

Poker Tip No. 11

Feb. 17, 2013

Tip Subject: **Playing Small-Medium Pairs**

What are Small – Medium Pairs:

Medium Pairs = JJ, *TT, 99, 88 (*TT = 10 10)
Small Pairs = 77, 66, 55, 44, 33, 22

Poker Listings Website: “Small and Medium Pairs are played much too often by inexperienced players.
You have to learn when, and how, to play them right or risk floundering forever.”

Basic Numbers: Note = Many of these numbers are rounded-off.

1. How often will you hit your pair on the flop, to have a set?

Answer = 11%

or, 1 out-of-every 9 times = You will hit the set
or, 8 out-of-every 9 times = You will miss the set.

2. If you have 88, and your opponent has 99, how often will your pair win?

1 out-of-every 5 times = Your pair will win the hand.
4 out-of-every 5 times = Your pair will lose the hand.

3. Percent chance that an overcard will flop.

<u>You hold</u>	<u>Overcard Flops (Rounded Off)</u>
JJ	60%
TT	70%
99	80%
88	90%
77	90%
66	95%
55	98%
44	99%
33	99%
22	100%

General Comments

Poker Saying: "You start with a pair – You end with a pair."

Meaning, far more often than not, if you play all 5 board cards you will still have only a pair at the end of the hand.

And the odds are really high that your Small – Medium pair will not hold up.

Poker Listings Website:

Small pocket pairs can be tricky to play at the best of times.

It may feel like they should be all-powerful, but depending on the blind level they can range from a robust holding to extremely worthless, and usually expensive to play.

When blinds are low, see cheap flops with small-medium pairs.

In the early stages of a tournament, small pocket pairs (PP's) are very valuable. The blinds are low and your stack is big.

Author's Note: This is a contradiction to Poker Tip No. 4, which says to play only the 5 premium hands in the "Early Stage" of a tournament.

Phil Gordon offers this.

"You might choose to play small – medium PP's when the blinds are low. And of course, fold if you miss the set."

In the Early Stage of the game you can limp with your small pocket pair and hope to hit a set.

Thus, it's advisable to try and see cheap flops when the blinds are small.

The key word being "cheap:" It's ok to call a 3XBB raise (3 times Big Blind) if there are a few players in the pot, but getting into the habit of limping small PP's early and calling large raises when out of position is a good way to burn through chips.

The rare times you do flop a set are not going to counteract the amount of money you bleed when you limp-call before the flop only to fold on the flop, because you missed the set.

As Play Progresses, Limping is Out.

The middle stage of a tournament brings bigger blinds.

This should change the way you play your PP's.

No longer can you limp from any position hoping to get lucky and flop a set.

