

# Texas Hold'em Secrets

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## Can You Really Make A Living Playing Poker?

It's no secret.

Within the last 12 months, poker has literally EXPLODED into perhaps the world's fastest-growing hobby. Some people even say that poker is "America's New National Pastime." But unlike baseball, you can cash in on the new popularity of poker. That's right. YOU can make huge amounts of MOOLA by mastering the game of Texas Hold'em.

Every time I sit down to play, I meet a new player who saw the World Series of Poker and now thinks he is a real player. Lol.

Of course, I don't MIND these players giving me their money. With the newfound popularity of Hold'em, there are thousands of FISH out there, and by mastering Texas Hold'em, you can become a very happy SHARK.

But can you really make a LIVING from playing poker? Is the game really something that can pay your mortgage, car payment, electric bill, and keep food on the table?

Absolutely!

In fact, it also can pay your college tuition, pay off your loans, and give you the freedom you've always wanted, all while doing something you truly love and enjoy.

With the explosion of Texas Hold'em onto the world scene, I have been able to make a comfortable living using only my poker skills. I own my own car, consistently save for the future, have extra spending "dough," and I am looking to move to a new home...and I don't even have a "real" job.

Unfortunately, no matter how many "fish" there are, you are never going to make any money if you are one of them.

So, if you want to take advantage of this incredible opportunity and you want to start making big money playing poker, you are going to have to master the game of Texas Hold'em. Period.

Now, this doesn't mean that you should go out, buy a brand new Corvette, tell your boss where he can put his reports, empty your bank account, and hit the poker tables.

Texas Hold'em takes time and patience to master. But, the good news is, you can dramatically SHORTCUT your poker education. My e-book, "Texas Hold'em Secrets" is a complete "tell all" course of all my tips, tricks, and lessons about

Texas Hold'em poker, so that YOU can immediately get started on mastering the game and getting to the "next level."

The SECRET to Poker

Let me ask you something.

Have you ever played poker with someone who seemed to CONSISTENTLY catch lucky cards, time after time after time? I'm not talking about any luck. I'm talking about the kind of luck where your opponent flops a boat, gets dealt pocket rockets, catches a flush on the river and so on.

Have you ever found yourself wondering: "Jeez, he can't POSSIBLY catch another hand like that, it's simply statistically impossible!" Yet the luck CONTINUES, until he rakes in all the chips, and empties your pockets. And then you go home for the night. And you rationalize to yourself that the only reason you lost was because your opponent was LUCKY and that you just couldn't seem to catch any good cards. Am I right?

If you've ever been through this, you're not alone my friend. Far from it. Because THAT is exactly what poker is all about. If the odds played out the way they're "supposed to" every time, poker wouldn't be fun at all.

Indeed, over time, eventually the odds will "catch up" and "even out". If you caught a cold run of cards last night, you may get hot tonight. Then again, you may not. So, here's the million dollar question:

Is it possible to somehow "control" the unpredictable nature of poker odds?

I have the answer.

And here it is...

No! Of course not! Are you crazy?!

This is the mistake amateurs make. They catch some good cards, win a few times, and then think they're "poker naturals". Then, they watch Rounders; maybe buy a chip set and some "casino" cards and start fantasizing about making it to the final table of WSOP. THEN, these players catch a BAD streak of cards. They run into some bad beats. They get beat by other amateurs.

And you want to know what they do after that? THEY WHINE ABOUT BEING UNLUCKY! But they forget the cardinal rule. And that is, TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER IS NOT ABOUT LUCK!

This is so important, it's worth repeating: TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER IS NOT ABOUT LUCK! Got it?

Now, here is the REAL secret about Texas Hold'em poker:

Instead of thinking about odds and luck, you should be thinking about HOW YOU CAN LEVERAGE THE POKER ODDS AND LUCK IN YOUR FAVOR. Here's what I mean - I've broken it down into four categories.

I call these the "4 Stages of Momentum."

- Stage 1: HOT STREAK  
This is when you catch tons of great cards and "lucky" draws.
- Stage 2: CATCHING COLD  
This is when you keep getting "scraps" and bad draws.
- Stage 3: TILT  
This is when you start acting crazy and making poor decisions...usually because of a previous bad beat.
- Stage 4: READ MACHINE  
This is when you've got a fantastic read on your opponents and know what to play in each situation. (This, of course, is the stage you want to be in.)

Okay. Now, back to the secret.

When you're playing Hold'em, you WILL go through each of these 4 stages of momentum at different times. Sometimes you'll be hot. Sometimes you'll be cold. Sometimes you'll be on tilt. And sometimes you'll have a great read on the other players. And just as importantly, the OTHER PLAYERS at the table will each go through these 4 stages as well.

The secret is to learn how to CAPTIALIZE on these "natural" forces of momentum. When you catch a great streak of cards, be thankful for your good fortune and start PLAYING MORE AGGRESSIVELY.

This will keep the momentum on your side and put other players on TILT. Control the tempo and speed of the game and take on the characteristics of the "table leader". Other players will start saying, "Check to the better" and will give YOU the power in the game.

You'll get opportunities to see cheap flops when you're weak, and raise the prices when you're strong. THIS is how you get hot and STAY hot.

Now, what about when you start catching COLD cards? What then? Catching a cold streak of cards can quickly zap away your chip stack. To prevent this from happening, here's what you do:

First, be AWARE that the cold streak is happening. Become conscious of what's going on and notice which players at the table are hot. Then, (this is important), you must tighten up your playing style. Even though the odds are the same,

hands that you might play when you're HOT won't be the same as hands you should play when you're COLD.

I know this sounds strange, but stay with me here. Some players, when they get cold, start to loosen up their play, hoping to see more flops. Bad idea. Tighten up, only play your good hands, and wait for the tides of luck to change back in your favor.

And then there's TILT.

Tilt is the "cancer" of a poker player. If you go on tilt, just one bad decision can ultimately lead to your losing the game. Tilt creates a negative momentum that will lead you to lost pots and more bad luck. So how can you avoid tilt?

Well, since tilt is usually the result of a bad beat, you've got to BE AWARE OF YOUR BEHAVIOR after a bad beat. Personally, any time I get a bad beat, I instantly fold the next 5 hands or so (unless I've got a high pocket pair). It's kind of like taking a break. This gives me the chance to cool off and "restart" my thinking process.

The NATURAL behavior after a bad beat is to immediately start betting more aggressively, in hopes of winning back the chips you just lost. Of course, that will just hurt you further.

So when you feel "tilt" creeping into you, take a break and relax. Clear your mind and start to mount a comeback.

There's another element to all of this that I haven't mentioned much, and that's watching what stages the OTHER players are going through. When someone at the table gets HOT, what do you normally do?

Most players feel BITTER and start to play AGAINST the guy who keeps getting lucky. They want to beat him! Right? But, like we talked about earlier, the secret to poker is NOT trying to take things into your own hands. The secret is to LEVERAGE what's happening.

If someone else is hot, don't go up against them. Especially avoid trying to bluff them or going heads up for a big pot (unless you've got a monster). Instead of giving this lucky player a chance at winning your chips, MINIMIZE their luck.

Don't let them win too much. Make sense?

It's the same way with tilt. When you see someone on tilt, you DEFINITELY want to take advantage of the situation. Make a large pre-flop raise and try to go heads up with the guy on tilt. YOU want to be the one who wins all his chips. After all, he's on tilt, so there's a good chance he's going to make a stupid bet.

The secret is to BE THE ONE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS BAD BETS. Try to force him all in and win the rest of his stack. It's all about LEVERAGE, my friend.

So remember, the next time you play, here's how you can put into action what you've just learned:

- Know the 4 stages of momentum (good cards, bad cards, good reads, and tilt) and recognize what stage you're in at all times.

- Watch the other players at the table and know which stage of momentum THEY'RE in.

- LEVERAGE each stage accordingly. Don't go heads up against someone who's got luck on their side. Take a breather when you feel yourself going on tilt.

- Play tight when you've got a bad run of cards. And win as many chips as possible when luck is on YOUR side.

Try out these concepts and watch your poker profits go up dramatically. Of course, the 4 stages of momentum and the concept of leverage are just two small pieces of the puzzle.

### The Secret to Playing "Heads-Up" Poker

Everyone has a general strategy (whether it's conscious or not) that they use at an eight-man table. Some players are tight; some loose, and some simply jump from one strategy to another and keep their opponents guessing.

Well, we've been sending out newsletters for the last few months on the style of play that we feel will help improve your game. And I certainly hope our strategies and tactics have made you a stronger player. It seems as though most of our email list sees an improvement in their game.

However, I keep receiving questions on how to play heads-up. So hopefully this newsletter will help. Most players feel confident in their game until they play in their local tournament only to finish SECOND because heads-up is a completely different game. This seems to be where a lot of players find a flaw in their game.

So here is an example of a solid heads-up strategy:

You've got the button and are dealt a 5-6 of spades. The blinds in the tourney are \$200-400 and you make it \$800 to play. Why?

Because you can't just raise with your big hands. You have to mix up your play and raise with a wide variety of hands. Just be smart about it and use your positioning to your advantage.

Drew calls and the flop hits A, 9, 3, with no spades. He is 1st to act after the flop and checks.

OK, now there is no doubt that we have to fire another bet and represent the ace on the board. We're sitting on \$30,000 in chips and decide to make a bet that isn't going to hurt our stack too much.

We throw out a \$1000 bet and Drew mucks his hand immediately. We flip over our 5-6 for him to see. You do this for a few reasons. First, Drew could be the type of player that will play on tilt when he knows that he has been bluffed. Hopefully he is. Second, we will get calls with our REAL hands now that Drew knows that we are a bluffer. Finally, were sending a message to Drew that this is OUR GAME and that we are going to control the action.

Just make sure you don't hurt your stack too much when you get caught on one of these bluffs. Even if you do get caught, don't be afraid of showing it. It will pay off later.

A few hands go by and we're the big-blind and dealt pocket 7's. Drew limps-in and we throw out a \$1000 bet that Drew quickly calls. You can sense that he may be a bit frustrated with your aggressive style of play. The flop hits A73 and we are 1st to act.

Do we slow-play the hand and hope that Drew throws out a bet? No, we actually want to make a bet that makes it LOOK as though we are trying to buy the pot, so we throw out a \$3000 bet.

We know that our bluff is still on Drew's mind. Plus, he called our pre-flop raise so there is a good chance that he is holding an ace in his hand. Hopefully he is.

The hand plays out and you rake a large pot by betting the entire time. Drew called every bet because he felt like you were bullying him. Again, this was SET UP from the bluff that we showed a few hands earlier.

Drew wins the next few pots and we're dealt a 9-10 of diamonds. We've got the button again so you make a \$1000 pre-flop raise. Do we want Drew to call here?

Who cares, 9-10 of diamonds isn't a bad hand. You may catch a good flop or may steal another after the flop.

Drew actually goes over the top for \$5000 more. We think for a while with no intention of calling the raise. We just want to make Drew sweat a bit. Finally we throw over our cards and say, "I can't call, I've just got suited connectors."

Once again, this lets Drew know that we will raise with a VARIETY of hands. Now Drew is steaming. He was probably holding a monster like kings or aces and expected our aggressive play to call his raise. Nope, we are not aggressive.

We are aggressively SMART.

We know when to muck a hand and when to play a hand.

The very next hand we're dealt pocket queens. Drew simply calls the small blind and the action is on us. We make a \$3000 pre-flop raise that we are sure Drew will call.

This is where our 9-10 and 5-6 moves pay off. We are going to get a call out of Drew with a mediocre hand. He calls and the flop hits J,9,3. The hand plays out and we rake a very large pot.

A few hands later we look down to see a monster. Pocket aces. Drew calls the small blind and the action is on us. We pound our fist against the table to check.

This isn't a bad strategy in a heads-up game. Your chances of being ran-down is greatly reduced with just the 2 of you. Plus, we have been playing rather aggressively and want to show weakness here.

The flop hits 9,2,K and Drew feels as though he has the upper-hand with his 9-10. He throws out a \$1000 bet that we call. The turn is a 3, which doesn't put anything scary on the board. There isn't really a draw out there. Drew is 1st to act again and throws out a \$2000 bet. We simply call.

We feel as though we have the best hand and are going to let Drew fire away. The river card is an ace, which gives us our trips.

Drew fires a \$5000 bet at us. We think for a while and then announce that we are going to raise. "I'm all in" as we push our entire stack into the middle. We feel as though Drew will call this because he has half of his chips invested already. Plus, it looks as though we are bullying again.

The rest is history.

Drew is so far off his game right now that it's like taking candy from a baby.

THAT, my friend, is how you have to play heads-up poker.

Mix up your style of play and try to frustrate your opponent. The best phrase for it is PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. You will find that it will throw them off their game and it will benefit you. Give the strategy a try and let me know if it works for you.

### Master These Laws of Lucky Draws

Have you ever faced a situation where you needed just ONE MORE CARD to complete a MONSTER hand?

Would you like to know PROVEN, time-tested methods that will allow you to complete those "monster" hands more often?

And how to suck the MOST money out of your opponents when you catch these cards?

If so, this can set you on the path to LAUNCHING your poker game to a brand new level.

If you've ever invested any serious money into a pot, when a draw busts, it feels like you just got kicked in the "nuts" (pun intended.)

I can't tell you how many times people have approached me to tell me that I am the LUCKIEST person in the world, and how I must have SOLD MY SOUL to the poker devils just to catch so many good cards.

I just laugh.

There have been countless hands when I had the nut flush draw or open-ended straight draw, only to watch my hand go to the gutter. However, what SEPARATES me from the players who insist it's "luck" is the fact that when I get LUCKY I cash out.

And when I DON'T, I get out of the hand without losing many chips. To get a good idea of your chances of catching a good draw, you need to know the odds of getting a "make card."

(For those of you don't know, a "make card" is a card that basically COMPLETES a hand. Example: If you had 7, 8, 10, J the "make card" would be a 9.)

If you flop an open-ended straight draw, there are 8 cards in the deck that can give you your straight. An inside straight draw has only four "make cards," and a flush draw can be completed with 9 different cards in the deck.

This means that you can invest more money into open-ended straight draws and flush draws than you can "belly-buster" draws. (Belly-buster = inside straight)

This may seem obvious, but there are many players who chase inside straight draws and end up wasting their chips in the process. Remember that when you are on a straight or a flush draw, odds are that you will NOT complete it. So you don't want to invest too many chips on the outside chance that you'll get lucky.

When I am in this kind of situation, I always want to get as many cheap cards as possible. Let's say that you flop a nut-flush draw and the action checks around to you. At this point, you don't know what anyone has. Some players would make a strong bet in this situation to buy the pot. This is a bad idea because when you are in this position, you need to see more cards in order to have a hand worth betting on.

If you make a strong bet, you may find that one or more of the players were slow-playing their cards. Now, a player with a solid hand makes a considerable raise over your bet. Everyone else folds, but you decide to see another card with your flush draw.

The turn doesn't help out at all. Now, your opponent makes an even larger bet than before. You can either fold and cut your losses or call the big bet with the roughly 20% chance you will catch a card. Neither option is very appealing.

If you call and the river still doesn't complete your hand, you are faced with the same situation. Some players will make huge bets and raises to try to buy their way out of a busted draw.

This can work, but often your opponents will not be scared out by a large bet on the river unless you have been playing aggressively the entire hand. Now, look back at your option to check before the turn card. If you checked, you get to see the turn for free. You put no money in the pot, and you discover that the turn wasn't going to help.

This time when your opponent makes a big bet after the turn, you see that the odds of catching a make card don't merit a call, so you fold the hand without losing many chips.

The difference between checking and betting before the flop means the difference between getting out of a bad situation without losing many chips or getting pot-committed and going home early. Any time that you are looking for another card to complete your hand; you should always be looking for cheap cards.

Warning: Some players think that they need to bet BIG to build up the pot when they are on a draw so they can "make bank" when they catch their cards.

However, if the cost is \$40, there will usually only be 2 players in the pot which equals an \$80 pot.

This is only a difference of \$20 in pot size, but it saves YOU \$30 right away. Plus, you can always raise the pot after/if you complete the hand. Learning to play hands when you need a make card is NOT EASY. But I'll tell you, it's really what separates the FISH from the SHARKS.

And learning this one skill can help you win a LOT more tournaments and poker games. When you learn techniques and strategies like this, people will start approaching YOU and saying, "Hey, how do you get so lucky at the card table?"

### Keep Your Opponents Guessing Blindly

From the second that you sit down at a table, your opponents will be sizing you up. They will analyze your moves, dissect your bets, and look for your tells. If you want to have any sustained success playing poker, you must learn how to AVOID giving off these signals. Period.

To do this, you must cloak your movements and disguise your activities. You must also learn how to FORCE other players to fold, even when they "know" they have the best hand. Make other players "out-think" themselves by staying

unpredictable. These are 5 KEY strategies that you MUST employ at the poker table every time you play.

These methods have been developed and refined over my 13-year poker career, and if you use them properly, you will become virtually "unreadable."

#### STRATEGY #1: Vary Your Bets

I cannot believe the number of players who want to use the same bet structure over and over again. If you want to be unpredictable, you must vary your betting and raising patterns as much as possible.

Imagine you are sitting at a table where a player gets stuck in the same betting patterns. Now, let's say that he is dealt a large pocket pair. He leads out with a large bet, exactly as he did in the past. Now you have a great read on him.

This kind of read can easily prevent you from losing a stack of your chips. It can also keep you from getting any callers on YOUR good hands, and too many callers on your bad ones.

#### STRATEGY #2: Keep Players Out Of Hands

The real mark of a great player is the ability to win dozens of small pots with aggressive play. Forcing players out of small pots also ensures that your opponents will see fewer of your cards. Every time that your opponents see your cards, you will become a little bit more predictable. It is key that you play very aggressively to keep yourself shrouded in mystery.

#### STRATEGY #3: Shift Styles Completely

If you watch poker games closely, the successful players will always be the ones who change gears from aggressive to tight throughout the game. When you are at a table, it is important that you mix up your betting patterns for a given hand...and then switch your OVERALL PLAYING STYLE between loose and tight and loose and tight.

#### STRATEGY #4: In the Dark Plays

Using "in the dark" plays is a great way to confuse your opponents. When you play in the dark, it is very hard for your opponents to get a good read on you. When you make a move in the dark, your opponents will start to rethink their moves.

Remember, since a player's FIRST instincts are usually RIGHT, you want to make your competition second-guess their instincts.

#### STRATEGY #5: Never Show Your Cards

There are a lot of players who like to reveal their cards when they pull off a good bluff. It's usually a big-headed gesture from the player trying to satisfy their own giant ego.

If you're playing Texas Hold'em to feel better about yourself, then be my guest; show your cards. But if you're like me: playing Texas Hold'em because you LOVE THE GAME and YOU LOVE TO WIN; then DON'T show your cards.

When you show your cards, players will start to understand how you behave when you bluff. No matter how hard you try, you will inevitably develop "playing patterns."

It doesn't matter if you're Doyle Brunson or someone who just started playing poker last week; the habits will form. These five strategies that we just discussed will give you an EDGE in disguising your habits.

## How to Take Advantage of Bad Players

The increase of poker popularity has led to a flood of fish that are just WAITING for you to take their money. Seriously.

These fish are untalented, undisciplined, and lack the fundamental skills to succeed in Texas Hold'em. These players think that since they have seen a few episodes of the World Poker Tour, they are poker pros.

If you want to make money playing Texas Hold'em, you need to learn to take all the money from these novices before they give it to someone else.

There are many ways that you can bankrupt the bad players at your table. These methods are tested and proven and can give you an advantage over everyone else at the table.

These methods include:

### 1. Fake Weakness

It seems that everyone over-estimates their own poker ability. Bad players usually think they are one of the best players at any given table. This false sense of ability will lead bad players to attempt to buy virtually EVERY pot.

This over-aggression makes weak players especially vulnerable to check-raises and slow playing good cards. When you have the nuts, DON'T lead out with a big bet (like you should against a good player), instead slow play the hand and let the novice try to buy the pot.

### 2. Destroy Their Game Plan

Usually a novice's plan will depend on his ability to bluff effectively. If you are able to remove a significant section of their stack, you will destroy their game plan and put yourself on the fast track to the chip lead.

