

Family Project: **A Southern Poker Tournament**

Topic 060 Article 4

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### The Situation

Like most families mine dolts constantly on the children. We love the little ones dearly and spend a great deal of time working with them. But sometimes we need adult conversation, we need adult situations (not "adult situations" as in the movie sense, but "adult situations" in the sense that there are no children present worry about and fuss over).

Perhaps in some families these situations just happen - but not in mine. If we want a situation away from the little ones we have to make it happen. One of the events we have refined for this purpose is the Poker Tournament.

Why Poker? Three reasons:

First, because it's easy to play - the mechanics of the game are rather simple. Yet it offers opportunities for many talents to be used - some just depend on luck, some compute odds, and some "read" the other players - all have a good time

Second, poker has an allure to it. Poker wasn't invented in America but it was made in America. All of the movies about the old west and the riverboats have created somewhere in each of us a "steely eyed poker player". Also there is just something vaguely naughty about playing poker.

Third, the little ones understand why they are not invited. They know that poker is gambling and children don't go gambling. So they are all right with the arrangements made for them. But many of them are counting the years until they are invited - it's become something of an unintentional rite of passage.

### The Basic Idea

The Poker Tournament described here is a social gathering. It's more about fun than poker. Poker is just the theme of the party. But it's a good theme and provides an

activity separate from eating, drinking, chatting in small groups, and watching television. It's a genteel method of mixing and re-mixing the guest in an acceptable manner - and it's just plain fun.

### General Description

A guest recently described one of our Poker Tournaments as "A house party with three poker sessions". That's a pretty fair assessment. However it fails to mention all of the laughter and teasing that went on during the evening.

During one of our Poker Tournaments the general sequence of events is as follows:

1. The guests arrive.
2. A refreshment period (30 minutes).
3. The Five-Card Stud Game (30 minutes).
4. A break period (30 minutes).
5. The Draw Poker Game (30 minutes).
6. Another break period (30 minutes).
7. The Seven-Card Stud Game (45 minutes).
8. Another break period (30 minutes).
9. The Winner Announcement and payout (about 15 minutes).
10. The Pretty Woman Drawing (about 15 minutes).
11. Follow on refreshments (until everyone leaves).

The above is an outline for a 4 to 5 hour evening enjoyable to all. The breaks allow plenty of time for chatting with personal favorites. The poker games ensure that everyone mingles with everyone else. No one is just left standing or sitting alone for the whole evening. The poker games force some interaction and also provide a common topic for beginning conversations between games.

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Producing a Poker Tournament takes a bit of doing, but it's well worth the effort. Not only can you provide people and opportunity to meet and have fun, you can influence them in that direction.

### **The Details**

There is some organization, preparation, equipment, and consideration involved in hosting a first Poker Tournament - the second is much easier. With practice it becomes simpler than a dinner party. The detail sections below discuss many of the items.

**The Players** - Think about who you want to participate in the tournament - and why. Most people know the rules and mechanics of poker or can learn them quickly enough. The "people mixing" format and the low stakes somewhat mitigate the "people reading" and "odds counting" skills of the more seasoned players, so everyone has a fair chance of winning. About twenty players works well, though more or less works too, this can yield four tables of five players each so things move along and the guests can be mixed well. Old, young, men, women, married, single - none of this matters too much.

**Organizing** - It's important to start early. The number of players does matter. You want to leave yourself enough time to invite someone else in case some people decline. With twenty people or so the party atmosphere can be maintained, if the number drops to eight or ten it becomes more of a card game - still good, just different. There is something nice about a written invitation but it's not absolutely necessary, phone calls can suffice to invite people to play. However, as explained later, poker requires a "pot", I require everyone to put up ten dollars. The amount can be varied to suit the situation, but the invited guests must be told about it when the invitation is extended.

