

## **Tournament Rules (Last Update: 04/21/2024)**

(As used herein, "RQP" means Royal Queens Poker Club, its employees, contractors and/or approved representatives. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or suggestions for revisions.)

### **1: General Concepts**

#### **1.1 Floor Decisions:**

RQP Tournament Directors will use reasonable commercial efforts to consider the best interests of the tournament and fairness as the top priority in the decision-making process, with the understanding that "best interests of the tournament and fairness" shall be determined by RQP, acting in its sole and absolute discretion. Unusual circumstances can, on occasion, dictate that the technical interpretation of the rules be balanced against the interest of fairness.

When a situation arises that is not covered by the official Tournament Rules, RQP shall have the sole authority to render a judgment, including the imposition of a penalty, in accordance with the best interests of the tournament and the maintenance of its integrity and public confidence.

RQP decisions are final, cannot be appealed, and shall not give rise to any claim for monetary damages, refunds, or compensation of any kind.

#### **1.2 Penalties:**

Tournament Directors may, in their sole and absolute discretion, impose penalties for any rule, etiquette, or policy violation. Penalties that may be imposed include verbal warnings, missed-hand penalties, or tournament disqualification.

A missed-hand penalty may be assessed in increments of 5, 10, or 15 minutes. Players receiving a missed-hand penalty must remain outside the designated tournament areas for the duration of the penalty and must notify a member of the Tournament Staff prior to returning to his or her seat.

Any player who is disqualified from an RQP tournament for any reason shall have his or her chips removed from play and no vouchers, rainchecks, or refunds will be provided. Depending upon the severity of the offense, RQP may impose additional penalties up to and including club expulsion.

### **1.3 Tournament Format:**

All RQP tournaments are freeze-out format No-Limit Texas Hold'em, unless otherwise noted.

### **1.4 Official Language:**

The English-only language rule will be enforced at all tables during tournament play.

### **1.5 Official Terms:**

Official terminology is comprised of simple, unmistakable, time-honored declarations like: CHECK, BET, CALL, RAISE, FOLD, and ALL-IN. The use of non-standard language is at the player's risk because it may result in a ruling other than what the player intended. It is the responsibility of each player to always make their intentions clear.

### **1.6 Poker Chips:**

All poker chips used in RQP tournaments have no cash value whether they have been printed with monetary denominations or not.

## **2: Registration and Seating**

### **2.1 Registration:**

Registration for all tournaments will begin at least one hour prior to the scheduled start time. Players are encouraged to arrive early to ensure a seat in the tournament. Club Policy prohibits players from registering any player that's not present at the host venue.

### **2.2 Late Arrivals:**

Players arriving after the tournament has started will be permitted to register until the end of the first scheduled tournament break. In some cases, it may be necessary to postpone the break until all alternates have been seated.

### **2.3 Alternates:**

If there are more players than available seats, players will be placed on an alternates list. Alternates will be seated in the tournament as seats become available.

*ROYAL ELITE Members* who have been placed on an alternates list will be seated before any Basic Member or Guest listed ahead of him or her, but not before another *ROYAL ELITE Member* listed ahead of him or her.

### **2.4 Special Needs:**

Reasonable requests for accommodation for players with special needs will be made whenever possible.

**2.5 Seating:** Tournament seating is offered on a first-come, first-seated basis. Players may choose to sit in any available seat, but RQP reserves the right to move any player at any time as outlined in **Rule 6.2. Club Policy** prohibits players from reserving seats for any player that's not present at the host venue.

### **2.6 Final Table Re-draw:**

Seating at the final table will be determined by random draw. The Tournament Director will scramble ten cards (Ace through 10) and each player will draw a card. The player drawing the Ace will be in seat 1 and will receive the button. Players drawing 2 through 10 will sit at the corresponding positions at the table. Position 10 is to the immediate right of the Table Dealer.

## **3: Blinds/Button**

### **3.1 Blind Schedule:**

Blinds will increase according to the official blind schedule; however, the Tournament Director may occasionally find it necessary to accelerate the blinds due to session time constraints.

