



THE AMATEUR'S MIND

A QUICK WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR NL TOURNAMENT PLAY

MICHAEL ROME

Here is one of the best exercises for accelerating your level of play. First, go online and sign up for a single table tournament. Second, make sure the entry fee is \$10 or more. (Less expensive tournaments are more unpredictable regarding the quality of play.) Not much of a stretch so far...but now the twist. Cover the screen with a piece of dark painter's tape so it will conceal your hole cards.

Although I have shared this training technique with my friends, none of them have tried it. They just can't bring themselves to do anything that might decrease their chances of winning. Since you might feel the same way, let me tell you what I learned. *The cards you are holding are even less of a factor than we have been warned about by the poker experts.*

Position, chip stack size, timing, bet amount, the cards on the board, and your read on the other players—these are some of the critical factors. When was it important for me to know what I was holding? When I was faced with a decision to call for a large portion of my chips. I am

not talking about a bet that is half the size of the pot. I am referring to a pot odds busting amount.

Pre-flop in these situations it would have been nice to know if I had the type of cards that play well in a showdown. Post-flop it would have been helpful to see where I stood in relationship to the board. But even when we know our hole cards, how often are we going to call a huge bet? Unless you put your opponent on a bluff, you will seldom have a hand strong enough to take the risk.

So I did better playing in the dark than you might think, but don't start wondering if I cashed...I am not the Nostradamus of poker. Telling you what I learned is not the same as you experiencing it yourself. I strongly suggest investing \$10 in your own one hour class. If you do, I believe you will develop more confidence about making moves that are not based on the cards you are holding.

"I could win most of the time without looking at my hole cards if I had position every time." Doyle Brunson.