PookieGirl2's Strategy for Super/Hyper Turbo Sit-n-Gos

Introduction

The strategy that is set out below is designed for Single Table Super Turbo Sit-n-Gos. In these SnG's players each start with only 10xBBs with the levels increasing every 3 minutes.

The Strategy employs an All-in or Fold philosophy based on sound Mathematical principles, and therefore exploits others players not understanding the range of hands that they should be pushing with.

Furthermore, a lot of players fail to understand that at the start of these tournaments the only option a player has is All-in or Fold … and this is why.

Everyone starts with 300 chips. If you Raise a standard amount and get re-raised by a subsequent player to double what you put in, there is virtually no hand you could have that makes a fold mathematically correct.

Example:
You get dealt KQs in mid position at the start of the tournament (Blinds are 30/15). You raise to 60. The player on the button makes it 120 and it is folded back to you.

You have 240 left in your stack. There is 245 in the pot and it is 60 more for you to call.
- (i)   Even before you call, the pot now has more chips than your stack does.
- (ii)   You are getting better than 4:1 pot odds to call.
- (iii)   If you just call, there will be 300 in the pot and 180 in your stack. You cannot defend against draws

Let's look at each point
- (i)   If you fold your tournament EV is 0.0908, if you push all-in and win your Tournament EV is 0.2028 so you are risking 0.0908 to gain an extra 0.1120 tEV. So if you suspect you are 44% chance of winning (eg. if his hand range is any Ace, any Pair) you should continue purely from an ICM perspective.

- (ii)   You are getting pot odds of better than 4:1. From a pot odds perspective if you are more than 24.49% chance of winning the hand you should call. Even if you put your opponent on a hand range as tight as AA-QQ, AK ~ you are 25.08% to win, so you should call.

- (iii)   Calling any bet over 1/3 of your stack prevents you from defending against as few as 8 outs. So even if you hit a pair and your opponent has an open ended straight draw, you cannot deny them proper odds to call and try and draw out on you.

Now, here is where it becomes even more apparent. If you make a standard bet pre-flop, any raise will see you pot committed if you call. If your raise it up to 3xBB and its made 6xBB, you only have 10xBB in your starting stack. If you are putting in 6xBB you are really committing yourself as the pot will be 17.5xBB when you are forced to call your last 4xBBs. What hand could you have that isn't going to be 22% (6 outs on the flop) to win the hand ??

If you have previously doubled up, and have 20xBB, your opponents will be in this same situation. That is any hand they play will be for their entire 10xBB stack. There is never going to be a situation that warrants not pushing all-in and getting maximum fold equity.

Hopefully you should now understand the importance of fully committing to your hand in this tournament format. The following sections will outline hand selections and when to push.

When playing this strategy, you will suffer some bad-beats and will equally suck-out occasionally as well. It will happen, ride the bumps and start another tourney.

Preliminary Results

For the last 200 games played I have achieved an ROI: 26% (+$ 200) and placed ITM: 45%. There are two distinct patterns in the profit graph. A sharp upward trend where large profits were achieved during the Full Tilt "Happy Hours", and a flatter and downward period during "normal" play. Preliminary investigation shows that the calling range during "Happy Hour" is a lot weaker than during regular play.
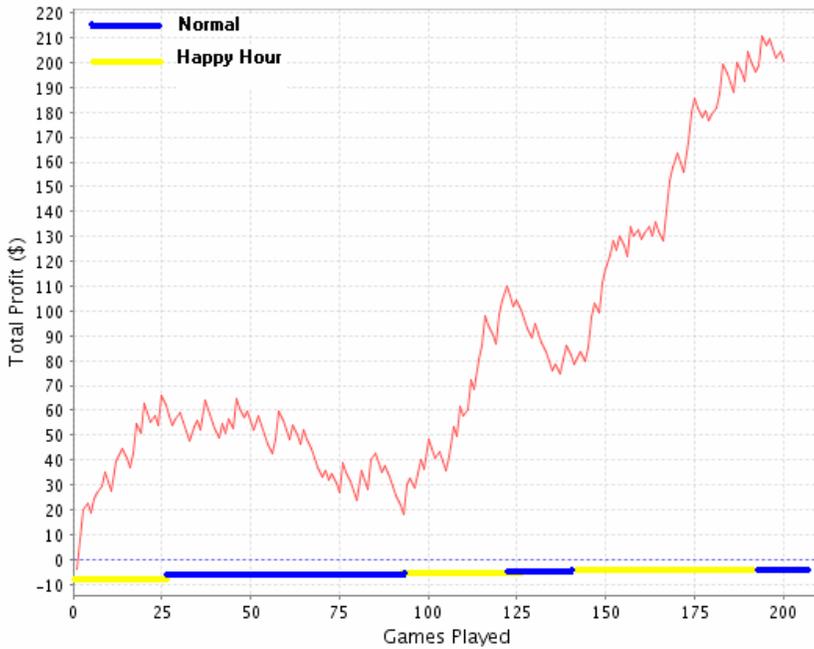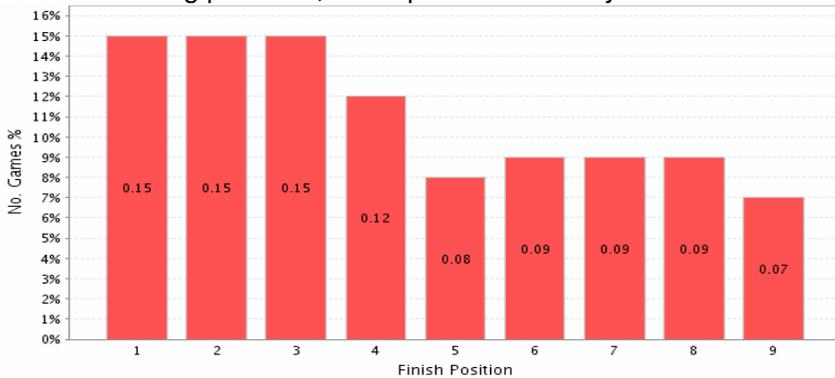