### **3.2 Posting Blinds:**

Players are always required to post their blinds. If a player is not at his or her seat for any reason, the dealer will post the blind on their behalf using chips from the player's stack.

### **3.3 Dodging Blinds:**

Any player who intentionally dodges his or her blind(s) when moving from a broken or short table must post both blinds and may incur a penalty in accordance with **Rule 1.2**.

### **3.4 New Levels:**

When time has elapsed in a level and a new level is announced by a member of the Tournament Staff, the new blind values apply to the next hand. A hand begins when the first card has been dealt to the small blind. Players may not declare "already posted" to pay a reduced blind.

### **3.5 Setting the Button:**

At the start of each tournament, the button will be placed in the same position on each table. The position will be determined by a random draw performed by the Tournament

Director. If additional tables are required after the tournament has started, the Tournament Director will perform another random draw after all players have been seated at the new table. At the Final Table, button placement will be determined by random draw as outlined in **Rule 2.6**.

### 3.6 Dead Button:

Tournament play will use the dead button rule. A Dead Button is defined as a button that cannot be advanced due to elimination of a player or the seating of a new player into a position between the small blind and the button.

### 3.7 Heads Up:

When the tournament has been reduced to the final two (2) players, the small blind will receive the button and will act first. When beginning heads-up play, the button may need to be adjusted to ensure no player takes the big blind twice.

## 4: Bets and Raises

### 4.1 Raises:

There is no cap on the number of raises in no-limit games. All raises must be at least double the big blind or double the size of the previous bet - whichever is greater.

### 4.2 Incomplete Bets/Raises:

If a player puts in a raise of 50 percent or more of the previous bet but less than the minimum raise, he or she will be required to make a full raise. The raise will be exactly the minimum raise allowed.

Pre-flop: If a player is ALL-IN for less than the minimum required bet, remaining players must make the full raise. Example: Blinds 100/200. Player goes all-in for 50. Next player must call 200 or raise to 400 or more.

Post-flop: If a player is ALL-IN for less than the minimum required bet, remaining players may opt to simply call the all-in amount. Example: Blinds 100/200. Player goes all-in for 50. Next player may call 50 or raise to 400 or more.

If a player is ALL-IN for more than the minimum bet, but less than the minimum raise, the remaining players in the hand may opt to simply call the all-in bet and are not obligated to

create a side pot. Note: An ALL-IN bet of less than a full raise does not reopen the betting to a player who has already acted.

#### **4.3 Single Chip Bet:**

To make a raise with a single over-sized chip, a verbal declaration must be made before the chip hits the table surface. Putting a single, over-sized chip into the pot will be considered a call if the player doesn't announce a raise beforehand. If a player announces a raise and puts a single, over-sized chip into the pot but does not state the amount, the raise will be the maximum allowable up to the denomination of that chip. After the flop, an initial bet of a single over-sized chip without comment will signify a bet equal to the size of the chip.

#### **4.4 Refunds/Rebates:**

All chips put into the pot in turn stay in the pot. If a player has raised and his or her hand is killed before the raise is called, the player may be entitled to the raise back but will forfeit the amount of the call. Any chips put into the pot out of turn fall under the action "may or may not be binding."

#### **4.5 String Bets/Raises:**

A string bet/raise is defined as attempting a bet or raise in multiple movements that include a return to a player's stack without a prior verbal declaration of intent or include deception intended to induce action out of turn before a player's action is complete. Table Dealers are responsible for calling string bets/raises, but all players at the table are encouraged to assist in calling a string bet/raise if a dealer fails to identify one.

#### **4.6 Ambiguous Bets:**

Whenever the size of a declared bet can have multiple meanings, it will be ruled as the lesser value. For example, the statement "I bet five" can be interpreted multiple ways. If it is unclear whether "five" means 500 or 5,000, the bet stands as 500.

