

Texas Hold'em

Texas hold'em is an increasingly popular form of poker in which each player is dealt two cards and there are five common cards. In 2005, the legislature enacted a law authorizing Texas hold'em tournaments that are conducted according to certain requirements.

Does Minnesota prohibit all forms of betting?

Minnesota law generally prohibits betting and the operation of any location where betting is permitted or promoted. A "bet" occurs when parties agree that one party will give another party money, property, or some other benefit in the event of an outcome that is dependent upon chance, even if the outcome is also dependent upon an element of skill.

Over time, Minnesota has established a number of statutory exceptions to the general prohibition of betting. For example, Minnesota law authorizes the operation of a state lottery, bets on horse races at licensed racetracks, and private social bets that are not part of or incidental to organized, commercialized, or systematic gambling. Minnesota also allows gambling on some social skill games (e.g., cribbage, bridge, gin) and social dice games (e.g., "shake-a-day," "3-2-1," "who buys"), provided that they meet certain conditions.

When are card tournaments legal?

Minnesota permits gambling in certain card tournaments, as long as the tournaments do not provide any direct financial benefit to the promoter or organizer and the value of all prizes awarded in a tournament does not exceed \$200.

Until June 2005, only ten card games were permitted under these circumstances: cribbage, skat, sheephead, bridge, euchre, pinochle, gin, 500, smear, and whist. However, as of June 4, 2005, Texas hold'em tournaments and contests are also permitted, subject to the restrictions described below. Gambling in tournaments consisting of any other social skill game are illegal in Minnesota.

When are Texas hold'em tournaments legal?

Texas hold'em tournaments are subject to the same restrictions as other social skill game tournaments in Minnesota. However, there are additional requirements for Texas hold'em tournaments that do not apply to other social skill game tournaments.

Can players be charged to participate in a Texas hold'em tournament?

Players in Texas hold'em tournaments cannot be charged *any* fee or be required to give *any* consideration (something of value) as a condition of participation. In other words, players must be able to participate in a Texas hold'em tournament for free.

<i>Can prizes be awarded in a Texas hold'em tournament?</i>	Prizes can be awarded in Texas hold'em tournaments. However, as is the case with tournaments involving other social skill games, the value of all prizes awarded in a single tournament cannot exceed \$200. With respect to Texas hold'em, the law further specifies that the value of all prizes awarded to <i>an individual winner</i> of a tournament at a single location may not exceed \$200 per day.
<i>Is there an age requirement to play Texas hold'em?</i>	To participate in a Texas hold'em tournament or contest, a player must be at least 18 years old.
<i>Can players with disabilities participate in Texas hold'em tournaments?</i>	Minnesota law requires the organizer or promoter of any Texas hold'em tournament to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made for players with disabilities. In addition to making other accommodations to tournament tables and cards, a tournament organizer or promoter has to make sure that Braille cards are available for blind players and that the cards visible to the entire table are announced.
<i>Who regulates Texas hold'em tournaments?</i>	The Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division (AGED), Department of Public Safety, in conjunction with local law enforcement authorities, has jurisdiction over Texas hold'em tournaments and other social skill game tournaments. The Gambling Control Board has no jurisdiction over these tournaments. It is appropriate to contact a local county attorney with questions about the conduct of Texas hold'em tournaments.

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