Here is the distribution of Finishing Positions for the last 200 games played, note that they are heavily skewed toward the later finishing positions, the explanation for why is in the next section.

Not that you will finish top 4 more than half the time – 57% there is some additional changes required to utilize ICM and play correctly on the bubble. In particular when you are 2nd in chips and there is a very small stack at the table.

Tournament Structure and Play Statistics

The tournament structure commences with 300 chips and blinds increasing every 3 minutes. My statistics over 10,000 hands show that you will receive about 7 hands per level. The money is reached around level 4 or about 24 hands into the tournament. This requires about 390 in blinds to survive to this point, which rules out sitting out until the money.

The following table shows that until the money is reached the playing conditions basically stay the same. The average chip stack has less than 10 big blinds and stealing the blinds will generally increase your stack by about 15%-18% each time.

Players	Avg Blind level	Avg Stack	Avg M	Steal Value
9	30	300	10.0	15%
8	40	337	8.4	18%
7	40	385	9.6	16%
6	50	450	9.0	17%
5	60	540	9.0	17%
4	80	675	8.4	18%
3	80	900	11.3	13%
2	100	1350	13.5	11%

The benefit of an early double up is enormous, as it allows you to put pressure on the smaller stacks without risking your tournament life when you push. On the reverse side, it is also important not to panic when you start to run low on chips. Ideally you should try to avoid falling below 3 big blinds, but 150 seems to be the key number, as a single double up puts you back into contention.

More to come ….

Hand Selection Table

Once again this strategy is adapted form Sklansky's all-in or fold strategy that was further enhanced by enhanced by Charles Mousseau. The strategy set out below takes into consideration the basics of solid play:
- Position
- Action to you
- Stack Size (your M)

All of these factors will give you an indication of the strength of hand required to push all in.

Being the initial aggressor is very important in this format of SnG. Pushing all-in and having it folded around to picki up the blinds will increase your stack (from the starting base) by as much as 15% in the first few rounds.

Position is important as the likelihood of your opponent having a hand that will call and be leading your hand obviously increases with the number of opponents yet to act. As a result we tighten up in front and loosen up at the back. On your table count the number of players between you and the BB. This is the number of players yet to act. Look up this row in the table, and that is your hand range to go All-in with.

Action to you is very important. Generally a limped hand will indicate a small pair, suited connectors or a weak suited Ace. Any raise should be considered an indication of strength. Only play AA-JJ, AKs, AQs or AK against any size raise.

Your stack size is only relevant when it is very small (ie less than 5% of the chips in play). If you find yourself with less than 150 chips, you need to be willing to push taking slightly the worst of it as the Blinds if stolen, now account for a bigger portion o your stack. As such, action before it comes to you can now be ignored.

	ALL IN OR FOLD
ANY RAISED POT	JJ+ AQs+ AK
UNRAISED POT :6 or more players left to act	TT+ ATs+ AT+
UNRAISED POT :4 or 5 players left to act	77+ A7s+, K9s+, QJs A9+, KT+
UNRAISED POT :3 or less players left to act	44+ As, K6s+, Q9s+, JTs A5+, K9+, QT+
ANY POT :less than 150 chips in stack	44+ A7s+, K9s+, Q9s+, JTs A9+, K9+, QT+

Notes: I have changed the hand notation. There are three lines in each square. The top line is Pairs, the second line is suited cards, and finally the bottom line is off-suit cards.

66+ : any pocket pair between Pocket Aces and Pocket 6s
A7s+ : any suited Ace between Ace-King and Ace-Seven
A5+ : any hand with an Ace (suited or Unsuited) between Ace-King and Ace-Five
As : any suited hand containing and Ace
A : any hand containing and Ace (suited or unsuited)

Results from the first 10,000 hands show the following win rates at showdown. Along with the overall win rate which includes hands that have no showdown (tat is you win pre-flop)

The observed opponent hand range is for all hands played to showdown, where I had gone all in pre-flop. What is interesting is that the observed and projected win rates don't match up when we push in from late position, indicating that we get called by an even wider range of hands, making late position stealing profitable.

