

Poker Pro's Corner: Keep your bets consistent

by Shawn Rice

Q: I find myself struggling with how to play aces in early position. Every time I raise three times the blinds, it looks strong and everyone folds. Every time I limp I don't get raised and too many people get to see the flop. What should I do? Is a min-raise effective?

SHAWN RICE - UltimateBet Internet pro Shawn Rice spends his time traveling for tournaments and playing online. Rice has won thousands online and continues to impress live with cashes totaling more than \$330,000. CNS Photo.- Dave, Gulfport, MS

A: No, a min-raise is probably one of the worst bets in poker. When you minimum raise and you get called, you have no information about where you are at in the hand. Play consistent. Play your aces the same way you would tens or nines in that same situation. Don't give away, don't bet more just because you have aces and don't bet less just because you have aces. Keep your bets consistent and don't give people reasons to read you. The top pros are going to read that you are overplaying or underplaying your aces. Be consistent.

Q: What is the most important thing to know about short-stack play?

- Out of Chips, Chicago, IL

A: When you are playing a short stack you have to realize that when you have less than 10 times the big blind and you are really desperate, you know you are going to get called, so you have to be a little bit selective. You know you have to go against a hand that matches up really good heads-up, so oftentimes any ace is good. I like the old T.J. Cloutier way of playing it. If you have an ace in your hand, you are never more than a 2.5-to-1 underdog. If they have a bigger ace than you, then you are a 2.5-1 underdog, and if you have A-7 and they have two nines, you are a 2.5-1 dog. There is only one hand you fear and that is if they have pocket aces and it would be pretty rare for them to have that hand when you have a quarter of the aces in your hand.

Q: When you are a big stack in a tournament I have heard you should stay away from short stacks and avoid doubling them up and calling them with marginal hands. Is this the case?

- Big Bully, Bar Harbor, Maine

A: I am going to tell you something and I almost hate to say this because this is the truth and it's almost a secret. What you do is you don't pick on the short stacks. The short stacks have to fight. What you do is take advantage of the middle stacks. You rob these middle stacks because they are also waiting for the short stacks to go broke. What you do is apply pressure on the people that have to fold. If a cat and a grizzly bear face off, the cat is going to fight if it is backed up into a corner because it has to. Attack these medium stacks that have to fold, don't attack a desperate stack, because it has to fight.

UltimateBet Internet pro Shawn Rice spends his time traveling for tournaments and playing online. Rice has cashed in online for thousands of dollars and continues to impress live with cashes totaling more than \$330,000.

Poker Pro's Corner: Keep your bets consistent by Shawn Rice