

Poker Pro's Corner: What to do once you're at the finals table

by Dan Harrington

Q: What are some key tips for final table big chip stack play?

Just Asking

San Diego

DAN HARRINGTON - A former backgammon champ, chess master and lawyer, 1995 WSOP Main Event champ Dan Harrington made final tables in 2003 and 2004 and has made \$4.5 million in lifetime tourney winnings. Known for his tight play, 'Action Dan' is also the author of the well-respected 'Harrington on Hold'em' books. CNS Photo courtesy of Mike Stotts. A: When you get to the final table and you have a lot of chips and there is a lot of money at stake, what the pros like to do is maneuver and not get involved in any confrontations unless they have a very strong hand. They are waiting for other people to be eliminated because every person who is eliminated pushes your payout higher. Most pros try to see if they can play down to the final three players. If you get knocked out then at least you have the consolation that you have won a fair amount of money.

Q: How do you handle a wild, aggressive table?

Jennifer

Reno

A: To handle a wild and aggressive table I just play slow in order to try and trap the players and not chase them off the hands. Hands that I normally raise with, I would just call and keep calling and hope they will bet their money off at me.

Q: What should you do if the table thinks you are an extremely tight player?

James

Boston

A: If the table thinks I am a tight player I will pick situations where they know I can't be bluffing, and then I will bluff.

Q: Is it a good idea to push all in on a draw?

Reckless

Riverdale, N.Y.

A: That's all situational. It depends on how good the draw is, how many outs you have. If you are talking

about a tournament it depends on your situation in a tournament. Maybe if you are at a good table you don't want to risk it all on a draw. If you think your opponent is a very tight, conservative player and is going to throw away the hand most of the time, then by all means raise on a draw because you have a lot of positive equity there. Forty to 50 percent of the time he is going to throw it away, the other times he calls and hopefully you will win half those times. That's a pretty good situation to be in.

Q: What should I do with pocket eights in first position at a seven-handed table? Should I be raising there, folding there or limping there?

George

Eau Claire, Wis.

A: I definitely wouldn't fold. I would either raise or limp with those hands.

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