Aylmer Poker Club

Bar League

Tournament
Rules & Procedures

2026 Edition

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RULE ENFORCEMENT

RULE #1
All staff and game officials are to consider the integrity and fairness of the game as the *ultimate priority* in every decision-making process. Unusual circumstances may sometimes dictate that the direct interpretation of the rules be partially or wholly ignored to preserve the integrity and fairness of the game.
Unless explicitly stated, all rulings made by tournament officials will be final.

Verbal Warnings
Dealers and tournament officials are encouraged to liberally issue verbal warnings and to politely educate first-time offenders whenever possible. A polite rule description and a friendly warning will prevent future problems and improve general efficiency far more effectively than an immediate and/or unexplained penalty.

Minor Penalties
Tournament officials may occasionally issue minor penalties to players who repeatedly violate written game rules. The penalty issued will reflect both the severity of the violation, as well as the history of related violations of the individual player(s) in question.
Except in the case of disqualification, players will <u>never</u> have their hand killed as a minor penalty.
Minor penalties scale:

a) Verbal warning
b) Sitting out 1 to 5 hands
c) Sitting out 1 to 2 blind levels
d) Disqualification

Major Penalties
Violations of this type are things like cheating, excessive and/or profane verbal abuse towards other players or staff, and any act of physical aggression.
Violators may expect penalties including but not limited to:

a) Disqualification from events in progress
b) Revocation of club membership
c) Revocation of eligibility from POY & POM
d) Revocation of eligibility from TOC
e) Disqualification from the receipt of past prizes (in the case of cheating)
f) Legal action

TOURNAMENT RULES

PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES

Overview
Players are required to abide by all applicable rules, procedures, and code of conduct.
It is the player's responsibility to always protect themselves, the integrity of the game, the host venues, and the spirit of competition.

Etiquette Expectations
Players are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a fair, orderly, and enjoyable game. As with game rules and membership terms, repeated or intentional violations of player responsibilities may result in penalties, up to and including revocation of membership.

a) Respect all staff and other players.
b) Act in turn. Do not act out of turn or influence action before it's your turn.
c) Protect your hand. Do not reveal your cards unless permitted by game rules.
d) Keep cards visible and identifiable. Cards must remain on the table.
e) Table cards without delay at showdown; do not "slowroll".
f) Do not comment on cards, strategy, or possible outcomes during a hand.
g) Act within a reasonable amount of time.
h) Stack chips neatly and keep higher-denomination chips visible.
i) Announce actions clearly.
j) Do not seek advice or provide advice during a hand.
k) Do not intentionally mislead through technicalities or ambiguity.
l) Promptly post blinds and antes. Be ready to play when necessary.

Terminology & Gestures
Players are encouraged to use simple, unmistakable, time-honored verbal declarations when acting: "bet", "raise", "call", "fold", "check", "all-in", "complete", "pot", etc. Players must be cautious when using gestures instead of verbal declarations. It is the responsibility of players to make their intentions clear. Using non-standard terms or gestures is done at each player's own risk and may result in a ruling other than what was intended.

Self-Dealing Procedure
On most occasions, players will share dealing responsibilities:

a) the deck must be properly randomized prior to dealing.
b) the standard shuffle is: riffle, riffle, strip, riffle, cut.
c) alternative shuffling methods are permitted at the discretion of game officials.
d) the cut is routinely performed by the player to the right of the dealer.
e) if the seat to the right of the dealer is empty, any non-dealing player may cut.
f) the placement of burn cards will not be done prematurely.
g) in Hold'em and Omaha, one card must be burned before the flop, turn, and river.
h) in Stud games, one card must be burned before the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th hole cards.
i) in Draw games, one card must be burned before each draw.
j) the next shuffle must only be started once the previous hand is fully complete.

LANGUAGES & OBJECTS

Allowable Languages
The spoken languages allowed during play are English and French.
Players are also encouraged to smash them together and speak both languages simultaneously if they're able, as it is both highly amusing, and promotes the deeply-bilingual roots of our community.

Foreign Objects
Players may have a maximum of one foreign object on the table, to be used as a card protector. A foreign object is considered anything that isn't chips or cards. Tournament officials reserve the right to revoke the use of card protectors deemed unsuitable. No food or drinks will be allowed on the table.

