

Poker Tip #10

Feb. 10, 2013

Tip Subject: Managing a Tournament – Middle Stage

Situation: As you saw earlier, a poker tournament can be divided into three stages.

Stage 1:	Early	(Discussed in Poker Tip #5)
Stage 2:	Middle	(Today's discussion)
Stage 3:	Late	

What is the Middle Stage?:

Entering the “Middle Stage” will be different for each player, and for each player it will be different for every tournament depending on a number of factors.

However, to keep it basic, entering the “Middle Stage” will usually occur when you have reached the end of the “Early Stage” – e.g. the end of the 3rd or 4th Blind Level.

Also, a good barometer of entering the “Middle Stage” is when you notice the table has become tighter. It's usually very noticeable.

Your playing style will now change as follows:

1. At this point you can no longer afford to sit around waiting for only the premium hands as you did in the “Early Stage.”
2. Because of the larger size of the blinds, they will eat-away at your chip stack much more quickly.
3. You must now play the starting hands suggested in Poker Tip No. 2.
4. Some of the players you are playing with will make the final table, so let them know you are a tight, solid player.
5. Don't worry about the big stacks.
Be patient and wait for the right hand/situation.
6. The blinds will be getting significant, so only play good cards.
You can't afford to limp with anything less than the suggested starting hands.
7. Position is everything, so use it. Play a good hand aggressively.
Don't Limp or Call. Either raise or fold.
8. If you have a good hand after the flop, make your opponents pay.

9. If the flop does not help your hand, then get out.
Don't chase flush and straight draws.
Don't chase AK and AQ when you miss the flop.
10. As this stage progresses you will be playing against better players.
But be on the lookout for the inexperienced player that got lucky.
They are playing too many hands and can have anything.
11. Avoid playing anything except the best hands when you are up against an inexperienced player that has a huge stack.
They will call almost anything.
12. Now is the time to steal an occasional blind.
Or to make the occasional semi-bluff.
One bluff per hour is generally considered correct.

Note: Semi-Bluff = Betting with a hand that, if called, does not figure to be the best hand at the moment but has a reasonable chance to improve to the best hand by the end.
Of course, it's a bluff so you are hoping the opponent folds.
13. One common mistake to avoid is challenging a legitimate raise with a marginal hand, like AJ or 10-10.
14. If you limp with a marginal hand and there is a raise, don't call.
Just fold and accept your loss.
Players generally raise with good hands and your odds of winning are significantly reduced.
You will usually be the under-dog.