

PokerCoaching Tournament Cheat Sheet

Tournament Fundamentals

Mindset & Focus

- Think about the action on every street of every hand before you act.
- **Do NOT** play robotically.
- **Do NOT** play the same generic, predictable style all the time
- **You MUST** get out of your comfort zone and exploit your opponents' weaknesses if you want to become a big winner.
- If you only pay attention to your own two cards, your position, and your chip stack, you are certain to fail in the long run.
- **You MUST** focus on your opponents.
- Pay attention to **EVERY SINGLE HAND** that takes place at the poker table.
- Take mental notes about your opponents.
- If you have trouble remembering details, take notes for future reference.
- Take notes on what each specific player does incorrectly.

Pot Control

- Pot control to avoid getting blown off your hand and induce your opponent to bluff.
- **Do NOT** pot control when your opponents will pay you off poorly.
- **Do NOT** pot control when your opponents will rarely bluff the river.

Value Betting

- A value bet is made when you're confident you have the best hand and expect your opponent to call with many weaker hands.
- Value bet weaker hands against loose players who rarely fold.
- **Do NOT** value bet if opponents will fold most weaker hands.
- **Avoid** value betting on the turn and river against tight players who only continue with stronger hands and fold weaker ones
- Be less inclined to value bet when losing will leave you with a significantly less profitable stack.

Preflop Strategy & Effective Stack Consideration

- Raise with a different range based on the effective stack size.
- When calling a raise, you need to ensure you are getting at least 10:1 implied odds with your small pocket pairs.
- With over 40 BBs, play more pots in position, especially to get heads-up against weak post-flop players.

Adjust to Your Opponent

- Adjust your strategy to exploit your specific opponents.
- Exploit your opponents' tendencies.
- **Always** consider your opponent's range of hands rather than a specific hand.

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Exploits for Common Player Types

Against Splashy, Passive Players

- **3-bet linearly with good hands to get value and isolate them.** They rarely fold to 3-bets, so build big pots with your strong hands.
- **Value bet relentlessly**, they love calling, so bet your good hands frequently and aggressively.
- **Fold to them when they apply significant pressure.** If a passive player becomes aggressive, they almost always have the nuts.
- **Bluff them often on later streets.** They hate folding the flop but will give up on the turn/river when they miss.
- **Use big bet sizes for value** since they aren't sensitive to bet sizing, go for bigger bets when you have a strong hand.

Against Players Who Play Well

- **Focus on your fundamentals** and playing well. You don't need fancy moves; just stick to a solid strategy.
- **Do NOT ego-battle**, typically avoid them and focus on where your \$\$ is coming from (weak players).
- **Exploit their tendencies in deep-stacked play.** Many solid players are GTO-based but struggle in deep-stacked situations. Use creative lines when deep.
- **Find specific leaks and attack them.** Even strong players have weaknesses (e.g., over-folding to 4-bets, betting too thinly, not check-raising enough). Identify these spots and exploit them.

Against Overly Aggressive Players

- **3-bet them with a polarized range preflop.** They'll fold to pressure sometimes but also overplay weak hands postflop.
- **Induce them to bluff by checking and small betting.** Let them fire off big bets into you when you have a strong hand.
- **Pot control marginal hands that can't stand the pressure.** Don't inflate pots with medium-strength hands. Keep them small and manageable.
- **Do NOT make big folds**, they barrel a lot with weak hands, so call down lighter than usual.
- **Exploit their aggression with overbet traps.** Let them think you're weak by betting small earlier, then suddenly overbet to get paid off.

Against Weak, Tight Players

- **Raise their blinds often, c-bet often, barrel often - RUN THEM OVER!**
- **Over-fold when they fight back aggressively.** If a nit suddenly shows aggression, they usually have a monster hand.
- **Attack their capped ranges.** When they just call preflop or check-call postflop, apply pressure on later streets where they don't have strong hands.
- **Bluff more often on scary boards.** Nits overfold on dynamic runouts, so use them to your advantage.
- **Check back marginal hands to keep them in the pot.** If you bet too aggressively, they'll only continue with strong hands. Slow down sometimes to keep their weak holdings in play.

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Things to Focus On

Things to Focus on BEFORE a Tournament

Bankroll and Mindset

Do I have the proper bankroll of at least 50 to 100 buy-ins?
If I don't, am I in the mindset to play properly as if I was properly bankrolled?
Do I have enough money on hand to re-buy as necessary
Am I emotionally prepared to handle variance without going on tilt?
Am I playing tournaments where I can make the best decisions without feeling pressured by the money?
Do I have a plan for when to move up or down in buy-ins based on my results?

Sleep

Did I get a full night's sleep?

Breakfast

Did I eat a healthy breakfast?

Study

Did I study my previous games to find my errors?

Mental Focus

Is my mind clear such that playing poker is the ONLY thing that matters now?

Things to Focus on DURING Each Hand of a Tournament

My Opponent

What do I know about my opponent?
What are my opponent's tendencies?
What can I do to take advantage of my opponent's tendencies?
What does my opponent know or think he knows about me?
Should I play in an exploitable or balanced manner against my opponent?

