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Best Poker Online Tournament Winning Tipsheet

I have seen it said that in order to win cash and [free poker tournaments](#) you need to try and chip up early.

On the other hand there is a school of thought that maintains it is best to be passive for the first few rounds so as to allow the maniacs and donks to eliminate themselves in the initial blinds.

I am not sure that either of these strategies are correct or incorrect but neither works well for me. In this article I will outline what does work for me and hope it helps you win more at the poker tournament tables.

Where both the fast chip out and passive strategies are 100% correct is that the early hands in a poker tournament are critical to the overall result. Where I disagree is that neither of these strategies will work all of the time.

Both early chip out and passive start approaches can be seriously affected by local conditions such as the player mix and the simple fall of the cards. I try and play a more measure pace somewhere in the middle of the 2 schools of thought.

I feel that early on you need to play quite tight, top 10-15 hands and pocket pairs only, but you need to play them aggressively. Build the pot early and take it down when you know you have the edge.

All other hands should be thrown away pre-flop and forgotten. Yes, forget them, that's because say you fold a marginal hand like 6h 7h that you'd normally play in a tournament and the flop gives 345 rainbow you'll go tilt really quickly and be in danger of losing chips badly.

Later in a tournament you'll want to play these hands as throughout a long tournament suited connectors will be your biggest money makers. For now, however, you want to play safe and stay in the game while other people are throwing chips away and being eliminated.

Make sure that you try and maintain a decent size stack compared to the other players and never get too far behind or our final table hopes will be dashed before the bubble.

The way you maintain this optimum stack size is actually straight-forward, especially in online play. We will play tight-aggressive-aggressive and monitor the biggest stack, smallest stack, number of players in the tournament and the average stack size.

What we want to do before the first bubble is just stay alive to make it into the cash. The best way to do this is to watch these things rather closely and, by playing your hands properly, maintain your stack at or a little above the average.

I've had people tell me that this will not work because you can't make the final table this way. Untrue! If you're stack is always at the average you are forever in the top 50% of the remaining player in the tournament, which means that when the final table begins you are sitting in 4th or 5th place and poised to take the larger stacks. I play this tactic in both live and online play and it works rather well for me.

Play after the bubble is slightly different as you still want to maintain that average+ stack but by now the average class of players you're up against will have gone up too.

Now you must to open up your hand selection a little bit. If you can get in cheap, say 1-2 BBs, you now want to play any top 20-25 hands in addition to any suited connectors from any position, off suit connectors can now be played from late position as well.

Keep in mind that when I say connectors I mean cards that actually connect, i.e., 6h,7c are connectors while 6h,8c would not be, lots of people get confused by this saying that these cards do connect and while they are able to connect to create a straight you're now drawing inside and hurting your chances. You've far better odds of making that straight with 6,7 than you do of making it with 6,8.

I really hope this helps you with your poker tourney play, if you're new to poker tournaments then I advise you to [learn how to play poker](#) on a free poker site where you can [play poker online for free](#) with no risk of cash loss before moving onto cash play.

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