#### **4.7 Asking for Counts:**

Players are entitled to a reasonable estimation of an opponent's chip stack as outlined in **Rule 8.11**. Players may only request a more precise count if facing an ALL-IN bet. An ALL-IN player who is asked for a count is not obligated to provide such if he or she chooses not to. In such cases, the dealer will count the chips in the ALL-IN player's stack. Accepted Action, as outlined in **Rule 4.10**, applies.

#### **4.8 Short Stack:**

If a player does not have enough chips to call a bet, they may choose to go ALL-IN. If this occurs, the other players will continue the hand and bet into a side pot if necessary. If a player does not have enough chips to post his or her blind, they must go ALL-IN. If this occurs, the other players will continue the hand and bet into a side pot.

#### **4.9 Conditional Statements:**

Conditional statements of future action are strongly discouraged and may be adjudged as binding or subject to penalty. For example, "If-then" statements such as "If you bet, then I will raise." The Tournament Director, at his or her sole discretion, will decide if such statements are binding.

#### **4.10 Accepted Action:**

It is the caller's responsibility to determine the correct amount of an opponent's bet before calling, regardless of what is stated by the dealer or players. If a caller requests a count but receives incorrect information from the dealer or players and places that amount in the pot, the caller is assumed to accept the full correct action and is subject to the correct wager or ALL-IN amount.

### **5: Pots and Showdown**

#### **5.1 Side Pots:**

Each side pot will be split separately and will not be mixed together before being split.

#### **5.2 Odd Chips:**

Odd chips will be broken into the smallest denominations possible and, in the event of a split pot, awarded to the first active player left of the button.

#### **5.3 Disputed Pots:**

The right to dispute a hand ends when a new hand begins. **See Rule 3.4**

#### **5.4 Face Up for All-In:**

All cards will be turned face up once a player is ALL-IN and all action is complete.

#### **5.5 Cards Speak:**

Verbal declarations of hand value are not binding at showdown, but deliberately miscalling a hand may be subject to penalty. A dealer cannot kill a hand that was turned face up and was obviously the winning hand. Players are encouraged to assist in reading tabled hands if it appears that an error is about to be made.

## **5.6 Playing the Board:**

A player must show both hole cards when playing the board to receive part of the pot.

## **5.7 Show Order:**

**A)** In a non-all-in showdown, if cards are not spontaneously tabled or discarded, the last aggressive player on the final betting round must table their cards first. If there was no final round bet, the player who would act first in a final betting round must table first (i.e. first seat left of the button).

**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 is not required to table their cards.

## **6: Breaking/Balancing Tables**

### **6.1 Breaking Tables:**

Players moving from a broken table to fill in seats at another table assume the rights and responsibilities of the new position. Players can get the BIG BLIND, the SMALL BLIND or the BUTTON and are not permitted to suspend play until the button passes. Players moved from the Big Blind will be seated in the worst available position at the new table, which is never the Small Blind.

### **6.2 Balancing Tables and Move Requests:**

Players may be asked by the Tournament Director at any time to move to another table. When such a request is made, the player must move as requested and will receive no compensation for doing so. Players refusing to move when asked may receive a penalty in accordance with **Rule 1.2**.

Players may request to be moved to a different table at any time if they have a valid reason for making such a request. Whether or not the reason for the request is deemed valid is at the sole and absolute discretion of the Tournament Director. If the request is deemed valid, the Tournament Director will make every effort to honor the request but is not obligated to do so.

Players who are moved to a new table either at their own request or that of the Tournament Director may not choose their new table or seat and will assume the rights and responsibilities of the new position as outlined in **Rule 6.1**.

### **6.3 Short Tables:**

Play will halt at any table that is at least four players short, unless only one or two tables remain.

#### **6.4 Elimination:**

Once a player has lost all their chips, they are eliminated from the tournament and must leave the table so an accurate count of remaining players can be easily determined.

#### **6.5 Bursting the Bubble:**

Once a tournament has been reduced to eleven players, a "Hand-for-Hand" method of determining player placement within the final table will be utilized. This will begin by completing the current hand in progress at both tables. Once both hands are complete, the dealer at each table will deal one hand, then - once the hand is complete - suspend play. This process will continue until the first player is eliminated. During the Hand-for-Hand process, more than one player may be eliminated during the same hand. In this case, see **Rule 6.6**.