**Required Items** - In addition to the normally required party items (food, drinks, plates, glasses, napkins, etc.) a Poker

Tournament needs a few other things. Tables, chairs, change, cards, and chips are the biggies. Tables may appear to be the big problem but it's really not, many things will do if you put a cloth over it - for a chance to play poker some men will build the tables. Chairs are usually the problem, look around, give it some thought - benches and stools will do for some people as they tend to lean on the table anyway. (But don't make the mistake I did the first time, try them out - you don't want to be running around in a panic when you realize that the tables you plan to use come up to the chins of people sitting in the chairs you plan to use.) Change is needed, most people will give you a ten or twenty dollar bill for the pot, but few will be considerate enough to win or lose in nice round numbers - you will need plenty of singles, quarters, and nickels. Poker chips and cards are available at many stores, not a problem unless you forget to get them.

**Seating** - The host determines the seating of the players at the poker tables. Put some thought into this, don't put people who aggravate each other at the same table. And don't put husbands and wives at the same table - this will make everyone happier. Brook no arguments from the players about the seating - even the most ardent couples can survive sitting at different tables for a half hour at a time. Mix the players as much as possible from game to game.

**Money Handling** - This doesn't have to be difficult. We have developed the following process that works well. Every player is provided a plastic cup with their name on it. The ten dollars is collected from everyone during the first refreshment period and then put away. At the beginning of each game each player is given his or her cup containing three dollars in chips. At the end of each game the players turn in their cups containing whatever chips they have left. The chips are counted, the results written on a score sheet and the cups refilled with three dollars in chips for the next game. At the end of the third game the results of all three games are tallied and each player paid

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accordingly. The un-returned dollar goes into the Pretty Woman Pool.

The reason for the collection and redistribution of the chips between games is to allow everyone to start even. Previous winners must do so again without the advantage of a large bank, and previous losers are not hampered by a shortage of chips. Also it insures that everyone gets to play in all three games.

The Pretty Woman Pool is distributed to the women playing at the end of the evening. (see the "The way we do Pretty Woman" sheet for details).

### **Encouragement**

I encourage everyone to try a Poker Tournament. It's a lot of fun, and it can be used for a variety of purposes, just to get everyone together, to introduce new people to a group, to form a group, or to introduce specific people to each other.

Don't let the logistics scare you, it's not that bad and many invited guest will help if asked.

Frequently the biggest problem is getting organized. Toward that problem I have included the following pages. Print them out, use them "as is" or modify them to fit your needs. I give them as a packet to first time guests so they will know what to expect. Maybe they will assist in getting you on the road to a fun filled evening.

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## Poker Tournament

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

Players must be on time. A ten dollar chip deposit will be collected upon arrival. (Three dollars in chips will be provided for each of three Poker Games and one dollar will be placed into the Pretty Woman Pool.) At the end of the evening the chips will be redeemed.

### Tournament Agenda

- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival, organization, and refreshments
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Five-Card Stud Game - seating will be assigned
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Tally and refreshment period
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Draw Poker Game - seating will be assigned
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Tally and refreshment period
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Seven-Card Stud Game - seating will be assigned
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Tally and refreshment period
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Winner Announcement and Pay-out
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Pretty Woman Drawing
- \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Refreshments and conversation

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How we play

## Five-Card Stud

Local rules:

1. No lending or borrowing chips.
2. No Wild Cards.
3. 10 cent Ante.
4. 5 cent minimum bet 50 cent maximum.
5. Only three raises allowed per betting interval.
6. The Low Money Rule is in effect.

The Play:

1. Each player puts and Ante into the pot.
2. The dealer gives each player a card face down (the “hole” card), then a card face up.
3. The players look at their hole cards but do not show them to anyone.
4. A betting interval is allowed starting with the player having the best poker hand showing, ties go to the player nearest the dealers left. Players may drop out of the hand at their time in the betting rotation of this or any other betting interval. But they must wait their turn.
5. Another card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
6. Another betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
7. Another card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
8. Another betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
9. A last card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
10. A final betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
11. All remaining active players go into a showdown and reveal their hole card so a winner can be determined.

