



**THE
RAISER'S
EDGE**

**TOURNAMENT-POKER
STRATEGIES FOR
TODAY'S AGGRESSIVE GAME**

**BERTRAND "ELKY" GROPELLIER, LEE NELSON,
TYSEN STREIB, AND TONY DUNST**

The Raiser's Edge

Tournament-Poker Strategies for Today's Aggressive Game

**Bertrand "ElkY" Grospellier,
Lee Nelson, Tysen Streib, and Tony Dunst**

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this book to
tournament poker players all over the world and
to express the pleasure it gives us to play with all of you.

Acknowledgments

From Bertrand “ElkY” Gropsellier:

I would like to thank Jacques Zaicik for his tireless help and encouragement, which have made my poker career possible and successful. Stephane Matheu not only helped in the creation of this book, but assisted me in uncovering my true potential. Likewise, my mother’s continuous support and love have given me the confidence to achieve anything I want. Finally, I acknowledge PokerStars for believing in my potential from the start and giving me the chance to excel at the highest level at the game I love.

From Lee Nelson:

I would like to acknowledge and thank Huntington Press for their dedication to poker publications, both domestically and internationally, and Deke Castleman, the best editor in the business.

From Tysen Streib:

I would like to thank my wife Allison and my son Matthew for their love and dedication during my long working hours.

From Tony Dunst:

I’d like to acknowledge those who along the way saw opportunity and potential in my eccentricity and provided encouragement, including Kyle Kirkland, Lee Nelson, and the WPT.

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Preface

“Poker mirrors life. Successful poker players, and those successful in life, are able to effectively utilize incomplete information, incorporating probabilistic thinking to evaluate risk-reward ratios of various undertakings (or hands), read the people with whom they’re interacting, and make determinations that, over the long run, are likely to be profitable.

—Lee Nelson

How This Book Came About

Kill Everyone, a collaboration among Lee Nelson, Tysen Streib, and Steven Heston, introduced a number of advanced concepts for new-school tournament play. Characterized by increased aggression and playing a wider range of hands than the old-school tight-aggressive strategy, new-school players are more unpredictable than those of the old-school. In *Kill Everyone*, concepts such as hand selection, fold equity, fear equity, equilibrium strategies for short-stack play far from the money, bubble factors, tournament odds, and an equilibrium push/fold strategy for heads-up play were discussed in detail.

Lee and “ElkY” (the PokerStars screen name of French poker pro Bertrand GrosPELLIER) met on the tournament trail. It turned out that ElkY had read *Kill Everyone* and was impressed with its content. He agreed not only to spearhead *Kill Everyone’s* translation into French, but also to comment on the places in the text where he agreed, and where his approach differed from that of the authors. The resulting book was called *Kill ElkY*, and when a new English edition of *Kill Everyone* was published, ElkY’s comments were included.

Tournament poker, both live and online, is constantly evolving. The clear trend is toward looser and more aggressive (LAG) play. In online play, this “laggy” style has become widespread, with players moving chips around at dizzying speeds. As more and more of these talented young online players find their way into live tournaments around the globe, these contests are becoming accordingly more aggressive.

ElkY, Lee, Tysen, and their associates have had numerous discussions regarding this trend and its implications. Now more than

ever, identifying player types and tendencies and making appropriate adjustments is critical to tournament success.

In this book, we bring you up to speed with the current state of tournament play. We provide details for all stages of tournament play, and illustrate how and why the loose-aggressive style works and how to defend against it. We analyze 3-bet and 4-bet strategies and reveal an equilibrium strategy based on ranges. We closely scrutinize a number of new-school techniques that have changed the way the game is played. In light of the suspension of the biggest online poker sites in the United States, we've added a bonus Appendix at the end of the book on reading tells to enhance and perfect your live play.

Some readers, even those who have played for decades, may not be familiar with some of the terms and abbreviations used in the modern-day game. Thus, we have provided a complete Glossary, starting on page 248, for all the terms and abbreviations used in this book. It might be beneficial for some readers to peruse this Glossary prior to reading the rest of the book.