#### **6.6 Tie Breaker:**

If two players are eliminated during the same hand, the player who began that hand with the highest chip count will receive the higher place finish. If both players had the same amount of chips, the higher finishing position goes to the player with the best hand. If both players had the same hand, players would draw for high card from a shuffled deck until a clear winner has been determined.

### **7: Dealer Responsibilities**

#### **7.1 Misdeals:**

The Table Dealer is responsible for declaring all misdeals. A misdeal will be declared and the hand dealt again if, during the initial deal, any of the following occurs:

- A) either of the first two cards dealt is exposed*
- B) two or more extra cards have been dealt*
- C) the first card was dealt to the wrong position*
- D) cards have been dealt to an empty seat or a player not entitled to a hand*
- E) a player has been dealt out who is entitled to a hand.*

A misdeal may not be declared after significant action has taken place. "Significant action" is defined as either of the following:



*A) any two actions in turn, at least one of which puts chips in the pot (e.g.; check, call)*

*B) any combination of three actions in turn (e.g., fold, fold, fold)*

## **7.2 Pot Management:**

Dealers should not stack the chips in the pot and will not count the chips in the pot when asked. If requested, dealers may spread the pot so that it can be more easily analyzed by a player.

## **7.3 Four Card Flop:**

If the flop contains four (rather than three) cards, whether exposed or not, the dealer shall scramble the four cards face down. The Table Dealer should call the Tournament Director or approved Floor Personal, who will randomly select one card to be used as the next burn card. The remaining three cards will become a flop.

## **7.4 20-Minute Rule:**

If a player is absent from the table for more than twenty (20) consecutive minutes, the player is disqualified and his or her chips will be removed from play. It is the responsibility of the Table Dealer to notify the Tournament Director when a player's absence has exceeded the 20-minute maximum.

## **7.5 Rabbit Hunting:**

In cases where hands are concluded prior to the flop or the turn or river being dealt, the Table Dealer will not expose the undealt card(s) under any circumstance.

## **7.6 Fold and Hold:**

A player who folds his or her hand by verbal declaration or by releasing their cards in a distinct, forward motion has a dead hand and must surrender the cards immediately. Folded hands may not be retained at any time for any reason. The Table Dealer is responsible for immediately killing all folded hands.

## **7.7 Auto Muck:**

A player must be at his or her seat by the time the last card has been dealt to the button to have a live hand. "At your seat" is defined as being within reach or touch of your chair. If a

player is not at his or her seat by the time the last card has been dealt, their hand is dead, and the Table Dealer must collect the players cards and kill their hand.

### **7.8 Cutting the Deck:**

After the deck has been shuffled (**See Rule 8.2**) and returned to the Table Dealer, the deck must be cut before it is ready for use. Only the Table Dealer may cut the deck.

To properly cut the deck, place the cut card on the table surface in front of you in horizontal "landscape" orientation, and place the deck in the same position just below the cut card (towards yourself). Using ONE HAND, remove a portion of cards from the top of the deck and place it on the cut card and then place the remaining cards on top to complete the cut.

## **8: Player Responsibilities**

### **8.1 Hands Off:**

At no time may any player touch any of the burn cards, muck cards, deck stub, or chips in the pot. The only player that may touch these items is the Table Dealer. If change is required, the Table Dealer will handle all transactions.

### **8.2 Shuffling:**

When a playing dealer is used, cards must be shuffled at least three (3) times following each round by the person currently on the button. If the player on the button is a playing dealer, absent from the table, or unable to shuffle, the next available player to the right of the button must shuffle the cards.

When a non-playing dealer is used, cards will only be shuffled by the Table Dealer.

RQP recommends that all players learn and follow standard shuffling procedures.