Players who drop out are not allowed to reveal their hole card to anyone. All players in the showdown **must** reveal their hole card to everyone.

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How we play

## Draw Poker

Local rules:

1. No lending or borrowing chips.
2. No Wild Cards.
3. 10 cent Ante.
4. 5 cent minimum bet 50 cent maximum.
5. Only three raises allowed per betting interval.
6. Open on anything.
7. The Low Money Rule is in effect.

The Play:

1. Each player puts and Ante into the pot.
2. The dealer gives each player a card face down, then a second, a third, a fourth, and a fifth - the undealt cards are set aside for later use.
3. The players evaluate their hands but don't show them to anyone.
4. A betting interval is allowed starting with the player on the dealers left. Players must either place a bet or drop out - checking is not allowed. Players may drop out of the hand at their time in the betting rotation of this or any other betting interval. But they must wait their turn.
5. Starting with the first active player on the dealers left and progressing around the table back to the dealer, each player is given the opportunity to "discard" any or all of the cards in his hand and have the dealer replace them with the top cards on the deck. The discarded cards must not be shown to anyone.
6. The players evaluate their hand again but don't show them to anyone.
7. A final betting interval is allowed starting with the first active player on the dealers left.
8. All remaining active players go into a showdown and must reveal their cards so a winner can be determined.

Players who drop out are not allowed to show their cards to anyone. All players in a showdown **must** reveal their cards to everyone - even if a higher hand has already been shown.

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How we play

## Seven-Card Stud

Local rules:

1. No lending or borrowing chips.
2. No Wild Cards.
3. 10 cent Ante.
4. 5 cent minimum bet 50 cent maximum.
5. Only three raises allowed per betting interval.
6. The Low Money Rule is in effect.

The Play:

1. Each player puts and Ante into the pot.
2. The dealer gives each player a card face down, then a second card face down (the “hole” cards), then a card face up.
3. The players look at their hole cards but do not show them to anyone.
4. A betting interval is allowed starting with the player having the best poker hand showing, ties go to the player nearest the dealers left. Players may drop out of the hand at their time in the betting rotation of this or any other betting interval. But they must wait their turn.
5. Another card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
6. Another betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
7. Another card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
8. Another betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
9. Another card is dealt face up to all remaining active players.
10. Another betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
11. A last card is dealt **face down** to all remaining active players.
12. A final betting interval is allowed, again starting with the player with the best hand showing.
13. All remaining active players go into a showdown and reveal their hole cards so a winner can be determined.

Players who drop out are not allowed to reveal their hole card to anyone. All players in the showdown **must** reveal their hole cards to everyone.

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How it works

## The Low Money Rule

Because we limit the number of chips each player brings into a game, and allow no provisions for getting more, we need a way of handling a player running out of chips. The Low Money Rule takes care of this situation.

The Low Money Rule works as follows:

1. If at any time a bet is made or raised to an amount that equals or exceeds the remaining chips of an active player, that player can invoke the Low Money Rule - this must be done at the time the bet is made or raised. To invoke the rule the player simply says "Low Money" and states how much he has left - the amount is verified.
2. When the Low Money Rule is invoked the bet or raise is limited to the amount the invoking player can cover, and no more raises are allowed. The player invoking the Low Money Rule must call the bet.
3. At the end of the betting interval all remaining active players immediately go into a showdown with the cards they have to determine the winner of the pot.

If a player has not invoked the Low Money Rule and can not match a bet, that player must drop out of the hand.

If a player has no chips to Ante, that player is out of the game.

Absolutely no borrowing or lending of chips is allowed.

All players must keep all of their chips visible on the table. Players are advised to be aware of the number of chips other players possess as invoking the Low Money Rule can significantly alter the play of the game.

