

# About the Authors

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## **Chris Moorman**

After getting his start as a pool and bridge competitor, Chris Moorman moved his analytical strengths to the poker table and has since become one of the most successful players in the game. Chris, known as Moorman1 online, now sits as the most accomplished online poker player of all time, becoming the first player ever to achieve the \$10 million milestone in lifetime online tournament winnings. Chris has also been recently ranked the #1 online player in the world and the all time PocketFives Triple Crown leader with an astounding 23 wins, more than double that of his closest rival.

Chris has transcended from online poker to live poker easily with huge success there as well. To date, he has over \$11.5 million online earnings, has been ranked in the Global Poker Index Top 10, and achieved \$4 million in live tournament winnings, with his latest victory notched up at the 2014 WPT LA Poker Classic where he pocketed \$1,015,000 in winnings.

Chris has been featured on televised final tables at the World Series of Poker Europe, European Poker Tour and World Poker Tour as well as the Aussie Millions. Additionally, Chris was invited to participate in the prestigious NBC National Heads-Up Poker Championship in 2013.

## **Byron Jacobs**

Byron, as with a lot of poker players these days, has a background in chess, where he holds the title of international master. He started playing poker seriously in 2002, concentrating on Limit Hold'Em. He works full time running publishing companies so doesn't play professionally, but has always put a lot of time and energy into playing, studying and writing about poker. He has written two books on Limit and has also been employed as a writer, coach and video producer for Limit by pokerstrategy.com. He has also written for twoplustwo.com and *Card Player Magazine*.

Since 2010 he has played less poker, giving up Limit in order to focus on tournament play. He has played mainly around the \$50 buy-in level where he has been moderately successful.

# MOORMAN'S BOOK OF POKER

**CHRIS  
MOORMAN**  
with  
**BYRON  
JACOBS**  
*foreword by*  
**DOYLE BRUNSON**



POKER SERIES

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# The Structure of the Book

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All of the hands in this book are taken from various tournaments that I (Byron Jacobs) have played over the last 18 months. The majority have buy-ins of approximately \$50, with the exception of the PokerStars Supernova Freeroll which (although having no entry fee) plays like a \$200 buy-in event. I have tried to choose hands from tournaments with a variety of different structures, both in terms of the format as well as the rapidity of the blind increases. As well as “normal” tournaments, there are turbos, super-turbos, hypers, 6-Max and “Rush” tournaments.

In some of the tournaments I bust out quite early, but there are others in which I either win the event or, at least, make the final table. This provides a good variety of hands, ranging from early deep stack play and bubble play through to final table short stack play. I have, in general, avoided hands where the effective stack size is less than 15BB since, at these stack depths, the play becomes quite mathematical, and the “correct” decisions can usually be generated by a number of different software programs.

The hands are grouped together from particular events since, occasionally, the commentary refers back to the play of a previous hand. Before each collection of hands there is a brief explanation of the tournament structure. Obviously the format of the tournament is of great im-



portance in determining the most successful ways to play the hands. In particular, the faster structures (especially those that introduce an ante early on) require more aggressive stealing and re-stealing, consequently leading to wider postflop ranges.

I have also tried to select a variety of hands that demonstrate the great range of problems that need to be solved at the poker table. They vary from quite straightforward, "standard" heads-up spots, to unusual multi-way situations.

