

TOURNAMENT SETUP - STRUCTURE

BUY-IN

This depends on how much your players are willing to spend. It is better to have a lower buy in if you are going to have rebuys and add-ons.

REBUYS

Whether or not you have a rebuys should be based on player preference and also on the characteristics of the game. Rebuys are good for tournaments where players will be coming from far away. If a player drove an hour to the game and got busted out with KK against AA on the 2nd hand they would be disappointed that they drove 2 hours to play 2 hands.

If you have conservative players then you may want to have a tourney with no rebuys. Players tend to play crazy during rebuy events and your conservative players may not enjoy them or want to put in money for the rebuy.

Most people think that the prize money will be greater with rebuy events but this is only true if the initial buy-in is the same as a no-rebuy. For example, a \$50 buy-in/\$50 rebuy will have about the same amount of money as a \$100 no rebuy tourney.

Most of the time, the rebuy period lasts for an hour and the typical rebuy is either the same as the buy-in or half the amount. You can also have either 1 rebuy or unlimited rebuys. You can also change the number of chips you get for a rebuy to be more than what you got for a buy-in. This is to incentive players to do a rebuy. For example, you could do a \$50 buy-in to get \$1,500 in chips and do a \$50 rebuy to get \$2,000 in more chips. For the buy-in you are getting \$30 in chips per \$1 in buy-in. For the rebuy, you are getting \$40 in chips for every \$1 invested.

Rebuys will cause your tourney to run longer. also, if you have rebuys then the blinds may have to be higher because more money will be in the game.

PAYOUTS

Payout structures can vary from conservative to top-heavy (where most of the money goes to the winner). Most people like top-heavy payouts so they can get a big windfall if they win. If you are playing a game with inexperienced players it might be better to have a more flat payout structure to reward marginal players. If bad players keep playing without winning any money they may stop going to your games.

In most cases, when 2 players get busted out at the same time, the one with the most chips gets the higher place.

DEALS

In most tourneys, players can make deals at the end of a tourney to split allow players to cut 'side deals' to split payouts. For example, the final two players might agree to split the first and second prize payouts between the two of them. The Tournament Director is never responsible for anything to do with side deals. Any such side deals are strictly between the players.

You can use my spreadsheet here to use the Deal Calculator I made up in Excel. Here is a screenshot:

DEAL CALCULATOR - 2 OR 3 PLAYERS					
instructions: fill in the yellow boxes					
TOTAL PRIZE MONEY				\$	1,000
Place	Name	# of chips	Payouts	\$ after Deal	
1	Joe	10,000	\$ 900	\$	544
2	Brian	8,000	\$ 100	\$	456
3	Mike				
TOTAL			\$ 1,000	\$	1,000
DO NOT TOUCH					
min		\$	100		
# players			2		
Difference		\$	800		

BLINDS

It will take a few times to become comfortable with a blind structure. There is one huge rule you need to use when hosting a tournament for the first time - if you aren't sure what the blinds are then make them low! There is nothing worse than setting up a tournament that people look forward to enjoying but the blinds go up too fast and it becomes an all-in festival. My opinion on blind structures is that the majority of blinds schedules are WAY too fast and the tournies end up being crapshoots at the end. Devilfish has stated this opinion publicly also. The reason for the fast blind increases is because when it gets down to 2 players left, then the people who are waiting for the next game to start (or the dealer for that matter) gets impatient and all the railbirds don't like watching all the folding - they want to see action - even if it means rushing you into making a move you don't want to. It also has to do with the fact that poker rooms ultimately make money by the hour and want the tournies to finish faster. Unfortunately some players enjoy the fast blind structures. The reason for this is something most people don't realize. In games where the blinds are high, it encourages more aggressive betting because the pots (relative to the average stack size) are much bigger. This means that the more aggressive no-limit players (and hence, the BETTER no-limit players) favor high blinds. Although this is good for the aggressive players it is not necessarily fair. Having blinds that are so high that it becomes a crapshoot at the end means that luck plays the biggest part when the most money is at stake. This doesn't make sense. People are willing to play for an hour to squeeze in-the-money to get \$50 but yet when it comes to a \$500 difference then players are supposed to give up control of the game to mandatory all-ins at the end.

