



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF WINNING AT ONLINE POKER

BY ROY ROUNDER

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INTRODUCTION

Becoming a **WINNING** online poker player is not an easy task. Rumor has it that up to 99% of online poker players **LOSE** money over the long term...!

So if you want to be a winner, you need to **REALLY** be on top of your game. You need to be constantly improving: learning new aspects of the game... practicing different styles of play... studying books... and so on.

The problem is this takes **TIME** and **HARD WORK**. There has to be an easier way, right?

Fortunately, there **IS** a way to win more... starting **IMMEDIATELY**. And the solution is simply **FIXING** a mistake that probably 99.9% of poker players make... which is:

PICKING THE WRONG TABLES!

The truth is, how **GOOD** you are doesn't matter as much as **WHO YOU PLAY AGAINST**.

Let's face it... the top .0001% of professional poker players in the world... **LOSE ALL THE TIME!**

Why?

Because they're playing against OTHER PROS!

With online poker you must choose:

1. Which casino to play at...
2. Which stakes to play at...
3. Which type of game to play...

Most players don't give these decisions ANY THOUGHT WHATSOEVER. They choose whichever game type is MOST COMFORTABLE to them... and often sign up for a specific casino based on a friend's recommendation or some "deposit bonus" they're getting.

But THESE ARE THE MOST CRUCIAL DECISIONS YOU'LL MAKE... before any cards are ever dealt!

What you'll discover in this report is an in-depth, strategic ANALYSIS of the game types at Poker Room and Bodog. These are two of my favorite casinos... and feature a wide range of games and players.

That means that if you follow my methods, you can choose the BEST game type and stakes for YOUR APPROPRIATE PLAYING STYLE.

(Be sure to read the chapter, "The Five Player Types And How To Beat Them" in my eBook BEFORE tackling this report...)

Not only that, but you're getting a "brain dump" from my PERSONAL journals and notebooks that took me over TWO YEARS to create in front of the computer screen...

I've been playing at these websites for some time... slowly developing and refining WINNING SYSTEMS for the different types of games. And I've been STUDYING what works and what doesn't.

Are you ready?

Good, let's get going...

ALL CASINOS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

Perhaps the biggest misconception online is that ALL CASINOS are created “equal”. This is simply not the case.

Each online poker room has a unique CULTURE and set of PLAYERS. Why? Because each uses its own unique method for ATTRACTING players...

Some casinos use TV ads... some use outrageous deposit bonuses... some host giant freerolls for tournament entries... some use sexy supermodels for attention... and so on.

For example, check out this ad for PokerRoom.com...



Now let me ask you: WHO do you think Poker Room is targeting in this ad?

They're trying to attract experienced, talented players... with the promise of “fish inside”.

Why would they do this?

That's easy. Because these types of players play MORE poker... which means MORE RAKE... which means more money for the casino.

Get it? Good.

Now let's talk about specifics... starting with Poker Room. The second half of this report will be about Bodog.

(Note: I won't be talking about high-stakes or micro-stakes games in this report.

The reason is simple...

Micro-stakes games are too much like “play money” and rely a lot on luck. It’s difficult to hone in on a “system” for consistent profits since skill is such a minimal factor.

High-stakes games are too advanced for any generalities and huge distinctions. The “system” you need for high-stakes games is an entire arsenal of poker skills and experience. Because the way to win is by simply OUTPLAYING your opponents...

In addition, high-stakes games are generally the same at each poker room, unlike the low-stakes and middle-stakes games.)

OK, enough talk. Let’s get to the fun stuff.

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POKERROOM.COM CULTURE

All right... let's look at the unique features of Poker Room. These features change HOW THE GAMES ARE PLAYED in this casino... and as a result, change the PSYCHOLOGY required for you to be a consistent winner there.

Remember... master the psychology, master the game.

- ♣ **Fewer high-stakes games.** It's not uncommon for high-stakes players– who are generally much more talented than other players– to move down into LOWER stakes to make some quick, easy money.

They might be practicing... warming up... or just raking some easy pots.

No matter what the reason is, these players are TOUGH to beat... because they're GOOD and because the money doesn't mean as much to them (which causes them to be "bullies").

Fortunately, because there are SO FEW high-stakes games at Poker Room, you WON'T HAVE TO WORRY AS MUCH about hidden pros "dropping stakes" and taking your bankroll... definitely not as much as at other sites.

- ♣ **Ego-marketing.** The banner that we looked at earlier doesn't appeal to a true "shark". Because a shark already marks his targets... and usually has a clear plan mapped out.

Instead, ads like that attract EGO-PLAYERS! The ad appeals to someone's ego who WANTS to be a shark. And so Poker Room (through these types of ad campaigns) tends to have a lot more ego players than other websites you will find...

This is great for you and me. Because we know that against ego players, all you need to do is push and bully them until they make a bad move and fight back at the WRONG TIME... and then you get paid off.

- ♣ **Download-free software.** Poker Room likes to advertise their "download-free" software...

Now think about it. Who wants "download-free" software?

Well, the answer is mostly people who are playing in a location where they can't (or aren't supposed to) DOWNLOAD FILES... like... SCHOOLS and the WORKPLACE!

Can you hear the "KA-CHING" noise in the background?

I can.

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STUDENTS... and people who are SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING... are much “fishier” than most segments of the population. Because they’re surrounded with tons of distractions and can’t focus on the game.

Of course... there’s ANOTHER group of people who prefer download-free software. And that’s those who don’t TRUST the online poker sites. They’re scared some kind of virus or spyware will get installed on their computer.