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How we do

## Pretty Woman

In the South of Louisiana we always have a little Lagniappe for the Ladies. After all, they can't play poker very well. Right?

Here's what we do:

1. Ten percent of every chip deposit is put into the Pretty Woman Pool.
2. At the end of the evening, after the Winner has been determined and the Pay-outs made, we have the Pretty Woman Drawing. All of the women who played participate in reverse order of their final chip count. (Those who lost the most, or won the least, go first.)
3. A deck of cards is spread face down on a table. In order each of the ladies picks up a card. This continues until all four queens have been selected. The ladies holding each queen are awarded 25 percent of the Pretty Woman Pool.

Just a little something extra for our Ladies.

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## A General Description of Poker

Poker is a card game in which players bet as to which holds the best cards. A poker “hand” starts with each player placing a small bet in order to participate, the bets are put into a pile in the center of the table called the “pot”. The object of the game is to win the pot.

All players are dealt some cards, then an interval of betting occurs, when the bets are equalized some more cards are dealt and another interval of betting occurs (the number of repetitions of this process depends on the variation of poker being played).

Any player who becomes convinced that his cards will not win may drop out, forfeiting the bets he has already placed in the pot.

A player wins the pot in one of two ways: 1) after all of the cards have been dealt and all betting done, the remaining players show their cards and the best cards win, or 2) if at anytime a player makes a bet that no other player is willing to match (the rest drop out), that player immediately wins the pot.

Once the pot is won another hand can begin.

Poker is a card game, but cards are only half the story. The other half is reading the people playing. If a player becomes visibly excited when he has good cards, other players will not bet against him, they will save their chips for another hand. Conversely, a player who can convince the other players that he has good cards can cause them to drop out, allowing him to win the pot even with poor cards.

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## The Rank and Description of Poker Hands

In poker the following combinations of cards have value. They are listed here from highest to lowest value. In a showdown the highest valued hand win the pot.

1. Straight Flush - Five cards in sequence in the same suit. Between two Straight Flushes, the one headed by the highest card wins.
2. Four of a Kind - Any four cards of the same rank. Between two such hands, the higher ranking cards wins.
3. Full House - Three cards of the same rank and two cards of another same rank. Between two Full Houses the one with the higher ranking three cards wins.
4. Flush - Five cards all of the same suit but not in sequence. Between two Flushes the one containing the highest rank card wins.
5. Straight - Five cards in rank sequence but not the same suit. Between two Straights the one containing the highest ranking card wins.
6. Three of a Kind - Three cards of the same rank with the rest of the cards being unmatched. Between two such hands the one with the higher ranking matching three cards wins.
7. Two Pair - Two cards of one rank and two cards of another rank with the rest of the cards being unmatched. Between two such hands the one with the highest ranking pair wins, should those be equal compare the lower pairs, then the unmatched cards for high card until a difference is found.
8. One Pair - Two cards of one rank with the rest of the cards being unmatched. Between two such hands the one with the highest ranking pair wins, should those be equal compare the unmatched cards for high card until a difference is found.
9. High Card - All unmatched cards. Between such hands the one containing the highest ranked card wins, should those be equal compare the rest of the cards for high card until a difference is found.

In poker the suits are all of equal value and can not be used to determine winners.

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## Some Poker Terms

Poker is played around the world, and in many respects is an international language. It is also in many respects, a language of it's own. There are a lot of terms used, and the number is growing. People seem to love making up poker terms and then trying to convince everyone that they are standard. I have tried to list and define the ones needed to play in our tournaments here. If you hear others used don't be afraid to ask for an explanation - frequently the answer is amusing to the whole table. I've placed the entries in alphabetical order.