A good rule of thumb is that at the beginning of a tournament the big blind should be 1% of the average stack size (i.e. the starting stack size). For more aggressive games the big blind can be 2-3%. It should never be higher than 3%. Near the end of a tournament the big blind should be 5% of the average stack. To most players that seems low but think about this. If the big blind is 5% of the average stack then calling a bet to the river (without raises) means you will lose 20% of your stack. That is a lot. If you watch the WSOP of the \$500 buy-in Pokerstars tournies then you can see that when it gets down to the final 2 players then the big blinds is usually 2-4% of the average stack.

Small tournies (10 players) should last about an hour. Medium sized tournaments (10-25 players) should last 2-3 hours and large tournaments (30 or more players) should last 3-5 hours. Blind increases are usually 50-100% of the last blind and the blind intervals are usually 20-30 minutes. Most home games tend to be casual, and therefore there are fewer hands dealt per hour because of people talking and socializing. The blind structure should not be altered during a tournament. The reason being is that the chip leaders will always want faster blinds and will always campaign for them,

but blinds levels should be at a reasonable level to allow the average player room to play. Make sure your color-ups are in line with your blinds. For example, if you color up the \$25 chips then don't have blinds that are \$250/\$500 if you only have \$100 chips.

STARTING CHIPS & CHIP VALUES

You typically need 4 different color chips in order to play a tournament. Three of the chips will have values of \$5, \$25, and \$100. The fourth chip will have a value of \$500 and will be brought in during a color-up. For really big tournaments you will want to have a 5th chip with a value of \$1,000. It is best to have the starting chips be either 1,000 or 1,500. This is because most tournaments (especially online tournaments) have these as the starting values. Not only does it make it easier to run the tournament with conventional values, but it makes it easier for the players because they are used to betting the same amounts at the beginning of a tournament.

ANTES

Some tournaments use antes in order to speed up the tournament. To me this is pointless because if you want to speed up the tournament then just make the blinds bigger. If you use antes then before every hand you have to make sure all the players put their antes in. This can get annoying. But this is a personal preference. If the person running the tournament is a Stud player then there is a higher likelihood that there will be antes since Stud uses an ante.

SAMPLE BLIND STRUCTURES

Single-Table Structure - this is the one Party Poker uses

Level	Hour	Time	Small Blind	Big Blind
1	1st	0:00-0:20	10	20
2		0:20-0:40	15	30
3		0:40-0:60	20	40
4	2nd	1:00-1:20	25	50
5		1:20-1:40	50	100
6		1:40-1:60	75	150
7	3rd	2:00-2:20	100	200
8		2:20-2:40	150	300
9		2:40-2:60	200	400
10	4th	3:00-3:20	300	600
11		3:20-3:40	400	800
12		3:40-3:60	500	1000
13	5th	4:00-4:20	600	1200
14		4:20-4:40	800	1600
15		4:40-4:60	1000	2000

Multi-Table Structure - this is the one Party Poker uses

Round	Blinds	Limit
1	\$10/\$15	\$15/\$30
2	\$10/\$20	\$20/\$40
3	\$15/\$30	\$30/\$60
4	\$25/\$50	\$50/\$100

5	\$50/\$100	\$100/\$200
6	\$75/\$150	\$150/\$300
7	\$100/\$200	\$200/\$400
8	\$150/\$300	\$300/\$600
9	\$200/\$400	\$400/\$800
10	\$300 / \$600	\$600 / \$1,200
11	\$400 / \$800	\$800 / \$1,600
12	\$500 / \$1,000	\$1,000 / \$2,000
13	\$750 / \$1,500	\$1,500 / \$3,000
14	\$1,000 / \$2,000	\$2,000 / \$4,000
15	\$1,500 / \$3,000	\$3,000 / \$6,000
16	\$2,000 / \$4,000	\$4,000 / \$8,000
17	\$3,000 / \$6,000	\$6,000 / \$12,000
18	\$4,000 / \$8,000	\$8,000 / \$16,000
19	\$5,000 / \$10,000	\$10,000 / \$20,000
20	\$7,500 / \$15,000	\$15,000 / \$30,000
21	\$10,000 / \$20,000	\$20,000 / \$40,000
22	\$15,000 / \$30,000	\$30,000 / \$60,000
23	\$20,000 / \$40,000	\$40,000 / \$80,000
24	\$30,000 / \$60,000	\$60,000 / \$120,000
25	\$40,000 / \$80,000	\$80,000 / \$160,000
26	\$50,000 / \$100,000	\$100,000 / \$200,000