Once again... this contributes to the “low skills” population of players at Poker Room. If they’d EVER played online poker before, they’d know that the download is 100% safe.

- ♣ **Large free-play base.** Many of the participants that currently play for REAL money USED to just do PLAY money...

This is more great news... Because as a general principle, play-money players aren’t as skilled.

Even if they ARE a skilled player... the transition to real money is so radical and intense that they probably won’t be able to adjust quickly enough.

Chances are if they’re playing with FAKE money, they’ve probably never played for REAL money online.

You’ll want to use the fact that Poker Room has such a large “play money” presence to your ADVANTAGE... as long as you can HANDLE the irrational behavior and bad beats that go with it.

- ♣ **Mobile phone game play.** I can’t imagine many situations where I’d be able to play solid poker on my CELL PHONE. I just can’t see someone sitting down... free from distractions and boredom... playing good Texas Holdem on a mobile phone.

Can you?

But hey... I’m not complaining! Because every distracted player means more money for you and me!

Even more important than your opponents’ cell phone habits is the simple fact that you CAN play at Poker Room on your phone. It reflects on the overall ENVIRONMENT and CULTURE of the website...

The message being conveyed is that playing on PokerRoom.com is fun... and fast... kind of like a video game.

Since poker is ACTUALLY a game that takes time and patience to win... the room

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is full of “easy targets”. You just need the right psychology of PATIENCE and DISCIPLINE.

OK, now that you know a little about Poker Room’s distinct style, let’s take a look at the different games that you can play... and what you need to do to CONSISTENLY COME OUT ON TOP.

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LOW-STAKES NO-LIMIT RING GAMES

Low-stakes no-limit ring games (with 7 or more players) are very popular at Poker Room... and the amateurs are plentiful at these levels. \$.50-\$1 and lower games are the easiest games to beat: All you need is to play with SOLID FUNDAMENTALS and you will consistently dominate.

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **The players here are better than at Party Poker and Pacific Poker...** They are still easy money, but they know more about the game.

This actually makes winning EASIER for you because novice players are much easier to predict than players who have NEVER played before (which is the quality of low-stakes players at sites like Party).

- ♣ **There is a clear drop with the levels of action.** Raise double the blinds and you will get action from half the table. Raise four times the blind and you will take down the pot more often than not.
- ♣ **Players generally don't force expensive action.** That means you can call down with flush and straight draws because the other players will give you excellent pot odds.
- ♣ **Surprisingly, most players don't try to bluff very often.** They will bet with low-pair, low-kicker, but stone cold bluffs are uncommon at this level.
- ♣ **Most of your money is going to come from winning when you have the best cards.** Bluffing here is slightly profitable, but really, there is no reason to bluff because you have to risk so much money in order to bluff successfully... It's better to spend that time playing multiple games.
- ♣ **Slow play traps are rarely successful because they rely on opponents to bluff at the pot.** Poker Room players will throw out "feeler bets"... but rarely will they make large bluffs.
- ♣ **All-in's are relatively rare.** Compared to other websites, all-in's are RARE at Poker Room. I was surprised when I could sit down at a low-limit game and go a full hour without seeing 3-4 all-in showdowns...
- ♣ **It's easy to become the table leader.** Throw out a few raises early and you will instantly establish yourself as the top of the table. Use this table image to bully players around all session.
- ♣ **Turnover is fast.** Players come and go very quickly, so you don't need to worry about becoming predictable. Simply play your winning game and wait as the fish come rich and leave broke!

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- ♣ **Use the table stats, but don't fall in love with them.** Poker Room offers a lot of information about every table. This information is really valuable in your search to pick out the best table... but it isn't everything you need to know.
- ♣ **Play only the best cards.** Don't mess around with marginal hands unless you are getting great odds on your money. On a site like Party Poker, the implied odds are a lot higher because you can win so much with a good hand.

At Poker Room, however, the players are much less likely to risk a lot of money on a dumb draw... so the money that you "might" win is much less on any given hand.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

To win the most at these games, you should adopt a medium-tight, highly-aggressive playing style.

That means you should RAISE AGGRESSIVELY for hands you play. Even though the players here are better than at other sites (like Party or Pacific), they are still loose-passive. So make sure that you narrow the action every hand you play and carefully pick the hands you play.

If you play too many hands... or don't play them aggressively enough... you are going to trap yourself in losing hands and will waste money uselessly.

So if you are a PATIENT, AGGRESSIVE player who likes to take charge of the game and control the action, Poker Room low-stakes no-limit games are PERFECT for you...

You should get started with your DOMINATION right now!

Here you go...

Starting Hand Selection:



The Psychology Of Winning At Online Poker

Betting Style:



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MIDDLE-STAKES NO-LIMIT RING GAMES

If you are interested in playing for more than just quarters, there are lots of easy middle-stakes games at PokerRoom.com that you can beat up on...

Interestingly, the players that you find at the middle-stakes games are a lot different than the players you see at the low-stakes games...

The low-limit players are mostly just inexperienced and haven't developed any real skills.

The middle-limit players, on the other hand, are largely BAD players and HAVE played for awhile... and have consistently lost. I consider "middle-stakes" games to be \$1-2 and higher...

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **Be patient.** The players in the mid-stakes games are more aggressive than you would expect, so don't get caught up in trying to win lots of small pots.
- ♣ **Push, push, push.** Many of the players that you will encounter at these limits are going to be very EGO-DRIVEN. You will be able to push them around for awhile, but they will quickly lose their cool and come back at you.