1. Active Player - A player who has matched all bets and is still in contention for winning the pot. Sometimes these players are referred to as "Still in".
2. Ante - The initial small bet required to participate in a poker hand. Usually one chip.
3. Betting Interval - Opportunities to place bets. The number and timing of the betting intervals depends on the variation of poker being played but within the interval the process is always the same. A player places a bet by putting some chips into the pot, the active player on the bettors left then has an opportunity to drop out, match the bet, or increase the bet. This process continues around the table, perhaps several times, until all remaining active players have equal amounts in the pot.
4. Bluffing - Actions taken to make opponents believe that a players hand is much stronger than it is. This might take the form of placing large bets or acting out excitement - the goal of bluffing is to cause other players to drop out, and win the pot without a showdown.
5. Calling - The act of matching the accumulated bet but not increasing it. Also sometimes referred to as "seeing a bet".
6. Checking - The act of placing a zero bet or no bet - this is only allowed if the player is first to bet or if there is no accumulated bet outstanding when the players turn in rotation arrives. Some games do not allow checking.
7. Cut - The act of cutting the deck. At the beginning of each poker hand, after the cards are shuffled but before any are dealt, the dealer presents the deck to the player on his right for cutting. The player takes the deck, removes some cards from the top (more than 5) and places them on the bottom of the deck, then gives the deck back to the dealer. Care should be taken that none of the cards are exposed to anyone during the process..
8. Deal - The act of giving out cards to the active players, or the responsibility for giving out the cards (as in "You have the deal").
9. Deck - The stack of cards from which players are given cards. The top card is always given out next. Between hands all of the cards are gathered up and put back in the deck. The cards in the deck are then mixed up or shuffled before being given out again. Each hand starts with a full deck of 52 cards.
10. Dropping Out - The act of quitting a hand of poker. The player who drops out forfeits all bets already in the pot but has to make no more - the player becomes an inactive player for the rest of the hand. A player should only drop out at his turn in the betting rotation. A player drops out when he becomes convinced that his hand will not win the pot. Dropping out is also called "folding" or sometimes as "passing".
11. Game - A meeting where poker is played. Usually some form of limit is placed on the length of the

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meeting, either a time limit or a number of hands limit.

12. Hand - A term that can either refer to the cards a player has (as in “My hand is weak”), or to the activities that begin with players putting up an ante and ending with a player winning the pot (as in “Mark was bluffing in the last hand”).
13. Hole Card(s) - In one of the Stud games, the cards that are dealt face down to the players. These cards are said to be “in the hole”.
14. Inactive Player - A player who has dropped out of the current hand. Such players are but observers until the pot is won - then they may ante up and become active players in the next hand. Inactive players are often referred to as “out”.
15. Limits - Limits on the size of the minimum and maximum bets to be allowed are usually established before the game. Frequently a limit on the number of raises is also established.
16. Opening - The act of placing the initial bet in a betting interval. The player might say “I’ll open for a quarter”.
17. Pot - The prize, the accumulation of all bets made thus far in the hand, physically a pile of chips in the middle of the table.
18. Raising - The act of not only matching the accumulated bet but increasing the bet.
19. Rank - One of the 13 types of cards; from highest to lowest they are, Ace, King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2. Twos are frequently called Duces. There are 4 cards of each rank in a poker deck.
20. Rotation - The order of events in a poker hand. Everything moves from right to left around the table in poker: the cards are dealt first to the player on the dealers left then on around the table; the opportunity to bet or drop out moves from one player to the player on his left. A player should do nothing related to the game “out of rotation” as it might signal intention and give other players and advantage.
21. Showdown - Once the last betting interval is completed, if there remains more than one active player, a showdown takes place. In a showdown all active players expose all of their cards and the player with the best poker hand wins the pot.
22. Sitting Out -- Not participating in a particular poker hand. This is not allowed, a players may place an ante and immediately drop out if they want - but they must participate, or drop completely out of the game. If a break in the game is required, all players must take it.
23. Suit - One of the four categories of cards; hearts, diamonds, clubs, and spades. There are 13 cards in each suit. In poker all suits are of equal value.

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