Mobile Devices
The non-verbal use of WiFi-enabled mobile device screens is always forbidden during play. Players are allowed a short grace period to verbally answer a call and quickly end it (i.e.: "I'll call you back!") but are not permitted to engage in any lengthier conversations during play. Players who wish to engage in any other mobile-based activity must leave their seat to do so.

ETHICS & INTEGRITY

Player Responsibilities
Players are required to abide by all applicable rules, procedures, and code of conduct.
It is the player's responsibility to always protect themselves, the integrity of the game, the host venues, and the spirit of competition.

Allowable Talk
In heads-up play, players are free to discuss any details about the hand in progress.
In multi-way play, players are forbidden from verbalizing any information to which their opponents are not entitled. This information includes but is not limited to: strategic considerations, hand strength, the stack size of any opponent, betting action from previous rounds, pot size (except in pot-limit games), or any other information which could cause an unfair advantage.

Exposing Cards
The legality of exposing cards before the betting action is complete will depend on the number of players remaining in each hand:

a) in heads-up play, exposing hole cards is permitted.
b) in multi-way play, exposing hole cards is forbidden.
c) it is each player's responsibility to protect their cards, and to ensure the number of players in each hand.
d) a player's illegally-exposed hand may <u>never</u> be killed as a penalty for violating this rule.

Soft Play
Intentionally helping an opponent by means of non-competitiveness is known as "soft play", and it is strictly forbidden.

Verbal Claims
Deliberately misrepresenting hole cards by verbal claim is not permitted. However, it is each player's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of another player's verbal claim about their holdings. Players are encouraged to wait until verbal claims are proven at showdown before acting. Players who muck irretrievably in response to a false verbal claim will have no recourse.

Retrievable Muck
In cases where cards are mixed, a mucked hand is considered dead and will not be retrievable. In cases where the mucked hand is identifiable beyond *any possible doubt*, mucked cards may be considered live if/when ethical issues dictate that they be kept live. Example: A player lies by declaring "full house" at showdown with no pair, and an opponent mucks a better hand in a retrievable way.

Out-of-Turn Actions
Players are responsible for monitoring the flow of play and betting action.
Repeatedly and/or intentionally acting out of turn will result in escalating minor penalties.
In the event of out of turn action:

a) folds are always binding.
b) other actions (check, call, bet, raise) done out of turn will always be binding, unless the action is first changed by a player acting in turn in the corrected sequence. If the action is changed by the corrected sequence, the player who was initially out of turn will have their previous action undone and will have all action options (call, raise, fold) available to them.
c) action is considered "changed" by any bet or raise which was not made at the time of the out-of-turn action. A check, a call, or a fold does not constitute a change in action.

Rabbit Hunting
The practice of revealing community cards which were not needed for an already-completed hand is known as "rabbit hunting". This is not permitted.

Viewing Losing Hands
Players are granted the privilege of requesting to see the hole cards of any opponent who completed all bets in a hand which reaches the final showdown (after all possible community cards have been dealt). This privilege is to be used sparingly. Abuse of this privilege for reasons not deemed reasonable by tournament officials may result in its revocation for the individual(s) thought to be abusing it.

Transporting Chips
Players must always keep tournament chips in plain view when transporting them, using the chip racks provided by tournament officials. Using pockets to transport tournament chips is not allowed.

GENERAL GAMEPLAY

Hand Start
A new hand will begin once the previous pot has been pushed to the winner(s).
If a blind level concludes after the previous pot has been pushed, one more hand will be played at the previous blind level before the new blind level takes effect.

Dealing Order
In all games – including Stud - the first card will be dealt to the player left of the button; the deal will continue clockwise until complete.

Dead Button
Tournament play will use the "dead button" structure.
With the start of heads-up play being the only potential exception, the button on each hand will always be moved into the small blind position from the previous hand. Neither the elimination of players nor the arrival of new players will affect the movement of the button.

Player Movement
Players will periodically be moved from one table to another to keep tables balanced, according to the applicable procedure. Players moving from one table to another will assume the rights and responsibilities of their new position – this may include the small blind, big blind, or button. A player who is moved to an empty seat between the small blind and button on a new table must wait one hand before joining the game.

