Jonathan Little’s Tournament Poker Cheat Sheet

- Think about the action on every street of every hand before you act.
- Do NOT play robotically.
- Don’t play the same style all the time.
- Adjust your playing style to your specific opponents.
- Exploit your opponents’ tendencies.
- Raise with a different range based on your stack size.
- When calling a raise, you need to ensure you are getting at least 10:1 implied odds with your small pocket pairs.
- When the effective stack is greater than 40 BBs, try to play lots of pots in position, especially when you think you can get heads-up against opponents who play poorly post-flop.
- You MUST get well out of your comfort zone and blatantly 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 a bad memory, write notes in a notepad.
- Take notes on what each specific player does incorrectly.
- Always put your opponent on a RANGE OF HANDS rather than a specific hand.
- Value bet when you think you have the best hand most of the time AND you think your opponent will call with most of his range.
- Value bet relatively weak made hands on the turn against loose players who never fold any made hand or draw.
- Do NOT value bet when you think you have the best hand most of the time and you think your opponent will fold most of his range that you beat.
- Do NOT value bet the turn and river against tight players who will fold all their worse hands and call with all their better hands.
- Be less inclined to value bet when losing will leave you with a significantly less profitable stack.
- Pot control to avoid getting blown off your hand and to 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 not bluff the river.
- Against players who play too many hands too aggressively:
  o Realize they often have marginal hands even when they apply pressure.
  o They will usually fold if you apply aggression.
  o If you induce them to bluff, do not fold decently strong holdings.
  o Bluff them on scary boards.
- Against players who play too few hands too passively:
  o Relentlessly steal their blinds.
  o Fold to their aggression.
- Against players who play too few hands too aggressively:
  o They are usually not capable of folding hands they perceive as strong.
  o Play hands with huge implied odds.
  o Do not stack off with hands worse than top pair, top kicker.
  o Relentlessly steal their blinds.
- Against players who play well:
  o If your opponent thinks you’re tight, bluff a lot.
  o If your opponent thinks you’re wild, play tightly.
  o Apply aggression in intelligent spots.
  o Fold when it is clear they want to put money in the pot.
  o It is usually smart to avoid them and focus on the weak players.
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Things to Focus On
BEFORE a Tournament:

Bankroll and Mindset
Do I have the proper bankroll of at least 50 to 100 buy-in’s?
If I don’t, am I in the mindset to play properly as if I was properly bankrolled?

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:

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

Payout Structure
Should the payout structure alter my decisions?

Expectation
How do I maximize my expectation for THIS hand?

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

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 think about me?
Is my opponent doing anything to take advantage of me?
What should I do to be sure my opponent is not taking advantage of me?
Should I play in an exploitable or balanced manner against my opponent?

Things to Focus On
AFTER a Tournament:

The Good
What did I do well?

The Bad
What did I do poorly?

Get Specific
Are there any specific hands I have problems with?

Discuss with Friends
Did I discuss my difficult hands with my friends and post them on the FloatTheTurn.com forums?

Improve My Weaknesses
What aspect of my game do I need to work on the most BEFORE my next tournament?

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