Use this to your advantage by pushing around all the players early and making exaggerated bets when you have good hands. If you bet more than needed ("over bet"), the ego-players will assume you are bullying them and come back at you... and you'll get paid off.

- ♣ **Bluff on the river.** Since so many of the players at these levels are going to be ego-driven, they are going to be tough to bluff out of pots. The best time to bluff is with big bets on the river...
- ♣ **Watch for traps.** A lot of the players in mid-stakes games try to trap you when they are holding good cards. They will check and slow play monster hands. Don't get fooled. Never try to bluff at small pots and use feeler bets throughout the hand... that way you can avoid the traps.

Note: One of the funny things that I noticed about players at these stakes is their tendency to jump at the idea that they slow played a hand to perfection.

MAKE SURE you throw out feeler bets to avoid getting slow played... that way you get a read on your opponents and know when to muck your cards.

- ♣ **Watch out for marginal bets on marginal hands.** One of the defining characteristics of the player that you find at middle-stakes Poker Room tables is that they LOVE to catch bluffers.

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I'll admit that re-raising a bluffing player feels GREAT, but these players LOOK for bluffers just so they can get that feeling...

So if you are on a mediocre hand and you try to bluff, but you don't bluff enough because you're scared of your opponents, there is a good chance that you will be called or re-raised...

The point is this: If you are going to bluff, make sure that you bluff STRONG. Period.

- ♣ **TILT-ALERT.** Poker Room players go on tilt faster than anyone I have seen. Something about this site draws players with weak emotional control... Look for the following "tilt tells" so you can spot the players going on tilt INSTANTLY.
 - **Loss of a big hand because of bad luck.** Say that a player has A-A and loses to J-J on the river. They are going to be pissed... and there's a good chance they'll be tilting already.
 - **Chatting.** Chatting isn't really a big part of the play at Poker Room. Most of the chat is "nh" or "gl". But when players are getting frustrated or start losing control, they tend to start chatting more...
 - **Losing a hand after losing a BIG hand.** Say that someone doubles up another player and then gets involved in the NEXT hand and doesn't win (even if it is a small, unimportant pot).

This is a major tell that: 1) the player isn't experienced or he would know the importance of sitting out hands after bad beats... and... 2) he is probably going on tilt because his emotions are running his play, not his mind...

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

At middle-stakes games, the players who have the most success are the players who stick to the "tight-aggressive squared" playing style. This means you should ONLY play the best starting hands... but when you do enter a pot, make sure that you bet very aggressively.

If you are having trouble focusing on the tight-aggressive playing mentality, you should try setting a quota for your hands. Sit down at a low-stakes game and tell yourself that you can only play three out of the next fifteen hands. You will (at first) find it hard to pass up hands like K-9, but you'll quickly learn what hands are the best to play...

Take this knowledge to the middle-stakes games, mix in some aggressive play, and you will definitely take down these tables.

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Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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LOW-STAKES SIT AND GO'S

The low-stakes Sit and Go's on Poker Room feature SURPRISINGLY decent competition. Most players are definitely still novices... but stronger than the Sit and Go players at similar casinos.

Ironically enough, this makes it EASIER to consistently win! There are fewer bad beats than at a room like Party...

As the saying goes, "They know enough to be dangerous."

Dangerous to THEMSELVES, that is!

At other casinos, for example, this kind of scenario is far too common...

You look down at A-K offsuit while on the button. This is a great hand. You know the table is loose so you throw out a 5x big blind bet. There's one caller... the player in the big blind.

The flop hits: K-2-6. Nice. You just flopped top pair, top kicker. There are no flush or straight draws... so unless your opponent just hit trips or two pair, you're golden.

He checks. You bet strong... and he calls.

The turn hits: 7.

He checks again. You bet the pot size. He calls. You're wondering what the hell he's calling with... but you're obviously still confident in your Big Slick.

The river is a King.

Awesome. Now you have trips. He throws out a small bet... You decide to move all-in. He calls.

And then you curse loudly when the cards are flipped over... because you see he was holding K-2 offsuit and has a full boat!

Of course, it's impossible to know your opponent would be dumb enough to play K-2 from the big blind to a large pre-flop raise. But oh well, that's life. Just get over it.

That's why so many people lose money online. They get all bent out of shape to a bad beat like that... and let it shake them from their game plan.

OK, so back to my point.

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At Poker Room, there are far fewer of those “bad beat causing” players. The players at Poker Room know more about the game... which makes them more predictable... which means you can play REAL poker.

That’s why I’ve concluded that the low-stakes Sit and Go’s are the **EASIEST GAMES AT POKERROOM.COM**.

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **The action early on in the game is pretty loose.** Most of the players are excited to get started so they play a lot of hands early. You should stay away from the action at this point in the game unless you have a monster hand.
- ♣ **Don’t mess around trying to bluff people out of hands until the much later stages.** You will start out with 1,500 in chips and the blinds are small... so you don’t need to worry about the blinds making any impact on your game in the early stages.
- ♣ **The most effective bluffing method is moving all-in.** The all-in’s at the Sit and Go tables are rare so pushing all your chips into the pot is a real statement. Of course, you only want to bluff like this when you have good positioning and there is a lot of money to win.
- ♣ **Once a couple players get out, the table will get tighter and the play will slow down.** This is your chance to build a big stack. Because once it gets down to about five players, the blinds will start becoming significant and players will be very aggressive in trying to steal them.