	Opponents Observed 55+,ATs+, AT+, KTs+, KT,QJs		
	Projected Win Rate	Actual Win Rate	Total Win Rate
JJ+, AQs+, AK	66.66	66.28	83.14
TT+,Ats,AQ	63.33	63.68	81.84
77+,A7s,K9s+,QJs,A9+,KT+	49.73	60.20	80.10
44, As, K6s+, Q9s+, JTs,A5+, K9+, QT+	44.71	56.99	78.50

The key is to try to be the aggressor and the first into the pot.

There is still some work to be done to stop the leaks. The indicators are that hands such as K8s-K6s, QJs, QTs, Q9s, QJ and the small aces (A7s-A2s, A7-A5) are all weak in relation to the expected calling range of your opponents. If your opponents are playing tight, it may be appropriate not to play these.

A note on Bubble Play

Your play around the bubble shouldn't really vary from the above strategy, however there is one exception. Their will occasionally by times where you are the second largest stack and there is a player who has less than 2 Big Blinds. In this situation there is no need to go all-in and risk a call and elimination by the big stack. In this situation the correct play is to raise the size of the 3rd largest stack to keep pressure on him, but not commit yourself fully to the hand. If the big stack calls you have the option to fold if the flop misses your hand.

Another variation is to consider folding on the bubble is when 2 players are already all-in and you have JJ. This again is situational, particularly if one of the players is NOT the small stack.

Heads-up at the End

The following table is adapted directly from Bill Chen's book, The Mathematics of Poker. In Bill's book he goes through some very detailed discussion on Game Theory and in summary it goes something like this... (and I am para-phrasing heavily)

If we push all-in with a wide range of hands, your opponent may adjust his calling strategy to maximize his expectation of winning against your push. Let's say stacks are even, you push every hand and he will only call if he has Pocket Aces.

In this situation he will call 1 in every 221 hands and you will lose the pot about 85% of the time. The other 220 of 221 hands you win the pot un-opposed. Your EV is

1 / 221 * 85% you will lose 45xBBs (your stack)   = - 0.17xBBs
1 / 221 * 15% you will win 45xBBs (his Stack)   = + 0.03xBBs
220/221 you win 1.5xBBs (you scoop the blinds) = + 1.49xBBs

Your Expected Value is 1.35 Big Blinds

So, clearly playing this way is profitable for you and not so good for him. Your opponent needs to call with a wider range of hands to prevent you from scooping the Blinds as often. However in doing this he increases your chance of winning the pot when the hand goes to showdown. As he increases his range, you can tighten your range even further to exploit this situation, and increase further your chance of winning at showdown. Eventually, you will both settle on a range of hands which is an "equilibrium point" where you both stand to make 0xBBs per hand.

This range of hands is also dependant on your stack sizes. As your stack size decreases, the value of the blinds increases, which in turn merits a wider range of hands to call with.

Also, the hand range is dependant upon which of the two situations you will find yourself in. You will either be the aggressor and be raising All-in (the attacker) or you will responding be calling/re-raising all-in (the defender).

This all looks like a rather large number of things to consider, but luckily for us the majority of the work has been done and the results presented in their book. The following table summarizes pretty much all of the situations you may find yourselves in during heads up battles (reminder: this is specifically for the FT Super-turbo single table SnGs)

HEADS UP	ATTACK	DEFEND
IF YOUR HAVE > 1500 Chips	22+ As+, Ks+, Q5s+, J5s+, T6s+, 96s+, 85s+, 75s+, 65s, 54s A+, K8+, Q9+, J9+, T8+, 98+	33+ As, K9s+, QTs+ A5+, KT+, QJ
1000 to 1500 Chips	22+ As, Ks, Q4s+, J5s+, T6s+, 96s+, 85s+, 75s+, 64s+, 54s A, K6+, Q8+, J8+, T8+, 98+, 87	22+ As, K7s+, Q9s+, JTs A, K9+, QT+
750 to 1000 Chips	22+ As, Ks, Qs, J3s+, T4s+, 95s+, 84s+, 75s+, 64s+, 54s A, K, Q7+, J8+, T8+, 98, 87, 76	22+ As, Ks, Q6s+, J8s+, T9s A, K5+, Q9+, JT
325 - 750 Chips	22+ As, Ks, Qs, Js, Ts, 94s+, 84s+, 74s+, 64s+, 54s, 43s, 32s A, K, Q, J3+, T6+, 96+, 86+, 76+	22+ As, Ks, Qs, Js, T4s+, 95s+, 86+, 76+ A, K, Q, J5+, T7+, 97+
IF YOUR HAVE < 325 Chips	ANY 2 CARDS	ANY 2 CARDS