All authors contributed to all chapters, but each chapter has a "main author," who sometimes writes in the first person. The main author for the following chapters is:

Chapter 2, ElkY
Chapter 3, Tony Dunst
Chapter 9, ElkY
Chapter 10, Tony Dunst
Chapter 12, Tysen Streib
Chapter 16, Tysen Streib
Appendix I, Steve van Aperen,
with comments from Lee Nelson
Appendix II, Tysen Streib

This is not a book for beginners. Our target audience is intermediate and advanced tournament players, both online and live. If you fit this bill and want to improve your tournament play, then this book is for you.

Part One

General Concepts

Evolution of the Game

Poker is an evolving game. Part of the beauty of poker is that because there are so many game strategies and personal styles, there's no perfect way to play that results in a win every time. Certain styles are effective against some players, but make you a perfect victim for others. Players tend to establish trends, creating a herding effect as they gravitate toward the same strategies. The herd has moved over the last decade, and strategies and styles have shifted.

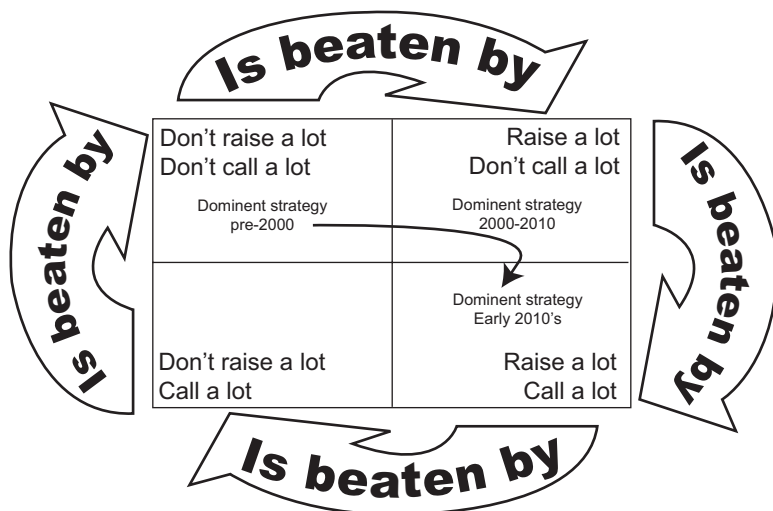
Overall, the general trend is that tournament poker styles of play have become more loose and aggressive over the last few years. Actually, online play may already be *too* loose. A few years back, the game was too tight, and aggressive players were able to exploit that by opening up their range. Today, the trend may be starting to go the other way around, as tighter ranges seem to be the way to counter the current loose patterns. Online play tends to lead the way in setting new trends, with live play lagging behind a bit. This is generally because online players are playing a vastly greater number of hands and have a multitude of tools that break down the math of the game instantly over a large sample size, from which they can more easily study patterns.

Since today's game probably won't be tomorrow's, no book can prepare you fully for the way things will change between when it's written and when you read it. Therefore, the best thing we can do is teach you how to think. If we can teach you how to think about situations in general—how to rationalize in all situations rather than copying a formula—then you can survive no matter how quickly the playing climate changes.

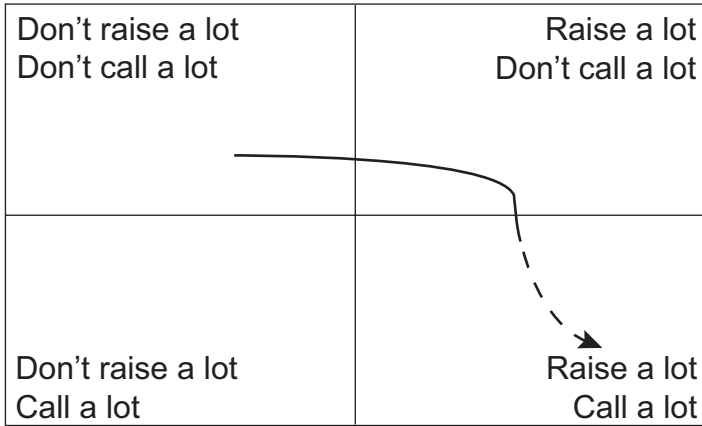
In the next couple of sections, we take a quick look at adjustments and counter-adjustments that have occurred with some popular plays, such as the squeeze play, 3-betting, and 4-betting. We review these in more depth later in the book.