Just wait patiently at this stage because you will eventually get good cards and you can burn the people trying to buy pots.

- ♣ **There is not as noticeable of a tightening right before the money payouts begin.** At other sites, people are playing to finish “in-the-money”. At Poker Room, they tend to be shooting to win.

Take advantage of this by setting traps late in the game. Let them come to you and take all their chips!

Here’s a chart which illustrates what you should be doing at each level of the 10-player Sit and Go tournament...

Number Of Players In The Game	Strategy
10-8 Players	At this stage in the game, you want to be very tight and very aggressive. Only play premium hands... and do so very aggressively. You should limp-in with weak pocket pairs and suited connectors, but if you don’t get

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	a lucky flop, fold the hand. Don't chase draws.
8-6 Players	Now that a few players are out, the game is a little tighter. Odds are there are one or two players have a lot more chips than the rest of the table. Avoid these players. Make moves with good cards, but start to bully players without big stacks.
5-4 Players	Now the play has gotten very aggressive. Players are raising nearly every hand and with bigger blinds, they are doing okay. Wait until you have a good hand and then come back at players who are buying pots. This will immediately make you the leader and players will no longer try to steal your blinds... which will get you into the money!
3 Players	Now you are in the money... but you don't want to mess around and only win a few dollars. Take on a very aggressive stance and loosen up your hand selection. Take total control of every hand. You don't want to finish 2 nd . You are playing to win right here, so don't be scared to take risks.
2 Players	You have made it to heads-up! This is a tough spot to be in- especially if you don't have a lot of chips. Become more aggressive and looser. If you are a tight player and you don't feel comfortable moving all-in with Ace-high, you will quickly get blinded out at this level... Your goal is to bleed your opponent to a level where he is desperate to win a hand and you can trap him with something better.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Generally, the most successful players are those who stick closely to their game plan. If you remain too tight or get too loose, you are NOT going to win these games.

If you are an experienced player and can adopt a tight-aggressive style early on... and move slowly toward a loose-aggressive mentality, than you will be able to win at these games consistently...

One of the great things about the Sit and Go tournaments is your hand selection and betting are the only two talents that you need to develop in order to WIN.

Your knowledge of traps, pot odds, bluffing, and intimation will HELP... but if you just play the right hands and bet a lot every time you enter a pot, you are going to consistently make it in the money.

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Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



And then transition to...

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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MIDDLE-STAKES SIT AND GO'S

Middle-stakes Sit and Go's... with buy-ins around \$20... are also very easy to consistently beat and profit from with the right mentality.

The system that you mastered to beat the small games is almost EXACTLY the same with middle-stakes game. There are few changes, but the games run pretty much same...

Here are the key differences you should know about:

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **These players are MUCH MORE LIKELY to come back over the top of a suspicious bet.** Until there are only five players left, don't enter any pots that you aren't ready to get serious with.
- ♣ **The games get really aggressive near the end.** When you are down to three to four players, expect to see a lot of all-in's and showdowns. Fortunately, this means that this stage will end quickly and you won't have to worry about getting blinded out while you protect your stack.
- ♣ **Try to bully the same people every time you have a good hand.** There are a lot of big egos in these games at Poker Room, so many of the players are going to trap themselves...
- ♣ **Don't fall victim to the "entitlement effect".** At this level, any hand could be your last. The players are ready to move all-in at any time... so if you get married to a hand, you will find yourself eliminated.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Since the game is so similar to the low-stakes ones, the players that succeed will be those who are adept and can change their game quickly...

The biggest change is that the most successful middle-stakes players are a little tighter than the most successful low-stakes players. This is because the game is more aggressive and you need better cards to stay in each hand.

Starting Hand Selection:



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Betting Style:



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SHORTHANDED RING GAMES

The ring games are basically the same at full-sized tables as at the short-handed ones. Since the blinds never increase, the number of players really only affects the quality of cards that you can play. If there are four to six players, you will be able to see about 30% of the flops at the table...

If there are less than four players, you are going to be seeing 40-50% of the flops. At these tables, Ace-high and King-high can often be winners...

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **Players that hang out at shorthanded tables are usually looking for fast action.** They don't worry about the blinds because they are going to be playing almost every hand. These players would be terrible at a regular table because they are too loose.

However, these players don't realize that playing shorthanded games is a matter of patience. Wait until you have a good hand and force expensive action. These "action-junkies" are going to give you loose action.

- ♣ **The action is generally pretty mild before the flop.** You can raise and still get action, but very few players are ready to make their own pre-flop raises.

This means that you can see a lot of flops with suited connections, small pairs, and semi-connectors... and earn big payoffs when you hit...

- ♣ **Look for patterns.** None of the other players at the table are going to be looking for your tells because the action is so fast. But you should be able to pick up on their tells quickly... mostly because they are too busy to hide their patterns.

Once you pick up a few tells, you can exploit them EXPONENTIALLY since you will be in the pot with the same players so often.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Medium-loose, aggressive players tend to DOMINATE these games. If you are too tight, your opponents will quickly learn to fold every time you get in the pot...

So if you are comfortable playing a lot of hands and you enjoy taking control of tables, Poker Room shorthanded ring games are the best match for you.

In fact, I have played at many websites and I have not found a place where medium-loose, aggressive players have such an advantage!

Also, to be successful at shorthanded ring games you REALLY need to concentrate... because a lot of it depends on studying your opponents.