### 3. Show No Respect for Weak Bets

A bad player will fear losing all their chips on a mediocre hand. This means they will often make small bets on the turn and river. Show ZERO respect for these bets. Making a large raise over these weak bets will often scare away bad players leaving you with the pot.

### 4. Face Bad Players "Heads Up"

Since good players and bad players require different strategies, try to force other players out of hand before clashing with a weak player. Eliminating other players will reduce the amount of possibilities you have to consider. This will allow you to focus more on how to scare away weak players.

### 5. Always Have a Decent Hand

Even if you play your hand flawlessly, a bad player may call all your bets with nothing but an Ace high. This is very frustrating, but very common. In fact, I know many poker professionals who will not play against novices because they are so difficult to bluff.

So, before you enter into a high-cost hand with a bad player, make sure that you have at least a decent hand and you are confident that they don't have anything better. These are just a few of the quick, simple ways to take advantage of bad poker players.

## How to Bet After the Flop

Playing after the flop terrifies many players because of the high level of skill and risk it requires. In fact, many people will go "all-in" pre-flop just so they don't have to "really" play post-flop. However, post-flop play is where you can establish your DOMINANCE at the table, win most of your pots, and maximize your POKER PROFITS.

Even though post-flop play is the key to success when playing poker, it is a skill that most poker players utterly LACK. So let me ask you: How do you think YOU size up?

There are several key strategies for post-flop play, and I'm going to share them with you here. Think about the last few times you've played poker. Think about what you did during each hand. What you did RIGHT and what you did WRONG.

The quickest, most surefire way to improve your poker game is to PLAY as much as you can. Then, ANALYZE how you played so you'll do better the next time.

I'm going to share six post-flop strategies that will give you an advantage over your opponents, by allowing you to "out-skill" other players and to keep them from "out-drawing" you.

1. Sustained Aggression - After the flop, make sure that you don't show any weakness. If you are confident that you have the best hand pre-flop, and the flop yields nothing but scraps, you probably still do.

For example, let's say that you are dealt big slick and the flop comes 2, 5, 8. If you bet strong before the flop (as you should have), it is likely that the flop didn't help anyone. Also, if the turn card is yet another small or unimportant card, don't be afraid to fire out another strong bet.

It takes guts to fire out two bets and your opponents will rarely put you on a bluff after two strong moves.

So, make sure that you stay aggressive even if the flop does not help you. Since bad flops usually help no one, when you remain aggressive, you can usually scare away your competition and take the pot.

2. Remember Pre-Flop Action - There are many players who will see small flops and turns as a way to buy a pot.

Let's say a player calls a bet before the flop, then checks after, and checks on the turn. If the river is also unexciting, but the player leads out for a big bet, chances are he's bluffing.

Always think back to how other opponents played EARLIER in the hand when you think about how to play YOUR cards.

3. Raise And Re-Raise - You will never win a pot when you just call bets. I laugh when a player with a weak hand call bets all the way down the line. Then, when they are beaten by another weak hand, they immediately realize that a RAISE could have WON the hand.

If you have a mediocre hand, don't just call a bet. Raise the pot and force others out of the hand. If your opponents re-raise you, chances are you are beaten and you should fold.

If you have a good hand, continue to bet more and more after each card. This will make it too expensive for weak hands to stay in the pot and will increase the pot size for you to win.

4. Look For Cheap Draws - If you are on a flush or straight draw, try to get as many cheap cards as you can.

Let's say that you have an open-ended straight draw after the flop. If someone leads out with a small bet, just call. When you are on a draw, it is not your job to scare people out of the hand. You want as many people as possible to be in

for a low price. This will fatten the pot if you catch a card and reduce your risk if you don't.

5. Never Show Weakness - After the flop, there are many people who will be looking for you to show weakness. A check or a small bet will suggest weakness. When you show weakness after the flop, you are just asking for your opponents to come out firing. This means that staying in the hand will become very expensive and you will not be able to stay in the hand with marginal cards.

6. Watch For "Make" Cards - If you have a good hand, your biggest fear should be a card that can complete an even stronger hand.

Once, when I was playing at a casino in St. Louis, I flopped a nut flush draw. My opponent, Josh, however flopped a monster hand, trip aces! Josh decided to slow-play the trips, but failed to see the flush draw on the table. Then, on the turn, I caught my fifth spade.

Still, Josh failed to look past his trip aces and finally led out with a huge bet. With my nut-flush, I pushed in all my money, which covered his bet and his remaining \$250.

Finally, Josh realized that I might have a flush, but it was too late. After already investing most of his stack in the hand, Josh called my all in bet. Josh could have easily won that hand and raked in a fair-sized pot. Instead, he ignored the "make" cards on the table and ended up losing all his money. (Not that I'm complaining.)

Playing your hands after the flop requires patience, aggression, and persistence. Also, effective post-flop play requires a solid understanding of basic and advanced poker concepts.

## Seven 7 Poker Tells

To get an accurate read on your opponents, you must learn to spot their "tells," which can indicate the STRENGTH or WEAKNESS of their hands. I have been getting a lot of emails lately from players who want to learn which tells "average" players exhibit (not WSOP pros) that will allow them to get an EDGE over their opponents and as a result, make more CASH PROFITS from poker.

Getting a read on your opponents requires more than just seeing a few signals. It is a COMPILATION of dozens of different signals.

While there is no single tell that all poker players have, there are several signals that most poker players send out and are almost impossible to prevent.

The first five of these tells are for players who play at live tournaments, home games, or in casinos. The next two are for everyone, including online poker players.

1. PULSE - This is one of the lesser-known tells in poker, but it is one of the most powerful tips that you can possess.

A man's pulse can be seen on either side of his neck and will give you valuable information about the strength of his hand.

Since it is virtually impossible to completely control your pulse, TONS of players display this tell.

If a player makes a big bet and then his neck starts going nuts, his pulse is increasing, and there is a good chance he is bluffing.

2. POSTURE - If a player's posture improves right away after a card is turned over, there is a good chance that the card completed his hand.

If a player has been on tilt for previous hands, then is dealt a hand and he immediately sits up straight, there is a good chance that he caught a killer hand.

3. CHIP MOVEMENT - Watch you fellow players closely when they're involved in a major pot...

Watch the way that they handle their chips and what moves they make with their chips and their cards.

Then, CAREFULLY observe what they ultimately held in their hand.

If the player played a lot with their chips when they had a terrific hand, you can count on them to do the same thing when they have similar cards.

When you are "researching" players for these kinds of habits, it is best that you do so when you are NOT involved in a hand...

If you are involved with a player when you try to figure out his tells, you probably won't be able to concentrate enough on the many OTHER things you should be considering during the hand.

4. SHOULDER SHAKE - I know a lot of players who bounce their legs up and down underneath the table when they have a good hand.

These players think that since their legs are under the table, that no one notices it, but I always look at their shoulder to see if it moves back and forth.

5. TABLE TALK - Whenever a player talks at a table, they give away a lot of information. If a player is often quiet, but starts speaking up when involved in a major hand, it is likely that that person is bluffing.

Also, when a player talks and it sounds unnatural or forced, it is likely that the person is trying to intimidate his opponents, and is bluffing.

(Since table talk can reveal so much about a player, I encourage you not to talk much at the table. Be social and nice to your fellow players, but don't be the table loud-mouth.)

6. TIMING - Timing is a crucial tell for poker players. The amount of time that a player takes to make his decision is a key indicator of the strength/weakness of their hand.

The common rules are as follows: Quick Check: Weakness

Quick Call: Strength

Slow Call: Weakness (If this player raises the pot, it could show strength.)

Slow Call: Medium

Slow Raise: Medium-Strong

Fast Raise: Strong

Of course none of these rules are steadfast or apply all the time. If a player always takes a long time to act, it is almost impossible to apply these rules to that player.

7. PAST PLAY - Not technically a "tell," a player's playing style and past tendencies are the BEST source of information about what they'll do in the future.

It is always a good idea to watch all the other players at a table before you get involved with them, especially if you have never played them before. Getting a good read on your opponents will allow you make better bluffs, win pots with marginal hands, and fold your losers before you lose big.

Of course, just getting a good read on your opponents is only one aspect of controlling the game.

Are You One Bet From Greatness?

There I sit, staring down a player across the table. There is Jason, a new, but fairly strong player staring right back. I think "Well, Jason is pretty aggressive and has been on tilt lately, so I should probably call his raise." I look down at my pocket 10's once more, and call his large pre-flop raise.

The flop comes out 8, J, K.

Jason leads out with a medium bet. With two overcards on the table, I know my hand is only marginal. If Jason bets stronger, I would fold. But since he only bet 2X the big blind, I cautiously call, still knowing my 10's are weak.

The turn is an Ace, and I am really worried about my 10's. Just about any bet will scare me away from this hand. However, Jason is a novice and meekly checks. Sensing weakness, I place a big bet, he folds, and I win the pot.

As I rake in my nice pot, Jason flips over a Jack and says, "I couldn't call with just jacks." I quietly laugh to myself as I think about how easily Jason could have won that pot. Any bet would have scared me away from the pot. Instead, Jason showed weakness and lost the pot.

The moral of the story?

If you are going to succeed playing poker, you need the "nuts to bet without the nuts." The key to picking up hands from loose players is NOT just placing a single large bet.

Instead, if you want to win pots against overly aggressive players, you must be willing to bet before the flop, after the flop, on the turn, and on the river.

Remember that bad players will often call a large bet on a draw or with a medium pair. However, few players will call 2 or even 3 large bets with a weak hand.

Let's say that a player comes out with a large preflop bet. Then the flop comes A, 9, 10- all spades. Now, the player scales back and only places the minimum bet. I put my opponent on a pair of aces, weak kicker, and no spades. Even if I don't have any spades, I will bet like I do. After I make a medium raise, my opponent reluctantly calls.

I know now that he is on the brink of folding.

The turn is a 4 of diamonds. My opponent checks. In this position, many players would not lead out with another bet if they don't have the flush. Instead of showing weakness, I lead in with a big bet, representing the flush (or an Ace with a high kicker).

My opponent stares me down, looks at his cards, and then folds. I rake in the pot as I throw my scraps to the dealer. If my opponent calls down the line, his Aces will beat my rags. If I show weakness and check on 4th street, he will bet big on the river, and I won't be able to call.

So, if I don't bet big on the turn, I will lose the hand and a chunk of my stack. The biggest difference between players and wannabees is their ability to make multiple attempts at a pot.

When you play poker, you cannot be afraid to lose your chips. As the old saying goes, "The second you try to hold onto your chips, you will surely lose them all."

I should mention here that there are some circumstances when you should play tight and not bet at a pot. The cardinal rule is simple: never bluff tight players. If your opponent only plays solid hands, chances are that he will be willing to call (or even raise) you all the way down the hand.

Also, if there are more than two other players in a hand, don't try to buy it. The odds are too great that someone has a solid hand. Also be wary of bluffing bad

players. If a player has shown that he is far too loose with his chips, you should avoid trying to buy pots off him.

Finally, don't bet for a pot when you are short-stacked. When you are short-stacked, you cannot afford to lose any significant hand on a bad bluff.

When you learn how to properly time your bluff attempts and you are comfortable with placing several large bets on a single hand, you will gain a huge advantage over everyone you play. This advantage will allow you to win more pots, whether you are playing in a friendly home game, at a casino, or in a large tournament.

### Secrets to Beating the Pot Odds

If you play poker, you should always pay close attention to many different elements of the game.

Players who are on tilt, opponents who are on poker runs and the size of other players' stacks are all elements that you should be CONSTANTLY thinking about.

While many players are aware of these different aspects of Texas Hold'em, many players ignore one of the most important parts of the game.

The SIZE of the POT.

There are many reasons that you should pay close attention to the size of the pot when you are involved in a hand. The MOST important reason is that it will give you an accurate gauge of the RISKS and REWARDS that each hand offers.

If you are involved in a hand where many players have put money into the pot, the hand likely has very good "pot odds"- which is the ratio of the money which you stand to WIN versus the RISK REQUIRED to win it.

For example, I was recently playing a hand at the final table of a no-limit Texas Hold'em tournament. I was dealt pocket 10's and played it aggressively. My opponent checked to me every turn and then called each bet. Finally, after the river came, I was holding two pair (10's and 8's) with a flush draw on the table. My opponent led out and bet \$50.00.

I was worried about the possible flush, but it only required an additional \$50.00 to possibly win over \$500.00. I knew that if he had a flush, he would call any raise I was willing to make. So, I decided to call. Using the laws of pot odds, I was able to bring in a pot of \$625 when my opponent turned over his lousy pocket 7's.

The law of pot odds should be considered every time you are involved in a pot. I can't help but laugh when a player folds to a small bet on the river when they could win a huge pot if they call.

You should also remember that pot odds also apply to you when you should NOT call or make bets.

Recently, I was playing in an online poker tournament when a player moved all-in before the flop. Unfortunately, there was nothing for the player to win but a few blinds. There was absolutely no reason for this player to move all-in when there was nothing to win but a few measly dollars. Unfortunately for my opponent, I was dealt a monster hand (pocket aces) and I went on to win his money.

Never risk an unnecessary amount of your chips to win a small pot. (Of course, if you are small-stacked, it is plausible to go all in when you are late in a game and the blinds are considerable.)

The size of the pot will also dictate how other people play their hand. When your opponent has placed a great deal of money into a pot, he is unlikely to fold unless you make a huge bet.

So, if you catch a monster hand, you should always try to get your opponents "pot committed." Then you can turn your opponents into "calling stations" and make away with all their chips.

If you sense weakness and you think that you might be able to buy a pot off of a pot-committed player, there is a way to scare him off without putting all your chips in jeopardy.

I have learned that when a player is pot-committed, they are far looser than if they weren't. So, the TRICK is that you want to DISCONNECT the final moves from the rest of the hand.

A good way to separate the plays you make from the rest of the hand is to force a BREAK in the action. I like to ask my opponent to count their chips before I make a move. This action forces a break in the action and also puts any bets I make in context. Let's say that I'm up against an opponent who has \$1,000 in chips. If I bet \$500 in this position, my opponent will realize that the bet constitutes HALF his chips and will usually fold unless he has a very good hand.

However, you should remember that with YOUR OWN hands, you should never worry much about the money that you have already placed in the pot. When you put money into a pot, it is NO LONGER YOUR MONEY. That money belongs to whoever wins the pot. Period. Unless you are playing with great pot odds, you should never call any bets unless you are confident that you have a better hand or can pull a bluff.

If you have put \$100 into a hand, and you are contemplating calling a \$50 bet, think about your move in the context of the MOMENT. In other words, forget the money that you have already invested into the pot. Instead, if the current situation merits a call or a raise, make it. However, you don't want to make such a move simply because you have already put a large portion of your stack into the pot.

Paying close attention to the size of the pot and the better players who are putting money into it is a great way that you can control the game, which is essential to WINNING Texas Hold'em poker.

## How to Play Small Pocket Pairs

\*\*\* Question \*\*\*

Rory, help me out. I need to know what to do when I get pocket pairs that are under 10s. Any ideas?

S.J., Venice, CA

>> My Comments:

Most players hesitate when dealt a small pocket pair. They aren't sure what to do with the hand. Should you raise or should you limp in with your hand?

Well, it really depends on the action at the table and your positioning. Let's say you're sitting just to the right of the button and you're dealt pocket 4's. Drew is to the left of the big blind and is first to act before the flop. He comes out firing and makes it \$10 to play. Josh is next to act and he calls the raise along with three other players.

There is \$53 in the pot up to this point, and it's finally time for you to act. You know you're beat right now. In fact, you may have the weakest hand of everyone. So do you muck the 4's?

No, this is where you play the pot odds and call the bet. This may be your biggest win all night if you hit your trips.

The flop hits K,9,4 and Drew begins the action with a huge bet. Two others call and the action is back to you. You push your entire stack in because you know you will get a caller. Plus, there are 2 hearts on the board and you don't want someone to catch a lucky flush. If they want to chase, they will have to pay the price.

Drew calls the all-in bet with Big Slick and you take his entire stack. This is how you play a small wired pair when the pot size is right. Even though you know that someone may be sitting on pocket aces, you're going to rake a huge pot if you hit your trips.

When the flop hits K,9,4, your opponents can never put you on pocket 4's. These are the hands that you make money with if you play correctly. Now what if you're dealt pocket 4's while on the button. Everyone at the table has limped in and the action is to you. How do you play the hand in this situation?

You have to play aggressively so you make it \$15 to play. This is a rather large bet but, you did it for a reason. You want to get rid of the crap hands at the table and hopefully go heads up against just one opponent who has a hand like AJ or KQ.

This is exactly what happens. Drew is the only player to call your bet.

The flop hits A,K,2. Now you've got a huge advantage because Drew must act first. He checks to you and your pocket 4's. Now you represent the flop as though you've hit the ace or king on the board. You fire out a \$40 bet.

Drew looks down at his pocket 5's for a moment and soon mucks the hand because he has to put you on a big hand, when in fact, he has you beat. This is how you play aggressively with a small pocket pair when you have good positioning and everyone has limped in.

If you play these hands correctly, you're going to steal a few extra pots a night and be the player at the table that dictates the action.

### How to Play Against Tight Players

You're on the button and dealt KQ of diamonds. Aaron is first to act and he makes it \$20 to play. Everyone else at the table folds because they know that Aaron is a very tight player. When he makes a bet, everybody runs because more times than not he's holding aces or kings.

You, however, decide to see a flop by calling the bet. Why not? You have good positioning on him and he must act first after the flop.

The flop hits K, 9, 4 with no diamonds. Aaron doesn't even hesitate before firing out a \$50 bet. The action is on you and you're not feeling very good about your top pair. You know that Aaron doesn't bluff and that there is a good chance that he is holding Aces, Kings, or Big Slick.

If he has any of these hands, you're in big trouble. You decide to see the next card because you are stubborn and want to see a queen hit. This is where you've made the mistake. You've just become pot committed and didn't even think about the action after the turn card hits.

If you had thought about what was to come, you would have realized that Aaron is going to make an even larger bet. He always does. He's probably going to fire at least \$100 at you. Then what do you do?

You will be invested for \$70 and \$100 more won't seem like much to pay. And even if you do hit your queen or king, you may still be in big trouble.

These are the types of hands that get players in trouble against tight players. They don't think about the price they will have to pay after the turn and the river.

In this example, we decided to call the \$50 after the flop. If we had played the hand out in our head, we would have seen how ugly it could get.

We knew that Aaron would fire an even larger bet after the turn card hit. We are not prepared to call another huge bet against a tight player like him.

Here is how we should have played the hand...

Yeah, we all love KQ suited. Aaron made it \$20 to play before the flop. I would call his bet even though I'm sure he's got a monster hand.

Why not? If diamonds hit you're going to rake a large pot. The flop hit K, blank, blank. We just hit our top pair but Aaron came out firing.

Here is where we have to lay the hand down. Don't commit yourself to the pot by calling another bet. This will make it even harder to fold after the turn and river. Take your \$20 loss and catch Aaron when you flop a monster against him.

#### First Position, Before the Flop

There you sit - just to the left of the big blind. This means you are going to be the FIRST to act before the flop. You can't figure out if this is a position that you LOVE or one that you HATE. It's really the position you love to hate. Here's why:

Let's say you're dealt a Q, J offsuit. You're one of those players who loves just about any combination of cards. So, of course, this Q, J is looking very good right now. You decide to call the big blind of \$2.

Drew is next to act. He makes it \$10 to play and one other player calls his bet. The action is back to you and your QJ. You think, "What's \$8 more?" and call the bet.

The flop hits Q, 7, 4 and you're first to act. Now what do you do? You've just hit the top pair on the board, but are afraid to bet because you have to put Drew on a strong hand with his pre-flop raise. He could be sitting on pocket Q's, K's, A's, KQ or AQ. All of which beat your hand.

You decide to check and see what Drew is going to do. He fires out a \$20 bet, just as you thought he would. Josh folds and the action is back to you. You're already in for \$10 so you decide to see the turn card, which is a 9. You see where this story is going?

You end up becoming pot committed and bet your stack only to see Drew throw over AQ.

This is exactly how the first position before the flop can get you in trouble. If you play mediocre hands you are going to get burnt.

Now, let's look at the time when you will LOVE the first position. Here's the scenario:

You're dealt pocket aces and are first to act. Instead of firing out a raise you simply call the big blind. You're at a rather aggressive table and know that one of the seven other players will raise.