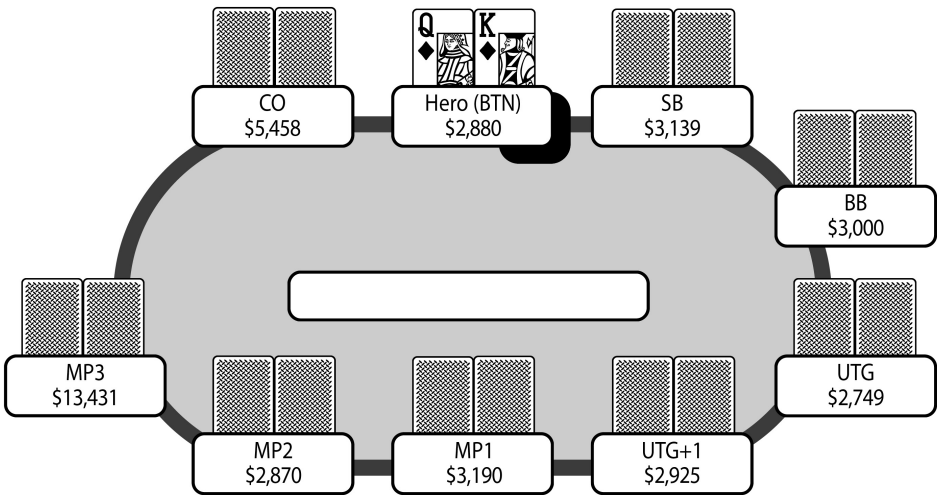
The discussion of all the hands is structured in the same way. The play of the hand is given, and then I provide my own commentary and thoughts – including any reads on the table dynamics and the other players. I also articulate my thoughts about my own play and that of the Villains. Chris critiques the play and the analysis and gives his own take on the lines chosen, indicating what he considers to be the optimal lines. Finally, I provide a short conclusion, identifying what seems to me to be the key lesson of the hand.

We think that this structure works very well and is highly instructive. The vast majority of serious and semi-serious tournament poker players will be competing near this level and will probably have thinking processes similar to mine. It is enlightening to see where this kind of thinking works well, but also to identify situations where it proves wanting.

I have found it fascinating that in almost every hand in this book (probably 90 percent or more), Chris finds a better line than the one I actually chose, and clearly explains the concepts that make the play preferable. Occasionally, it is a completely different approach but, more often, it is a case of fine-tuning, such as finding a more accurate bet size or raise size. Understanding these ideas is absolutely fundamental to improvement, since long-term success in poker is based on the accumulation of small edges. There is no better player than Chris Moorman for demonstrating where those edges can be found.

## Hand 67: Playing Top Pair Multi-way

**Game:** PokerStars \$40 Turbo, March 2014  
**Hand:** Q♦-K♦  
**Position:** BTN  
**Players:** 9  
**Blinds/ante:** 30/60



**Preflop:** Hero is BTN with Q♦-K♦

6 folds, Hero raises to 150, SB calls 120, BB calls 90

**Flop:** (450) Q♣-10♥-4♥ (3 players)

SB checks, BB bets 252, Hero raises to 600, SB calls 600, BB calls 348

**Turn:** (2,250) Q♣-10♥-4♥-7♠ (3 players)

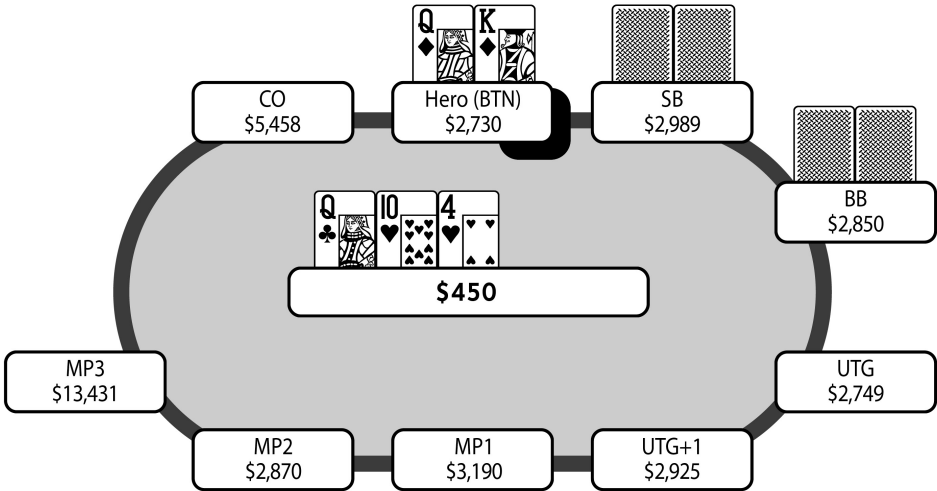
SB checks, BB checks, Hero bets 2,130 and is all-in, SB calls 2,130, BB calls 2,130

