, which is very helpful if they come back, asking you to remind them what table they are seated at.

### ***Decks of Cards***

You shouldn't hand out the decks of cards until the last minute. This keeps players from opening the decks and possibly marking the playing cards. Keep the cards and chips on a separate table.

\*\*\* NOTE \*\*\* If you reuse decks each week, then you may want to hand out the decks and have someone at each table count the cards and make sure they are all accounted for.

Most players like to use two decks per table, this keeps the game moving at a good pace; however it will also mean more wear and tear on your cards. If you allow two decks per table make sure you give alternating colors for the decks, otherwise they can easily be mixed up.

## **The Chips**

Each player will get 20 poker chips. Only 4 colors are used at the start of the tournament. The 5<sup>th</sup> color is used later on to color up. See Color Up in Running the Tournament.

Creating stacks of 20 will fit perfectly in the acrylic chip racks. Each chip rack fits 100 chips, which means that each chip rack has enough chips for 5 players. You can now easily transport the chips to the tables and players.

Each player gets 5,000 in tournament chips

Color	Starting Number of Chips	Value
WHITE	8	50
RED	6	100
BLUE	4	500
GREEN	2	1,000
BLACK	0	5,000

Take a chip rack or two to each table, have the players distribute the chips as you make your rounds to the other tables. Collect the empty chip racks and pass out more as needed.

If you have not passed out the cards yet, go ahead and do so now. Also pass out the cut cards if you have any in stock. A cut card is used for two reasons:

- One the most obvious is to cut the deck.
- The second and more helpful is that after the deck is cut, the cut card is on the bottom of the deck which serves as cover, protecting what that bottom card is from the preying eye as well as keeping someone from dealing from the bottom of the deck.

You are now ready to start the tournament.

## **RUNNING THE TOURNAMENT**

Running a tournament is fairly straight forward. It can seem like a hefty task if you've never done it before, however once you've done it once it will seem extremely simple.

The tournaments are targeted to run for approx. 3 hours a piece. This allows you to run at least two per night if you start around 6:30 – 7:30 PM. See the Appendix at the end of this document for the blind structure during regular season games.

Please note that on the night of the Finals you will run the tournament for 6 hours. Only one tournament will be run on the night of the finals. The blinds will also change to accommodate a slower play. See the Appendix at the end of this document for the blind structure on the night of the finals.

### ***Starting the Tournament***

Announce to the players

**Any special thanks for information you want to give.**

(do this now otherwise you won't get a chance after the next couple of announcements)

Next announce

**"PLEASE DEAL FOR HIGH CARD FOR THE DEALER"**

Next announce

**"THE STARTING BLINDS ARE 50 and 100"**

Next announce

**"IT'S TIME TO SHUFFLE UP AND DEAL".**

At this point the tournament starts.

## **Late Arrivals**

In the event that a player shows up after the dealer has been determined have them take a seat to the right of the dealer. A player can still be sat at a table after the tournament has started so long as the blinds have not risen yet.

## **The Blinds**

### **Described**

The Blinds (Little & Big) are the two forced bets that must be made by the two players to the left of the deal button (The deal will rotate player to player to left during the game).

The minimum bet IS THE BIG BLIND, the Little Blind only puts in half of the minimum bet. This is before they even see their cards.

### **Increasing the Blinds**

The blinds are increased approximately every 20 minutes. We say approximately because this gives you the chance to either speed up play by increasing the blinds at a faster rate or slow down play by increasing the time in which the blinds will go up.

Typical Blind Structure is as follows:

**(See the actual Blind & Break Structure at the end of this document).**

<b>Little Blind</b>	<b>Big Blind</b>	<b>Increase Interval</b>
50	100	20 Min
100	200	20 Min
200	400	20 Min
500	1,000	20 Min
1,000	2,000	20 Min
2,000	4,000	20 Min
5,000	10,000	20 Min
10,000	20,000	20 Min
20,000	40,000	20 Min

Typically you will not reach the 10,000/20,000 level unless you have over 100 players.

If you need to increase the blind structure after 20,000 / 40,000 use the following guide.

Little Blind	Big Blind	Increase Interval
50,000	100,000	20 Min
100,000	200,000	20 Min
200,000	400,000	20 Min
500,000	1,000,000	20 Min

## ***The Dealer***

Each player will get a chance to be the dealer (assuming they aren't knocked out before they get a chance to deal).

## **Who gets the deal first?**

Mix the cards up on the table face down and each player will draw a card. The player that draws the highest card deals: the ace is the highest card. In the event of a tie, the two or more players that drew the same highest card will draw again to determine the dealer.

## ***Playing a Hand***

Before the hand starts or at least while the deal is being done, the Little Blind post half of the minimum bet and the Big Blind post the Full Bet.