Just as you thought, Drew makes it \$15 to play. Three other players call the bet and the action is back to you. You go over the top and make it \$60 to play. Drew is a maniac and can't stand to be raised. So he pushes his entire stack into the middle with AJ and you take all his chips.

You made the money in this situation because you played your positioning to your advantage. You decided to limp in instead of raising. You did this because you wanted to let your opponents create the action before you made your attack.

While Drew was raising and the others were calling, they had completely forgot about you, which is EXACTLY what you wanted.

Playing the first position can be frustrating at times. You simply have to know what type of table you are at and which hands to play. Once you master this position in Texas Hold'em poker, you will own a MAJOR competitive edge against your opponents and friends. And you'll start dragging in more pots, night after night after night.

### What to Do When You're Small Blind

If you've read my newsletters or my book, then you know that I'm a rather aggressive player. I like to push the action and make things happen. However, there is a position at the table that I am very hesitant to play aggressively.

And that position is small blind, which is just to the left of the dealer. This position is very tough to play because you are first to act after the flop. I've found that playing aggressively from this position will only lead to trouble.

Here's how.

Let's say you're dealt a Q9 of diamonds and four of your opponents limp in to see the flop. You like your hand and already have half of your ante in the pot, so you also decide to also limp in.

The flop hits Q, 3, 7 with no diamonds on the board. Now you are first to act with the top pair on board.

Should you throw out a bet? I wouldn't!

It can only lead to trouble because of your positioning. There are four other players that can act after you. They could be holding a number of hands that beat yours. If you throw out a bet and Drew is sitting on JQ, you are in big trouble.

Why throw out a bet here? It doesn't make sense.

Check and see what your opponents do. If everyone checks, then you may want to make a bet after the turn card. However, betting after the flop will only get you in trouble if there are numerous callers in the hand. Don't do it!

Now let's say your holding that same Q9 and the flop hits Q, 9, 3. You've just flopped 2 pair. Once again, your first to act. Do you play this flop aggressively by making a bet? No again! It wouldn't make sense to. Here is how I would play this hand:

Check the flop and let one of the other aggressive players make a stab at the pot. After Drew throws out a \$20 bet, I'd simply call. The turn hits and it's a 4, which I know didn't help Drew's hand. I check again as though my hand is weaker than it actually is. Drew's not falling for it. He checks right behind me.

The river is another 4 and once again, I'm first to act. Now I can't check. If I check here I take the chance that Drew may not bet again, which means I make no more money on the hand.

Instead, I throw out a \$20 bet. I know Drew has to call this with even a very weak hand. He's pot committed and will pay the \$20 to simply see my cards.

As you can see, I really don't bet often in the small blind. If I do it is because I raised before the flop or have just one or two opponents in with me after the flop.

In these situations, it makes it a bit easier to bet. However, if I'm in the hand with multiple callers, I really don't see a reason to bet after the flop. If you play the small blind with caution, you will rake more pots and outplay your opponents all night long.

### The Most Feared Player at The Table

\*\*\* Question \*\*\*

Hey Rory, I just downloaded your book and it's great. I feel I know much more about poker. I was wondering if you could give me some more tips and pointers on reading opponents at the table. Thanks.

J.L., Los Angeles, CA

>> My Comments: Dear J.L.,  
Great question.

Understanding the different player types is the key to making serious money playing poker, but there is one type of player who will DOUBLE your stack or could send you packing...its up to you.

Maniacs are the most feared and volatile players in Texas Hold'em. These players can steal your blinds all night long without being challenged, but once you decide to make a stand they will reveal their monster hand. That is, unless you know how to play "maniacs" properly.

The reason that maniacs are so dangerous is that they wear down the logical thinking process of other players. Even experienced players get frustrated by the maniac's style and make moves they regret later.

A maniac will bet wildly for so many hands that eventually players will call them even when they don't have good cards. Maniacs are also so unpredictable that it is almost impossible to get a good read on them. Since they are so tough to get a read on, it is very difficult to judge if they have a good hand or if they are just trying to buy the pot.

While a maniac strikes fear into most players, when you understand their style you will know how to take advantage of their aggressive play. The key to playing a maniac is patience.

Once at a tournament, a player sat down at the table and started moving all-in almost every hand. After a few hands, the players started getting annoyed and after a half hour of being bullied by the maniac, the players were eager to make a stand.

Finally, a player was dealt 10, J suited and called the maniac's all-in bet. When the cards were turned over, the maniac was way out front with Q, Q and went on to win the hand. Even though 10 J suited is a decent hand, it is usually not good enough to risk all your chips with before the flop.

Instead of making a hasty decision with his 10 J, the player should have waited until he had a more powerful hand to play. After about an hour at that same tournament, the maniac at the table was chip leader and I was in second. I had mostly avoided playing against him throughout the night. I was waiting for my big chance. Finally it came when I was dealt pocket Kings.

I made a small raise trying to fake a weak attempt to buy the pot. Everyone folded but the maniac who (of course) made a large raise. After thinking for a little bit about the situation, I came in all-in over the top of his raise. To my surprise, he quickly called. I flipped over my pocket Kings and he turned over pocket Queens.

I went on to win the hand with my cowboys and quickly moved into a commanding position with my huge stack of chips. The maniac (who had more chips than I did) became the short stack at the table and lost his advantage.

Once he tried to mount a comeback with his usual raises, he was quickly called and eliminated.

The moral of the story is simple. When you sit down with a maniac, you must be PATIENT. When you get good cards, you will be able to make away with a big pot.

Remember: maniacs and highly-aggressive players make their move when they sense weakness in the other players. This makes them prime candidates for slow plays and check-raises.

Re-raising large bets made by maniacs can serve as a way to force them out of hands where they have no real hand. However, you should only do this when you have good hands. And always be ready for a re-re-raise.

There are more and more maniacs in Hold'em poker tournaments lately. Maniacs are very successful against amateur players and the increase of poker popularity has definitely generated a flood of amateur players.

This increase of maniacs means that when you learn to take advantage of their playing style, you will gain a huge advantage over your competition and increase your poker profits. Of course, the maniac playing style is just one of many player types that you will encounter when playing poker.

There are many other playing types, such as:

- Calling Stations
- "Timids" and Conservative Players
- Yo-Yo's (Players who switch playing types)
- Baby Sharks (Strong but undisciplined players)
- Opossums (Always slow-play good cards)
- And Many More...

You will come across these playing types at almost every tournament that you play in. You will also find that players are usually a combination of two or more of these styles.

Since a player's style makes a huge difference on how you play against that player, you must learn the different styles in order to win against each type.

### Common Online Poker Mistakes

If you play online poker, this may be the most important tip you've ever read. Take these strategies seriously and you could quickly and consistently win more pots from online poker games.

There are seven major (yet easily correctable) mistakes that both novice and experienced players make when playing online poker. Learn to prevent these mistakes, and you'll have a competitive advantage over others.

### Mistake No. 1: Getting Distracted.

Poker is a skill game, but it requires concentration and attention to detail. When you are distracted, you take your abilities out of the picture and then you have to rely on luck.

I know many poker players who play as many as 5 games online at the same time. While experienced online poker players may be able to handle this, you should focus on one game at a time.

Also, remember that the distractions that surround you at your home can ruin your concentration when you are playing poker. TV's, radios, and phones all divide your attention and take your mind off the game at hand. While distractions are likely the most costly mistakes that players make, they are easy to eliminate.

When you are playing poker, make sure that you turn off the TV, grab a Coke, and turn off your phone. This way you won't be jumping up and down when you should be concentrating on your game.

### Mistake No. 2: Using The Auto-Play Functions.

The auto-play buttons are made to speed up the game. If you use the auto-play buttons, realize that you are using them at the cost of your chips.

Since online poker players are separated by hundreds of miles, one of the only "tells" in an online poker game is the amount of time that a player takes before acting on his or her hand. The "Commonly Accepted Formula" is this:

A delayed check = Weakness  
Instantaneous call = Strength  
Instantaneous check = Weakness  
Quick bet/raise on turn or river = Strength

The reason that this formula is so widely accepted by poker players is that it holds surprisingly true. The first tell is simply an understanding of poker psychology, but the last three are based on the auto-play buttons.

Think about it: If you have a weak hand and you click the automatic check button, you are telling every one at the table that you have a weak hand.

However, if you take a moment, people must ask themselves "Are they slow playing it? Will I be check-raised? How has he played in the past?"

### Mistake No. 3: Talking Too Much.

Some players think that since they are online, that talking doesn't serve as a tell. However, except for using auto-play buttons, talking serves as the biggest tell in online poker.

Don't waste your energy taunting or talking to other players. This will give players a look into your personality and therefore your true playing style. Talking too much also leads into the next online poker mistake.

#### Mistake No. 4: Making Enemies.

Making enemies in poker is never a good idea. If you win a pot, graciously drag the chips to your pile, but don't say a word. If you lose a pot to a lucky draw, take it on the chin and don't whine. The reason that you don't want to make enemies is simple. The enemies you make playing poker will be "gunning" for you.

It is never good to have players who want you out of a game, because they will be more likely to make a move against you. This takes the power out of your hands because the other players aren't playing FOR chips, they are playing AGAINST you.

So, keep to yourself, and let the chips do the talking.

#### Mistake No. 5: Showing cards.

Showing your cards is rarely a good idea. Some players claim that it puts other players on tilt and shakes them out of their game. However, instead of hurting the other players, showing your cards usually hurts you and forces you out of your game.

Remember that you always want people to respect your bluffs. So think about this:

You win a huge pot on a stone-cold bluff. Good for you. You turn over your 7-2 offsuit to shake up the other players. Now the other players know your style of bluffing and your betting method.

A few hours later, you make another move for a pot by pushing most of your stack into the pot. Now the players think back and remember your past bluffs. This time, they don't fall for it, call, and you lose your stack. Finally, players who turn up their cards often are seen as cocky or rude. This leads to poker enemies...and we know what that means.

#### Mistake No. 6: Relying Too Much On Odds.

Many online poker players have downloaded "odds calculators" that give precise readouts of the probability of any certain combination of cards. These calculators are terrific tools to give you an idea about the strength of your hand, but be very wary of putting too much emphasis on the odds.

Remember that poker is a game of strategy and numbers, not just a game of numbers. You must take many factors into consideration when playing poker, not just the odds that you will win the hand.

## Mistake No. 7: Playing For Too Much.

Never play poker with more than you can afford to lose. If you have \$30 to spare, don't sit down in a \$5-10 limit room.

Anytime that you sit down at a table, be sure that you can afford to lose the money that you take with you, and that you have enough money to play competitively. If you sit at a table and only bring 3-5X the big blind, you will find yourself being bullied and quickly lose your stack.

Also, if you play at a table where you cannot afford to lose all the money, you will play too conservatively, and you will quickly go broke. Of course, just learning the common pitfalls of poker players will never take you to the next level. If you want to take the step to increase your poker skills so you will dominate every game you play, there is much more to learn.

If you're really serious about winning tons of cash at the poker tables, you must learn the art of bluffing, betting, reading players, folding, odds calculation, recalling hands, and much more.

Learning everything you need to become a successful poker player all by yourself requires years of hard work and lost pots. Luckily for you, you aren't on your own.

## How to Finish In the Money Every Time You Play

Whether you are playing a cash game, home game, or in a tournament will have a huge impact on how you play and the strategies you use during the game. An experienced player will vary his strategies to make certain that he has every advantage to win every time he plays.

There are three main game types which you will play, and each one requires different strategies and game plans.

### 1. Home Games - Home games are the most popular form of poker today.

With the explosion of Texas Hold'em popularity, there are literally thousands of home games occurring every single day. When you are playing a home game, there are several things you should keep in mind.

First, home games are often played much more aggressively than tournaments or cash games. Because amateurs usually prefer small home games, and amateurs tend to play more loosely than more experience players, you must take into account that home games are played looser than other games. To take advantage of this fact when you play, make sure that you play strong hands when and make full use of check-raises and slow plays at home games.

2. Cash Games - Cash games are also gaining more and more popularity. These games don't mess around with chips or anything but just put the money right on the table. These games are usually played more conservatively. The psychology of cold hard cash on the table makes people more worried about losing big.

These games are usually easier to bluff than home games or tournaments. Since the actual value of a bet seems greater in a cash game, pots are far easier to buy.

Think of it like this: If you are in a game and a player makes a \$1,000 bet and lays down a few chips, you may fold. However, if you see a player start laying down hundred dollar bills, you are much more likely to fold.

Make sure that you take the conservative nature of cash games into account when you sit down at the table.

3. Tournaments - Tournaments are the most popular type of game. There are thousands of tournaments held every week. Tournaments are the most popular form of poker for several reasons. First, tournaments usually have very high payouts with very small buy-ins.

Another reason that tournaments are the most popular sport is that all the experienced players prefer tournaments to other games. Why?

Because in tournaments there are PROVEN methods you can use to finish in the money every time. There are several fundamental truths that you must learn if you are going to have any success playing poker tournaments.

First, you must know the tournament structure before you even sit down at the table. Make sure you know the policies on buy-backs, pay-out structure, and the prize amounts. This information will greatly effect how you play the game.

Knowing the buy-back policy is crucial because it will determine how you play for the first hands of the game. If you can buy-back into a tournament, as a rule, you should start the game by playing very aggressive. This will allow you to jump out to a quick chip lead, but allow you to fall back on the buy-back if you lose your chips.

You should also learn the pay-out structure because it will shape the pace of the tournament and should shape the rhythm of your play. If a tournament only pays out the top 3 or 5 players, you cannot sit back and play in "survival mode." Instead, you must play to form a huge chip stack that will carry you deep into the game. However, if the tournament starts paying for the top 15-20 spots, you can play more conservatively.

Ultimately, every tournament player should have three goals when playing poker:

1. Survival.

2. Building a large chip stack.
3. Eliminate as many players as possible.

Finally, any successful poker player knows that moving tables in a tournament can be the most dangerous time of a game. When you play at a table for a long period of time, you start to learn the styles of the other players and learn how to play against them.

However, when you move tables, you start over at a completely foreign table with players you likely don't know. So, to avoid making a costly mistake, you should avoid playing hands until you watch several hands.

A general rule states that you should allow the dealer button to make a complete loop around the table before you start playing hands. Understanding the game of poker is pivotal to becoming a successful poker player.

Does The Size Of Your Stack Really Matter?

Do You Know The Laws Of Chip Position?

If you want to achieve any real success playing poker, there are several fundamental rules which you must understand about capitalizing on chip position. By chip position I mean the amount of chips which you have in your stack. You must also know how many chips your opponents have in theirs.

Novices forget the incredible importance of chip position. In fact, in Texas Hold'em, the size of your stack is just as, IF NOT MORE, important as your cards.

There are two different reasons you should master the concept of chip position. First, you must change your play depending on your chip position. Also, you must change your play against players in different positions. A sure-fire way to lose your money is to play the same not matter how much money you have. You must vary your strategies and rotate between conservative and aggressive play.

The following are general guidelines to follow to help you make the most out of these laws of Chip Position:

1. If you are the Short Stack or you are running out of chips, it is time to make a move.

The biggest mistake that I see novices make is waiting too long before switching to aggressive play. By the time they go all-in, they don't have enough chips to scare anyone away - they are called by 3 players and go broke.

2. When you are Chip Leader, throw your weight around at the table. A good player will be a "bully" at a table where he is chip leader.

As the bully of the table, you will be able to buy more pots than otherwise. However, don't get TOO aggressive. I see many bad players lose huge sums of money trying to buy every single pot.

Another mistake that Chip Leaders make is becoming too comfortable. Poker is a very volatile game and no matter how many chips you have, you could go broke in just a few hands. To avoid losing your advantage as chip leader, aggressively play your good hands. As chip leader, you can afford to lose chips on good hands and bad beats, but not on bad bluffs.

### 3. Beware the Chip Leader and Short Stack

If you are in the middle of the pack, going heads up against the Chip Leader or Short Stack can be a dangerous choice. First, a player in the Short Stack is often desperate and dangerous to bluff against. If you have solid cards, playing the Short Stack can be great. The Short Stack is more willing to go all-in with only mediocre hands; this means a big win for you.

The Chip Leader is also very dangerous to play unless you have solid cards. If the Chip Leader has a hunch that you are bluffing, they are likely to call you or raise you down the line. If you try to bluff the Chip Leader and he suspects it, you are in huge danger of losing a chunk of your stack.

To avoid getting caught bluffing by the Chip Leader and losing to mediocre cards, make sure your bets and raises are enough to make a serious difference for every player at the card table. If the Chip Leader has \$1,000 in chips, small \$15-50 bets will not scare him away but could take a significant chunk out of your stack. So, if you are trying to buy a pot from the Chip Leader make sure you bet at least \$100-\$200, a sum that will usually be enough to make him think twice about calling.

### 4. Eliminate Short Stacks When Possible

If you watched the World Series of Poker this year, you saw that Chris "Jesus" Ferguson was down to his last chip. However, with only a single \$2,000 chip, he battled back to build a stack of \$125,000.

This type of comeback isn't unusual in poker; in fact it is very common. I have seen hundreds of players who were short stacked catch a few lucky hands and end up as the Chip Leader.

The moral?

Any time that you can eliminate a player from a poker game, DO IT! When a player is short stacked, push him to make a bad decision and knock him out of the game. Period. Even if you have to lose a few chips, eliminating a player from the table is likely worth it.

This is also why it is so important for you to make a move when you are short stacked before it is too late. Once your stack is too short, you will find it very difficult to battle back.

Understanding Chip Position is a key element of any strong poker strategy. However, it is just one aspect that you should consider every hand you play.

## How to Check-Raise Your Way to Victory

The check-raise is one of the most potent and powerful weapons that any poker player has. If you are leaving this tool in your belt, you are missing out on more pots than you can imagine.

The check-raise intimidates players, allows you to control the tempo of a game, and puts other players on "tilt." It is safe to say that when I play novices, I win more pots with the check-raise than I do with good cards. This is why it is so confusing to me when people don't use this secret. To master the check-raise, you must first understand what the check-raise really is.

A check-raise is when a player checks to his opponent who places a bet. Then the player proceeds to raise his opponent. This simple strategy is extremely powerful for several reasons...

First, a check-raise confuses your opponents. A check is often read as a show of weakness and is met by a bet. However, when you raise after checking, your opponent must reconsider his read. Also, this strategy often intimidates your opponents. Especially if you are playing against amateurs, you can SCARE players out of hands by using the check-raise.

Yet another advantage of the check-raise is it will often put other players on tilt. For example, you have pocket 7's and the flop comes 10, 7, 2. If you check and your opponent tries to buy the pot with a large bet, a raise will "catch him" and win the hand. Anytime that you can catch someone on a bluff, you gain a serious advantage. Since bluffing is so important, if a player is too scared to bluff, he will be broke soon.

The final benefit of the check-raise is that it can be used to win pots no matter if you have the cards or not. If you have great cards, you can check-raise to increase the pot size. This is better than simply placing a large bet because other players will already have money in the pot.

So using the check-raise, you can drag in more money without forcing out your opponents. You can also use the check-raise when you don't have good cards. When you check, players will often sense weakness and try to buy the pot. When players try to buy the pot, they are not ready to be raised or willing to call a significant raise unless they have good cards.

The check-raise is somewhat like an ambush. You show weakness with a check; then your opponent chases you, but falls right into your trap.

Every strategy you add to your repertoire will improve your game and increase your winnings. Check-raises are very powerful, but they must be used as part of a large collection of strategies and "tricks." If you rely too much on one strategy you will become predictable and things will turn bad.

### How to Read a Poker Face

Has there ever been someone in your life who you could just read like a book? By just seeing their body language, you INSTANTLY knew what kind of mood they were in? It may have been someone in your immediate family, or a girlfriend, or a spouse, or whoever.

- You could READ the look on their face.
- You could HEAR and IDENTIFY the tone in their voice.
- You could SENSE their mood right away.

Know what I'm talking about? If so, give me a silent nod.

What if I told you that you could bring this ability to "read" a person to the poker table? What if you could instantly KNOW what your opponents were thinking? Or the cards they were holding? Would you be able to win more hands, tournaments, and CASH with that kind of ability?

9 times out of 10, your opponent's body language will literally GIVE AWAY their hands. All you have to do is know HOW to understand this "hidden communication."