**River:** (8,640) Q♣-10♥-4♥-7♠-3♥ (3 players, 1 is all-in)

SB bets 180, BB folds

## Byron

This hand is from very early on in \$40 turbo event at PokerStars. I am on the button playing a 50BB stack and open to 2.5x with  $K\heartsuit-Q\heartsuit$ . Both of the blinds call. The flop comes down  $Q\clubsuit-10\heartsuit-4\heartsuit$  giving me top pair, second kicker.



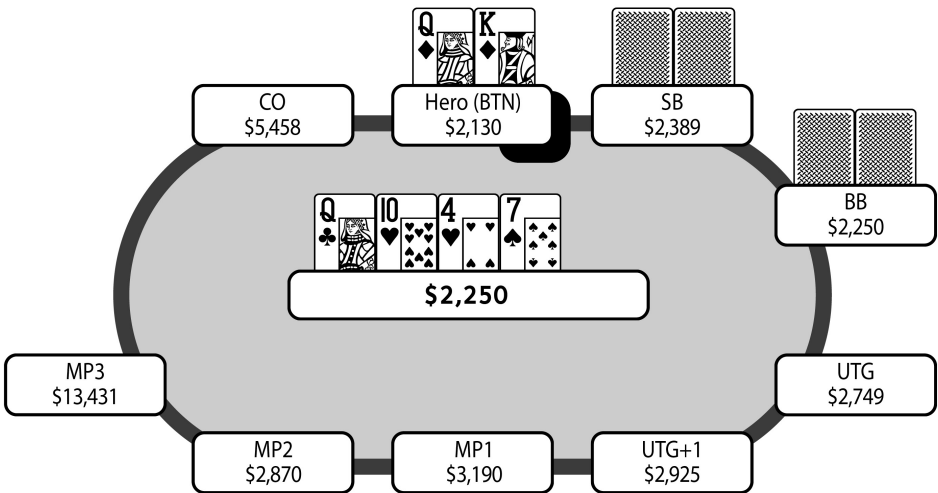
The small blind checks, and then the big blind unexpectedly donks out for close to half pot.

The first job now is to put the big blind on a range. In general when players donk out in situations such as this they either have a moderate made hand or some kind of draw. They rarely (although strong players will have this weapon) show up with a monster. So here, I would put the big blind on any kind of draw (open-ended straight draw or flush) or a made hand that is weaker than mine, e.g.  $Q-9$ ,  $J-10$ ,  $10-9$  etc. I don't put him on hands like sets or  $Q-10$ . Since I am very likely ahead here, and the board is wet ( $Q-10$  combo and two hearts) I want to raise, which will also prevent the small blind from getting the right odds to call with all kinds of weak draws.

I decide to raise his 252 to 600, since I want to keep his weak made hands in. Assuming the small blind folds I will then be playing heads-up in position against a player whose range seems fairly clear. The small blind now thinks for a while and eventually calls, putting in around 20 percent

of his stack. This looks very much like a decent drawing hand (most likely a flush draw, possibly with a gutshot and/or overcards), since if he had a strong made hand I would expect him to raise or shove with the board being rather wet and both the big blind and me possibly having drawing hands. The small blind is getting a decent price to call with a good drawing hand. The big blind also calls.

The turn completely blanks, as no flush or straight draw has got there and it is hard to imagine that the 7 has completed a two pair hand.



