



Poker in clubs

Advice on allowing poker in clubs



Can we allow poker in our club?

Poker can be played in a members' club or commercial club, but you must take account of the conditions that apply to any gaming in clubs, including limits on stakes and prizes. Action can be taken against clubs that do not comply with these conditions.

What is a members' club?

It is a club that:

- is not established as a commercial enterprise and is conducted solely for the benefit of its members
- has at least 25 members
- is established and conducted wholly or mainly for purposes other than gaming (unless the gaming is restricted to bridge and whist)
- is permanent in nature.

Examples include working men's clubs, branches of the Royal British Legion and clubs with political affiliations.

What is a commercial club?

It is a club that:

- is established for commercial gain (whether or not it is making a commercial profit)
- has at least 25 members
- is established and conducted wholly or mainly for purposes other than gaming (unless the gaming is restricted to bridge and whist)
- is permanent in nature.

Examples include snooker clubs, clubs established as privately owned companies and clubs established for personal profit.



What are the stakes and prizes?

There may be a maximum value to both the amount that can be staked and the prize that can be offered when playing poker in a club, depending on whether it is a members' club or commercial club, and the type of permit held, if any.

The maximum prizes include money, payments-in-kind, vouchers, goods, donated items, goody bags, buy-ins at other poker tournaments and other items which have a value.

Members' clubs and commercial clubs (with or without club machine permits)

The maximum stake per player is £10 per game, and the combined stakes for your premises must not exceed £250 per day and £1,000 per week.

The maximum prize is £250 per game.

A maximum participation fee of £1 per person per day can be charged by a members' club, with or without a club machine permit. A commercial club with a club machine permit can charge £3 per person per day, but only £1 otherwise.

Members' clubs (with club gaming permits)

Members' clubs with club gaming permits are allowed to offer their members poker with unlimited stakes and prizes.

A maximum participation fee of £3 per person per day can be charged.

Commercial clubs are not entitled to club gaming permits, so they cannot offer poker with unlimited stakes and prizes. There are important tests to determine whether a club is a genuine members' club. Any club which offers poker as the primary or only activity of the club, or on a commercial basis, does not qualify as a members' club under the Gambling Act 2005 and, therefore, cannot have a club gaming permit. For further information, see the separate quick guide called **Members' club or commercial club?** which is available on our website.

Money must not be deducted from any stakes or winnings, and no fee can be charged to take part in the poker, other than the participation fees mentioned earlier in this guide.



Can I run a poker tournament?

The Gambling Commission recommends you take legal advice before you run a poker tournament or league.

A document called ***Advice on gaming in clubs and alcohol-licensed premises: Gambling Act 2005*** is available on our website and has some examples of ways a tournament might be structured which you may find helpful.



Can I host a poker league?

Yes, provided it is not linked gaming. The Gambling Act 2005 says that a single game of poker cannot be played across a number of different premises.

Games of poker are linked if:

- players in more than one club or pub are competing in the same game of poker across premises, and the winner of that game of poker gets a prize
- the amount of the prize is determined by the number of people playing in different games of poker in different clubs or pubs.

Poker tournaments where the winners of games, or top players in a series of games, from various club and pub venues go through to play in a tournament final, would not be linked gaming even if the final was held at another venue, for example a licensed casino. The amount each entrant can win depends on the number of games they have played in the tournament. See the example at the end of this guide.

You should always keep to the stakes and prizes limits already discussed, in particular the limit of £250 per day and £1,000 per week in combined stakes for the premises.

How final prize limits are worked out

The maximum prize for each game is always £250, even if it is a regional or national final. They are regarded as separate and distinct games and cannot be linked to the league games.



This player wins a maximum of £2000

	league A	league B	league C	league D
week 8	£250	£250	£250	£250
week 7	£250	no winner	£250	£250
week 6	£250	£250	£250	£250
week 5	£250	not played	£250	£250
week 4	£250	£250		£250
week 3	£250	£250		
week 2	£250	£250		
week 1	£250			

This player wins a maximum of £750

For example, if the player in poker league A reaches a tournament final by playing eight games in the league, the total prize can be no larger than £2000 at the club league level. The player can then win a maximum of £250 at the regional final and another £250 at the national final, if played in a club. If the player in league D only plays in three games in the league out of five games available, his or her total prize can be no larger than £750 at the club league level. Again, the player can then win a maximum of £250 at the regional final and another £250 at the national final.

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