Each player is dealt two cards (even if they are not at the table at the time – see Sitting Out a Hand) face down called the Hole Cards. At this point the Little Blind & Big Blind have already invested money into the pot, so the betting actually begins with the person to the left of the Big Blind. At this point it goes around the table and each person gets a chance to match the current bet, raise the bet or fold. If they decide to raise it then they must raise the current bet a least the amount of the big blind. For example if the blinds are 50 & 100, a person cannot raise it to a total of 150 it must be raised to a minimum of 200 (100 as the blind plus the minimum raise to 100). It can be raised to a total of 250 (100 as the blind plus 150) is completely acceptable.

## **The Dealer**

Eventually it will come back around the table to the dealer, the little blind and the big blind.

The dealer is treated like any other player with a chance to bet, raise or fold to the bet.

## **The Little Blind**

Assuming no raise has occurred the Little Blind already has half of the minimum bet in the pot. At this point the Little Blind can match the rest of the bet, raise it or fold. If a raise has occurred then he/she can match it, raise it or fold and only lose the Little Blind that they have posted.

## **The Big Blind**

If no raises have happened at this point then the Big Blind can check meaning we are ready to see the Flop (the first set of community cards). The Big Blind can also Raise at which case we go around the table again for those to match, raise or fold, or if a raise has already happened then the big blind can fold and lose the blind he already put into the pot.

## **Sitting Out a Hand**

In tournament play a player can step away from the table at any time; however they don't sit out of the hand. It's best to remember to deal to the chips and not the player (just incase they aren't there). If the player happens to be a blind they must still post the blind. Typically the person next to missing person will put in the blind and ask the fellow players to watch him just so no one has any reason for foul play.

Since the cards are dealt to that person they still have time to get involved in the hand if they make it back to the table in time. In tournament play you typically don't wait for that person to come back, remember the clock is ticking and the blinds will be going up soon.

As soon as action comes to the missing player (meaning they need to match a bet) then their hand is automatically folded. If however no action is necessary (meaning the player can check) then they automatically check.

## **Occasional Scenarios**

The BIG BLIND has gone from the table. His Big Blind is posted on the table (another player can pull chips from the Big Blinds stack and post the chips). If everyone folds including the Little Blind, then the BIG BLIND just won that hand. He/She won his Big Blind back and the Little Blind. In the same scenario where everyone folds and the Little Blind raises, since the Big Blind is gone from the table and action is to him/her the hand is automatically folded and the Little Blind just won the pot. If other players are still in the hand then just fold the Blinds cards and carry on as normal.

## ***Betting & Raising***

It is best to make the action clear to everyone at the table. If you are going to Fold say Fold, if you are going to call say "I Call", if you are going to check a verbal "Check" or a tapping motion is fine, however make sure they see the tapping motion.

Now for the biggie, if you are going to Raise you must say "I Raise", you cannot say "I Call & Raise" or "I See your bet and I Raise". This is referred to as a string bet

and should not be allowed. As a tournament director we will leave the call up to you however if your players plan on going the Atlantic City or Vegas they should learn these rules. The dealer will crack you up side of the head from doing a string bet. Ok they may not crack you up side of the head but they will give you the dirtiest look and only allow you to call the bet, the rest of your chips they will toss back at you all while looking at you like you just stole money out of their pocket.

## ***Poker Hands***

Contrary to what some people believe, there is no dominant suite; meaning that an ace of spades has the same value as an ace of hearts. The rank of hands for Texas Hold'em is the same as it is for any game of poker. For these tournaments the cards call themselves, even if a player calls their hand incorrectly the best hand available is played. The best hand is made up of 5 cards of any combination from the community cards and the individual player's hole cards. Note that the best hand available may be all 5 community cards not involve any hole cards. Also note that players on occasion will make the same hand; in this event the pot is split between the players that having the matching winning hand. Occasionally when the pot is split there is an odd amount of chips and the pot cannot be split evenly; in this case the extra chip goes to the player closest to the left of the dealer.

Rank of Hands
Royal Flush
Straight Flush
Four of a Kind
Full House
Flush
Straight
Three of a Kind
Two Pair
One Pair
High Card

## ***Combing Tables***

Combining tables is more of an art than a science. Players will be knocked out of the game when they run out of chips. When this happens you have an empty seat. As more players at any give table the more seats you have open. At some point you will need to either break up that table or bring more players to the table and fill in the empty seats.

The important thing to remember is that the ideal number at a table is 8 players, the minimum is 4 and the max is 10. Therefore the absolute simplest method is for a table play until there are 4 or 5 players and then break that table up and move each player to a table that has already lost several players. Try to not go over 8 players at a table but if necessary it should not be that big of a problem to place 9 or 10 players at one table.