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Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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SHORTHANDED SIT AND GO'S

Poker Room offers a wide selection of shorthanded Sit and Go tournaments. These tournaments have five players. They're very fast and very soft!

Why are these games so easy to beat?

Well, most of the players that enter these tournaments have two unique characteristics:

- 1. They are in a rush for action.** If a player were truly patient, they would stick to the standard 10-player games. People generally play these games because they are in a rush to win quickly... and don't want to wait for the whole tournament to run its course.
- 2. They believe they have a better chance of winning.** While two out of five is a higher percentage than three out of ten (these are the standard payouts), a skilled player has a BETTER chance of winning in a STANDARD 10-player game... because it relies more on SKILL than luck.

However, these weak players make the games so easy to beat that even if you do have bad luck you can still easily win consistently if you stick to these tips:

- ♣ **Be Aggressive, aggressive, aggressive.** The players at these games are generally passive. They like to call and check... but when you push the action they get scared and you can pick up easy pots.
- ♣ **Spot the shark.** Since most of the players you see are going to be suckers, you should spend your time looking for sharks. Sharks like to hang out at Poker Room shorthanded tables because the competition is so soft.

This is the biggest downside of these games. The good news is, if you concentrate and watch for the sharks you can stay out of their way...

They'll usually deal with most of the fish for you... and will play very aggressively. Learn from them while you them. Then make a move when it gets down to two or three players.

- ♣ **Play to win.** Don't play to get 2nd place... play to WIN. Make strong moves when you can and don't be scared to lose! If you are just playing for 2nd place, the loose-passive players will bleed you death... and you'll end up getting blinded out as you wait to get into the money.

Why?

Well, the passive players at the table are going to be playing to get 2nd place and will just check-fold until everyone gets knocked out. By playing to win, you will build a huge stack and get the leverage you need to take the game...

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- ♣ **If you lose control of the game, try making a few big moves.** When I lose control of these games, I make an all-in move at a spot where I know I could win and probably won't get a caller. This wakes everyone up and tells the table, "HEY, this is MY game... I own this table and you guys are just playing for 2nd!"

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Medium-tight, extra-aggressive players command control of Poker Room's shorthanded Sit and Go tournaments. The combination of passive players and the unique payout system make these games easy for a player who is willing to risk NOT winning...

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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MUTI-TABLE TOURNAMENTS

I love multi-table tournaments... because they give you the opportunity to win a lot of money without much risk. And the multi-table tournaments at Poker Room are some of the most lucrative tournaments you'll find.

There are way TOO MANY strategies and methods for each type of multi-table tournament to possibly cover in this section. For more information on tournaments, read my "Tournament Tactics" report.

So here I want to go over a few of the many UNIQUE TYPES of tournaments at Poker Room... and the basic strategies for each:

1. Turbo Tournaments – These games are designed to move very quickly, so be VERY TIGHT and VERY AGGRESSIVE. If you are going to play a hand early, be ready to move all-in with it.

This is like the "tight-aggressive squared" method... to the fourth power!

2. Shootouts – These games are such that each table plays out... and the winners play in a separate game. The "secret" here is to play each table like it was a single table Sit and Go... because the winning techniques are about the same.

3. Qualifying Tournaments – Poker Room offers a ton of satellites for entries to the WSOP, WPT, and other major events. The tournaments leading up to these qualifiers are soft because people are playing to "win a seat" not to "win the tournament."

The trick is to play aggressively like you would if you were playing for MONEY... not a buy-in.

4. Freerolls – Poker Room offers a lot of freeroll tournaments. But I don't suggest you play these tournaments because they are too loose and don't really imitate real poker conditions.

OK, that wraps up my notes and analysis of Poker Room. Now let's look at another one of my favorite casinos: Bodog.

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BODOG.COM CULTURE

As with Poker Room, there are some very unique features to Bodog that affect how the games are played... and as a result the PSYCHOLOGY you'll want to use to win...

- ♠ **Sports-betting cross promotion.** Bodog runs one of the largest sports-betting services in the world. And Bodog promotes its poker room to the BETTING customers.

This means that many of the players that you will encounter didn't come to Bodog for POKER playing... The result is that they're less talented. And just as importantly, they possess more of a "gambling" and "risk-oriented" mindset.

- ♠ **"Cool" marketing.** If you look at the Bodog marketing materials, most of them are very "cool." The man on a motorcycle with a beautiful woman on his arm appeals more to the YOUNGER crowd.

Young people tend to be looser, more aggressive, and more ego-driven than older people...

- ♠ **Less "hype" advertising.** A lot of marketing materials from other poker websites are very "over-the-top". They offer obscene bonuses for all new sign-ups, etc.

Bodog doesn't buy into this hype as much as the others. The advertising tends to attract a lot more players who have ALREADY PLAYED POKER ONLINE and are not as dumb with their play.

I see a large portion of COLLEGE STUDENTS online at Bodog.

- ♠ **Micro-Limit Games.** Since Bodog offers games with limits as low as .05/.1, there are a lot of new players in the room. Even though most of the novice players will stay at these levels, some will come up to higher levels where you can attack them. There will be a steady stream of players who come to higher levels only to get beat and move back down to their micro-limit games.

(This bullet point seems to directly contradict the previous one, of course. Just remember that the ADVERTISING attracts more experienced players, and the MICRO-LIMIT games attract beginners.)

- ♠ **Turbo Games.** Bodog has more turbo games (games that move very quickly) than other sites on the Internet. These games force players to be more loose and aggressive.