### **8.3 Act in Turn:**

Players must refrain from acting until it is their turn to do so. Any action made out of turn may, in some cases, be binding. If a player acts out of turn and the action does not change by the time it is that player's turn to act, then that player's action is binding. Action changes only if a player bets or raises before the action gets back to the person that acted out of turn. A check, call, or fold ahead of the player who acted out of turn does not change action. If a player acts out of turn and the action has changed, the person who acted out of

turn may have their chips returned or may change their initial action by calling, raising or folding. Players may not intentionally act out of turn to influence play before them.

#### **8.4 Accidental Muck:**

If a player accidentally folds/mucks their hand before cards are turned up at the Showdown, RQP reserves the right to retrieve the folded/mucked cards, provided the cards are clearly identifiable and have not touched the burn cards or muck pile. Any cards which meet any of the burn or muck cards will be declared dead and may not be retrieved.

#### **8.5 Unprotected Hands:**

If a dealer kills an unprotected hand, the player will have no redress and will not be entitled to receive his or her chips back. An exception would be if a player raised and his or her raise had not yet been called. In this case, the player would be entitled to have his or her raise returned. Players are encouraged to cap their cards with a single chip or use a card protector to help prevent such errors.

#### **8.6 Forfeit/Surrender:**

Any player who forfeits play for health or other personal reasons after the start of a tournament will have his or her chips blinded off for a maximum of twenty (20) minutes unless the seat is needed for a waiting player, in which case the chips will be immediately removed from play. If a player wishes to forfeit, he or she should leave their chips on the table and notify the Tournament Director.

#### **8.7 Non-Disclosure:**

Players are obligated to always protect the other players in the tournament. Therefore, whether in a hand or not, players may not:

- A) disclose contents of live or folded hands*
- B) advise or criticize play before action is complete*
- C) read a hand that has not been tabled.*

#### **8.8 Show One, Show All:**

All players are entitled to the same information. A player exposing his or her cards to anyone while there is action pending may incur a penalty but, will not have a dead hand. If a player exposes his or her cards to a player currently involved in the hand, the cards are to

be turned face up immediately. If a player exposes his or her cards to a spectator or player who has already folded, the cards must be turned face up at the conclusion of the hand if so requested. Any player at the table whether they were involved in the hand or not, may ask to see the exposed cards.

### **8.9 One Player to a Hand:**

Among other things, this rule prohibits showing a hand to or discussing strategy with another player, spectator, or outside source, therefore, while in a hand, players may not:

*A) discuss hands or strategy with any player or spectator*

*B) seek or receive consultation from any player, spectator, or other outside source*

### **8.10 Transporting Chips:**

All chips must always be visible at all times. Players may not hold or transport tournament chips in any manner that takes them out of view. Any player who violates this rule will forfeit the chips and may face disqualification. Any forfeited chips will be taken out of play.

### **8.11 Visible Cards and Chips:**

Players are entitled to a reasonable estimation of an opponent's chip count; therefore, chips should be kept in clean, countable stacks, with higher denomination chips visible and identifiable at all times.

Players with live hands must always keep their cards in plain view. Any cards removed from the table surface which disappear from view below the rail will be declared dead.

## **9: Misc Procedures**

### **9.1 Color-Up:**

Color-up is defined as the removal of a denomination of chips no longer in play. When it is time to color-up low value chips, a member of the Tournament Staff will remove any lower denomination chips held by each player by exchanging them for the next highest value. Any uneven amount will be rounded up to the player's benefit. Players found to have lower denomination chips remaining in their stack after color-up will forfeit those chips, unless they are equivalent in value to a chip still in play.

### **9.2 Calling for Clock:**

After a reasonable amount of time - which is no less than one (1) minute - has passed and a clock is called, a player will be given thirty (30) additional seconds to act. If action has not been taken by the time these 30 seconds have expired, there will be a ten (10) second countdown. If a player has not acted on his or her hand by the time the countdown has expired, the hand will be declared dead. If a clock is called, the Tournament Director must be notified so he or she can initiate the countdown. Any player intentionally stalling the progress of the game may incur a penalty.