Both the blinds check, and we all have approximately one pot-sized bet remaining. It seems to me that it is likely I am ahead here since I have the big blind's range as weak made hands and draws, and the small blind appears highly likely to have a drawing hand. I decide to shove, making essentially a pot-sized bet. I don't want to check since drawing hands figure heavily in the Villains' ranges and it's not clear how I can usefully size a smaller bet. Something like 600-800 just gives the Villains the right price to call with draws and much more pretty much pot commits me anyway. So I shove and, unfortunately, the small blind calls instantly. After some thought the big blind also calls.

There is actually some play left on the river, since both Villains had me slightly covered and now have micro-stacks. The flush gets there on the river and, when the small blind makes a tiny bet, the big blind folds despite

getting incredible odds to call. The small blind shows up with K-K.

I am annoyed at myself for busting out a 50BB stack with “only” top pair but am not sure if I misplayed this hand or not. It seems to me that the small blind took a big risk by not reraising or shoving on the flop since he potentially allowed strong drawing hands to see two “free” cards (I could have checked behind on the turn). However had the small blind shoved the flop I would have folded since this play (after a donk and a raise from the preflop raiser) just looks too strong.

## **Chris**

The results of this hand feel spewy; you stacked off for 50BB with just top pair and second kicker in a three-way pot. However, you played this hand optimally and were just unfortunate. Flatting the flop lead is okay, although raising is better on such a wet board in a three-way pot. The small blind will likely connect with this board in some way, even if it is as little as a gutshot. We don't want to flat the flop lead here and give him the right price to outdraw us. Also, three ways, there are a ton of bad turn cards, whereas in a heads-up pot a lot of those same turn cards actually strengthen our hand.

It's a bit scary when the small blind cold-calls 600 on the flop, because he is representing a monster hand, strong draw or sticky top pair. We have most top pairs beat, other than A-Q, which may decide to three-bet preflop. Also, it seems incredibly dangerous and sub-optimal to slow-play on this board when it is likely to go three-ways to the turn, out of position to both players with so many chips already in the pot relative to the average stack size of the players involved. Therefore, when the SB cold-calls the 600, I think he is likely to have a similar hand to you, or something like J♥-8♥ hearts.

The turn card is safe enough for your hand, and you have less than a pot-sized bet left. Your only option is to protect your hand by jamming when checked to. Many river cards will put you in an awful spot three-ways. Also, it is still possible that some worse made hands and big draws will call. Taking down the pot on the turn is huge for your stack, and if you

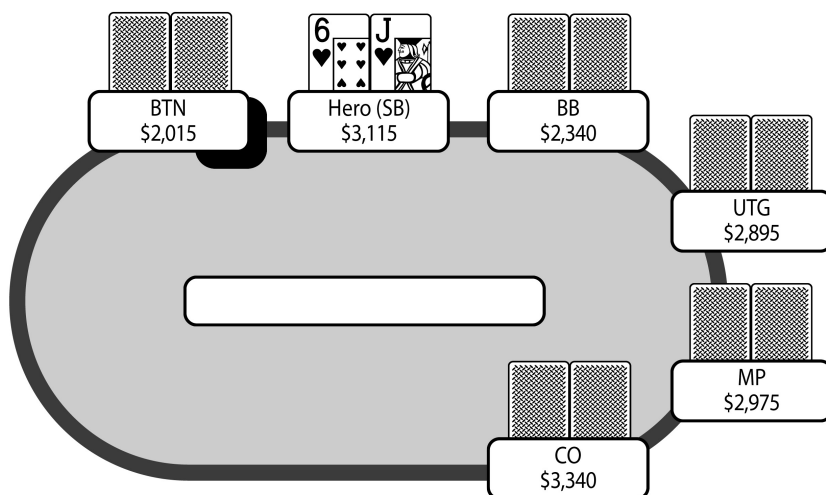
are somehow beat in this spot, there is nothing you can do about it. It feels spewy to stack off here, but the way the hand played out, you had no other option.