For starters, it's important that you study every single move another player makes. This is obvious, because without carefully studying their movements (instead of getting "too caught up" in your own hand) you'll NEVER be good at reading their body language. Make sense?

Usually, you can trust your gut instinct. The problem most players have is knowing what their GUT is REALLY SAYING. Mediocre and good players will be aware of their "poker face" (or "poker tells") and will seek to give you an OPPOSITE impression of what's really true. Reading this type of player is simple.

Anytime you see a player acting a little TOO dramatic, you've got him. Here's an example:

Let's say you're dealt pocket aces and you make a pre-flop raise of \$20 to get rid of the "limpers" (so that you don't get run down by something silly like a 2/7 off-suit). "Drew" is sitting to the right of you, and he's the only player to call your bet. The flop hits King, 7, 3 - all different suits.

Now, you're HOPING Drew hit his king so that you can wipe him out for all his chips. The action is on you first, and you toss a bet out for \$30.

Now here's the key: You should be STUDYING Drew's body language this entire time!

Let's say he calls you without hesitation.

Right away, you put him on the king. The turn hits, and it's another 3. You know this card doesn't help Drew, because he wouldn't have called your pre-flop raise with a 3 in his hand.

So now you fire out a \$60 bet, because you think your aces are going to wipe his cowboys out. He's obviously pot committed, and he calls without a look of being nervous. You're still thinking he's got the king (one in his hand, one on the table).

The river card hits, and it's a KING. Bummer. Immediately you feel sick to your stomach. That was the LAST card you wanted to see. So now the board reads K, 7, 3, 3, K and you've still got your aces. Now you HAVE to check to Drew. If you throw out a bet, he's going to come over the top of you (assuming he's got the king; which gives him a full house). The only hope you have left now is that he's got Jacks or Queens and that he'll also check the river card.

After you check the action, Drew sends off a major hesitation vibe. He stalls and of course, he knows you know what's in his hand. He sits, waits, and thinks.

What he's REALLY trying to do is make you think he doesn't have the winning hand because he KNOWS he's got the best hand. Finally, he leans back in his chair, takes a deep breath, and then pushes in a bet for \$240.

Before his chips get to the middle you muck your hand. He gave you his "tell" with his overdramatic body actions, and this hand is done. As you muck your aces, he says, "Damn" and shows you his hand - it's a King/Queen. You just nod your head and say, "Yea, I know."

Even though you didn't WIN the hand, you saved some of your bankroll. Catching the king on the river was simply luck for him, and it'll come back around to you soon. You played the cards right, and STAYED IN THE GAME because you were smart about reading his body language.

Instead of being like most suckers, who would whine about this type of hand for weeks claiming they "always catch the bad beats," you just shrug it off and keep tight to YOUR expert game.

Of course, reading body language takes practice, and it requires a deep understanding of the "signs" to look for.

## How to Spot the Sucker

From the moment you sit down at a table, people are going to be sizing you up. So it is vital that YOU learn how to identify the sucker at your table...FAST. Otherwise you'll end up BEING the sucker. Get my drift?

Think of it like this: a sucker is going to end up losing all his chips real quickly. If YOU don't take his chips, someone else will, and then you'll be at a disadvantage with a smaller stack. So if you don't know who the sucker is, you are essentially handing the advantage over to your competitors and I know you don't want that.

Fortunately, you can learn to spot the sucker within the first few hands at the table. These strategies will teach you to take the sucker for all he's got, then use his chips to dominate the entire table. To spot the sucker, look out for the following poker "tells":

1. Cockiness - Most players who constantly boast, brag, or "talk trash" are secretly trying to compensate for their insecurities...
2. "Insta-Tilts" - Watch out for players that go on tilt right away. If they fold after a tough lay down... then on the next hand they call every bet, there is a good chance they're your "sucker."
3. Overacting - If a player "overacts" with his/her bluffs, calls, and folds, watch out. Weak players tend to try to overcompensate for their lack of ability with acting. If you have an over-acting player at your table, get ready to go on a run.
4. WSOP Syndrome - The Hold'em on TV is time-edited, so it seems like there is serious action on every hand. The fact is that there are dozens of pots for every one they show on TV. If a player tries to play EVERY pot, there is good chance they have never played any real Texas Hold'em before.
5. Showboating - If a player showboats after winning a hand, it shows his inexperience in poker. Real players know better than to make enemies at the poker table whenever possible. If you have a showboater at your table, take all his chips, then see what he says.
6. Lack of Commitment - If a player seems to fold every time someone raises them; they must not have the "stomach" for poker, and probably haven't played before.

Once you have picked out the suckers out of the table, it is time to bring their chips over to YOUR stack. There are several ways that you can use your knowledge to gain a big chip advantage. Here are a few:

1. Bully The Timid - If a sucker is very cautious and folds once raised, use that and start bullying them out of pots. Re-raise their bets, and go over-the-top of them when possible.

2. Trap The Bold - If you find a player who seems to play every single hand, and bluffs too often, lay low until you pick up a monster, then let him try to bluff you and take them big.

(Note these players are dangerous, you cannot try to bluff them, because they will call you even if they have marginal hands.)

3. Confuse the Stupid - If a player simply doesn't know the game and has no real talent, you can simply outplay them. However, you need to clash with these players early, before someone else takes all their chips.

4. Trick The Cocky - No one likes cocky players, and you can use their vanity to your advantage. Once you win one pot against one of these players, you can put them on "revenge tilt." They are going to want revenge so badly that they will try to buy pots off you all night. Take advantage of this by waiting until you pick up good cards, then let him waste his money.

5. Outplay the Amateurs - Most of the "suckers" at a table simply haven't played a lot of poker before, so you should be able to outplay this type no problem. There isn't any single method to take these players, but they tend to play too tight and you can usually bluff them out of their chips.

By learning to identify and bankrupt the sucker at your table, you will jump out to a huge chip lead at the beginning of a game, and then you can use that lead to gain momentum and steadily increase that lead throughout the night.

## How to Stop Losing Big Hands

I have something important to share with you.

This single poker strategy that I'm about to reveal is one of the BEST (and most PROFITABLE) tips that I've given you in a long time, so listen up:

When it comes to winning poker, most players have "tunnel vision." What I mean is this: They focus only on how to WIN more pots and larger pots; whether it's through bluffing, calculating odds, or reading poker tells.

But what they DON'T FOCUS ON, (what I'm about to show you), is actually MORE important than 90% of all the other "stuff" and can both INSTANTLY and DRAMATICALLY increase your poker winnings over the long term.

And that secret is this:

## STOP LOSING Big Pots

You see, there's a lot of strategies out there for how to WIN hands, but very rarely does a player focus on strategies on how to NOT LOSE big hands.

Why?

Because they blame THAT PART of the game on luck and other forces "out of their control." The reality is, you can win tons of great hands and gain a chip lead, but it doesn't mean ANYTHING if you don't know how to keep it.

Think back to when Greg Raymer won the World Series of Poker. What was the key to his success at the final table? The key was he had a huge chip lead AND he knew how to keep it. He didn't lose big hands, which is what allowed him to keep his gigantic stack of chips and bully the other guys around.

The concept is equally (if not MORE) important for players who AREN'T in the chip lead, because no matter how many pots you win, you won't win a game or tournament if you LOSE a lot of big hands.

Notice the "catch" here. I didn't say, "Stop losing hands." I said, "Stop losing BIG hands." Because those two statements mean two TOTALLY different things. You CANNOT stop losing ALL hands - it's just not realistic. But you CAN use strategies to stop losing BIG hands AND those are the more important "turning points" of a game anyway.

So, what's this "hidden" secret strategy that most players overlook that will allow you to STOP losing big pots?

I thought you'd never ask...

Preventing major losses is a very complicated and "multi-layered" concept, as I explain in my course. However, one of the MAJOR components and "core" strategies behind it can be summed up in one simple, 12-letter word:

ANTICIPATION.

That's right, you can literally cut down on the number of big hands you lose by simply ANTICIPATING better. And I don't mean anticipating the CARDS. I mean anticipating THE BETS, based on what cards COULD come out of the deck.

Here's an example that will make it clear: Let's say you're on the button and dealt A, J off-suit. The blinds are \$1-2 and Aaron (a very tight player) makes it \$15 to play. Everyone at the table folds and the action is to you. This is the best hand you've seen in awhile, so you call the bet without much hesitation.

That is where you made your FIRST MISTAKE.

You KNOW that Aaron is a very tight player that only makes pre-flop raises with monster hands. But you called the bet anyway, because you didn't ANTICIPATE what YOU would do, even if you hit your ace on the flop.

OK, so the flop hits, and the cards are: A, 9, 2. Aaron comes out firing with a \$30 bet right away. Now what do you do?

You have to put him on AK, AQ, AA, KK, or QQ. These are pretty much the only hands that Aaron will make a pre-flop raise with. Of course, he didn't check to you, so he probably doesn't have the cowboys or queens. So now you think about what Aaron is holding. You put him on hands that beat yours, but instead of folding you decide to see another card for \$30.

This is where you made your SECOND MISTAKE.

You felt pot-committed and only thought about the \$30 bet. What you SHOULD have been doing though is ANTICIPATING what Aaron was going to bet after the turn card. Let's face it, you have to figure he's going to fire again. Are you prepared to call ANOTHER large bet after the turn with you're A,J?

Of course not! And what you've done here is simply dug yourself into a big hole because you played only to win. You got dealt a good hand and flopped the top pair and then stuck it out in hopes of a better card. When what you SHOULD have done is ANTICIPATED Aaron's behavior and folded your cards before the flop.

Hands like these happen to even the best poker players, and you MUST develop the discipline to fold that AJ and fold that top pair when you've anticipated what's coming next.

Think about what your opponent is going to bet.

Think about what you'll be WILLING to bet.

Then, think about what will happen after the next cards and then the ones after that...and then the ones after THAT...and so on. It's all about anticipation. If you anticipate the different scenarios BEFORE they happen, you will prevent big losses. And when you stop losing big hands, you'll get to KEEP the chips you win. And that will help you finish in the money virtually every time and lead you to a successful poker career.

Of course, like I mentioned earlier, anticipation is just ONE of the crucial skills you'll need in order to kick ass at Texas Hold'em poker.

## How to Stop Losing Big Hands 2

We talked about why it's CRUCIAL that you learn to ANTICIPATE your bets and your opponents' bets BEFORE they happen. I'd like to share with you part TWO of how to prevent big losses and that is:

DON'T GET GREEDY.

Successful poker players all have one thing in common:

They understand the PSYCHOLOGY of greed, and how powerful it really is. Let me share a story with you how \*I\* fell victim to greed the other night at my local

\$1-2 no-limit game and how it emptied my pockets. Here's how it went down. I get dealt pocket 6's and am sixth to act. Josh is first to act and makes it \$5 to play. Drew and Brett are next in line and call Josh's pre-flop raise. The action is to me, with the pot size at \$18. There's no doubt I'll play this one and hope to spike one of my sixes. One other guy behind me calls the bet. Okay, flop comes out: Ah, 9d, 6s. Perfect.

I've just spiked my 6's and there's an ace on the board, which I'm sure someone is holding. It looks like I'm going to rake a HUGE pot at this point.

Josh comes out firing, as I expect. I immediately put him on AK or AQ. Brett folds and Drew calls Josh's \$20 bet. Who knows what Drew has; I can never put him on a hand because he's the maniac at the table. He'll play just about anything. He's probably sitting on 10-J, looking for a runner-runner straight draw for all I know.

Needless to say, he's not the guy I'm worried about. Actually, I'm not really worried about ANYONE at this point. I just flopped trips and all I'm thinking about is how to milk these guys for all their money.

I decide to not slow-play the hand. I want to find out where I'm at so I re-raise Josh's bet. I'm confident I'll get a call. I know Josh won't fold if he has the ace, like I think.

"Make it \$50", I say, as I push in my red chips. The guy behind me folds and the action is back to Josh. He thinks for awhile as he shuffles his chips. "I call", he says. Drew, however, doesn't hesitate one bit. He throws in his chips with some frustration and splashes the pot.

I've done everything right so far. I'm very well-positioned to rake in a huge pot. The turn card comes...4 of diamonds. Now the board reads: Ah, 9d, 6s, 4d

So, the 4 doesn't scare me at all. Josh and Drew both check this time because I'm in control. "Seventy five" I say, in a rather DEMANDING voice that makes it sound like I'm trying to buy the pot. Josh mucks his hands, which he later told me was an AJ. So, he made a good lay down. Drew, on the other hand, thinks for a moment before calling my \$75 bet. Now I'm feeling GREAT about this hand.

Josh was the guy I was really worried about, not Drew. Drew's probably got pocket 2's or something crazy like that. Who knows?

The river card is a 2 of diamonds. Now I hope Drew DOES have ducks! If he does, I'm going to take the rest of his stack. The board now reads: Ah, 9d, 6s, 4d, 2d Drew checks to me. I see the backdoor flush on the board, but I throw out another large bet anyway.

AND THAT'S WHERE I SCREWED UP.

I SHOULD have checked right behind Drew when I saw the flush on the board. Instead, I got GREEDY and made a stupid bet because I figured there was NO WAY he chased the flush all the way down. Drew raises my large bet by going all in, and he seems confident. I lean back in my chair and take a deep breath. Then I call, with the remainder of my stack. He turns over a 7-8 of diamonds. He's got the flush, which beats my trip sixes.

So, he had flopped an open-ended straight draw and ended up catching the flush instead. I had played the hand perfectly right until the backdoor flush hit. THAT is when I let greed take over. I had made another bet when Drew checked to me, but I SHOULD have just checked back.

If I hadn't let greed take over, I would have saved a lot of chips, and stayed in the game. Greed is a powerful emotion that can empty your pockets...just like it emptied mine.

But of course, you can use greed to your ADVANTAGE. Because once you have your OWN greed under control, you can learn to make positioning moves and bets based on the greed of OTHER players. You can literally COUNT on the fact that your opponents will get greedy too.

## How to Dominate the Table

Have you ever lost a huge pot because you had a flush draw or straight draw and didn't catch the card you needed? It's happened to all of us. And frankly, it sucks. Because when you're on a draw, you're just ONE CARD AWAY from raking in a ton of chips. And you WANT to keep calling everyone else's bets, in hopes that your card will pop out on the turn or river. Am I right?

Of course, what ends up happening is you have to put a ton of your chips in the middle just to call everyone else's bets. That makes you pot-committed and if you DON'T catch your card, you're screwed.

Not let me ask you...Wouldn't it be WONDERFUL if every time you were on a draw all the other players would CHECK around? That way you didn't have to risk any chips, and could bet only after you KNEW for sure whether or not you caught your card. That sure would be nice, wouldn't it? AND...What if there was a way to STILL WIN THE HAND even if you DIDN'T catch your card? That'd be nice too, huh?

Luckily, there IS a technique you can use to make BOTH of these things happen. Let me show you how.

OK, so let's say I'm at an 8-person no-limit table and I'm sixth to act. I'm dealt a 5-6 of diamonds. Josh comes out firing with a \$10 pre-flop bet. Sarah and Derek both call. Now it's on me. I love suited connectors; especially busting my opponents with them unexpectedly, so I jump in and call.

The players behind me muck their cards right away scared to death of so much action. The flop hits: 4d, 9s, 7d

That means I've just flopped an open-ended flush straight draw. I couldn't have asked for a better flop in this situation. Unfortunately, Josh comes out firing (again) with a no-hesitation bet of \$20. Sarah and Derek both FOLD this time... And the action is to me. I'm putting Josh on a high pocket pair, or maybe A9 or A7. And he's figuring the scraps on the board didn't help anyone, hence the strong bet. Which puts me in a tough situation.

Think about it, If I CALL, I might miss my flush or straight on the turn card. Then what? Josh will make another strong bet. What will I do then? And if I call to see the river and miss, then I'll have just given Josh most of my chips and lost a major hand.

On the other hand, I don't want to FOLD, because I have a ton of outs and I want to WIN this! Now let me ask you, what would YOU do in this situation?

Most amateur card players don't think ahead, and they'd call Josh's \$20 bet. And if they missed on the turn, they'd call another bet to see the river. And if they missed on the river, they'd probably fold, watch Josh rake in all the chips, and wonder why they "never catch the right cards".

Now a more skillful player would ANTICIPATE what's about to happen and would probably call to see the turn, but then fold if Josh bet again. And of course, there are always the tight players who would never have played the 5-6 of diamonds in the FIRST place.

So what do I do?

Remember, I'm sitting on 5-6 of diamonds. The board reads: 4d, 9s, 7d. And Josh, who made a strong pre-flop raise, just bet \$20 after the flop. Here's the answer...I RAISE. Not some wimpy raise either; I raise him \$40 more to play.

Most players would NEVER think to raise in this situation, but here's what I've done:

1. I've TAKEN CONTROL of the hand and bought myself a FREE CARD when it matters most. You see, if Josh calls the \$40 raise, when the turn hits he'll CHECK to me. (Remember what I said at the beginning?)

That means I get to see the turn and river for a total of \$40 more, which is a BARGAIN compared to what Josh's next bet would have cost me.

2. I'm representing possible trips. Josh now has to wonder whether I called his pre-flop raise with a low pocket pair and just caught trips on the flop. Or I could be sitting on a high pocket pair and I'm not "phased" by the flop.

3. I've raised the stakes of the hand in MY favor...not his. You see, if I just call Josh's bets and then hit a 8 of diamonds on the turn, what will happen?

Well, Josh will SEE the three diamonds and the straight possibility, and he probably won't make any more huge bets or call any huge bets from me.

This way, I've raised the stakes \$40, which increases MY CHANCES at winning an even bigger pot than if I had just called. Make sense?

And last but not least...

4. I've given myself a way to WIN even if I don't catch the straight or flush. Now I get to see Josh's reaction to my \$40 raise. If I sense weakness, I may decide to BLUFF and buy this pot if I don't catch my flush or straight.

If I only call Josh's bets the whole way, he wouldn't fall for this type of bluff. But my raise of \$40 will sure get him thinking.

OKAY, BACK TO THE HAND...

Josh shuffles his chips around for a moment, and looks back down at his cards. It turns out he's holding an A9; so he's got top pair with the kicker. A good hand, but not a monster by any means.

He calls.

The next card comes out. Queen of spades. No help. Josh checks.

THAT WAS IMPORTANT. This is my "free card" opportunity that my \$40 raise bought. Now I'm in complete control and feeling pretty good about this hand. I can check and see the river for free. I've still got a lot of outs here. Or I can bet STRONG and try to scare Josh away.

"One hundred dollars", I say, as I push a huge stack of red chips into the middle. True, I only have a queen high and the beginner card player may think this type of play is crazy. But then again, that's why they're called "BEGINNERS".

Anyway, Josh thinks for a minute and then mucks it. I rake in a beautiful pot. Even if Josh had called, I still had a good number of outs. And if I missed, I could have tried to bluff again. Now think back to when the flop came out. After Josh bet \$20, what if I had called? (And not raised.)

Well, here's what would have happened...

The queen would have come and Josh would've immediately fired a huge \$80 bet. I would've had to either call the \$80 to see the river, or muck my beautiful straight flush draw. And THAT, my friend, is why it's CRUCIAL that you TAKE CONTROL of the game.

This type of technique allows you to truly DOMINATE THE TABLES and win more money playing poker. Period.

That's what makes Texas Hold'em such a fascinating game. There are just so many scenarios that can occur, and so many special "tricks" and "techniques" you can use to beat the competition.

## How to Play Big Slick in Late Position

Big Slick has the reputation for being a MONSTER hand. A hand that most players LOVE to get dealt. And with good reason. After all, it's got a TON of potential. Think about it:

If you have Big Slick and a king or ace hit the board, you've automatically got top pair. And not only that, but you've also automatically got the highest kicker possible. And Big Slick is connected, which means it has the POTENTIAL to become the highest STRAIGHT on the board.

Then again, if you're an experienced poker player, then you KNOW that Big Slick is often HIGHLY OVERRATED by most amateurs and beginners.

Because if you REALLY think about it, Big Slick by itself is NOT a good hand. By itself, it's an ace high with a king. Period.

It can be beat by just about ANYTHING from a flush to a 3-of-a-kind to a pair of deuces. What Big Slick has is the POTENTIAL to be a great hand, but that doesn't mean it IS a great hand. And this distinction is VERY important in order to learn how to play your AK properly.

