

Advantages And Disadvantages Of Playing Online Poker Vs Playing At A Poker Table

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Unlike sitting down at a poker table with friends, online poker has an added dimension these days. There is a lot of pressure from many quarters to make online poker illegal, particularly in the United States. You will almost always know if the table game you are playing is in an area where poker is legal, but it is getting harder to know if this is true about poker played online.

In spite of these gray areas, millions in the U. S. and around the world regularly enjoy participating in online poker games from the comfort of their own homes. Just to give this some perspective, in 2005, the revenue from online poker was reported to be in the vicinity of 200 million.

Not only is online poker generating huge amounts of revenue and creating new millionaires, among players, site owners, and affiliates of poker sites, but, due to its pervasive influence, the appeal of poker in general is growing. The public is not only gaining knowledge about poker, but is showing an interest in all things poker. From the tables to the chips at the table, to the people who play at the tables, poker is huge.

Poker players such as Chris Ferguson (Jesus), Annie Duke, and her brother Howard Lederer (The Professor), and Hoyt Corkins (The Alabama Cowboy), to name a few, had never been heard of by the public a few months ago. Now they are celebrities in their own right. Even people who have been celebrities, such as Jennifer Tilly, Ben Affleck, and Mimi Rogers have traded in the bright lights of Hollywood for the green felt of the poker table - at least on occasion.

While many of these famous people play in tournaments sitting at the table with the celebrities of poker, most mortals enter the poker arena via online poker websites such as partypoker.com, pokerstars.com, ultimatebet.com or fulltiltpoker.com.

Sitting at a poker table can be intimidating, particularly for the new player and just is not that inviting for the beginner. They are apt to feel out of their league, and, if others at the table have more experience or are strangers, they are apt to feel intimidated.

The online poker experience is quite different. There is an anonymity which protects the psyche of the "newbie". They can watch games as long as they want before actually taking part. Additionally, most online venues will have tutorials and practice games for beginners that help ease the learning process. Sometimes the main site will actually have a completely separate site set up strictly for the beginner. Another helper for the beginner is that online games tend to have buttons labeled for the various actions and often include on-screen prompts for the appropriate action.

Internet poker sites also offer a range of limits so that the beginning player can actually start betting pennies. Not only is the betting easy, but so is the access. Unlike a table game, an online game can be found 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world that there is a computer and an Internet connection.

There are, however, two drawbacks to playing online, particularly if one's goal is to eventually participate in the

highly televised poker tournaments occupying more prime time slots on TV. First, there is the hurdle of actually sitting and playing at the table itself. No amount of online preparation can duplicate or offset the first few times you find yourself in a chair across from a Doyle Brunson, Chris Moneymaker, or Daniel Negreanu.

Second, although it IS possible, it is exceedingly difficult to bluff at an online poker game and even harder to learn how to read your opponents.

Look on the bright side, however. It IS easy to learn basic poker skills and improve your technique online, and you won't have to worry about your poker face!

Short note about the author

Donovan Baldwin is a Dallas area writer and University of West Florida alumnus. He is a member of Mensa and is retired from the U. S. Army after 21 years of service. Find information on how to play poker at <http://donovanbaldwin.com/cbmall/poker.html>.

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