Raising and Calling

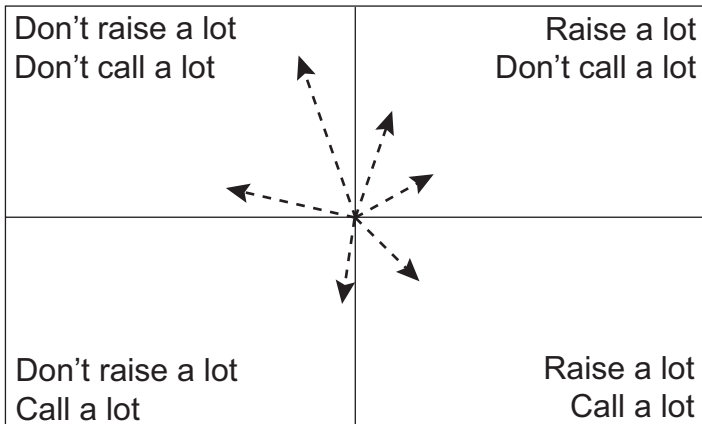
New strategies evolve because players find them to be more effective against the current norm. Poker isn't solitaire; your best response depends on how your opponents play. The subtleties go beyond this, obviously, but let's take a look at the evolution of the overall strategies of raising, 3-betting, 4-betting, etc. and calling.



The current trend in poker is moving toward hyper-LAG play and huge raising wars with wide ranges. People's natural response to this in the short term has been to get even more laggy than before. In chart form it looks something like the following:



Because this trend can't sustain itself, it will eventually implode. A much more likely scenario is that the good players will eventually curve back and hang around the middle of the chart, which is sort of an equilibrium spot. Since poker is all about exploiting your opponents' strategies while not allowing them to exploit you, that equilibrium spot will be the default starting strategy until the advanced player understands who he's dealing with. At that point, he can leap out in any appropriate direction to take advantage of any situation that presents itself.



Online Evolution

Nowhere is the LAG style more evident than online, which seems to undergo a serious evolution and major metagame adjustments every six months. Co-author Tony Dunst often alternates between periods of heavy online play and heavy travel for live poker and had the following thoughts on the matter:

“I find that if I go traveling for even just a few months at a time, when I get home, things online have changed to a noticeable degree. Optimal shoving and calling ranges have been adjusted and people’s flop aggression has normally increased. Some guys who used to be regulars are hardly playing and guys I’ve never heard of are suddenly smashing it. Players have accumulated an increased number of statistics displayed by their tracking software, and are increasingly understanding how to use them. Having done this kind of cycle a few times now, I’ve come to understand that every time I go away, I should anticipate spending my first month back focusing on study as much as play, just to make sure I don’t fall behind the trends. From what I can tell, the best way to learn what the current metagame online is like is to read up on poker-strategy forums, as people will often discuss what they believe to be the standard play in given situations. Too bad what’s standard keeps changing!”

Live tournaments, though increasingly filled with players coming from an online background, are still evolving at a much slower pace. So by practicing online a lot and staying up on all the new patterns, we can stay way ahead of what will normally happen next live.

Squeezing, Smooth-Calling, Three-Betting, Four-Betting, and More

Here are a few examples of recent poker evolution. In 2008, the squeeze play was a very popular move, especially online. After a while, a counter-move appeared: smooth-calling a pre-flop raise with a big hand, in order to disguise the strength of the holding. Before the squeeze-bet era, it was a much more standard move simply to re-raise with a big pair, such as KK or AA.

Another evolution is that former “squeezers” now tend to smooth-call more often with hands that have good post-flop value in order to preserve potential equity. For example, let’s say you and your opponent both have medium-sized stacks. There’s a raise from middle position and a call on the cutoff. If you’re on the button holding 55 and squeeze by 3-betting, you might have to give up on all the equity if one of your opponents 4-bets you, because you would have to fold most of the time. On the other hand, if you flat-call, you’re giving yourself a chance to flop a set and win a huge pot for a much cheaper price—for example, if the flop comes something like A-5-J and your opponent holds AJ-AK, or a chance to outplay your opponent post-flop. In our opinion, most new-school players tend to squeeze more frequently with hands that have no post-flop value, such as K5o or 92o, and with these types of holdings, they’ll either fold or re-raise in position when they find a good squeeze spot. As a result, squeezing ranges nowadays are very polarized—that is, either premium holdings that players are ready to play for all their chips, or hands that have practically zero post-flop value.

