

Poker Pro's Corner: Casino tournaments tend to be crapshoots

by Shannon Shorr

Q: Every time I play a tournament at a casino I feel like it is a crapshoot. What is the best kind of tournament blind structure to play in?

SHANNON SHOOR - Shannon Shorr is one of the youngest players on the tournament circuit. At the ripe old age of 22, Shorr has already cashed in for more than \$1.8 million and is hitting the circuit in a big way. CNS Photo. - Confused, Commerce, Calif.

A: A lot of tournaments you are going to find in your local casinos are going to be crapshoots because they just aren't going to make a super structure for a \$40 buy-in or whatever they are hosting. I really like the Bellagio structures; all the \$10,000 structures are great, of course. The smaller tournaments are a different animal because it is just going to be short-stack poker. It is going to be a lot of all-ins - there are not going to be a lot of flops.

If you are going to play at that level, that is just the style you are going to have to learn. There is no getting around it. The longer the period between blinds increases, the better I like it, because I like to play flops - but it is hard for the casinos to accommodate that. They don't make enough money to spread it over a long a period of time.

Q: I've heard pros mention that a lot of the weaker players are preflop players and the better players know post-flop play. What is the best way to improve your post-flop play?

- Tunica Denizen, Memphis, Tenn.

A: The best way to improve post-flop play is definitely to play cash games. When you are playing cash games in the poker room or online, you are really deep. You have like 100 or more big blinds, usually. That is

where you play flops, as opposed to tournaments that are sometimes a preflop game. The best tournament players are the best preflop players in the world. They know when to steal, they know when to re-steal, and whose blind to raise.

The early stages of tournaments are when you have a lot of chips, so that's like when you are in a cash game. Sometimes I will play cash games to brush up on my game so I can play well in the early stages.

Shannon Shorr is one of the youngest players on the tournament circuit, and he is kicking butt. An Alabama native now living in Vegas, Shorr began playing in some of the biggest events before he was even 21, traveling out of the U.S. to play and cashing in most events he entered. At the ripe old age of 22, Shorr has already cashed for more than \$1.8 million and is hitting the circuit in a big way, hoping to keep that number increasing. He's already cashed an incredible 33 times, including fourth place in the 2006 Aussie Millions, two firsts at Bellagio Cup II, seventh in the 2007 WSOP Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em Championship and third in a recent \$5,000 Five Diamond NLH event.

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