

Poker Tip # 3

Dec. 22, 2012

Tip Subject: Position

Position is: 1. Before the cards are dealt, where you sit relative to the dealer.

 e.g. If you are “Under The Gun” (UTG); i.e. to the left of the Big Blind, then you are in the worst position.

 If you are “On the Button,” then you are in the best position.

 2. After the flop and you have entered the pot, and the betting starts, are you 1st to act, or 2nd to act, or 3rd, etc.....or are you last to act.

 e.g. If you are 1st to act when the betting starts, then you are in the worst position.

 If you are last to act when the betting starts, then you are in the best position.

Situation: Almost without exception, Position is considered the single most important aspect of Poker.

As you’ve learned from the last tip (“Starting Hands”) only certain hands can be played effectively and profitably from certain positions around the table.

Examples: For emphasis as to how important Position is, go to the chart (in Poker Tip #2) that shows suggested “Starting Hands.”

From “Early Position” only 6 hands can be played successfully.

- Those positions are: SB, BB, 3 and 4.
- Those 6 hands are: AA, KK, QQ, JJ, AK and AQ.

And in those 6 hands, notice that it is suggested that you fold AQ if there is a raise, either before you act, or after.

And you all know about the problems with JJ.

All other hands need to be folded from those positions.

That means folding popular hands like AJ, A-10, KQ, KJ, QJ, 10-10, etc.
Or, hands that most players play...from any position.

If you are still not convinced that the above 6 hands are the only ones that can be played successfully from early position, following is a list of professionals who discuss it in their books and websites.

Phil Gordon	
David Sklansky	(he excludes AQ)
Ken Warren	(he excludes JJ)
Dan Harrington	
Phil Helmuth	(he excludes AQ)
Tom McEvoy	
Mike Caro	(he excludes JJ)

Reasons Position is so Important:

The best position is when you are last to act; whether it's pre-flop, post-flop, the turn or river. Reason's follow:

1. You get to see what all your opponents do before you decide if you are going to commit any chips to the pot.
2. It gives you a much better idea as to how you want to play your hand. Do you fold, call, bet or raise. And if it's a raise, then how much.
3. If nobody before you has entered the pot, then you have fewer players acting after you to worry about.

That's one of the reasons that you can play less than premium hands when you are in later position.

4. If you are in early position and hold a relatively weak hand like AJ or A-10, there are six or more players acting after you, any of whom could raise. In which case you would need to fold the AJ and A-10...and even the AQ.

The result of playing weaker hands like that, in early position, is that you would be burning chips. Remember:

- Protect your soldiers.
- You will need them later.

5. With stronger position, you can play more hands.

Ex.: While AJ is considered a weak hand in early position, and therefore needs to be folded, it becomes quite strong in late position if you are first to act.