For about the first hour of the tournament you will most likely not need to combine any tables, however after the first color up in chips you will need to do so. Keep an eye on the tables and pull players to fill other tables as necessary.

If you have a table that's deemed as "The Final Table" then you should be breaking down the tables furthest away from The Final Table and start migrating players towards it.

### **Occasional Scenario**

It is unavoidable that at some point in time a table will reduce down to 4 players and there will not be enough open spots at other tables to move them to. In this case it is best to pull a couple players off from tables that are full and move them to the table that only has 4.

When doing this it is important to pull a player in the correct position off the table. You should move the player that dealt the last hand and if you need to move a second player from the table then that player should be the player to the right of the player that you just moved, i.e. work counter clockwise from the current dealer. This will ensure that the blind structure at the table will not be interfered with. This should be avoided if possible but sometimes is necessary.

### **Keep Making Money from Players who have been knocked out (Marketing Tip)**

When a player gets knocked out they have nothing to do. If you have one or more empty tables offer the players some poker chips and cards and allow a "Fun Table" where they can play. They are not in the tournament but they are still at your establishment ordering food and beverages. The alternative is that they will most likely leave. Also note that a player who is now just having fun as opposed to playing competitively will most likely relax and spend more.

### ***Final 16 Players***

The final two tables typically make up the final 16 in any given tournament. Make sure you announce the players that they need to sign out at this point in order to get their extra points.

All players attending get points, however starting with player 16 they receive more points. If two or more players go out on the same hand then the order in which they go out depends on who had more chips at the start of the hand. Whoever had more chips gets the better position. If they both had the exact same amount then they would get the same position.

For example if 16 players were left and two players went out with the same amount of chips, then award both players the 15<sup>th</sup> position and leave the 16<sup>th</sup> empty. However if the same two players went out and player A had more chips than player B (at the start of the hand), then player B gets 16<sup>th</sup> and player A gets 15<sup>th</sup>.

## ***Final Table (8 – 10 players)***

If you have 8 players to a table you can still squeeze in 9 or 10 for the final table. Typically the players will be like this idea because they just increased the time it takes for the blinds to reach them.

## ***Points***

### **Tournament Points**

When playing in a tournament the player can be ranked and receive points. Everyone attending will get points. The Top 16 players will more points. The points will be consistent for all games no matter how many players are in the tournament.

All points not are accumulative in a single tournament (1<sup>st</sup> does not get 500 + 10 attendance points) they only get 500. The only accumulative point that they get per tournament is an extra 5 points for signing up online.

See the Point structure on our web site for current points.

## ***Heads Up Play 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>***

When it comes down to two players at a table, all you need to remember is that the dealer is the Little Blind and the other person is the Big Blind. This may seem to backwards but it serves two purposes. First the dealer has a slight advantage of not playing the hand since they are only in for half of the blind. Second if the dealer was always the big blind then there would be little chance that they would fold since they are in better position (acting last after the flop, turn and river), thus giving the dealer too much power by position and money in the pot.

## ***Prizes***

Now that you have a winner it is good to reward them with a prize. This prize does not need to be all that spectacular. A gift certificate to your tavern is a great way to congratulate the winner and insure a return customer. Also talk to your beer reps. They will often provide t-shirts and such for you so long as you feature their product on poker night.

How much you spend on 1<sup>st</sup> and or 2<sup>nd</sup> is up to you. We know from experience that some players are in it for the prizes and some for the points.


Some players will only where they can win a chip set, other are happy with a t-shirt and the 500 points they earned. It helps to know your audience.

## TIPS

- Remember this is a self regulated game. If a dispute arises at a table, tell them that the table majority must solve the problem. Even if you have time and can solve the problem for them; make them do it so that when you are busy you're not running around officiating.
- Down play problems. No one paid an entry fee so no one really has a right to complain; in the event that some is upset tell them that this is just for fun and that it is not supposed to be a Vegas poker room.
- Your patrons will be more than happy to help you with just about any thing. Week after week you'll see many of the same people; use this to your advantage. If you're too busy to handle chip distribution then ask a patron that you know and trust to help you. If a new player has arrived to play and has several questions that you're too busy to handle then ask an experienced player to explain things to him. You'll be surprised how many people will help you.
- This is supposed to be for fun. Competition brings out the best and the worst in people. Make sure that your poker tournaments are a fun social gathering. Providing a great prize valued at \$500 dollars every night is a great marketing tool for getting people to come to your tavern; but it raises the stakes and makes the tournament more competitive. Some bars do this and works out well for them; other bars choose to keep things simple and provide a gift certificate to the winner. Analyze your cliental and decide what will be best for you.