Four-bets pre-flop, especially heads up, are usually quite polarized too, at least when it involves two competent players with big stacks, especially online. Therefore, 4-betting hands such as JTs or 99 in those spots, considering there isn’t some crazy history and your opponent isn’t likely to 5-bet shove light, will have you relinquishing all equity in the pot if your opponent has the goods and 5-bets it. So, by 4-betting those hands, we win the pot vs. 3-bet bluffs. However, we could have probably sensed weakness somewhere along the way, and if the 3-bettor has trash and isn’t that crazy, he’ll give up on the turn anyway. But when he does have a monster, we give him the opportunity to come over the top for a bet large enough so that we have insufficient odds to call.

There was also a time when late-position raising became very popular in order to steal the blinds and antes. The counter that evolved was to 3-bet with air from the blinds, and a counter to the counter was introduced with the light pre-flop 4-bet. Today, we’re at a point where players are even starting to 5-bet semi-light! In

some spots now, because 4-betting is so popular, when you 3-bet very aggressive players in certain spots, especially in a late-position raising war (also known as a “leveling war”), you have to be ready to 5-bet if you have a hand with decent equity; otherwise, you’re just asking to get owned by the new breed of hyper-LAG adepts.

Plays such as this require an understanding of your opponent’s style and the courage to go with your read and pull the trigger with the full knowledge that if you’re wrong, your odds of avoiding elimination are slim. Taking risks like this against certain players, especially online, is necessary for success in today’s game.

Thin Value Bets

Another pattern that has recently evolved is thinner value bets. The good thing about thin value bets is that they allow you to mix up your range much more effectively. For example, if you bet the river with 2nd pair or top pair on a 4-card straight, you’ll keep your opponents guessing. When executing a value bet this thin, make sure that your opponent is either a calling station, or a thinking player who’s either unaware how thin you bet (and believes you have a polarized range), or who thinks you have a very high bluffing frequency.

However, some players will exclusively bet either as a bluff or with the nuts on such boards. Against these opponents, it’s easier to make calls with weaker hands, such as ace-high or bottom pair, because their range is polarized—either they have the straight or flush, or they’re bluffing. Additionally, other players at the table who don’t have an advanced thought process will see you making what appears to be an incredible call and you’ll gain fear equity. Add thin value betting to the mix and it’s no longer so easy for others to make such calls.

A counter to thin value bets is to check-raise on the river, either with a strong hand or a missed draw. This strategy also needs to be implemented in a balanced way to be effective. Remember, in order to pull it off as a bluff, your opponents must also know that you might also make the same bet with the nuts. Most players assume

that a river check-raise is a monster hand until proven otherwise (e.g., they see you run a river check-raise bluff), so assume that will be their read in all situations when there isn't a serious history between you. With the aggression factor in today's game, by the time you get to the river, the pot is often huge and a river check-raise, except at early levels, would be for a big portion of the stacks. It's definitely an advanced move and takes a lot of guts to spring a river check-raise for your whole stack with complete air. Because you wouldn't usually expect many opponents to do so, this move earns a lot of power.

C-Betting

Here's another example of the changing game. Thanks to Dan Harrington's revelations about continuation betting, players used to c-bet almost 100% of the ace-high boards, especially heads-up and in position against the blinds, but also often in 3-way pots. The counter became to check-raise on the flop more and more frequently.

For example, the initial raiser continuation bet an A-2-2 board almost all the time. Today, due to the increased likelihood of getting check-raised, the initial raiser tends to check behind, even with hands that are likely best in that spot, such as AJ. As a result, delayed c-bets have appeared, where the initial raiser c-bets the turn instead of the flop in order to control the size of the pot and reduce variance. Also, the initial raiser usually gets more credit for a turn bet when he has nothing, since it has become a reasonable move to check behind holding an ace when an ace flops.

Another advantage of the delayed continuation bet is that players usually try to check-raise the flop, but are less likely to do so on the turn. If they have a real hand, they'll more often lead out on the turn instead. As a result, the initial raiser can gather more information and get out of the way relatively cheaply.

An interesting counter to players who've become so check-raise happy on boards with a big card and two rags is to bet every time you have top pair with the intention of calling their check-raise and

intending to call them down on later streets. However, if you believe they're completely incapable of "triple-barreling" (continuing to bet on every street) in a spot like that as a bluff, you should call their flop check-raise (and a turn bet), then bet the river for value if they check.

