Poker Pro's Corner: Know the right time to steal in early position

by Huck Seed

Q: In a full game that is tight, what kinds of hands can I enter with in early position?

HUCK SEED - A respected tournament player and 1995 World Series Main Event champion, Huck Seed answers readers' questions this month. When the 6-foot-7 Vegas resident isn't making his crazy prop bets, you can find him playing tournament poker both live and online at Full Tilt. Huck was an engineering student at Caltech when he took a leave of absence to pursue poker. That was 18 years ago. Today, he has raked in almost $3 million in tournament cashes and owns four bracelets. CNS photo. - Karin, Chicago

A: It depends on how tight the table is. Some people like to steal in early position because it gives them much more credit. If people are giving you credit for raising in early position, raise a lot. If people are calling behind you with 4-5 diamonds because they have position on you, then you shouldn't be trying to steal at that point.

Q: How differently should I play in a rebuy event?

- Danny M., Los Angeles

I think the way to play in a rebuy event is to play extremely conservative in the first few levels and just pick off those people who are splashing around and just gambling, trying to get a big stack. They are taking the worst of it to build up a stack that is four or five times the normal stack. You pick up a lot of equity just waiting. Sometimes you wait for the best hand and you double up, and they rebuy and you double up again and you end up with a big stack from the best hand and they are still sitting there with nothing. I think that's how you are supposed to play rebuy tournaments in general. Some people just think "rebuy tournament" and they rebuy like mad and gamble, and rebuy four or five times.

Q: If I flop a flush draw in early position, should I check it with the intention of check-raising, or should I bet

out?

- Morgan, Orlando

A: You should probably just check and fold. What's a flush draw if the guy has a pair? Why would you be betting and raising if you don't have the best hand? Especially if you have a small flush draw, I would always check/fold, because if someone has a bigger flush draw, then you are dead. If you have an ace-high flush draw, or a straight-flush draw or a flush and straight draw, for example you have the A-4 of diamonds and it comes 2-5-J with two diamonds, you have a three for the straight or you could hit an ace or any diamond. You are drawing to the nuts and that is a powerful hand. Even if the guy has kings, you are the favorite. If you think he has a pair, you could try to check-raise him to try to get him to throw the pair away, or if you think he has nothing you can semi-bluff and fire out, or check-raise. You are capable of making a big hand and you can bet that if you want.

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