Most players play both turbo AND regular games... and so they tend to become more loose and aggressive in the REGULAR games. This makes beating both normal and turbo games easier.

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- ♠ **Heads-up tournaments.** Bodog has very popular heads-up poker games. These are actually one of my all-time favorite game types of any online poker site.

These tournaments are so much fun that players often get their friends to sign up so they can compete heads-up. This amplifies the “young player” presence.

As a side note, I recommend playing these heads-up games to PRACTICE heads-up play. They’re the perfect place to face a wide range of opponents while risking small amounts of money.

OK, now that you know a little about Bodog and what is so special about it, let’s take a closer look at the different games that you are going to find at the site... and all the secrets that I’ve learned...

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HEADS-UP SIT AND GO TOURNAMENTS

Heads-up poker games at Bodog are among the most exciting– and softest– games that you’re going to find online. Heads-up games start when each player buys in for the same amount. Blinds increase until one player has all the chips and the winner leaves with the money...

MY NOTES:

- ♠ **TAKE NOTES!** You are going to run into the same players many times, and a good read on your opponent BEFORE you start playing is PRICELESS.

Most players don’t take notes, so rarely will you find a player who remembers you and won’t play against you again and again...

- ♠ **Remember the differences of heads-up games.** There are a lot of things that you will not find in heads-up play as in regular tournaments.

These major differences mean that no matter how experienced a player is, the only way someone can be experienced in heads-up Sit and Go’s is to play a lot of them.

This means that you only need to follow the system I’m about to outline in order to consistently beat Bodog heads-up games...

- ♠ **Don’t fall into the all-in mentality.** In a regular heads-up situation, you have to make very strong moves. You have to push your whole stack into the pot in order to bluff.

But here you don’t have to put all your money into the pot in order to bluff. Each game you’ll start with 1,000 chips with the blinds at just 10-20!

You should however, establish the all-in move early so you will be able to get action on your good hands. Early on in the game I will make a few all-in moves to shake up my opponent.

Then, after a few of those moves, I am confident I’ll get action on my big hands...

- ♠ **Leverage chip position.** Getting the chip lead early is very important because once you have a lead in the chip sizes, you can push and bully around your opponent. Don’t mess around checking or calling blinds. If you are going to enter a hand, make sure that you raise the pot... and make sure that your opponent has to put money into the pot to see the flop.

This will also push your opponents to make poor decisions because they get so frustrated with your raises and their inability to see flops!

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- ♣ **Your ultimate goal is to get all your money in with the best hand.** It is going to be very tough to wear down your opponent with such low starting blinds, so your strategy will be to FRUSTRATE your opponent all-in...

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Who can beat these games? ANYONE!

Really these games offer the biggest opportunity to win easy money against weak players. Plus, you can pick up so much experience in a remarkably short period of time.

Once you start playing you will learn the insider secrets of these games virtually RIGHT AWAY.

The people who dominate the FASTEST are the players who are willing to push all their money into the pot with marginal hands. If you are too tight, you are never going to get action on good hands and you will slowly get bled to death by your opponent...

So if you are a medium-loose, highly-aggressive player (most players fall into this category) you will be able to clean up against the novices at Bodog heads-up games.

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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TURBO SIT AND GO TOURNAMENTS

Turbo Sit and Go tournaments are games that are designed to move more quickly than regular Sit and Go's. Now, why would someone choose to play this kind of game?

Simply put... because they're impatient!

That means they're going to be too impatient to wait for the right situations to enter pots. This makes for easy competition because even the turbo matches are not SO fast as to justify irrational moves.

These games are FILLED with fish...and Bodog's turbo games are among the easiest games that you will find ANYWHERE!

MY NOTES:

- ♣ **TRAP.** When you have a good hand, do what you can to entice your opponents to fall into traps. Most of the players in these Bodog games will try to buy pots that they think are vulnerable.

You can also use pot-commitment traps to get players to fall in love with a hand... and then push your chips into the middle and take a huge pot.

- ♣ **Don't worry about early chip counts.** The loose-aggressive play that is common in these Bodog games increases the chances that someone is going to jump out to an early lead by knocking out a few players.
- ♣ **Don't mess around bluffing.** Bluffing in these games is very challenging. It's POSSIBLE to bluff consistently, but the payoff for the risk really isn't worth the marginal benefits.
- ♣ **Come back at bullies.** As the blinds get large, many players are going to try to bully you out of your blinds. Come over the top of them a few times early and you will gain a TON of respect at the table. You will be able to check your big blind a lot more and you won't have to worry about all your bets getting raised!
- ♣ **Don't get over-eager.** Many times in a turbo game you will find that you are starting to get a little short-stacked. This can be a very distressing feeling for most players...

That's why it's CRUCIAL that you stay calm. Remember that cards WILL come. But if you rush your play and get knocked out, they will NEVER come.

- ♣ **Don't get discouraged.** These games are very easy to beat, but they take a little time to get used to. So even if you lose a few games right away, give it some time and stay persistent.

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When I first started playing these games, I could never win. I was about to say that they were too hard until I made a few minor adjustments (what I talked about in this section)... and now I win nearly every time I play.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

These games are so fast and action-packed that a loose player is going to get caught up in the flow and will go broke very quickly. There is really no way to outplay manics except to stick to the tight-aggressive playing style.

However, since there is the urgency added by the rapid blind increases, you must also make sure that you are playing aggressively enough to carry you deep into the game.

