

Something horrible and embarrassing happened at the tournament last night and I don't want to talk about it. But I have to, because I'm the host!

Let's start at the bottom. **Jeff** picked up in 2022 right where he left off in 2021, earning a coveted first out award. He lost to a 2-outer after flopping three of a kind, because he is Jeff. **Suzanne** earned her coveted Bubble Person award, losing the battle of the micro-stacks against **John**, who somehow sneaked into fourth place by surviving over 10 hands with about \$2.50 when the blinds were \$5/\$10. (You would think that would be the most impressive feat of cockroachery in the tournament, but you would be wrong. Hang on.) **Craig** earned his covered third place award, extending his streak of finishing in the money back to sometime around the Carter administration. (Reluctant fact check: OK, only John has finished in the money for both 2022 tournaments.)

Now, what happened to the final two participants would have been super interesting had the beneficiary been anyone other than one of the dastardly Avakians. But no, I (**Greg**) snatched defeat from the jaws of victory worse than I have ever seen in any gaming or sports contest. Worse than the Falcons choking away Super Bowl LI up 28-3. Worse than Greg Norman (must be the name) blowing a six-stroke lead in the 1996 Masters. Worst of all, it was to **Vampire Mike**.

As much as I would like to disappear from existence and never mention this tournament again (I tried this morning, but eventually my dogs forced me out of bed), a collapse of this magnitude requires explanation. The people demand answers! So, as best as I can, I will try to explain the unexplainable, and account for how I lost a tournament while up \$536.58 to \$3.42 when the blinds were \$10/\$20. Yes, you read that correctly.

Let's start with some numbers. As a general rule of thumb, your chances of winning a tournament are roughly proportional to the percentage of the total chips you have in your stack. So if you have 10% of the chips, your chances of winning the tournament are roughly 10%. When I had the \$536.58 to \$3.42 lead, I had a roughly 99.4% chance of winning. Wait, it gets worse. Let's examine what happened from that point, hand by hand:

- Hand #196: Because the blinds are \$10/\$20, Mike is forced all-in with \$3.42. I have him dominated with T8 against 84. Heading into the river, Mike is 6.82% to win and 11.36% to chop, which means I am roughly **99.9% to win the tournament**:



Mike hits his miracle 3-outer on the river to win and doubles up to \$6.84.

- Hand #197: Mike is forced all-in a second time. I have him dominated *again* with 85 against 54. Mike flops a straight and doubles up again to \$13.68.
- Hand #198: Mike is forced all-in a third time. I have 97 against AQS. Mike flops a flush and doubles up again to \$27.36.
- Hand #199: Mike is (effectively) forced all-in a fourth time. I have J4 against K8. Mike wins and doubles up again to \$64.72.

That is four forced all-ins in a row that Mike won, including the first two when he was dominated. But after all that, I was still leading \$475.28 to \$64.72 and was a commanding 88% to win the tournament. More shenanigans:

- Hand #204: I have A6 against K7, all-in preflop. Mike wins and doubles up to \$169.44.
- Hands #208-219: In the span of 12 hands, am dealt six great starting hands: KK, QTs, AT, AQ, A7s, and JJ. Mike folds preflop to all six of them. In contrast, I raise with three mediocre hands -- A2, T7s, and 96s -- and Mike re-raises all-in against all three of them. I wonder out loud if he can see my cards and turn off my camera.
- Hand #227: I have A6 against A8 and an ace hits on the flop. I am dominated, and no miracle card hits for me. Mike wins and doubles up again to \$478.88. He is now the favorite to win the tournament.
- Hand #228: The next hand, I have A7 against AJ, all-in preflop. I am dominated *again*, and again no miracle card. Mike wins the tournament.

So there you have it. How to lose a tournament when you're a 99.9% favorite to win! Tune in next week when I demonstrate other amazing feats, like how to drown in a cup of water and how to get electrocuted by a roll of paper towels.