If you play Big Slick the RIGHT way, you can win with it at least 75% of the time. If you play it the WRONG way, you'll end up losing all your chips and whining about your bad beat. The decision is yours.

So, let's approach our strategy for Big Slick with LATE positioning; which is the equivalent to GOOD positioning, as you know.

Since the hand can get run down easily, your strategy is to GET RID of as many players as possible BEFORE THE FLOP. In other words, SCARE AWAY everyone who doesn't have a pair or face cards. If you let too many players stay in, someone with rags is bound to catch great cards on the flop and steal your chip stack. But if you go up against players with face cards, then YOU have the advantage and the odds are in YOUR favor.

This is accomplished, of course, with a pre-flop raise, which will also give you control over the table as you'll see in a minute. Let's use a real-life hand I played to demonstrate. This is from last night, actually.

I was in a \$1-2 no-limit game and got AK on the button. Drew was first to act and made it \$7 to play. The action went around the table and every single one of the next five players called. Now the action was to me.

How would you handle this situation? Call, raise, or fold?

The correct answer is RAISE. "Make it another \$50", I say. And here's why:

Let's say I call. That means there are SEVEN guys in the hand. Amateurs might say, "Oh, that means there's more money in the pot."

NO. WRONG. With seven players, I am virtually GUARANTEED to have my AK run down... because EVEN IF I catch a king or ace, there's a good chance someone else will hit a flush, straight, trips, or two pair. And besides, CALLING doesn't give me any idea where I stand in the hand, and it doesn't allow me to know what to put my opponents on.

So, I make the pre-flop re-raise. The other players fold, and Drew calls. That means I know he has a real hand. He wasn't just bullying the table. It also means he probably doesn't have cowboys or rockets, because if he did he would've come back over the top of me, maybe with an all-in.

So, now I've got a read on my opponent, and I've forced out all the other guys, which means I don't have to worry about someone getting "lucky" on the flop. AND, I've achieved something else here: I've taken control of the table. Instead of Drew coming out firing after the flop, he'll probably check to me to see what I do. This gives me control. If I miss on the flop, I can do one of two things:

1. I can see a free card. Or..
2. If I'm confident with my read on Drew I can try to buy him out by representing a big hand.

And sure enough...the flop hits: 9, 4, 2

What an UGLY flop, right? Actually, I kind of like this flop. Because I'm pretty sure Drew doesn't have any of these cards on the board. He could be holding pocket 9's, but I can't put him on 4's or 2's, because of my strong re-raise before the flop.

I'm putting him on two over cards or a pair. It actually wouldn't surprise me if he has Big Slick, just like me. Anyway, now it's time to find out, because Drew taps his fist against the table and checks to me. Just like I expected. I COULD see a free card here, but I'd rather play this aggressively and find out EXACTLY where I'm at.

If Drew calls a strong bet from me, then he's probably slow-playing trips. If that's the case, I'll back off after the turn card and minimize my losses. I throw out a \$100 black chip with my ace high. Drew looks at his down cards for a few moments and then decides to muck his pocket 8's for the world to see.

"Yea, I had kings", I say as I turn my cards face down for NOBODY to see. Drew replies, "Yup, that's what I put you on" and he nods his head. Little does he know, his 8's had me beat, and I just stole a nice pot.

That's how you play Big Slick the RIGHT way in late position. You've got to:

1. Scare away as many players as you can before the flop.
2. Take control of the board and action.
3. Find out where you're at in the hand.

Even if Drew (or anyone else) came back over the top of me after my pre-flop raise, I'd be okay. Because then I could put my opponent on aces or kings, muck my Big Slick, and live to see another hand without catching a "bad beat."

So, play AK aggressively when you've got good positioning, and back up your pre-flop raise with a post-flop raise, even if you've hit nothing on the board. Of course, you can't play Big Slick like this in every position. This is simply how you play it with good positioning.

### How to Win With Big Slick in Early Position

Let's discuss how to win when you're dealt Big Slick (Ace, King) in an early position. First, let me clarify what is meant by the term "early position". If you're in an early position, it usually means you're one of the first three players to the LEFT of the dealer. Of course, if you're small blind, that means you're almost last to act before the flop, but first to act AFTER the flop.

If you're big blind, that means you're last to act pre-flop, but second to act after the flop. And last but not least, if you're the THIRD player to the left, that means you are the FIRST to act before the flop, and third to act after the flop. This position is also known as "under the gun".

Ok. Enough with the definitions. Re-read those four above paragraphs if you're confused. Otherwise, let's dive into the strategies.

As we discussed a few days ago, Big Slick is a "monster" hand that most players pray for, BUT it can actually be a TERRIBLE hand for you if you don't know what you're doing. It can be terrible if...

1. You go "all in" (or bet a substantial pile of chips) before the flop, but then don't catch anything. Or...
2. You catch an ace or king on the flop, bet a lot of chips, but then get run down by another player who gets a better hand.

Since even a pair of DEUCES can beat Big Slick by itself, I recommend that you don't go all-in with Big Slick before the flop. It's just too risky. Because there are so many hands that can beat you. Going all-in with Big Slick pre-flop is the equivalent to saying, "Hey, I'm not that confident I can win this game, so I'm going to HOPE to get LUCKY and risk all my chips on the CHANCE that an ace or king hits, or that my ace high wins."

Obviously that's not ALWAYS the case, but for the most part it's pretty accurate. The second scenario, getting run down by another player even though you hit your ace or king, can be EXTREMELY frustrating.

For example, let's say you're holding Big Slick and the flop comes out A, K, 5. You're obviously excited because you flopped top two pair, but what if Marty, that new guy who just learned how to play Hold'em a couple weeks ago, is holding a pair of fives?

Chances are; he's going to clean you out for all your chips. Your strategy then should be to DECREASE the chances that someone at the table (like Marty) is going to get lucky on the flop. And you do that by making sure they don't even SEE the flop in the first place, by making a pre-flop raise or strong bet.

The ultimate goal should be to create "heads-up" action before the flop when you get dealt Big Slick. Force players like Marty to fold before the flop hits. That will prevent the "bad beats" and allow you to focus on a single opponent. The most difficult way to win with Big Slick is if you're in an early position AND you don't catch anything good on the flop.

Here's how I play it:

Let's say I'm "under the gun" (first to act before the flop, third player to the left of the dealer) in a no-limit cash game.

I look down to see AK of diamonds. Great hand, terrible positioning. Instead of limping in and letting all the crap hands at the table see the flop, I make a raise as we discussed. "\$15 to play."

Some players will limp-in with AK when they're first to act, hoping someone ELSE will make the raise for them (which gives them the chance to re-raise).

I don't like this strategy. Because if someone else makes the initial raise, that means they get control over the table and betting.

For example, let's say I limp-in and Josh makes it \$25 to play. Everyone else folds and then I come back over the top of him for \$100 more. Without hesitation, Josh goes all-in and pushes in his stack of \$350 in chips. See how this could get ugly?

Josh may be holding pocket 9's for all I know, which WILL BEAT me if I don't catch the right cards on the flop. Then again, he might be holding a pair of face cards or maybe just A, J. No matter what, I really don't care. Because I don't want to risk all my chips on AK and leave my night up to chance. As much as possible, I want to be in FULL CONTROL of my destiny at the card table.

There will inevitably be players who are more reckless with their chips and these are the players who rely on LUCK more than SKILL. But not me, I know I can beat the game, which is why I don't limp-in here when I'm first to act with Big Slick.

OK, back to the hand...

"\$15 to play", I repeat. I'm hoping to get just one caller; or two at the most. The action goes around the table, and everyone mucks their hands except for Drew. He splashes the pot and calls.

So, I've created heads-up action and taken control of the betting exactly as I wanted to do with my monster hand in this position.

The flop hits: 2h, 9d, 7s. I'm first to act. Obviously, this flop is terrible... the best thing I've got going is a possible runner/runner diamonds draw.

So what do I do now?

Should I check my ace high?

No. This is where you should fire AGAIN, and continue to play aggressively...

Because the flop probably didn't help Drew either.

If I CHECK, Drew will sense my weakness and might try to steal the pot. My bet will give him the impression I'm on an over-pair and have the best hand, so he'll probably muck his cards now. Even if he calls, I'm still in good shape. If the turn card doesn't help me, I'll back down and minimize my losses. I DON'T want to dig myself in a deeper hole and try to bluff it out.

Or I may catch my top pair on the turn or river and be able to win that way.

So no matter what happens, I'm not risking too many chips and I'm putting myself in a great position to win the hand.

Now, rewind for just a moment. What if my \$15 pre-flop bet had multiple callers?

Having multiple players in the game would have increased the odds that someone actually benefited from the 2, 9, 7 flop.

Which means I would NOT have made a strong bet after the flop. Instead, I would have backed down and just checked. If someone else bet strong, I would have mucked my A, K and lived to see another hand.

So THAT is how you play Big Slick under the worst of circumstances... with scraps on the board and bad positioning... and STILL have a great chance at winning a nice pot.

Of course... the chances of getting AK are just 1 in 83. And the odds of getting AK suited are just 1 in 332. And that doesn't even factor in the odds related to your positioning.

## How to Win WITHOUT Great Cards

331 to 1.

Those are the odds AGAINST getting dealt an Ace and a King suited before the flop.

220 to 1.

Those are the odds AGAINST getting pocket Aces before the flop. Monster hands like these are GREAT when you catch them and you'll definitely have a good shot at raking in a killer pot.

But the fact is, when you play poker you WON'T catch monsters very often.

The same is true with wired pairs and suited connectors...

When you hit with one of these hands, your opponents will usually NEVER see it coming...

And once again, you'll rake in a nice pot.

But how many times do you get hands like these AND hit the right cards? Not too often. ANYONE, no matter what their skill level, can win a pot with a monster.

The SECRET to poker success, my friend, is learning how to win hands WITHOUT having the "nuts" or great cards.

It's what separates the AVERAGE card players from the poker LEGENDS.

So how do you play hands that are DECENT, but not GREAT? Hands like QJ, J10, 9-10, Q10, K10, K9, and so on.

If you FOLD every time you see cards like these, you're playing too tight. Because you're going to see these types of hands A LOT.

To WIN... consistently... at Texas Hold'em poker, you've got to learn how to WIN with hands that AREN'T great.

But how?

I'll tell you how...

The key is POSITIONING. That's the magic word. In Texas Hold'em, positioning is EVERYTHING.

You can see a hand in one position and the right play is to FOLD it... And then see the SAME EXACT HAND in a different position and the right play is to make a BET.

For example, let's say you're in an 8-player no-limit Hold'em game... where the blinds are \$1-2.

You're first to act before the flop (a.k.a. "under the gun") and look down at your cards:

Queen and a jack... offsuit. What do you do?

Playing the hand shouldn't cross your mind.

Calling with a Q, J offsuit can easily turn into TROUBLE when first to act.

Because SOMEONE at your 8-man table is probably going to throw out a pre-flop raise.

Think about it.

How many times does the action go COMPLETELY around the table before the flop without SOMEONE making a raise? Not too often.

Even if it's just a small \$5 raise, you don't want to pay \$7 with your Q, J offsuit just to see the flop.

After all, even if you HIT top pair, you're STILL going to be one of the first to act, if not THE first. What then?

Your kicker isn't too strong, and you don't have a read on the other players.

It's just a bad situation to be in.

Which is why I muck "decent" hands like these when I'm under the gun or in an early position.

And you should too.

Now let's say you're fourth to act before the flop (sixth position at the table) and you peek down at a Queen, 10 offsuit.

Your positioning isn't great, but it's not too bad either. The action is on you to call the \$2 big blind. What do you do?

Instead of mucking, this is where I'd limp in and call the blind.

The key is to pay \$2. Don't raise it. You've got a good chance at seeing the flop for just \$2 and you won't have to act first after the flop hits.

Even if someone throws out a small pre-flop raise, you can call and see a cheap flop without getting into too much trouble.

Now let's say you're on the BUTTON (dealer position) with a Queen, Jack offsuit. Four of your opponents limp-in and the action is to you.

What's the play?

This is where I'd make a pre-flop raise. Nothing crazy... just a small \$5 that's not going to get me into trouble.

And I'll do this with any good positioning, not just when I'm on the button.

Here's why:

First, it gets rid of the "crap" hands at the table. Anytime you can force the scraps at the table to fold, your odds of winning the pot increase. (The reason you don't want them in the hand is in case one of them gets lucky on the flop.)

Second, I get to see what my opponents do AFTER the flop... before I have to act.

This is a HUGE advantage. I can get a read on everyone else's hand... and NO ONE gets a read on mine. Use this advantage EVERY chance you get.

And third, my bet gives me relative control over the table and is likely to result in a free card if I want one.

Let's say the flop hits 9,10,2 (an open-ended straight draw with my QJ).

There's a good chance my opponents will CHECK, because they anticipate another bet from me.

So I'm in a win-win situation...

I can throw out a semi-bluff bet or I can see a free card by checking.

Getting control over the board also puts me in a position to buy the pot if I sense weakness at the table.

Which brings me to another point. Positioning is a fundamental part of Texas Hold'em, but you had better have a good read on your opponents in order to win the hand.

And you'd better know the right size to make your bets and what to do if there's a draw on the board and how to bluff if you get into trouble.

How to Get a Read on Your Opponents

The BIGGEST MISTAKE you can make while playing no-limit Texas Hold'em is to focus too much on your cards.

If you're playing draw, stud, limit, or any other form of poker, then it's important to concentrate on MATHEMATICAL ODDS and PROBABILITIES.

But no-limit Hold'em is different. MUCH different. You can be a math WIZARD and know the odds of every possible scenario in the deck, but it won't do you much good at the no-limit table.

Hell, you can even know how to COUNT CARDS, but I'll still knock your socks off and take your rent money if you face me heads-up.

Because no-limit Hold'em is a game of PSYCHOLOGY. To win, you must learn how to play the PLAYERS, not the CARDS.

The reason no-limit Hold'em is so different from other types of poker is because it's possible to bluff HUGE pots and go ALL-IN.

And the only thing that separates YOU from your OPPONENT is just two down-faced cards that are dealt at the beginning of each hand.

That's it. Just two cards.

The reality is this...

No-limit Hold'em is PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE, and if you want to WIN, you've got to learn how to get INSIDE THE HEADS of your opponents.

You've got to know them better than they know themselves and predict their every move.

But how?

There are a lot of strategies and techniques around identifying "poker tells".

A poker TELL is a habit or mannerism of a player that is a "giveaway" to the strength or weakness of their hand.

Like a twitch of the nose, a crack in the voice, a shaky leg, or a rapid pulse.

Tells like these are IMPORTANT.

And you must learn how to spot them and take advantage of them.

But there's one tell that's MUCH, MUCH MORE IMPORTANT and it has NOTHING to do with body language, voice, or mannerisms.

In fact, this tell is technically not even classified as a "tell". But it WILL give you a read on your opponents.

What am I talking about? BETTING.

Stay with me here.

BETTING is the KEY to getting a read on your opponents.

It is through BETTING that you find out the strength or weakness of another player's hand, which is how you WIN in no-limit Texas Hold'em.

BETTING is how you get inside your the heads of your opponents. Especially the ones you've never met or played against before.

Now, I'm not talking about just ANY kind of betting. I'm talking about the bets YOUR OPPONENTS make IN RESPONSE TO THE CONDITIONS AT THE TABLE.

Think about online poker, as an example.

How do the pros quickly and consistently win at ONLINE POKER where you can't even SEE your opponents?

That's right. The answer is BETTING.

You've got to watch and STUDY what each player does in response to the action. This is true no matter WHERE you play no-limit Hold'em, whether it's online, at home, in a casino, or in a tournament.

Now notice how I said IN RESPONSE to the action. This is the key. Because you can't get a good read on an opponent every time they make a bet.

The best time to get a read is when they have to REACT TO ACTION AT THE TABLE. When they have to make a DECISION. Because this is the time when they're NOT in control of the hand... For example, let's say the action is to Drew to call a \$10 bet. Does he fold, call, or raise? Does he hesitate, or immediately make a decision?

If he makes a raise, he's representing a good hand, and takes control of the action.

If he hesitates and then calls, there's a good chance his hand is weak.

If he immediately calls, he may have something or be on a draw. You get the point.

You can get a read on your opponent when your opponent has to REACT TO ACTION.

Unfortunately, your opponent won't always HAVE TO react to action at the table.

In fact, your opponent will often take CONTROL of the action and force YOU to make a decision.

Which means everyone will get the chance to get a read on YOU... And that is NOT what you want. So how do you counter this?

How do take control of the action AND force your opponent to a decision?

The answer is this: FEELER BETS. Feeler bets are bets made in order to "see where you're at" in the hand.

They're named "FEELER bets" because they allow you to "feel" out the strength or weakness of your opponents.

And they're a CRUCIAL part of becoming good at Texas Hold'em poker. Let me demonstrate with an example.

Let's say you're fifth to act in a \$1-2 no-limit game at a 10-man table.

You've got over \$200 in your stack. You look down at pocket nines. You're not too excited about your position right here, but you've been on fire the whole game. The action is on to you to call the blinds.

This is where you make a FEELER BET which would be a pre-flop raise in this situation.

"\$10 to play", you say as you splash the pot with ten white \$1 chips. This feeler bet accomplishes four things:

1. You get to find out who's strong and who's not.
2. You get control of the action at the table.
3. You're not allowing your opponents to get a good read on you.
4. You're getting a read on your opponents by forcing them to make a decision.

Okay, so let's say the action around the table continues as Nathan and Greg- who are both sitting left of you- call your raise.

The next few players muck their hands, and then Cindy, who is just to your right, jumps into the action and calls.

You really didn't want this much action with your pocket nines.

But hey, you've built up a nice pot, and you might get lucky and spike on the flop. Plus, everyone simply called your pre-flop raise (no one came back over the top), which is a good sign.

The flop hits: K, 7, 4. Not too great of a flop for you, but not that bad either.

You would feel a lot better off without that King on the board.

Cindy, first to act right now, taps her hand on the table and checks to you.

This isn't surprising, since you took control before the flop. So the action is to you. This is where most poker players would CHECK. Big mistake. Right now, you have absolutely NO WAY of knowing who has the best hand at the table.

And that is PRECISELY why you must make a feeler bet. Think about it:

If you CHECK, you're portraying weakness to your three opponents, letting them know that the flop didn't help you.

Which gives one of THEM the opportunity to make a bet or try to buy the pot.

And you still won't know where you stand.

So instead of checking, you throw out a small FEELER BET that isn't going to get you into much trouble.

This isn't a bluff.

This is just a bet to find out who has a real hand and who doesn't. And it keeps you in a position to WIN the pot.

"Thirteen dollars", you say as you push in a stack of chips.

Remember, this FEELER BET isn't going to get you into trouble. You're not going broke if you lose this pot, because you've got over \$200 in your stack of chips.

And this is the ONLY WAY you've got a chance at winning this hand. Nathan and Greg both immediately muck their cards. The action goes to Cindy now, who thinks for a few moments while peeking at her hand a second time. Finally, she calls your bet.

Your feeler bet worked well. You got rid of two players and you've got a read on Cindy now.

Because she called, you think she might be on a draw or might have the King without a decent kicker. The turn card is an Ace. This is GREAT for you.

It's great because you made that feeler bet. Because you're confident that Cindy is NOT holding an Ace. If she had Big Slick, she would've made a pre-flop raise, rather than simply limping-in and calling your feeler bets.

She checks again.

This is where you can take the pot down with a real bet.

"Forty dollars", you say as you push in a stack of chips.

Cindy folds, of course, and you rake in a nice pot all of which was SET UP through your two feeler bets.

If you hadn't made your feeler bets, there's no way you would've won the hand.

Because you wouldn't have scared out the other players, you wouldn't have created good positioning for yourself and you wouldn't have had a read on Cindy.

This is why I make feeler bets all the time and why you should too.

I throw out "feelers" with top pair, second pair, bottom pair, or draws.

These bets are the only way I know whether I have the best hand at any particular point in time.

Sure, I get re-raised often. And that's when I fold the hand and lose the bet I just put in.

BUT THAT'S OKAY.

Because I found out EXACTLY WHAT I NEEDED TO KNOW.

If you get re-raised after a feeler bet, then you know you probably don't have the best hand at the table, so muck it.

Losing the few dollars you made with your feeler bet is perfectly fine because it's MUCH BETTER than just CALLING bet after bet without getting a read on your opponents and then losing after all the cards get flipped over.