These examples illustrate how important it is for players to be aware of the current trends and patterns at any given time.

Geography and History

One interesting point is that the game actually evolves in different ways in various venues on the planet. For example, tournament poker is noticeably more difficult in the United States than in Australia, because the game is more popular in the U.S. and the quality of information has had a longer period of time to saturate the community. Across Europe, different countries and regions have originated their own styles. The Scandinavians, for example, are most famous for their highly aggressive, tricky, and developed form of the game. In Asia, Korean players have picked up the hyper-LAG style and quite a number of them are using it in live tournaments.

Identifying opponents who have good basics and understanding of tournament poker, as opposed to the ones with limited skills and experience, should determine the way you adjust your game when you play against each category. The earlier you can gauge your opponents' capabilities, the more profitable your strategy will be.

In many cases, you may have a prior history with opponents from previous tournaments, particularly if you play many tournaments in the same region (such as Lee Nelson and Tony Dunst do in Australasia, which has a comparably small player base compared to Europe or North America). If you reach a stage where you become a tournament regular, keep in mind what kind of reputation precedes you to the table. With people you've played with before, keep in mind that dramatic hands will stand out in their memory more so than small ones. You might play fairly tight, but if one of the players on the table has seen you caught out in a couple of large bluffs you've

run, he's likely to consider you far more aggressive than you actually are. The adjustment to make there is to play him straightforward and start value betting very thin against him.

Even if you're a total unknown to your table, keep in mind what kind of assumptions people will make based on your age, style of dress, the way you handle your chips, and the other aesthetic details we discuss in Chapter 4 on hand reading. If Lee Nelson (who's in his 60s) and Tony Dunst (who's in his 20s) sit down at a table together where neither of them is known by any players, Lee is able to get away with far more aggression before people adjust than Tony can, because of the assumptions people make about players of Lee's age.

2

The Metagame

The metagame is an increasingly important aspect of the modern game. As conceptually illustrated in Chapter 1, the metagame is the psychological game that exists among players, involving adjustments and counter-adjustments based on how an opponent is likely to interpret a given set of actions. Better players adjust their strategies and styles to those of particular opponents, always analyzing how the opponents are playing in terms of how the opponents *believe* they're playing. Sklansky and Miller sum up the metagame as “trading small mistakes for bigger ones from your opponents.”

Maintaining a well-balanced strategy, while deciphering your opponents' strategies, is key to the metagame. If you comprehend the concept of the metagame, accurately perceive the flow of your table and the tournament, and stay alert to and aware of current strategy trends, you'll be able to successfully mix up your play when considering your image and that of your opponents. In return, your game will be highly unpredictable and difficult to read, which should be your ultimate goal.

A Perfect Example

A recent World Championship of Online Poker (WCOOP) tournament provides an excellent look at the metagame.

Lee drew a table that stayed intact for many hours and included Team Pokerstars pros Juan Maceiras on his immediate right and WSOP Main Event winner Joe Cada seated next to Juan. All three

had been involved in a number of hands characterized by aggressive play. After about five hours, with blinds and antes of 150/300/40, the following hand came up.

It was passed around to Cada in the hijack; he made his standard raise to 750 off a stack of 22,600. Maceiras 3-bet to 2,100 off a stack of 19,500 from the cutoff, then it was folded around to Cada who 4-bet to 5,700. Juan then 5-bet to 9,300 and Joe insta-6-bet shoved! Maceiras tanked, then called.

Cada held 99. Maceiras had A8o (getting about 3-to-1, Juan was priced in and had to call).

This leveling war typifies the aggression that's becoming common in online tournaments. As Cada said after the hand, "You don't think he was playing me, do you?" Lee commented that Maceiras was obviously playing the player.

Maceiras lost the hand and was eliminated.

About an hour or so later with blinds and antes at 250/500/60, it was passed around to Cada in late position and he raised to 1,350 off a stack of 40,000. Lee 3-bet to 3,000 (from 22,700) and Cada 4-bet to 6,250. Lee 5-bet to 10,000 and Joe 6-bet all-in. Lee called.

Cada held JJ. Lee had AA.