So a player who can move from very-tight, aggressive to medium-tight, very-aggressive is going to OWN these games.

If you have trouble making these transitions, these games are probably not for you... and you should stick to the consistency of ring games instead.

Follow these diagrams...

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



And then transition to...

Starting Hand Selection:



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Betting Style:



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LOW-STAKES SIT AND GO'S

Besides the craziness of the turbo Sit and Go tournaments, Bodog also has a wide offering of standard low-stakes tournaments. However, the “carry-over” influence of heads-up games and turbo tournaments makes these Sit and Go games very fast...

MY NOTES:

- ♠ **The action early on is pretty loose.** Without good cards, you should steer clear of the intense action at the table. If you are going to enter a hand, make sure that you do so with an aggressive bet.
- ♠ **The action at the later stages of the game (4-5 players) gets aggressive.** At most websites, the action gets very dry and the blinds mount up... but at Bodog, the players actively try to knock each other out.

This spurs from the young players that mostly play here...

You can use this to your advantage by making sure that you don't get caught up in a huge hand in that stage unless you have something strong. Don't chase draws!

At most websites, people use this timeframe to build a stack and bully players on the bubble. But at Bodog all you have to do is WAIT until you are strong... and then come back over the top of the aggressive players and get paid off.

- ♠ **Don't get drawn into a shootout.** Oddly enough, Bodog Sit and Go players have a tendency to have “grudges” against other players. This leads them to get involved in shootouts where EMOTIONS are controlling the action... not LOGIC!

If you let your emotions run your game, there is only one thing I can tell you with certainty: You are going to LOSE.

- ♠ **Set pot-commitment traps.** Don't slow play. Say that you are dealt a monster hand like K-K and spike trips on the flop...

Some players would try to slow play this hand and get paid off when someone bluffs at the pot.

At Bodog, the slow play doesn't work very well. The players are aggressive, but they are only aggressive in hands where someone ELSE is aggressive. They don't generally try to buy small pots.

The way to get paid off most is by throwing out progressively larger bets on the flop, turn, and river.

Sometimes on the river, throw out a small bet if a draw is on the board. This

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almost ALWAYS draws out a big raise and then you can REALLY get paid off with your hand.

- ♠ **The action doesn't get too intense in the latest stages of the game.** After a brief increase right before payouts, the action subsides to regular tempos. This means that you can maintain a similar game plan the whole time and still win.

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

While versatility isn't as important in these games as in turbo games, you still need a little flexibility in your hand selection if you want to make any money with low-stakes Sit and Go tournaments...

You want to be a tight-aggressive player with the ability to become just a little bit looser at the end stages of the game. That's the magic combination for this game type.

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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MIDDLE-STAKES SIT AND GO TOURNAMENTS

The Sit and Go games with buy-ins around \$20 are quite a bit different than the \$10 and under games...

Here are some tips that will give you an immediate edge over the table. Having these tips makes it almost like CHEATING...

MY NOTES:

- ♠ **Be aggressive and dominate from the very start.** If you mess around and try to be too tight at the beginning, players are going to walk all over you.

When I sit down at the table, the first hand I have that I KNOW is the best, I move all-in. I rarely get callers, but that's okay... because I know that I am establishing my table image.

- ♠ **Keep firing.** Sometimes you are going to get in a position where your first large bet is called and the flop doesn't go your way. At this point you MUST keep betting. If you wimp out after the turn, you are going to lose all respect at the table.

On the other side, if you bet strong before and after the flop, you are going to be able to take 90% of the pots and you will gain a lot of power at the table...

- ♠ **Show bluff cards once.** This is not a set-in-stone situation, but these stakes at Bodog are one of the only times that I'll ever show my cards online.

As a principle I tell people NOT to show cards at online poker, but I have learned that because so many players at these levels are young and new to the game—that showing bluffs is a great way to put them on tilt.

After you show once, don't show again for the rest of the game. You can usually throw out one bluff and no one will be paying close enough attention to see patterns in your play. But if you do this more than once, you're asking for trouble...

- ♠ **Look for tells.** The players at Bodog are remarkably predictable. Once you find some of their patterns or tells, you'll be able to play off them for the entire game.

Turbo Sit and Go's are too fast for any clear patterns to show. And ring games have too quick a turnaround. But Sit and Go's and heads-up games are GREAT places to notice player patterns.

WHO CLEANS UP BEST?

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As with other tournaments, what is MOST important is the ability to move from tight to looser play. At the early stages of the game, you must be very-tight, ultra-aggressive. But at the end of the game you need to be playing semi-loose, aggressive.

Look at where you finish the first few times that you play in these tournaments. If you end up finishing out of the money early (in places 6-10) you need to TIGHTEN UP.

If you finish in 3rd-5th place many times, you are probably TOO TIGHT in the later stages of the games. You're not putting enough pressure on your opponents and they're taking advantage of you.

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



And then...

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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LOW-STAKES NO-LIMIT RING GAMES

Ring games at Bodog are VERY soft. There are two ways that players usually end up playing at these low-stakes ring games at Bodog...

1. They started at Bodog's very popular Sit and Go section, lost most of their money, and then started playing the ring games...
2. They started out at the micro-stakes games and moved up to low-stakes games. This is about the same as players who move up from play-money games... the action is so different that they cannot adjust. They lose all their profits and immediately move back down to penny games to re-build their "bankroll".