Effective Stack Size

How should I alter my play based on the effective stack size?

Expectation

How do I maximize my expectation for THIS hand?

Notes

Am I writing down my difficult hands so I can review them later?

Things to Focus on AFTER a Tournament

Track Results

Did I record my results, including buy-ins, finishes, and profits/losses?

The Good

Which aspects of my play were strong today?

The Bad

Where did I make mistakes or struggle in my decision-making?

Get Specific

Were there any particular hands that gave me trouble?

Discuss with Friends

Did I discuss my hands with my friends and post them on the PokerCoaching.com Discord?

Improve My Weaknesses

What aspect of my game do I need to work on BEFORE my next cash game session?

Take Action

What steps can I take IMMEDIATELY to ensure I play better **next time**?

POKER HAND RANKINGS

① ROYAL FLUSH



④ FULL HOUSE



⑦ THREE OF A KIND



⑩ HIGH CARD



② STRAIGHT FLUSH



⑤ FLUSH



⑧ TWO PAIR



③ FOUR OF A KIND



⑥ STRAIGHT



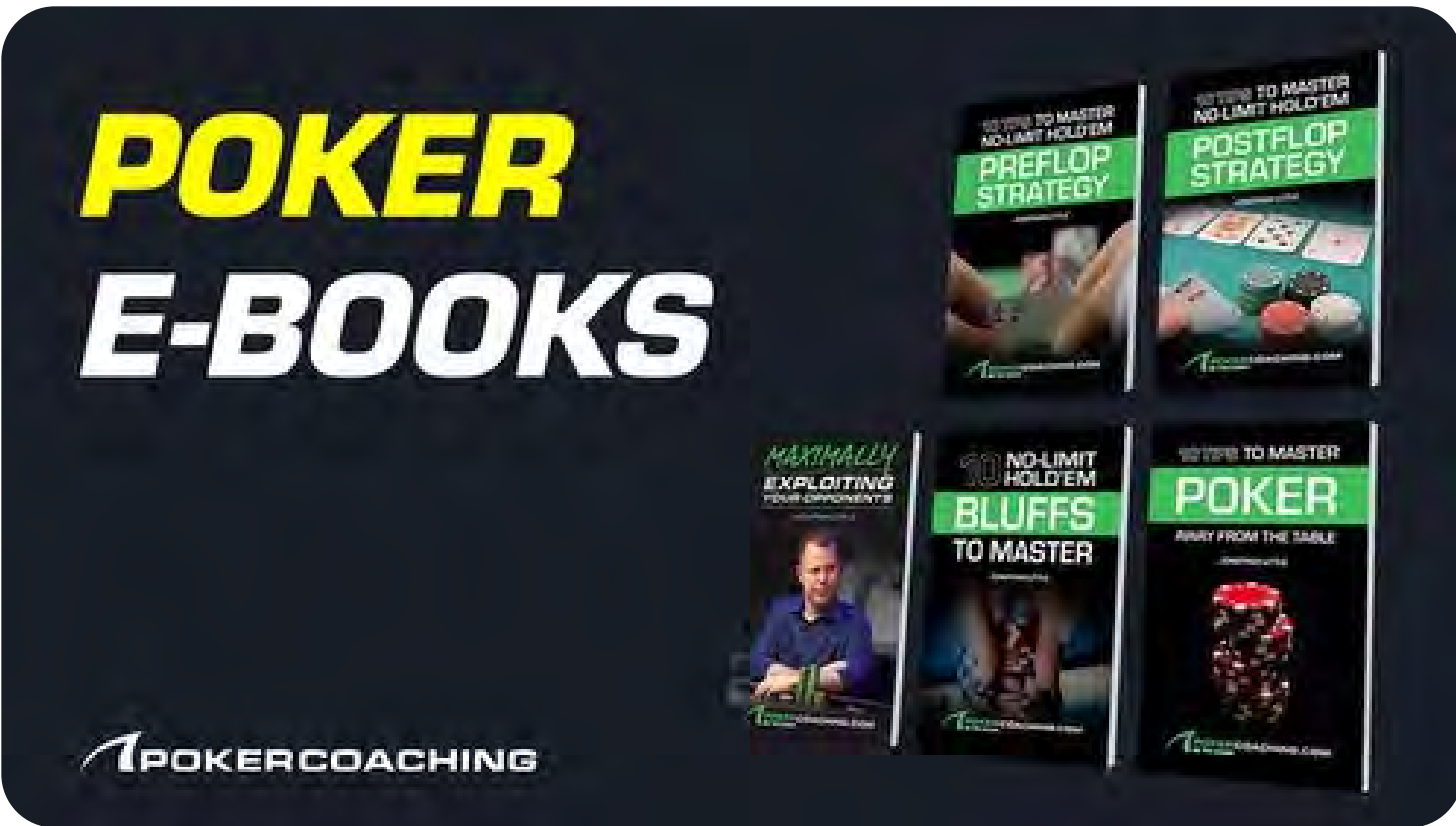
⑨ ONE PAIR



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