From a metagame perspective, this betting sequence almost exactly paralleled the prior 6-bet hand that Cada had won, which may have made Cada suspicious because it *should* have been indicative of extreme strength, but could easily be the leveling war again, because of this very factor. Since the sequence is meant to indicate extreme strength, and given the earlier precedent, this might be an ideal spot for Lee to 5-bet light. With JJ, Cada decided to shove, this time to his detriment.

Online Versus Live

The metagame is very different live and online. Betting sequences such as these are more common online than live. In most cases live, a sequence such as this would table AA versus KK. This fact also

plays directly into the online metagame, where representing AA or KK seems to be happening with ever-increasing frequency.

An example is Joe Cada at the WSOP Main Event final table 2009. The game is 3-handed. Joe Cada, with 39 BB, raises from the SB with 22. Antoine Saout, with 80 BB, 3-bets with QQ from the BB. Cada moves all-in fairly quickly. Regardless of the fact that Cada flopped a set, he later said that he considered his move to be “standard,” which to us means that it was “standard” for Joe Cada’s online strategy.

Earlier, when play was still 9-handed at the same table, Phil Ivey folded JJ to a re-raise from Antoine Saout (who held 77). Again, this fold probably wouldn’t have been “standard” online.

In short, the metagame and table flow are constantly changing and evolving, even throughout any given tournament. It brings to mind a quote I like to think I invented that nicely sums it up: “In poker, there’s never an always.” And Tysen has a similarly themed statement: “Every poker rule has its exception—even this one.”

Styles of Play

Tournaments are played so differently now than they were several years ago that they’re almost a different game. The loose-aggressive style and hyper-LAG styles are very effective. Experts in these styles of play also demonstrate good judgment, exercise pot control, stay aware of stack sizes, and alter their play accordingly. They also mix their game up to remain unpredictable. Tough!

Maniacs carry these styles to an extreme, but there’s a fine line between the hyper-LAG and the maniac, the difference being a modicum of judgment. While there have always been maniacs in poker, they now seem to be appearing in record numbers, much like a contagious disease. This extremely high-variance style is suboptimal, but one must be careful not to get swept away in the onslaught.

Loose-Aggressive

A loose-aggressive player plays a very wide range of starting hands, which makes him unpredictable. Unpredictability is definitely one of the key strengths of the LAG style, since the player can hold any two cards at any time.

LAG players also have a higher-than-average bluffing frequency. Since they play so many marginal and bad hands that will often miss the flop, they must bluff a lot in order to take down pots without a showdown. Fold equity is a big part of their game.

Hyper-LAG

Hyper-LAG players play even more hands than LAG players, and tend to show even more aggression. Their 3-betting and calling frequencies are extremely high.

Very often hyper-LAG bluffs need to be substantial and on multiple streets, since their image is usually poor and opponents tend not to believe them. However, the fact that they can have any two cards and are capable of putting their opponents under a lot of pressure works in their favor.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to follow a prototypical hyper-LAG, the Dutch player Lex “Raszi” Veldhuis, and his action in the early stages of the 2009 WSOP Main Event. Lex draws a tough table, including Alan Cunningham and Eli Elezra, but immediately goes to work. With blinds at 100/200 and all players deep-stacked, Eli raises to 600 with pocket 4s and Raszi immediately takes control of the hand by 3-betting to 2,300 from the SB with 97o, then leading for 3,300 on a flop of A-6-5 rainbow and getting Eli to fold; he shows the bluff.

Shortly thereafter at the same blind level, Raszi raises to 600 from middle position with KJo; Simon Muenz, a 22-year-old-German player, calls with 7♥6♥ IP. The flop is T♣-7♠-6♣. Muenz bets 1,100 and Veldhuis raises to 5,000! Muenz calls. The turn: Q♣.

This turn card gives Raszi an open-ended straight draw, but puts a possible flush on the board (although neither player has a club).

Raszi bets 6,800; Muenz tanks a bit and calls. The river: 4♣!

With four clubs now on board, Veldhuis leads for 7,000, a bluff designed to look like a value bet with a big flush. Not holding a club, Muenz folds his winning two pair. Again, Veldhuis shows the bluff!

At the next blind level, Veldhuis is after Muenz again. Muenz raises with T♠T♥ and Raszi calls IP with K♠6♠; Cunningham also calls in late position with AJo. The flop is 4♠-3♥-2♥. Muenz checks, Raszi bets 2,300, Cunningham folds, and Muenz calls. The turn: 9♥. Muenz checks, Raszi bets 6,300, Muenz calls. The river: A♠.