## **Conclusion**

When this hand concluded, I felt sure I must have misplayed it. Even when I looked through it afterwards and couldn't see anything particularly wrong, I still thought I must have gone wrong somewhere to bust out a 50BB stack in this way. However, avoiding being results-oriented also means realizing that sometimes you played okay when you lost, rather than always thinking that you played okay when you won.

## Hand 78: Generating Fold Equity

**Game:** PokerStars \$25 Turbo 6-Max, February 2014  
**Hand:** 6♥-J♥  
**Position:** SB  
**Players:** 6  
**Blinds/ante:** 60/120-25



**Preflop:** Hero is SB with 6♥-J♥

UTG calls 120, 3 folds, Hero completes, BB checks

**Flop:** (510) 4♥-6♠-8♦ (3 players)

Hero bets 204, BB calls 204, UTG folds

**Turn:** (918) 4♥-6♠-8♦-A♥ (2 players)

Hero checks, BB checks

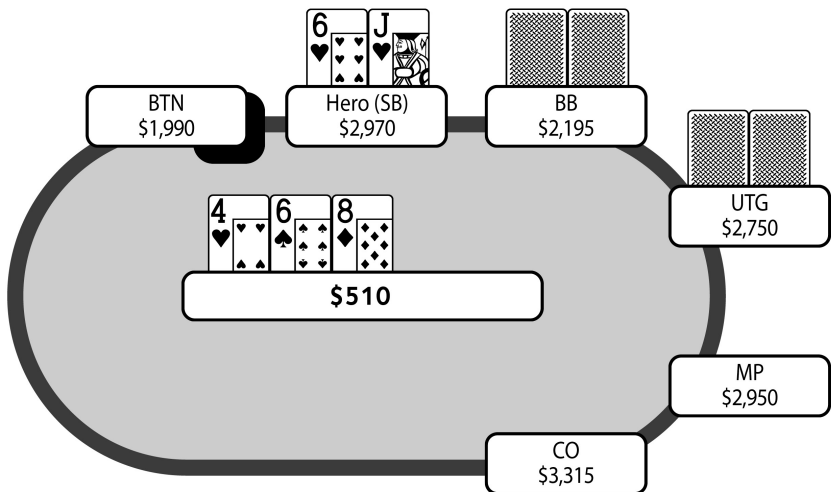
**River:** (918) 4♥-6♠-8♦-A♥-9♥ (2 players)

Hero bets 400, BB folds

## Byron

We are playing with blinds/antes of 60-120-25. On my six-player table the stacks are (more or less) between 2K and 3K creating an effective stack size of around 18-25BB. UTG limps, and the action is folded round to me in the small blind, where I have 6♥-J♥. Clearly, this is a fairly junky hand, but it is suited, the big blind has a completely random holding and I'm getting odds of 7.5-to-1 to call. These odds prove too compelling so I stick 60 chips in, the big blind checks and we see the flop.

The flop comes 4♥-6♠-8♦. This is a pretty good flop, giving me middle pair with a decent kicker.



I decide to lead out, a play which looks fine to me for a couple of reasons. If I check and there is a subsequent bet, I'll want to call but won't have any idea at all where I stand. Also, if the hand is checked around it will become much harder for me to win the hand since many (in fact, most) turn cards are bad for my hand. There is 510 in the pot with an effective stack of 2,200 or 2,700, relative to the two Villains. I don't really want to risk too many chips and so lead out for 204 which is 40 percent of the pot. Ideally, I want both Villains to fold at once and I don't think a slightly larger half pot bet will have any effect on their flop decisions. I don't think that leading out here is a problem in terms of being balanced because I will also lead out here with very strong hands such as straights,



two pair hands and good draws like 9-7.

The big blind calls quickly and UTG folds. I think the big blind should have a fairly wide range of marginal hands for this play – stuff like 6-x, 4-x, draws like 10-9, 10-7 (double gutshot) etc. I doubt he has a very strong hand, as I'd expect him to raise with these. I'd certainly expect him to raise a hand such as 9-8 or better but in these low buy-in events, you can never be sure. The turn brings 4♥-6♠-8♦-A♥, generating some extra equity for me with a flush draw. The pot stands at 918, and we are playing with an effective stack of slightly under 2,000. Now I am not sure what to do.