New Player Placement
A player who has not yet been dealt a hand within a given event may not be dealt into a dead button position, nor a dead small blind position. In those two cases, the player must wait until the button passes them before joining the game. In all other positions, new players will be dealt in upon arrival.

Methods of Raising
In no-limit and pot-limit games, a raise must be made by:

a) a verbal declaration, prior to binding movement(s) of chips.
b) the advancement of chips using only one forward motion.
c) saying "raise", advancing the *exact* call amount, and then using only one forward motion to advance the full amount of the raise, or announcing the raise amount verbally (as described above).

Finalized Bets/Raises
Following the forward advancement of chips when no verbal declaration has been made, bets and raises are considered final once they have been fully released by a player. Lateral movement while betting is permitted. Returning unreleased chips is also permitted, but players are encouraged to keep a reasonable limit on the relative quantity of unreleased chips they return to their stacks.
Abuse of betting motion freedoms will not be tolerated.

Minimum Bets
Except when players have insufficient chips remaining to meet the criteria, all bets must be at least equal to:

a) the big blind in no-limit or pot-limit games.
b) the applicable betting limit in fixed-limit games.

Minimum Raises
All raises must be at least equal to the largest prior full bet or raise of the current betting round. Example: Player A bets 200, Player B raises 500 more to 700 total. To raise again, the next player must raise to at least 500 more, to 1200 total.

In almost all situations, this can be calculated as:

(current total bet * 2) – (previous total bet)

Re-Opening Betting Action
A player who has already acted in a betting round may raise again only if a subsequent bet or raise is at least the minimum legal raise amount for that round.

a) The minimum legal raise is defined as the full size of the most recent legal bet or raise, not the current total wager.
b) If a player makes an all-in wager that is less than the minimum legal raise, that wager is binding but does not reopen the betting to any player who has already acted.
c) Players who have already acted may call the additional amount or fold, but may not raise unless the betting has been reopened by a full legal raise.
d) Players who have not acted yet may respond normally.

Ante First
Antes will always be paid before any other bet types. This includes cases where an all-in player is only eligible to win a main pot equal to the amount of their all-in wager.

Pot-Limit Betting
In pot-limit games, the maximum bet or raise a player may make is equal to the total size of the pot *after* the player has first called all outstanding bets. Bets are never rounded, and the antes will always count towards the total size of the pot.

Using Oversized Chips
If facing a blind, bet, or raise, advancing and releasing a single oversized chip will be considered a call unless a verbal declaration is made before the chip is released. Note that this includes cases when the single oversized chip is the only chip remaining in a player's stack.

Showdown Order
When action is completed after the last community card has been dealt, players will show their hole cards. The showdown in this case will start with whoever took the last aggressive action (bet or raise) on the final round of betting. The showdown will proceed clockwise around the table until all hole cards have either been exposed or mucked. If no action takes place on the final betting round, the showdown will begin with the small blind position and proceed clockwise.
When all possible action is completed before the last community card has been dealt, there is no showdown order - all players must show their hole cards without delay.

High-Value Chips
Players must always keep their highest-value chips clearly visible to other players. Deliberate and/or malicious attempts to conceal high-value chips may be subject to penalization.

Side Pots
Each side pot will be pushed or divided as a separate pot. Pots will not be mixed before they are split.

Odd Chips
When a showdown results in more than one winner, the pot(s) will be split as evenly as allowed by the available chips in play. Any remaining chip(s) which cannot possibly be split will be issued to the player(s) closest to the left of the button.

Show All To Win
If all opponents have folded or mucked, players do not need to show any hole cards to collect a pot.

In all other situations, players must show *all* their hole cards to collect any part of a pot. Showing part of a hand while irretrievably mucking another part of that same hand will be considered a muck.

Color-Ups
At scheduled intervals, the lowest-value chips in play will be removed and replaced with higher-value chips, using the "chip race" method – described below. Tournament officials reserve the right to perform additional color-ups if deemed necessary to preserve game speed and/or integrity.