Muenz checks again and Raszi announces, “All-in!” He has Muenz well-covered. Muenz tanks and folds. Raszi again shows the bluff!

This sets the stage for an amazing hand. A new arrival raises to 1,050 with blinds still at 150/300. Elezra calls with KTo and Raszi squeezes with K♠4♠, 3-betting to 4,000. Muenz, apparently having enough of Velhuis, moves in over the top for 18,800 with 7♥6♥; it’s folded around to Velhuis, who weighs things up. Having plenty of chips and given his history with Muenz, getting 1.7-to-1 and probably not wanting to taint his image by backing down, Raszi makes the call—and wins!

The hyper-LAG style requires extremely high-variance play. It’s crucial for players of this style to pick their spots really well.

Maniac

The new breed of young Korean players is truly maniacal. Of course, there are maniacs in every country; Korea, however, seems to spawn them in schools!

Some of these players may 3-bet you with any hand and from any position. It makes it very difficult to play against them, especially when they have a big stack. They’re fearless and they don’t like folding. They may 5-bet all-in light at an early stage of a tournament.

Players who can 5-bet all-in at the early stages with QT have substantial fear and fold equity and are sometimes able to accumulate mountains of chips early on. However, this strategy can also

backfire when they get caught. Usually, if they miss one big bluff early, they get knocked out of the tournament pretty quickly.

The difference between a hyper-LAG and a maniac is often judgment. Playing against them, you need to pick your spots well. Maniacs seldom fold or give up when engaged in bluffs. They're usually the easiest type to trap, as compared to the LAG and hyper-LAG.

Maniacs also tend to be unable to change gears and slow down as the tournament progresses and therefore don't last very long. It's important to note that good hyper-LAG players are, on the other hand, capable of playing the maniac style at times, but can also slow down and go back to more plain LAG play, depending on the tournament phases.

Advantages

Unpredictability. Unpredictability gives the hyper-LAG player credibility for making aggressive plays at any point. Because they play so aggressively, they can take control of the hand on many different boards.

For example, if any 6 or 7 on the river will complete a straight, they'll most often try to represent that they're holding that card. Since it's totally plausible that they indeed hold that card, and since their opponents may be crippled if they call and lose, hyper-LAGs put other players to a high-risk guess. Many players back down and fold, aware that there may be better spots to get their chips in.

Constantly putting opponents to a guess. Opponents are mostly reluctant to play against hyper-LAGs, because they know it'll often be for a big pot and come along with tough decisions.

Before antes. Against old-school players who only play big pots with big hands, the hyper-LAG strategy is extremely exploitive and profitable, especially early on in tournaments.

With antes. Hyper-LAGs accumulate a lot of chips once antes start, due to their high frequency of pre-flop raises, many of which

go unchallenged, because other players may try to avoid them. However, as stacks get shallower, hyper-LAGs usually have less and less room to maneuver. Indeed, stacks are better suited for all-in moves on the flop or the turn, and pre-flop, which definitely takes away a part of the ability to bully opponents with a hyper-aggressive style.

How to Use the Hyper-LAG Style

As long as opponents let you steal, keep doing it!

Always be aware that you're walking a fine line, and that any bluff can end up costing you a lot of chips.

It's important to distinguish the line between hyper-LAG and maniac and not fall into the wrong category by being overly aggressive. Maniacs will eventually get trapped and be out of the tournament.

Variance is the key factor in the hyper-LAG style. If you elect to use this style, your play will be high variance. However, there are some things you can do to try to control variance whenever applicable. Bluffs and the ability to use scare cards to your advantage are a critical component of the hyper-LAG style. However, even when you bluff appropriately, there's always a chance your opponent may actually have a hand, so you'll have to risk a lot of chips in almost every hand you play.

Eventually, opponents will play back at you and you'll have to be ready to 5-bet with hands that are much less than premium, as seen in earlier examples.

Personally, I'm more in favor of a balanced loose-aggressive style than a full-fledged hyper-LAG strategy. If you steal only once in a while, as opposed to systematically, it will take more time for your opponents to figure out what you're doing, and stealing may actually be a little easier, because opponents won't come over the top too often. To play an effective hyper-LAG style, you'll also need to be able to change gears at different tournament stages.