That's a SUCKER way to lose a pot. And you'll go broke that way. Plus, my feeler bets give me CONTROL and create ACTION at the table.

If a nine had come out at the flop in the example above, I wouldn't have needed to slow-play it. And I wouldn't have been worried about having a monster and not winning any money with it (which happens to a LOT of amateurs) because I had already created action with my FEELER BET.

So the next time you play no-limit Texas Hold'em, throw out feeler bets consistently and use them to your advantage.

Nothing too big, just enough to get a read on your opponents and find out where you're at in each hand.

You'll IMMEDIATELY realize the POWERFUL EFFECT that feeler bets will add to your game.

Because you'll have HUGE stacks of chips in front of you at the end of the night. While EVERYONE ELSE will just be sitting there, with their jaws wide open, wondering how in the world YOU BEAT THEM SO BADLY.

## How to Win Against Anyone

The trick to WINNING POKER is to always be at least ONE STEP AHEAD of your opponents. To be one step ahead, it helps to understand the COMMON EXPERIENCES and thoughts that every poker player goes through.

It seems to me that there are three distinct LEVELS of poker intelligence. Knowing which level your opponent falls under can be a MAJOR ADVANTAGE for you at the table.

I call these the "Three Stages of Sophistication".

As you read these, think about the guys you play cards with.

Think about what level they're at AND think about which stage YOU ARE IN right now. It will help tremendously.

Here they are...

### STAGE 1: Analyzing the CARDS.

This is when a player focuses his mental energies strictly on the cards.

This is someone who waits to play only premium hands, and perhaps spends a lot of time calculating "pot odds".

Usually, this type of guy plays TIGHT, and is fairly "see through". He'd be better off playing LIMIT Texas Hold'em rather than NO-LIMIT.

### STAGE 2: Analyzing the PLAYERS.

This is the person who understands that to win at no-limit Hold'em, you've got to PLAY THE PLAYERS, not just the cards.

This is the guy who sits there all night and STUDIES your every move. He's convinced that there are "secret tells" behind every player. And he'll do ANYTHING to figure them out.

You can spot a player like this just by watching him when the cards come out. If he's watching YOU, rather than looking at his cards, then he's probably in the second stage of sophistication.

### STAGE 3: Analyzing how players will analyze YOU.

Stage 1 players are easy to beat. You can bluff them out of big pots, rile them up, and then sit back until you catch a monster and put them all in.

It's like taking candy from a baby.

Stage 2 players are harder to beat, because they understand the Cardinal Rule of no-limit Hold'em, which is to PLAY THE PLAYERS, NOT THE CARDS.

You can't always push them around at the table, which means you have to devise a different strategy.

Which is why Stage 3 is so powerful.

Because when you're a Stage 3 player, you KNOW that the Stage 2 player is analyzing you. And you simply stay ONE STEP AHEAD of him.

A Stage 3 player is someone who gets pocket Aces before the flop and takes FOREVER to call a pre-flop raise.

Why?

Because by taking his time and making it LOOK like he's contemplating a decision, the Stage 3 player knows HIS OPPONENTS WILL THINK THEY CAN BLUFF HIM out of the hand.

Sure enough, after the flop one of the STAGE 2 players will go all-in, trying to buy the pot, not knowing they just fell right into the Stage 3 player's trap.

To be a Stage 3 player, you've got to ADOPT YOUR STYLE OF PLAY ACCORDING TO WHAT THE OTHER PLAYERS THINK ABOUT YOU. That's the key.

Here's an example that happened to me recently.

I was in a local game with a bunch of friends and players who know me well.

I've built up a reputation in my town for being an AGGRESSIVE player at the table... who's always pushing around the action and throwing out feeler bets.

In addition to being aggressive, people also know me as a BLUFFER. My buddies have seen me push my entire stack into the middle on a 2-7 offsuit...when I can't even beat the board.

And they've seen this happen MORE THAN ONCE.

This reputation has a TREMENDOUS IMPACT on my strategies at the table. And I can use this "image" to my advantage.

In this particular example, I was dealt pocket 3's while on the button. Three of my opponents limped in and the action was to me.

I liked my positioning, so I decided to throw out a pre-flop raise in hopes of spiking a three.

"Make it \$20 to play", I said.

This was a rather large bet with respect to pot size, but I did it for a reason. I wanted to either STEAL THE BLINDS by forcing everyone to fold, or create heads-up action... which would give my small pocket pair better odds at winning.

Anyway, Blake was the only player to call my bet, so I was feeling pretty good about my chances.

The flop came out: A, 4, 3 all different suits.

Fantastic. I just spiked my three... which gives me trips. AND there's an Ace on the board.

Blake checks.

Now here's where I have to make a decision. Do I slow-play the hand by checking right behind him? The answer is NO. Because like I said, I have a reputation with these guys. They know I bluff a lot, so they'll usually give me a lot of action.

So instead of slow-playing, I actually OVER-BET the pot in this situation.

Blake called my large pre-flop raise... and now there's an ace on the board. So he's probably sitting on a hand like AJ or AQ and thinks that HE is slow-playing ME.

"Seventy-five to play", I say in a very arrogant tone. (This was a large bet for this particular game.)

Blake- who is a Stage 2 player- thinks I'm pushing him around. He's sitting on about \$300 in chips and decides to go all-in.

EXACTLY what I wanted.

I call, and throw over my threes. He throws over A9 off-suit. And sure enough, I took the pot down. All because I was ONE STEP AHEAD of him. I KNEW that he was analyzing me and putting me on a bluff, so I reeled him in by "over-betting" the pot with a touch of arrogance.

Of course, I didn't always know how to do this.

I can remember a hand I once played COMPLETELY WRONG on a riverboat in St. Louis.

This was when I was first really "getting into" poker. The guys on the riverboat didn't know me...so they weren't familiar with my style of play.

They didn't know I was a very aggressive player who often bluffed. (Which I was, even back then.)

It was the second or third hand of the night and I was dealt pocket 6's. One of my opponents made it \$10 to play and I was the only one to call his bet.

I spiked my six on the flop... which means I had three-of-a-kind.

My opponent was first to act and threw out another \$10 bet. The action was to me.

Unfortunately, I was only focused on my cards and my opponent. I was between levels 1 and 2 of the "Three Stages of Sophistication."

I figured he had a strong hand since he'd raised the pot twice and I was excited as hell about my three 6's. So without hesitation, I made a raise. "I raise you \$40", I said in the same "pushy" tone I'd use with my buddies.

My opponent thought about it for a moment and then mucked his cards. I had COMPLETELY misplayed the hand and all I made with my monster was a lousy 20 bucks.

The MISTAKE I'd made was failing to adjust my style of play to WHAT MY OPPONENT WAS THINKING ABOUT ME.

Back at home, I would've gotten a call with my \$40 raise. But not on this riverboat. Because on the riverboat, my opponents didn't know me. They didn't have a "read" on my style and we were only a few hands into the game.

For all they knew, I could've been an extremely TIGHT player just like most of the young guys they show up on the riverboats.

Anyway, the lesson I learned is this:

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR OPPONENTS ARE THINKING.

Do they see you as tight, aggressive, reckless, bad, good, crazy?

See the game through the eyes of your opponents, and you'll be able to win against ANYONE, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

A lot of pros will tell you that the only way to master these skills is through EXPERIENCE.

But don't take this advice too seriously.

I've known guys who have played poker for 40 years and STILL can't play worth a damn.

And I've known guys who pick the game up and after ONE YEAR are making a FULL-TIME INCOME in card rooms across the country. The secret is NOT experience. The secret is KNOWLEDGE.

What matters is how far along you are in your "Poker Intelligence".

If you're young, and you understand the strategies and techniques I share, then you can have a MAJOR ADVANTAGE over your opponents because a lot of guys will underestimate you.

If you're older or more experienced the exact OPPOSITE is true. You'll be at a clear DISADVANTAGE if you're up against someone with a higher POKER IQ than you.

The solution, no matter what your age or experience level, is to KEEP READING MORE and STUDYING MORE about the game.

Discover the strategies and exact STEP-BY-STEP TECHNIQUES to follow for different scenarios. You'll be AMAZED at how quickly and easily you can start winning more pots and moving up to the higher stakes games. And before you know it, you could be making some SERIOUS CASH playing no-limit Texas Hold'em poker.

### How to Beat the Short Stack in Heads-Up Poker

Have you ever been in a heads-up poker match and realized just how much DIFFERENT one-on-one poker is from "regular" poker?

Most players learn strategies for winning no-limit Texas Hold'em when there are 4, 6, 8, or 12 players at the table. Not 2. Yet, you can't win a game or a tournament without MASTERING heads-up play. In fact, heads-up play is perhaps the MOST IMPORTANT aspect of no-limit Hold'em and here's why:

If you can't win at heads-up poker, you'll never come in first place. Period. And I don't know about you, but I play to WIN. Not to come in second place.

Most players, when they make it to a heads-up match are COMPLETELY CLUELESS and don't know what to do. Especially when it comes to DEFENDING a chip lead. Why is that? I think there are three main reasons.

1. Most players only make it to a heads-up match once in awhile, so they have very little EXPERIENCE playing poker one-on-one.
2. The strategies for starting hands, odds, tells, and betting are so RADICALLY DIFFERENT for heads-up poker versus say, at an 8-man table that most players don't have the KNOWLEDGE needed.
3. Most players don't get to watch and study poker GREATS play heads-up Hold'em, because even the greats will only make it to a heads-up match once in awhile.

With that said, let me share with you a rather EMBARRASSING story of how I got "schooled" in a heads-up match earlier in my poker career and how I learned the "secrets" to winning in heads-up poker.

I had fought my way through a 100-man tournament, and found myself heads-up with someone named Brandon.

Brandon was (and is) a very skilled poker player who loves to push the action but, at the time, I wasn't intimidated by him. Because I thought I had this baby in the bag. You see, I had been catching monster after monster in this tournament, and I had JUST finished knocking out two players at once with trip kings.

My chip lead was HUGE. 10 to 1 over Brandon, actually.

I was on a roll.

I had over \$100,000 in chips, versus Brandon's \$10,000, with the blinds at \$500/\$1000.

This thing is OVER, right?

The first hand I looked at was Q, 9 while I was small blind. I limped in, and the action went to Brandon.

"All in," he said. I folded.  
I didn't want to give him the chance to double up.

The next hand was K, 4 offsuit. Once again, Brandon went all-in.

I folded again, and Brandon raked in more blinds.

The next hand I was dealt was A, 4. Brandon goes all-in AGAIN. This time, I called. He threw over pocket 4's. The flop, turn, and river come out: K, 7, 9, 2, Q  
So I didn't hit my ace, and Brandon doubled up.

By this time, he was sitting on \$24,000 in chips, and I was at \$86,000. The next few hands played out and Brandon continued to go all-in time after time and I continued to fold hands like K, 7, Q, 9, J, 8, and so on.

I just didn't want to risk doubling him up AGAIN with such "mediocre" hands. But before you knew it, it didn't matter. Because I'd let Brandon right back into the game. He had taken about 10 straight pots from me.

I was frustrated as all hell, and went on tilt. As you probably guessed, I blew the rest of my chip lead and lost the match.

Honestly, I think this CHOKE should go down in the history books right next to the Yankees versus Red Sox in the 2004 ALCS.

Just writing this newsletter makes me SICK to my stomach.

Anyway, what's REALLY IMPORTANT is what I did AFTER I lost that tournament.

I called up my buddy Drew and I told him he was going to come over and play in me \$20 heads-up games.

I think Drew could hear the frustration (and DESPERATION) in my voice so he came right over.

We started playing at 7 P.m. and didn't finish until well after 5 A.M. in the morning. We completed OVER 50 GAMES THAT NIGHT.

Now let me tell you, I wouldn't trade that night for ANY other experience in my poker career.

It changed EVERYTHING for me. And here's why:  
Because I crammed in YEARS of heads-up experience into that one night.

I learned how to play with a big chip lead, how to play when I was short-stacked, how to "lean" on my opponent with a small chip lead...and so on.

And since then, I've done this same exercise with TONS of other poker players to keep my skills FRESH and to master the techniques needed to win against different playing styles.

When I was up against Brandon in that tournament, I had made a TON of mistakes. You see, when you have a big chip lead in heads-up action, the first secret is YOU MUST ATTACK.

To get a perspective on this, think about how you play when you're the SHORT STACK. You're prepared to go all-in as soon as possible, right?

Well, you must use this to your ADVANTAGE when you're the big stack, and PUT YOUR OPPONENT ALL-IN right away rather than the other way around. When you have a big chip lead, YOU must be the one to create "coin toss" situations and fast.

A coin-toss situation is when both players have virtually equal odds... and the winning hand is determined by whatever the flop, turn, and river cards are. In heads-up poker, any starting hand with a FACE CARD is playable. Or any pocket pair. It's that simple.

If you've got a big chip lead on your opponent and he CHECKS or LIMPS-IN (calls the blinds), then you should IMMEDIATELY put him all-in.

He wouldn't be checking or limping-in if he had ANYTHING DECENT at all. If he folds, you've stolen the blinds from him, which is crucial. If he calls, you've created a "coin-toss" situation.

Odds are you'll win at least one out of every two coin toss situations. Or at the very least, you'll win one out of three.

Here's a basic summary of the "rules" you should follow when playing heads-up poker with a huge chip lead. When I say "huge", I'm talking about 10 to 1 or more.

Of course, you won't START with a 10:1 chip lead very often (like I did against Brandon), but you will frequently BECOME the 10:1 chip leader in a heads-up match if you're a skilled player. And that's the exact moment when you MUST PULL THE TRIGGER AND WIN THE GAME. If you don't, the chip stacks can quickly even out again and you may lose your chance forever.

Anyway... here are the RULES you should follow:

1. Any starting hand with a face card or any pocket pair is good.
2. You should either FOLD or go ALL-IN every time. Nothing else.
3. Force COIN-TOSS situations. In other words, leverage the 50/50 ODDS as much as possible. Do this two or three times and you will almost always win the match.
4. If you're playing against a tight player, it will be even easier. Keep going all-in on just about every hand and let the blinds eat him to death.

Read and re-read those four principles and you'll be prepared the next time you make it to a heads-up match.

In the meantime, you should IMMEDIATELY do two things:

1. Call a friend or poker buddy and invite him over to play you heads-up. Put \$5 or even just \$1 on each game, it doesn't matter. The point is to play game after game after game in a heads-up setting. Play for as long as you possibly can.

When you're done, call a different friend and do the same thing again. And then do it again next week. And keep doing this over and over. Trust me, your poker skills will SKYROCKET when you follow this simple exercise.

### A Special Technique for Spotting a Bluff

Let me show this great new technique I've discovered for quickly spotting a bluff. I call it the "Question-Mark Check". This technique will IMMEDIATELY help you sense weakness in your opponents and sniff out bluffs at the poker table.

"Sensing weakness" means when you get the feeling your opponent does NOT have a strong hand. This information is extremely valuable, of course, because you can use it to bet aggressively, raise, or even check-raise your opponents out of a pot to win more money.

In order for me to explain this concept, however, I had to create some quick audio examples for you to listen to.

Go to this page to learn all about this brand new strategy and hear the audio (quick loading):

<http://www.Texas-Hold'em-Secrets.com/cmd.php?af=265179>

### Why You Shouldn't Slow Play Big Hands

When you get a MONSTER hand, you should NOT slow play it. And here's why:

"Slow playing" means that you don't bet very much, or bet nothing at all, in hopes that your opponent makes a big bet or tries to bluff. For instance, if you got two aces before the flop and only called the big blind, you would be "slow playing" your aces. Or if you flopped a straight and just "checked", you would be slow playing your straight. Make sense?

The problem is, most amateurs will slow play their big hands, trying to perform the famous check-raise maneuver or trying to "trap" their opponents. But generally speaking, this is NOT a smart strategy for two reasons:

1. Because many poker players will see right through you and fold the hand as soon as you make your move.
2. Because you won't win as much money when you slow play big hands versus betting them.

Let's talk about the first reason. The fact is, slow playing big hands will NOT confuse your opponents. On the contrary, it will actually give them a SOLID READ on you. Why?

BECAUSE MOST PLAYERS SLOW PLAY MONSTER HANDS. That's just the way it is. You may think you're being SLY, but you're really just being STUPID. I think it's actually human INSTINCTS to slow play big hands.

Think about it. When someone gets a big hand, what are they thinking in their heads? They SHOULD be thinking, "How can I get the most money possible out of this pot?" But what they are REALLY thinking is, "How can I make sure everyone doesn't fold and this great hand doesn't go to waste?"

It's the truth.

Especially since it will often take HUNDREDS of hands before you catch a monster. And that's the REAL reason why people slow play big hands. Because they're SCARED TO DEATH that if they make a bet, everyone will fold.

So the point is, it is NOT unique to slow play a monster, in fact, it's what MOST card players do. Especially amateurs. Now let's look at the second reason why slow playing a big hand is a bad idea and that is:

YOU WON'T MAKE AS MUCH MONEY.

The fact is, when you hit a monster, you should bet it. It's that simple. Even if you REALLY ARE thinking to yourself, "How can I get the most money out of this pot?", the answer is to bet it. Not slow play it.

You'll win more chips and make more money by betting your big hands especially when you look at it over a long term perspective.

Let me show you three reasons why:

1. Usually, one of your opponents will have SOMETHING, whether it's a bottom pair, wired pair, a straight draw, whatever.

This means that you'll usually get one or more callers for your monster hand... which is "sure money" going into the pot that you're about to win...

2. When you slow play big hands, you're opening yourself up for BAD BEATS. You shouldn't give your opponents the opportunity to see free cards.

When you let them see free cards, you're just increasing the odds that someone catches a lucky draw... or the one "miracle" card that can bust your hand.

Betting your big hand, instead of letting your opponent get free cards, will narrow down your chances of a bad beat.

3. Your opponents won't see it coming.

Since most players slow play monsters, your opponents will often put you on a BLUFF when you bet your big hand. And if they think you're bluffing, they'll try to come back over the top of you with a raise. This, of course, gives you yet ANOTHER way to make more money from your hand.

Now, let me talk about the EXCEPTION to this rule. And that is when you get a monster that is SO UNBELIEVABLE and you sense complete weakness at the table. The most common example of this is 4-of-a-kind. For instance, let's say the flop came out 8, 8, 2 and you've got pocket 8's. The other two players check to you.

In this case, it will be smart to just check your big hand, rather than betting. BUT, you're not really "slow playing" it. What you're ACTUALLY doing is just letting your opponents "catch up" to you.

Since you know the 8's couldn't have helped either of your opponents, you want to make sure a turn card comes out, and maybe even a river card, in hopes that someone catches SOMETHING.

If the turn card is a face card, that's good news for you. Because it means that someone might have made top pair and will be willing to give you some action in the hand. But besides that, you should NOT slow play your big hands.

Now, let's see a real-life instance where this strategy helped me make more money at the poker table. Just the other night I was at the riverboat and got dealt AQ. My positioning wasn't good, but it was the first decent hand I'd seen in awhile, so I raised the pot to 1,500 in chips.

Only one player called me, the man on the button. This guy (we'll call him "Mike") is a very good card player. He goes to the casinos every single night, 7 days a week, grinding it out and making his living. He's one of the only players at this table that I generally avoid going heads-up with, actually.

So, anyway, the flop comes out, and it's: Q,Q,3

I've flopped a set with an ace kicker. I'm first to act. So what do I do? Most players would slow play, but not me. I come out firing. I hesitate for like two seconds and then push in 4,000 in chips. Mike is thinking there is no possible way I'd bet trips like that, so he's probably putting me on a high wired pair (but not queens). Plus, he might think I'm just representing my pre-flop raise with this bet. So instead of folding, Mike decides to represent the queens out there and act as if HE has the trip queens. "Make it 10,000", he says aggressively.

Of course, now I've got Mike EXACTLY where I want him. I call his bet. The turn card comes...it's a 10. I check, because I know Mike is going to make a big move on me. "Make it 10,000", he says again. And I call again. It turns out Mike is sitting on K,10, which means he's got a pair. This will give him even MORE confidence to try to buy this pot.

Now that I've called his bets, however, he's probably thinking I have Kings or Aces. Which means the only way he can win this pot is to scare me away. The river hits and it's a 3; which gives me the full house. I check again, and Mike goes ALL IN with his huge chip stack, thinking he can bully me out of the hand. I call and I take down a MASSIVE pot from the seasoned rounder.

