Poker Pro's Corner: Save some chips for the final table

by Max Pescatori

Q: I am having trouble with final-table play. I get there but end up being one of the first to bust. What should I consider doing differently?

- Final-Table Frank, Kidsgrove

A: You probably get there because you have a short stack, that's what it is. You are probably holding on too much to get to the final table, and then you get there with no chips - that's why you are going bust. I doubt it is because you throw it away or anything like that. A way to fix that is to play a little more aggressively when you are two tables away from the final table. Then you will have enough chips at the final table to have a chance to win.

MAX PESCATORI - Playing professional poker since 1999, Max Pescatori has made quite a name for himself. He has won more than $1.8 million and plays in the biggest buy-in tournaments all over the world. CNS Photo.

Q: If I start out online with a $50 bankroll, what is the best game to play - sit and gos, cash games or tournaments?

- Johan, Stockholm

A: That's a good question. I think sit and gos are your best bet. You can play a $1 sit and go and you have quite a bit of range not to go broke, and when you get to $100 move up to $2 sit and gos, then higher.

Q: How should I be playing my small pocket pairs in a tournament in early position? Should I be limping, raising or just throwing them away? Is it the same in cash games?

- Vicky R., Nottingham

A: Don't throw them away, but you can do it different ways - mix it up. It's good either way. It's good to raise, it's good to limp. In a cash game I think it's the same thing. People in cash games tend not to throw away their hands, so they aren't going to go all in before the flop. There is actually more play after the flop, so it's pretty much the same way, limp or raise, but don't throw them away. Even if someone raises, you should call to see if you can flop a set, but it depends on how much money you have, of course.

I like 2-2 because when you flop 2-4-J people don't put you on deuces. It can happen every once in a while that you get set over set but it's so rare, I don't even remember the last time someone got set over set against me.

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Playing professional poker since 1999, Max Pescatori has made quite a name for himself. He has cashed for more than $1.8 million and plays in the biggest buy-in tournaments all over the world. His biggest cash ($682,000) came last year when he captured a WSOP bracelet in the $2,500 no-limit hold'em event. "The Italian Pirate" beat out a huge field and was able to take home the gold. The Milan native has more than 80 lifetime cashes, and won the Italian Championship this year. This month he answers your questions.

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