MY NOTES:

- ♠ **See cheap flops.** There are so many loose-passive players at these Bodog games that you will be able to see many cheap flops. Since your competition is loose-passive, you will be able to limp in with marginal hands, then— when you get lucky— force expensive action and still get callers.
- ♠ **Bully occasional rocks.** Bodog ring games are full of calling stations and rocks. You know that beating calling stations is just a matter of playing good hands and betting every time you have a hand...

To beat the rocks, bully them around by raising pots ahead of them in the action. Don't mess with them if they enter a pot... because you are probably beat. But if you push around a rock enough, he will loosen up and you can take his money MUCH more quickly.

- ♠ **Don't worry about being predictable.** The games at Bodog have extraordinarily fast turn-over. Players enter for a few minutes... then leave. Your entire table might change in just a few minutes.

So don't worry about giving out "tells". Just stick to your game strategy and system.

- ♠ **Don't "short-buy".** Many Bodog players sit down at these games with a tiny stack and try to make quick moves to become competitive. This is a BAD IDEA. Using this method you are hoping to NOT LOSE a lot of money...

Instead, you should be trying to WIN A LOT of money. You do this by buying in at competitive amounts. Let your opponents buy in for \$8 when they should put down \$50... that gives you just that much more of an advantage!

WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

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Bodog low-stakes games are EASY MONEY for players that use a semi-loose, aggressive playing style. Bu it's better to err on the side of being TOO TIGHT rather than TOO LOOSE...

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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MIDDLE-STAKES NO-LIMIT RING GAMES

Loose players beware! Manics are plentiful at middle-stakes Bodog ring games. These loose-aggressive players can be a real pain in the ass if you are not ready to be patient... wait for a good hand... and then make big moves when you do get good cards...

The manics run the games at this level, so all the other players (non-manics) start playing more loosely and more aggressively. This makes the game more predictable if you stick to your winning plan and don't get shaken by the tempo.

- ♣ **DON'T TILT.** You ARE going to get bad beats. It's just the way it is... you don't have any way of preventing it from happening. Sorry. You will have more bad beats at this level because players are more likely to call you down with draws. And the more cards these players see, the more they are going to "catch" over time...
- ♣ **Let THEM fire.** At a normal table, when you have a good hand, you want to lead out with bet after bet... getting as much as you can out of the hand.

At these tables, however, you don't want to bet too much because you KNOW that the manics at your table will bet into you. You can call them to the river and then trap them in their own bluff.

- ♣ **Don't dominate.** At most tables, you want to be in control of the game. You want to dictate the action and set the atmosphere for the table. At middle-stakes Bodog ring games, you want to focus on staying patient and waiting for good spots to make BIG MOVES.

Focus on winning a few BIG pots... not a lot of small ones.

- ♣ **Unfortunately, the players at this level are a little too good to fall for slow play traps.** Generally, if a manic makes a big bet and you immediately move in over-the-top, you are going to scare him away.

Instead, stay calm and call his progressively larger bets until you are at the end of the hand and he tries to make a HUGE bluff to save himself from losing...

- ♣ **Don't play shorthanded games unless you have experience with manics.** Manics are easy to beat once you've had some experience. But if you haven't mastered beating this type of player, you don't want to sit down at a shorthanded table with them...
- ♣ **Don't get frustrated.** Playing these games can be tough at the beginning. When players first start playing, a lot of them lose money and give up.

The learning curve in Bodog middle-stakes ring games is pretty intense. But if you overcome it, you can win a lot of money by "grinding" it out.

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WHO CLEANS UP THE BEST?

Extra-tight, extra-aggressive players win the gold at Bodog middle-stakes no-limit ring games.

If you see that you are getting slowly robbed of your money, you are likely playing too loose... You are seeing too many flops and each time you miss your hand, the manic style of the competition pushes you (the rational player) out of the pot.

If you find yourself suffering a lot of BAD BEATS, you probably aren't playing aggressively enough. Try raising more when you enter a pot and try to force out competition.

Of course, like I said before, bad beats ARE going to happen at this level because you will see a lot more action... If you can't handle taking bad beats, don't play this game type.

Starting Hand Selection:



Betting Style:



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MUTI-TABLE TOURNAMENTS

Bodog has a tremendous offering of multi-table tournaments. Their most popular games are “guaranteed” tournaments or standard tournaments with a set payout that is guaranteed to be available no matter how many players enter. If more is available, then more money is awarded...

Once again, I can't go through all the tournament strategies here. (Be sure to read my “Tournament Tactics” report.)

MY NOTES:

- ♠ **Games start off very loose and aggressive.** Don't get involved in the early stages.

Don't worry about the blinds unless you are in a turbo tournament... and even then, you have plenty of time to make SMART moves before the blinds pose much of a problem.

- ♠ **Table changes are rather intense.** Bodog multi-tables tend to be dominated by players who gain early edges during the “shootout” period. This means that every game is different. If you are moved between tables, make sure to concentrate and study the new atmosphere.

- ♠ **Stay disciplined.** The most challenging part of these games is staying disciplined enough to keep your play tight-aggressive and not vary too much from your original game plan.

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CONCLUSION

All right, that wraps up “The Psychology Of Winning At Online Poker”.

I hope you got some good “nuggets” from my analysis of the many different game types.

Remember that adjusting your PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH will have a dramatic effect on whether or not you become a WINNING online poker player.

I’ll be analyzing game types from other casinos and poker rooms in the future. If you have a casino you’d like to see me talk more about, be sure to email me at roy@royrounder.com and let me know.

I’ll talk to you again soon.

Your Friend,

Roy Rounder



THE END