And it all started because I DIDN'T slow play my trips. Mike didn't put me on the three queens and was willing to push his entire stack into the middle to try to win that pot.

Of course, that won't happen every time you get a big hand. And trying to confuse your opponent is definitely NOT the only reason to not slow play your big hands. The reality is, when you bet your big hands you'll CONSISTENTLY win more pots and make MORE MONEY playing poker.

## Winning Against Players Who Never Fold

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

Hello Rory, First I like to say your information is right on the money. I come across a usual situation a few times when I play 100 dollar buy-in with my friends. I have a few friends that always seem to chase their straights or flushes no matter how bad their odds are. Sometimes they need two cards to complete their hand. I usually bet heavy into these players when I hold top pair or pocket pairs to scare them out, but I can't seem to get them to fold. I usually win, but sometimes I have two of them chasing their straight or flush and when one hits I get pissed and puts me on tilt. I don't know what to do because I want to protect my hand and not let them play for free.

K.F.  
Vancouver, Canada

>>> MY COMMENTS:

The only thing WORSE than a player who never folds is someone who doesn't know how to BEAT a player who never folds. C'mon man, the answer to this is EASY! GO ALL-IN. That's it.

If you've got top pair and your friends at the table are chasing a straight or a flush, put them to a decision for all their chips. You said it yourself, you "usually" win. Any time your odds can be described as "USUALLY", then you need to push your entire stack in the middle. Period.

If they call, great. You'll "usually" win all their money. If they fold, that's good too, because you still won the hand.

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

Hi Rory, I love your emails. Each one of them makes me a better player although, I've got a lot of work to do. I thought I knew how to play, signed up at an online casino and lost it all. Bought your course, re-read it and read your emails and play a lot. Put in cash again a month ago and have won all I lost back. Thanks.

Anyways, regarding slow plays, what if someone else is betting? What I mean is you've hit a big hand (trips, flush or boat on flop). Out comes Drew in front of you and he bets the pot (say there is \$20 in the pot before the flop at a No limit \$1/2 blinds table) so Drew bets \$20. Two others call. You are pretty sure you have them all beat. Do you re-raise or just call? If you just call and Drew bets again, do you re-raise at this point or keep going till the river to push him all in?

Thanks in advance, P.

>>> MY COMMENTS:

I'm glad to hear you won all your money back. Good work. When you've hit a big hand and there are three other players in the hand, you need to be VERY CAREFUL. Chances are, someone's going to be on a draw. Pay close attention to the cards on the board, and figure out what these players are betting with.

If there are two cards of the same suit on the board and you have trips (three-of-a-kind), you need to make a LARGE re-raise or go all in. Because if you DON'T, and someone hits their flush, you're in big trouble. (A flush beats a three-of-a-kind.)

On the other hand, let's say the flop hits: 4c, 9c, Qc

And you've got Ac,2c in your hand. What then? Well, you've flopped what's called the "NUT FLUSH", which means it's the best possible flush (because you have the Ace).

If Drew and two other players at the table are in the hand, I would probably just call here. And I'd be PRAYING that another club hit the board on the turn card or river card. Why?

Because that means someone ELSE will have the flush also, and will probably bet a large amount, ESPECIALLY if they have the King of clubs.

And after that fourth club hits, that's the PERFECT opportunity for you to go all-in and win ALL of their chips since your Ace-high flush will beat their King-high flush.

The point is, if you have a big hand and there's any type of DRAW on the board that can beat you, you want to raise big. Examples of this would be:

- You have the flush but there is a pair on the board, which means someone might make a full house (a.k.a. "boat").
- You have a "set" (three-of-a-kind) but there are two spades on the board and someone might draw a flush.
- You have a straight and someone might make a flush if they get one more card.
- You have two pair and someone might make a straight.
- And so on.

A lot of players would SHY AWAY from betting big when there's a draw on the board, because they're afraid of losing all their chips. But you MUST do the

EXACT OPPOSITE. If you have a big hand, you must BET IT. Because that's the ONLY WAY your opponent is going to fold his hand.

If he folds, you win. If he DOESN'T fold, the odds are in your favor. And the BEST possible thing to do in no-limit Texas Hold'em is to get ALL YOUR CHIPS IN THE MIDDLE when you have the best odds of winning. Period.

Will you win every time?

No.

Will your opponent get lucky sometimes and catch the "miracle" card he needs?

Absolutely.

But that's okay. Because if you let your opponent STAY IN THE HAND and see the turn and river cards without going all-in, you're doing two (stupid) things:

1. You're opening yourself up for a bad beat by giving him the chance to catch his card.
2. If you win (which will USUALLY happen when you have a big hand), you won't win as much money as if you had put him all-in.

In other words, when you don't have the balls to go all-in on a big hand, you'll lose these hands MORE OFTEN and when you DO win, the pot will be smaller anyway.

So heed this advice: GO ALL-IN!

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

Hey man, I appreciate all the newsletters and the awesome wisdom from your book. There is only one thing that I still have trouble with. I guess some days is just not your day. I was playing a friendly no limit game the other night, and just did not win a hand. Every time I hit a hand, I would get beat by a dumb call draw, since I was short stacked. Is there any way around this?

Thanks again, R.P.  
New Jersey

>>> MY COMMENTS:

Sounds like you caught a bad run of cards. It happens to all of us, so don't worry about it. Your question, however, brings up a VERY INTERESTING point. And that is:

Sometimes it's just NOT your day. Oh how true. Once you get a decent amount of poker experience under your belt, you'll notice this phenomenon more and more.

Sometimes, no matter what you do, you just won't be "on".

And what most players do when this happens is keep playing...more and more. Whether that means spending more money online, re-buying into a tournament, or whatever.

What you SHOULD do is just STOP for the night. Period.

Don't bet any more money, because you're just going to be throwing it away.

Even the best poker players I know fall victim to this once in awhile and the REASON is simple:

Poker players don't like to STOP until they've made money.

It's the same way at casinos. People will sit and there and feed the slot machines coin after coin after coin, waiting to WIN before they leave.

It's just plain dumb.

If you're catching bad cards, and you're not winning any hands, just stop playing. Go home, get a good night's rest, watch a movie, or do whatever. Just DON'T play any more poker for the day.

If you took a REALLY bad set of beats, you may even want to take a few days off...or a few WEEKS off. But the point is, when it's not your day, it's not your day. Don't try to "force" it. Don't tell yourself that it's "impossible to keep catching such terrible cards". Trust me, it's possible.

So just accept the fact that it's NOT YOUR DAY and stop playing. In terms of money management, this is probably the number one MOST IMPORTANT rule. Follow this advice and you'll save yourself a lot of headaches (and money) in the future.

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

Rory, How am I supposed to handle a player that consistently out draws me? I have been all in for some huge pots and the same guy, whom is my friend, keeps out drawing me.

I have been ran down with trip aces, trip kings, and a better full house than mine on the river. Am I supposed to fold these hands? I am feeling really frustrated because I feel like I am playing the hands correctly. I remember the bad-beat article you sent me, and I have tried different ways to approach. I have made big bets to get the limpers and such out, but nothing seems to work. I am

avored about 9 to 1 when this crap happens. Do I wait for the odds to hit or is there another way I can pull off these big hands?

C.

>>> MY COMMENTS:

Oh geez. Here we go again. Ok man, first off, take a deep breath.

What your question says to me is that you're being very EMOTIONAL about your poker game.

You wrote things like, "I am feeling very frustrated" and "I feel like I am playing correctly". STOP THAT. The first step for you to start winning more poker is to stop FEELING so much and start THINKING more. Got it?

Secondly, you wrote:

"Am I supposed to fold these hands?" And my answer is: ONLY WHEN YOU'RE AT THE SAME TABLE AS ME.

If you start folding full houses and trip kings, just because you're scared someone is going to out draw you on the river, you should probably QUIT POKER and start playing MONOPOLY instead.

Or maybe checkers, because that requires even LESS INTELLIGENCE. I'm serious. I hate to break it to you, but your FRIEND is not the luckiest person in the world. And he's not always going to keep out drawing you.

Follow these three steps and I can promise you things will get better:

1. Stop FEELING so much and start THINKING.
2. When you have a big hand against this FRIEND of yours, go all-in and put him to a decision for all his chips.

If your odds are 9:1 on this "crap" and he CALLS your all-in bet, you're in good shape. Trust me.

3. Don't play big hands when there's a BIGGER hand out there that can easily beat you.

If your friend goes all in when there are three or four clubs out on the board, you should FOLD your trips. I know, I know, it's tough to fold trips. But he's probably got the flush. So just muck it and live to see another day.

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

We play Texas Hold'em once a week. There is always one player (the same one every week) that bets crazy. No matter what they have they raise the pot \$40, \$80 and sometimes all in. I always fold because if I call the pot gets raised until I finally fold. What should I do?

J. (California)

>>> MY COMMENTS:

Great question. Playing against ultra-aggressive players can be quite difficult, which is part of the reason why I advocate adopting an aggressive style of play.

When you're at the table with someone who plays this way, the key is to TIGHTEN UP UNTIL YOU CATCH A GOOD HAND. Then strike.

For instance, don't limp-in (call the blinds) before the flop against this player. Instead, you should either FOLD (when you don't have a good hand) or RAISE (when you do have a good hand). Don't call.

The only way you'll beat this player is to take a stand and COME BACK OVER THE TOP OF HIM. Put HIM on the defensive. And if he is playing so loose that he re-raises you when you have a good hand, then simply go all-in and wipe him out.

Ultra-aggressive players aren't magically getting fantastic cards every time. Instead, they're simply playing more hands and BLUFFING a lot more. The trick is to sit back, wait for the good hands, and then play right back at him.

Don't FEAR his style. Just realize that he's making it EASY for you to take all his chips as soon as you refuse to let him push you around. Let me know how it goes for you.

\*\*\* QUESTION FROM A READER \*\*\*\*

Rory, I wanted to thank you for your on-line tips. With your help I have become one of the most feared players in the tournaments that I enter. I have won \$28000 since April 1st including 4 first place finishes totaling over \$20000. While it was me that played the hands, I can see your influence in my game. I look forward to your next post.

C.

>>> MY COMMENTS:

Nice! Thanks for keeping me updated on your success. I always appreciate hearing stories like yours.

And of course, I always appreciate ROYALTY CHECKS, so feel free to send me some of that \$28,000 you just won. LOL. Just kidding.

The really great thing about poker is that you REALLY CAN win a ton of money at it, whether that means playing online, in tournaments, in the casinos, or even just in home games.

Especially since there are a lot of "fish" out there who are just getting started and don't quite "get it" when it comes to strategy.

### A Dangerous Mistake That Will Cost You Money

Here is a DANGEROUS MISTAKE that I'd say about 97% of people make when playing Texas Hold'em: THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO PROPERLY PLAY IN FIRST POSITION BEFORE THE FLOP. This is the player immediately to the left of the big blind. It's the first person to act as soon as the cards are dealt.

This position is nicknamed "under the gun". And with good reason, too. Because this is THE most DANGEROUS and COSTLY position at the table. Here's why:

1. When you're under the gun, you are FIRST to act BEFORE the flop and one of the first to act AFTER the flop. This means you DON'T EVEN GET A CHANCE to get a read on the other players before you must make your decisions about betting.
2. The other players can check-raise you, trap you, and get a READ on YOU much more easily when you're in this position at the table.
3. You are more likely to get bluffed, pushed around, out drawn, and BEAT when you're in this position.

Let's examine WHY this table position is so terrible and what proven strategies you can use to play under the gun PROPERLY, so that you don't lose any more money because of it. Here's an example:

Let's say you're under the gun at an 8-man table. You get your cards and look down at an A, 10 off-suit. You decide to limp in, and you call the big blind (50).

The action goes around the table to the other players. The man on the button (Drew) decides to RAISE and make it 300 total to play. You're not sure if this is a position raise, or if he really does have a solid hand. With all the chips already in the pot plus the 50 you already put in from your own stack, you decide to call with your A,10.

There's one other caller, and both the big blind and small blind players fold. The flop comes out: A,3,6 - all different suits.

You've hit top pair. Congratulations. What sucks is that you're FIRST to act, and you know that Drew is probably going to raise you no matter what you do. But you don't have a read on Drew or the other player. If Drew raises, you have to call, right? I mean, you hit top pair in a raised pot.

So, let's say you throw out a "feeler bet", just to see where you're at. Drew calls, and the other guy folds. Hmm, so now you wonder if Drew is SLOW-PLAYING a big hand or if he's just going to bluff at this. The turn comes. It's an 8. You check and now Drew bets 1000.

What now?

You're "pot committed" and you still have top-pair, so you decide to call.

Now the river comes, you check again, and Drew goes all-in for 3000 more. You've already got about 1500 in the pot. You're getting over 2:1 on your money, and you're really not sure if Drew's bluffing or not. So you call and sure enough, Drew throws over his Big Slick (A,K), and rakes in the pot. Ouch.

And the REASON you lost that big pot wasn't just the cards, it was your POSITIONING. If you're under the gun and you hit top pair on the flop, you're just ASKING for trouble. Because it's very difficult to get an accurate read on your opponents when you're first to act.

I mean, let's just look at the many ways you can LOSE your money when playing under the gun:

- If you call the blinds, but then the pot gets raised before the flop and you fold. (You've lost your blinds.)
- If you call the blinds (and maybe a pre-flop raise) and the flop is no help to you. You check, and there's a big bet by another player and you are forced to fold.
- If you bet after the flop but get raised and are forced to fold.
- If you have a good hand but someone else has a MONSTER and slow-plays you. (It's much easier for someone to slow-play you when you're first to act.)

Now multiply all of these LOSSES by the number of times you will be under the gun every single time you play cards.

The result is a TON of lost chips. But, I do have good news:

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. You don't have to lose money every time you're first to act before the flop. You just have to know EXACTLY WHICH HANDS TO PLAY and HOW TO PLAY THEM. Let's take a look:

In our example above, the biggest mistake made was playing A, 10 in the first place. Since under the gun positioning is so dangerous, you shouldn't play anything except PREMIUM HANDS.

The rule is this: TIGHTEN UP YOUR GAME. Only play these exact hands: AK, AQ, KQ, and pairs. The only other hand you may want to play is suited connectors, but, that just depends on your style. Personally, I don't like to play them here.

OK, now let's look at HOW to play the starting hands. There are basically two groups:

Group 1: AA, KK, QQ, and AK.

Group 2: AQ, KQ, and all other pairs. Got it? Now stick with me here, because this is VERY SIMPLE to understand and will save you a lot of money at the Hold'em table.

When you're under the gun, you should always CALL THE BLINDS (LIMP-IN) when you get any hand in Group 2. That means if you get any pair between 2's and Jacks or AQ or KQ you should CALL. Period.

The goal is to hit something good on the flop. If someone makes a reasonable raise before the flop, you can feel comfortable calling it with one of these hands.

I love playing small pocket pairs, because if you spike your card on the flop (giving you a three of a kind or a "set"), your opponents will usually never see it coming.

Now let's talk about Group 1 hands. The monsters: AA, KK, QQ, AK. The way you play these depends on whether the table you're at is LOOSE or TIGHT.

Here's the rule:

If you're at a LOOSE table (where a lot of pre-flop raises occur), you should LIMP-IN (call) with your monster.

If you're at a TIGHT table (where not many pre-flop raises occur), you should RAISE the pot before the flop.

Here's why:

If the table is LOOSE and you limp-in before the flop, the pot will most likely get RAISED and the action will come BACK to you. This is good. It means more money in the pot for your monster hand. But, if you make a big bet, there's a good chance you will NOT get raised, because you're first to act and everyone will know you probably have a good hand.

If you limp-in and the pot gets raised, you should probably make a RE-RAISE. Always try to get as much money in the pot whenever possible with your monster hand. But, you DON'T want more than 1-2 callers, because that would increase the odds of catching a bad beat.

Now if the table is TIGHT, you want to make a RAISE before the flop. You don't want a bunch of players to all limp-in and see a cheap flop. Instead, you want to

narrow down the field to 1-2 players and get some money in the middle before the flop. Period.

Playing first position before the flop is just plain tricky. You're first to act pre-flop, in early position after the flop, you can't get as good of a read on your opponents, and you're at risk to getting slow-played.

So just remember, the next time you're under the gun, follow these three simple rules:

1. Only play premium hands: pairs, AK, AQ, or KQ.
2. With AA, KK, QQ, and AK, you should RAISE at a tight table and LIMP-IN at a loose table.
3. With the other starting hands you should just LIMP-IN.

Play by these easy rules and you'll stop losing money and start MAKING money from this very dangerous position.

And you'll have a MAJOR ADVANTAGE over everyone else at the table who DOESN'T know this strategy.

Which brings me to my next point. You should always try to have MORE POKER KNOWLEDGE than the other guys at the table, because if you do, you've literally "stacked the deck" in your favor. But, if other guys you're up against know MORE about the game than YOU, you're going to be in DEEP TROUBLE because poker is a SKILL game and it is very complex. If you want to learn how to play and WIN, you've got to know the strategies and techniques of the pros.

### How To Spot a Bluff

There is one KEY PRINCIPLE to keep in mind when deciding if someone is BLUFFING or has a GREAT HAND...

Here it is:

If a player acts STRONG, he is probably WEAK. If a player acts WEAK, he is probably STRONG. It's simple human nature. This is NOT an original idea. Mike Caro was the first to put this amazing insight into words many years ago. And after I had heard this wisdom, my poker winnings soared to a NEW LEVEL. Because every poker TELL boils down to this fundamental principle.

Now, the UNFORTUNATE thing about this advice is that even though it is SO SIMPLE, most card players just don't "get it", or don't apply it properly.

So, let's discuss how you can use this concept to spot bluffs QUICKLY, EASILY, and CONSISTENTLY. First off, it's important to remember that in order to spot BLUFFS, you must be tuned into signs of STRENGTH as well.

For example, if you only look for "tells" that suggest a player is BLUFFING, you're only getting half the picture. When trying to get an accurate read on an opponent, you must be looking for both signs of strength AND weakness.

Let's go back to our main "rule" again and look at the first part:

"If a player acts STRONG, he is probably WEAK."

This means that when a player does something that makes it LOOK like he's got a monster hand, he's probably bluffing. The CRUCIAL point to keep in mind is that most players don't TRY to act strong. They just do it unconsciously. I know that sounds strange, but think about it.

Let's say you've got 9d,2s and you decide to make a bold bluff by going all-in pre-flop (which I don't recommend, by the way!).

Anyway, in your mind, you're thinking, "Damn I sure hope no one calls!", but when someone starts contemplating a decision, you REALLY start to get worried.

So what do you do?

Well, the NATURAL thing to do; the thing that MOST players do, is to act like you're NOT afraid. Obviously you don't want someone to know that you're SCARED of getting called, right?

So, you sit up straight, your hands don't tremble, your voice has a little "arrogance" to it. And ultimately, all of those things are signs that you're BLUFFING.

But, you didn't MEAN to act that way, it just kind of came naturally. You didn't think, "Oh, I don't want him to know that I'm scared, so I'm going to sit up straight and act smooth and talk with arrogance."

It just kind of HAPPENS. Still with me? Ultimately, a BLUFF is a LIE.

That's right, just a plain old lie. So, when someone is bluffing by betting, they're simply LYING about what they have in their hand. Which means technically, the real skill is not the ability to spot a bluff, it's the ability to spot a LIE.

But anyway, back to my point. When the player acts strong, he's probably weak. But, he didn't CHOOSE to act strong. This is just a "mechanism" inside of him that turns on, simply because he's LYING to you about his hand.

Let me show you a few practical examples. Here are THREE valuable "tells" to look for:

1. When a player "flicks" his chips in the middle with extra OOMPH or tosses them in aggressively.

What's going on there? I'll tell you what: The player is ACTING strong, which means he probably doesn't have a very good hand.

2. When a player speaks aggressively and talks a lot.

Once again, this is usually a sign of weakness, since the player is "covering up" his bad hand by acting like he's got something. BUT, this poker tell is very easy to confuse and get COMPLETELY WRONG, and here's why:

There is a major difference between SPEAKING AGGRESSIVELY and DEMONSTRATING CONFIDENCE. Here's what I mean, if a player talks a lot in a manner that's NOT normal for him, it's usually a sign of WEAKNESS.