Chip Race
Odd chips remaining after each color-up will be used in the "chip race" procedure:

1 – starting left of the button, each player receives 1 card for every odd chip
2 – all odd chips are collected and exchanged for higher-value chips
3 – the players with the highest cards receive a maximum of one higher-value chip

Players may never be eliminated by the chip race. If a player ends up with zero chips due to losing a chip race, they will be issued one higher-value chip (the lowest value on the table for the next level).

IRREGULARITIES

Substantial Action
Substantial action is defined as either:

a) 1x aggressive action (bet, call, raise, complete)
b) 3x passive actions (check, bring-in, fold)

Misdeals
A misdeal may only be declared if substantial action has not yet occurred.
If substantial action has not yet occurred, a misdeal will be declared if/when one of the following seven conditions has been met for a reason other than player error:

a) either one of the first two cards dealt are exposed.
b) any card intended for the button position is exposed.
c) more than one hole card is exposed.
d) more than one boxed card is found.
e) the button is revealed to be in the wrong position.
f) any player has the incorrect quantity of hole cards.
g) the first hole card was dealt to the wrong position.

Flashed Cards
A "flashed" card is one which is exposed during the distribution of hole cards.
As per the rules on misdeals, some situations with flashed cards will result in a misdeal.
In all other cases, the dealing of hole cards will continue beyond the position of the flashed card. Once all other hole cards have been dealt, the original flop burn card will be swapped for the flashed card, with the original flop burn now in a player's hole cards. The flashed card will be briefly shown to all players and then placed face-down on top of the stub, to be used later as the flop burn card.

Boxed Cards
A "boxed" card is one which is found face-up within the deck.
If any number of boxed cards are found after substantial action has occurred, the boxed cards will be shown once to all players and then discarded face-down into the muck pile.
Boxed cards are never replaced during a hand in progress.

String Betting
This illegal action is defined as attempting to bet or raise in multiple movements that include an initial forward movement (towards the center of the table, beyond a player's cards) and a return to a player's stack without a prior verbal declaration of intent.
Players unsure about betting procedures are strongly encouraged to verbalize their intentions prior to moving any chips – this approach protects players against all possible chip-movement errors.

Insufficient Raise Amounts
A player who makes a raise of 50% or more of the largest prior full bet, but less than a minimum raise, must make *exactly* a full minimum raise. An attempt at raising which does not eclipse 50% of the largest prior full bet will be ruled a call, whether it's done verbally or silently.

Player Absence
If a player is disqualified, their chips will be removed from play immediately.
If a player is away from the table for any reason other than disqualification, their hands will be automatically folded, and their chips will be blinded off by the normal flow of play.
A player is considered absent from a hand if they are not within arm's length of their seat by the time the final hole card has been dealt to the last player in the hand to receive hole cards.

Calling a Clock
A "reasonable" amount of time is defined as $1/10^{th}$ of the total duration of the current blind level. Once a reasonable amount of time has elapsed during a player's turn, any player seated at the table may call for a timer to be assigned to the player in turn. Once this is requested, tournament officials will begin a 40-second timer, the last ten seconds of which will be counted aloud by the official. If the player in turn has not definitively acted by the time the official begins to annunciate the "zero" at the end of the countdown, the player in turn will have their hand declared dead.

Premature Community Cards
If a community card is exposed prior to the completion of all the action within a particular betting round, it will be replaced according to the procedures below.

a) Flop: if the flop is exposed, the flop burn card remains in place, the exposed flop is returned to the stub (cards remaining in deck), and the stub is re-shuffled after all pre-flop action is completed. A new flop is then dealt without burning an additional card.
b) Turn: if the turn is exposed, the turn burn card remains in place, the exposed turn is returned to the stub, and the stub is reshuffled after all flop action is completed. A new turn card is then dealt without burning an additional card.
c) River: if the river is exposed, the river burn card remains in place, the exposed river is returned to the stub, and the stub is re-shuffled after all turn action is completed. A new river card is then dealt without burning an additional card.

Dealmaking
Deals may be made to redistribute the prize money, according to the following rules:

a) the clock will not be paused for the purpose of dealmaking.
b) all remaining players must agree to the terms before a deal takes effect.
c) if any player refuses to discuss dealmaking further, play will continue unabated.
d) "gifting" positions is not permitted: if a deal concludes play prematurely, the finishing rank of each player will always reflect their chip count ranking at the time the deal was finalized.