# Appendix

## *Blinds during Regular Season Play*

Level	Little Blind	Big Blind	Increase Interval
Level 1	50	100	20 Min*
Level 2	100	200	20 Min*
Level 3	200	400	20 Min*
Optional**	300	600	15~20 Min*
Optional**	400	800	15~20 Min*
BREAK	 1st Break: 10 Min.		
	 Color Up		
	 Convert all White & Red Chips to Blue & Green		
	 Keep it simple and round*** up any extra chips		
Level 4	500	1,000	20 Min*
Level 5	1,000	2,000	20 Min*
Level 6	2,000	4,000	20 Min*
Optional**	3,000	6,000	15~20 Min*
Optional**	4,000	8,000	15~20 Min*
BREAK	 2nd Break: 10 Min.		
	 Color Up		
	 Convert all Blue & Green Chips to Black		
	 Keep it simple and round*** up any extra chips		
Level 7	5,000	10,000	15~20 Min*
Level 8	10,000	20,000	15~20 Min*
Level 9	20,000	40,000	15~20 Min*

**\*The blinds:**

Increased approximately every 20 minutes for the first 6 rounds and then 15~20 minutes for remaining. We say approximately because this gives the bar the ability to either speed up play by increasing the blinds at a faster rate or slow down play by increasing the time in which the blinds will go up. This is at each bars discretion, remember they need to complete each tournament in approx 2.5 to 3 hours.

**\*\*Optional Levels:**

Use some or all of the Optional levels for small crowds (32 or less) or if you tournaments are scheduled for more than 3 hours apiece.

**If your tournaments are scheduled for 3 hours in length then do not use the optional blinds for crowds larger than 32-40, otherwise you will not be able to complete the tournament in the time allotted.**





**\*\*\*Rounding Up Chips:**

Keep it as simple as possible and round up the chips, don't worry about racing off chips.

For example if you are coloring up to Blues (500's) & Greens (1,000's), then have you players put their Whites (50's) & Red's (100's) into stacks of 500 and 1,000. If a player has 1,700 in chips then give them 2,000 in blue's and green's. If they have 3,050 (in reds & whites) they get the bonus to 3,500 (don't round down) in chips. If they are dead even (example: 1,000 or 3,500) then they only get 1,000 or 3,500 in blues and greens.





## Blinds during the Finals

Level	Little Blind	Big Blind	Increase Interval
Level 1	50	100	30 Min*
Level 2	100	200	30 Min*
Level 3	200	400	30 Min*
Level 4	300	600	25 Min*
Level 5	400	800	25 Min*

 1st Break: 10 Min.  
 Color Up  
 Convert all White & Red Chips to Blue & Green  
 Keep it simple and round\*\*\* up any extra chips




Level 6	500	1,000	25 Min*
Level 7	1,000	2,000	25 Min*
Level 8	1,500	3,000	25 Min*

4 HOUR MARK  
BLINDS INCREASE BY 1,000

 2nd Break: 10 Min.  
 Color Up  
 Convert all Blue to Green & Black  
 Keep it simple and round\*\*\* up any extra chips

Level 9	2,000	4,000	20 Min*
Level 10	3,000	6,000	20 Min*
Level 11	4,000	8,000	20 Min*

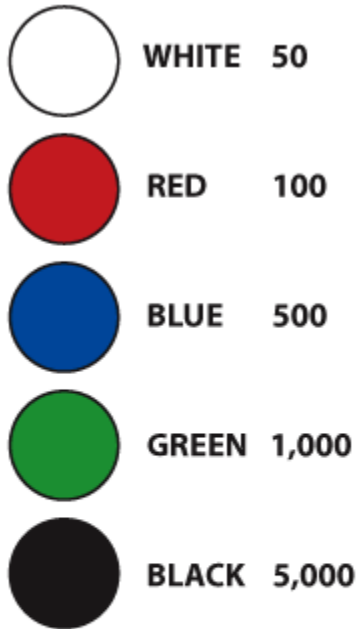
5 HOUR MARK  
BLINDS INCREASE BY 5,000

 3rd Break: 10 Min.  
 Color Up  
 Convert all Blue & Green to Black  
 Keep it simple and round\*\*\* up any extra chips

Level 12	5,000	10,000	20 Min*
Level 13	10,000	20,000	20 Min*
Level 14	15,000	30,000	20 Min*
Level 15	20,000	40,000	15 ~ 20 Min*
Level 16	25,000	50,000	15 ~ 20 Min*
Level 17	30,000	60,000	15 ~ 20 Min*

# Chip Denominations

## Easy to Read Chip Value Cheat Sheet



- Each player starts with 5,000 in tournament chips
- Each player will get 20 poker chips.
- Only 4 colors are used at the start of the tournament.
- The 5th color is used later on to color up.

Color	Starting Number	Value
WHITE	8	50
RED	6	100
BLUE	4	500
GREEN	2	1,000
BLACK	0	5,000

Print Ready PDF File  
Sized for: 8.5 x 10