I'd like to bet, but the stack sizes are awkward. If I bet about half pot and he shoves, I'll have to fold, wasting the equity I have with the flush draw. If we were a lot deeper, I'd be happy to bet, since if he raised I could call, and have excellent implied odds on the river if the backdoor flush came in. I am also not sure what to do if I bet and he simply calls. If I don't improve on the river, I won't really want to bet with what might be fourth pair, check-calling won't be attractive and check-folding means that sometimes I will get bluffed off my hand.

It's also not clear to me what line I should take if the ace on the turn did not generate a flush draw. I would be more inclined to bet since if I then got raised I would be wasting far less equity.

I, therefore, decide to check, planning to check-call, assuming the big blind bets something in the region of half pot. However, the big blind checks, suggesting that he has some kind of drawing hand. If he had a marginal made hand I think a half pot bet, planning to check behind a lot of rivers would be a reasonable line. The river brings 4♥-6♠-8♦-A♥-9♥, completing the backdoor flush. There is still 918 in the pot and we're playing with 2,000 behind.

I now have to choose between betting and checking, hoping to induce. If the river had been the 2♥, I'd be more likely to check since this card is unhelpful to the Villain's range, so I'd like to give him the chance to bluff. However, it seems to me that the nine might well have improved a drawing hand so I decide to bet a fairly modest 400, since then he'll almost

certainly call with a hand like 10-9 or 9-7. The Villain actually folds fairly quickly to this bet.

## **Chris**

After the initial limp UTG, you have a very easy complete in the small blind, getting great odds and almost closing the action. The big blind is unlikely to raise or shove here, unless he has a premium hand because UTG could easily be trapping off a shallow stack.

The big blind checks and you see a 4♥-6♠-8♦ flop. I like your lead out here. Your hand isn't really strong enough to check-call out of position, but you likely have good equity with some potential to improve. By leading out, you generate some immediate fold equity and can improve on the turn or win the pot by barreling off on certain run-outs.

After you lead out, the big blind calls and UTG folds. The big blind saw the flop for free, and could therefore have literally anything that connects with this board. He could have flopped a "big blind special" with a hand like 7-5, and slow-played the flop to try to get UTG in behind. But with most of his good hands (all two pair combinations) I would expect him to raise to protect against a scare card like a 7 or 5 on the turn. If the big blind has a pair and a gutshot I would expect him to make a cheap call here, hoping to improve on the turn. I would range the big blind toward weakness on the flop when he just calls your lead-out.

The turn is an incredibly interesting A♥. This gives you a flush draw to go with your third pair. It probably didn't really help either player's hand, but it's a much better card for your range because it is essentially a brick for Villain, and you have more strong hands on the flop than does the big blind. For these reasons, I would continue to bet, even if it is annoying to have to bet-fold such a strong hand on the turn if Villain moves all-in. By betting three streets and ending up all-in by the river, you should get your opponent to fold most 8-x hands, and you also charge him to draw with his pairs and straight draws.

If the big blind calls your turn bet, there are obviously a few rivers on which I wouldn't jam all-in. Any 5, 7, 8 or ace would most likely be a

check-fold because I would expect to still have a decent amount of showdown value when my opponent checked behind, and these cards either make it tough to fold out better or improve your opponent's hand strength significantly.

## **Conclusion**

My inclination when picking up extra equity (such as here with the flush draw on the turn) is to ensure that I make some use of it. This is a reasonable aim, but it is still necessary to find the right line. In this particular instance it's better to use it to generate fold equity by c-betting the turn. The flip side is that you have to play bet-fold on the turn, but this potential disadvantage is outweighed by the equity gained by forcing out marginal hands.