The way to sense this is to look for any signs of DESPERATION with his voice. But, if the player is chatting along, having a good time, and seems quite CONFIDENT in general, it usually means he has a strong hand.

It's a very subtle difference, and takes time to learn.

3. When a player looks you dead in the eye.

This usually means the player does not have a strong hand. The "death stare" is simply an ACT of strength, but what it really means is WEAKNESS.

Now, let's flip this over and look at poker tells that will show you when a player is sitting on a monster hand. Because knowing when to FOLD is often times MORE IMPORTANT than just knowing when someone's bluffing you. So, repeating the second part of our mantra:

"If a player acts WEAK, he is probably STRONG."

ACTING WEAK is usually more subtle than acting strong. It's usually demonstrated in a way that is more like DISINTEREST.

And once again, the player doesn't usually MEAN to act weak. It's simply a NATURAL MECHANISM. Of course, sometimes a player will INTENTIONALLY ACT WEAK, but the meaning behind it is still the same: He's got a strong hand.

Here are three poker tells when a player is acting WEAK, but has a really great hand:

1. Looking AWAY and acting disinterested and NOT making eye contact with you. This is the opposite of STARING YOU DOWN, which is a sign of weakness.

This poker tell is ESPECIALLY apparent when the flop hits. If the flop REALLY helped a player, he'll usually just glance at it for a brief moment and then look away.

(On the other hand, if a player stares at the cards on the flop for a long period of time, that usually means the flop did NOT help him.)

## 2. Being very quiet.

When a player is PRAYING to himself that you're going to call his bet, he usually stays very quiet and to himself. If everyone at the table is laughing at something and a player suddenly gets QUIET or kind of "forces" his laugh, then that's a sign he just picked up a monster hand. Beware!

## 3. Getting shaky.

When a player's hands get very shaky, watch out. Some people think it's a sign of BLUFFING, but I sure hope you're not one of those people. Shaky hands is almost always a sign of a MONSTER HAND.

Also, I might add here, that after someone WINS a really big pot, sometimes they get shaky as an "after effect". Honestly, I have no idea why. But, I do know that it happens. So, if someone just won a huge pot and is looking kind of shaky, that's probably why.

Knowing about poker tells like these; both signs of WEAKNESS and signs of STRENGTH, is a very important part of WINNING POKER.

## How To Avoid Going On TILT

When a poker player goes on "tilt", it means that he is playing in a way that is DIFFERENT than normal; in a way that is based on EMOTION and the events of the game.

For example, if you got pocket Aces and lost a big hand to someone with pocket 2's, you might go on TILT because of that bad beat. Or let's say you had a pair and your opponent went all-in and once you folded, your opponent showed you that he was BLUFFING with a nine high.

You might go on TILT after that because you were TRICKED and you blew the chance at doubling your chips. The point is, TILT is an EMOTIONAL state. And the most important thing you should know about tilt is this:

Tilt is DANGEROUS.

It's dangerous because it will cause you to lose money. LOTS OF MONEY.

Why?

Well, put simply, tilt makes you do things that you wouldn't "normally" do.

It makes you place over-aggressive bets. It makes you stay in pots longer than you should and it ZAPS your self-control and discipline.

The good news is, I can show you how to "avoid" tilt. But first, let's look at EXACTLY how tilt occurs when you play.

The PRIMARY REASON that tilt occurs is because of a MAJOR LOSS. There are other causes, but this is the main one, so we'll focus on it here. By "major loss" I mean a BIG POT that you COULD have won or even perhaps SHOULD have won, but DIDN'T.

For some reason, poker players can always remember the BAD BEATS and BIG LOSSES they've suffered, but never remember the big victories. Tilt works the same way. You can be winning hand after hand after hand all day, but then suddenly go on TILT following one lost pot.

When tilt occurs, it first impacts your EMOTIONAL mind, because like I said, tilt is just an emotional condition. Then, it will impact your LOGICAL mind. As much as we'd like to believe we can SEPARATE our emotions from our thinking, we just can't. The truth is, emotions are FAR MORE POWERFUL than logic or reasoning.

So when tilt occurs, you'll start playing in a way that JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. You'll try to bluff more, you'll raise more, and you'll be more aggressive.

Why does tilt work this way? Why does it make you play more AGGRESSIVELY, rather than TIGHTEN UP? The answer lies in what our brains are trying to "accomplish" with tilt.

You see, in poker and in all of gambling, the rule is this: GAINS COME SLOWLY. LOSSES COME QUICKLY.

It can take three hours to win a hundred dollars but only THREE SECONDS to lose it all and more. Now I'm NOT talking about something like winning the lottery here. I'm talking about being able to CONSISTENTLY win money by playing SMART and KEEPING THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOR. That's what Texas Hold'em strategy is all about: Keeping the odds in your favor. Because the more you play with the odds in your FAVOR, the more money you win.

Well, when a major LOSS occurs, you lose all that time you spent building up your GAINS... so your brain goes on TILT. And what your brain is TRYING TO DO is to win back all that money you lost...fast. In fact, your brain trying to win the money back as QUICKLY AS YOU LOST IT. Make sense?

It's kind of like the stock market. When a stock goes from \$100 per share to \$50 per share, it's a decrease of 50%. But, for the stock to get BACK to \$100 per share, it has to INCREASE BY 200%. That's a big difference. And if you know ANYTHING about the market, you know that 200% increases are hard to come by.

The reality is it will probably take YEARS for the stock to gradually climb back to \$100 per share. But, the investor doesn't want to think about it that way. The

investor wants his money back RIGHT NOW. And therefore the investor will go on TILT and make poor buying decisions with his money, hoping to find that "miracle" stock.

Poker is the same way. Except instead of hoping for a miracle STOCK, a player on tilt is hoping for a miracle MONSTER HAND like trip aces or a royal flush.

The problem is, the ODDS don't work like that.

You can't SUDDENLY win a ton of money just because you lost it in the previous hand. That money is no longer yours.

In addition, a major lost pot SKEWS YOUR ENTIRE PERCEPTION:

A pre-flop raise of 1,000 chips no longer looks "big" after you've just lost 10,000. So you decide to call the raise with your K-4 offsuit... because TILT has got you by the balls. The point is this:

You must AVOID TILT. Period. But how? A lot of pros will tell you that the way to avoid tilt is to, "Think logically, take a deep breath, and remember that it's all part of the game."

Phooey. You and I both know that that stuff doesn't work. Because like we said before, TILT IS EMOTIONAL. And that means it CANNOT be solved with LOGIC. The key to avoiding tilt is to CATCH IT right before it happens. So, the VERY MOMENT you lose a big hand or take a bad beat, THAT IS WHEN YOU MUST "INTERVENE" with your mind. THAT is when you must take control. And you can't just tell yourself, "Hey, this is just a part of the game. " No. You must SEPARATE YOURSELF from the game for however long it takes to "regroup".

For instance, if I lose a big hand at a casino I'll usually have my chips covered up and I'll go grab a quick bite to eat. I'll get some fresh air, call my girlfriend, go back to my hotel room, whatever. THEN I will come back to the table and continue playing.

When I'm not in a casino and don't have the luxury of being able to take a break from the game, I'll simply "sit out" for the next few pots and pay my blinds. I'll fold my hands and just watch. I'll breathe deeply and focus on MY GAME. Period.

This "separation" is the secret to avoiding tilt. Because first of all, it keeps your emotional brain from consuming your LOGICAL brain. Don't ask me why. I'm not a scientist. I just know that it WORKS.

And secondly, separation allows you to KEEP THINGS IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE. You'll be in control. You'll know that a pre-flop raise of 1,000 chips IS A LOT and you'll fold your measly K, 4 because you're thinking CLEARLY.

You'll go back to YOUR GAME. You'll remember your strategies and techniques and you'll gradually start winning with the ODDS BACK IN YOUR FAVOR.

Honestly, of all the tricks, techniques, and Texas Hold'em secrets I teach, avoiding tilt can quite possibly have the BIGGEST effect on your bankroll. Because whether you spend ten hours or ten THOUSAND hours "grinding it out" at the poker tables, your money will VANISH if you go on tilt.

Which brings me to ANOTHER interesting secret I've discovered. The EXPERIENCE OF TILT is actually just an EXTREME form of experience that happens ALL THE TIME when you play poker.

What I mean is EVERY TIME YOU LOSE A HAND you're going on tilt. Except, this tilt would be a small version of "the real thing." Stick with me here. If TILT is just an EMOTION, then you're ACTUALLY going on tilt all the time except it's only noticeable during the really big pots. The truth is you're going on "Tiny Tilts" all game, every game, that are swaying you back and forth and back and forth from the REAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS YOU SHOULD BE TAKING.

That's why the PROS are able to avoid tilt so effectively. Because they've played SO MUCH POKER that they know the RIGHT play to make in virtually every situation. Emotion just doesn't factor in.

And ultimately, that's the BEST way to avoid tilt. To adopt a complete SYSTEM of playing STRATEGIES and techniques that YOU STICK TO throughout the game. Take emotion out of it. Just play the proven, step-by-step methods that will help you CONSISTENTLY win the most money at the table.

## How to Represent The Flop

You're probably familiar with the term "represent the flop". But do you know what it REALLY means? And do you know how to PROPERLY represent the flop in order to win more chips? Most players think that REPRESENTING THE FLOP just means betting and acting in a way as if the cards on the board HELPED your hand. Although this definition is ACCURATE, it's much too simplistic to add any benefit to your game.

Representing the flop is in fact a very in-depth strategy that is CRUCIAL to pro-level Texas Hold'em poker. First, let's look at WHY you should represent the flop: The primary reason is to find out WHERE YOU'RE AT IN A HAND.

In other words, you want to learn how strong and how weak the OTHER players at the table are. And the only way to do this is through BETTING.

If you only check, check, call, call then you will NEVER become a good poker player. Never. You've got to bet and PRETEND that the community cards helped you. If someone has a weak hand, they will be forced to fold. If someone has a mediocre hand, they will probably fold too, because you're "representing" that you have something good. And if a player has a STRONG or VERY STRONG hand, they will either call you or raise your bet.

So based on what everyone does, you can find out if you have a chance at winning the pot, if you can bet other players out, or if you should just fold. All information you WOULDN'T have known otherwise. Frequently representing the flop is an AGGRESSIVE style of play. If you do it, you'll get a lot of action at the table, especially after the flop.

For example, if you come out firing after the flop three out of four hands, your opponents will begin calling your bets and giving you action, because they KNOW you don't have a great hand EVERY SINGLE TIME. This comes in handy when you hit a MONSTER, like when you flop a set or a flush or something. You don't have to worry about everyone folding to you.

But, even more important than getting lots of action, representing the flop will help you STEAL a lot of pots over the course of every card game. And when YOU control the action and the betting, you'll find it much easier to steal blinds and pots after the flop. And trust me, THESE SMALL POTS ADD UP...FAST. If you only go for the "big pots" in a poker game or tournament, you won't last long. You've got to stick your neck out there and go for the SMALLER POTS, too.

OK, so representing the flop is a USEFUL and IMPORTANT TOOL in no-limit Texas Hold'em poker. Now you've got to learn how to represent the flop the RIGHT WAY. I have FIVE BASIC RULES when it comes to representing the flop, each rule gets progressively more complicated as they go on. But, trust me, if you master these rules, you'll DEFINITELY be on your way to higher "poker profits" and winnings.

OK, so here they are. These are my FIVE RULES:

RULE #1: When you represent the flop, don't act weak by only betting the MINIMUM amount, BUT don't bet so much that it can burn you.

This is kind of like the "not too hot, not too cold" principle. You see, when you represent the flop, you've got to accept the fact that you will likely NOT get the chips back that you're betting. I mean, obviously you want to WIN, don't get me wrong. BUT, if someone has a great hand and you're representing the flop WITHOUT a great hand, then there's a good chance you'll have to fold soon.

So when you make a representation bet, do NOT bet so much that you'll feel "pot committed". On the other hand, don't bet too LITTLE. When you bet too little, your opponents will see right through it. And it won't be enough to scare the mediocre hands away.

For example, let's say you've got 9-8 suited and the flop hits K-8-2 and you're first to act. You don't want to CHECK because you know the guy after you will bet if you do. So you REPRESENT THE FLOP by throwing out a bet. If no one has the King, everyone will probably fold to your bet. Even if someone DOES have the King, they may fold if they don't have a decent kicker.

The key is you must make sure you BET ENOUGH. If you only bet the minimum amount here, someone with A-4 might call the bet, simply because the pot odds are in their favor. And if the Ace hits on the turn, you're in trouble.

So, always be sure to bet BIG ENOUGH to scare out the bad and mediocre hands, but SMALL ENOUGH to not get in trouble if you lose the chips.

RULE #2: Whenever possible, represent the flop when you have OUTS. This is a strategy most players don't quite "get" until you've been playing poker for a LONG time. Here's the thing: If you represent the flop frequently every single time you play Texas Hold'em, you want the odds to be as much in your favor as possible.

In the scenario above, for instance, representing the flop with middle pair is a good move. Because you have some OUTS. If another 8 hits on the turn or river, you're going to have three-of-a-kind. Obviously, hitting the eight is NOT likely (about 8.42%). But, there's STILL A CHANCE, and that's what is important. Think about it: Let's say you have just a 5% chance of hitting one of your OUTS that would cause you to have the best hand at the table.

Well, if you represent the flop fifty times and get a caller TWENTY times, that means you'll MAKE your hand (on average) one time out of these twenty. And when you DO make your hand, you'll BUST your opponent and win a ton of chips. Make sense?

This is kind of a MENTAL DISTINCTION that separates the pros from the wannabes. Pros think about the LONG TERM ODDS of playing. They don't base their decisions on situational circumstances alone. They base them on WHAT WORKS OVER THE LONG TERM.

That's how you develop a CONSISTENT winning career. Because as you'll see in the next rule, you don't want to CONTINUE to represent the flop if people stay in the hand with you, unless you're confident that you can get them to fold. But usually, if someone calls or raises, you want to "let up". Don't risk more chips when someone's got you beat.

So, by representing the flop when you have OUTS you'll open yourself up to the chance of MAKING YOUR HAND on the turn (or sometimes river).

RULE #3: If you get raised, muck it.

All of these rules are general in nature, especially this one. Obviously you don't want to ALWAYS FOLD every time someone makes a raise. BUT USUALLY, if you represent the flop with a bet and someone comes back over the top of you, that opponent will MOST LIKELY have a strong hand (maybe even a monster).

It's not logical to continue to bluff at the pot if you're up against a surefire winning hand. You'll lose too many chips that way. That's the downside of being an aggressive player: You've got to give up and cut your losses quite often. Discipline yourself to do it.

RULE #4: Change gears with your betting amounts.

As we discussed earlier, one of the benefits to representing the flop is that opponents will give you more ACTION during the game because they'll "catch on" to your aggressive style.

That does NOT mean, however, that you should become PREDICTABLE. Being predictable is a recipe for disaster. And that's why you've got to "change gears" and "mix it up" with your betting.

For example, in our scenario where you made a bet with your 9-8 suited (middle pair), let's say your bet was for 50 and then someone RAISED YOU to 200. Your opponent probably has the King and a good kicker, maybe even two pair. So, you fold your middle pair with a loss of only 50 chips.

NOW, when you fold, everyone at the table will SEE that you just made a bet and then folded to a raise. This will tell them that you were betting WITHOUT a good hand after the flop.

Now, let's say a few hands later the flop comes out 5-A-Q and you're second to act and you've got pocket deuces. Your first opponent checks.

Now, although you know someone at the table probably has you beat right now, you're not sure if someone has the Ace, because there weren't any pre-flop raises.

So, you REPRESENT THE FLOP (and the Ace) by betting. (Remember, you also have outs here, if a two comes you'll make trips.) The key is to NOT BET 50 again, as you did with your eights just a few hands ago. If you bet 50 again or always bet 50 when you represent the flop, your opponents will know exactly what you're doing and read right through you.

If Blake, who's sitting to your left, is only holding the Queen, he's going to fold if he thinks you've got the Ace. But if he thinks you're just REPRESENTING the flop, he will call your bet. And you DO NOT want that to happen (because his Queens are better than your two's).

So, instead of betting 50 again, you bet 150 this time. This way you stay out of any PATTERNS that will give away your hand and increase the odds that everyone will put you on the Ace and fold.

RULE #5: After you get better at representing the flop, INTENTIONALLY STOP mixing up your bets in order to trap your opponents. This is a "tricky" play that works very well against intermediate poker players.

Here's how it goes:

When you represent the flop and get "caught" in your semi-bluff, use the event to YOUR ADVANTAGE to bust your opponents.

Let's use the example from before with the 9-8 suited:

You got middle pair. You bet 50. Your opponent raised. And then you folded. Well, let's say you represented the flop AGAIN a few hands later with a bet of 50. And then you got caught AGAIN when your opponent raised you and you were forced to fold.

After watching this happen two or three times, your opponents will suddenly think they're geniuses and that they've got you "figured out". They'll think, "Whoa, when he bets 50 on the flop he doesn't have anything and all I have to do is raise in order to scare him away." And of course, you're doing this ON PURPOSE in order to trap your opponents.

Let's say a few hands later you get dealt pocket fours. The flop comes: 4, 7, J.

You've flopped trips. Now what? Well, since you've built a reputation for betting on the flop no matter what happens, you can feel safe betting and you'll probably get action. But what KIND of action are you looking for?

You want to get as many chips into this pot as possible. So, you take advantage of the "trap play" that you've created and you bet 50...again. This time, your opponents think they've got you figured out. They think to themselves, "That flop didn't help him one bit, he's just up to his old ways."

So your opponent RAISES you. And that's where you GET REWARDED for the trap you set up. Now you can either re-raise, or maybe call and hope that your opponent tries buying the pot again after the turn card. It doesn't really matter. Because as long as there aren't any draws out there, you can feel safe in knowing that you'll win the hand and a nice pot either way.

It's amazing to me how easily players will fall into this trap. (Especially with online poker.) But remember, only use this trap play AFTER you have mastered the first four rules for representing the flop. And be sure that you aim the play at intermediate players, as they'll fall for it the quickest.

There's one last component I want to mention here that relates to our discussion of representing the flop and that's what you should do when you make a PRE-flop raise. My technique is simple:

If I raised before the flop, I will come out betting AFTER the flop, no matter what hits. The reasoning is simple...

For starters, NOT betting after the flop is like waving a red flag and TELLING your opponents that the flop didn't help you. If you represent the flop after your pre-flop raise, your opponents won't know what to put you on. They'll be more likely to fold. And using this strategy over and over and over again pays off in the long run. Because after awhile your opponents will catch on. And this benefits you in three ways:

1. You'll get more action when you catch a BIG hand.
2. Your opponents will fold more frequently to your pre-flop raises because they know you're going to bet after the flop as well. This gives you the opportunity to steal more blinds.
3. Your opponents will be easier to read. When they have a good hand they won't be afraid of you and they'll come back over the top with a raise. This lets you know that they've got you beat and that you should just minimize your losses and fold.

Learning how to PROPERLY represent the flop is a crucial aspect of Texas Hold'em.

### The Right Time To Chase A Straight

Chasing straights and draws will BURN you. There's no doubt about it. The term "chasing" means you stay in the hand hoping to catch a certain card (or cards) that will complete your straight.

The problem with chasing is that the ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU. And as you know, successful Texas Hold'em poker is all about keeping the odds in your favor. But, sometimes chasing a straight IS the right thing to do. SOMETIMES.

Let me explain. First off, let's look at the two different types of straight draws:

1. GUTSHOT - This is when you're trying to make an INSIDE straight, like if you have 4-5-6-8 and you need the 7.
2. OPEN-ENDED - This is when TWO cards can "make" your straight, like if you have 4-5-6-7 and need EITHER the 3 or the 8.

There's also what's called a "double belly buster", which is actually like two gutshots at once. We'll talk about this a little later.

OK, so how should you play a gutshot straight draw? Let's look at the odds, if you FLOP an inside (gutshot) straight draw, the odds of making your straight are 16.47%. If you have an inside straight draw after the TURN with just the river card to go, your odds are 8.70%.

So, the odds aren't good. 16.47% might SOUND like it's worth it, but you've got to ANTICIPATE the bet after the turn card.

For instance, let's say you flop an inside straight draw and someone makes a big bet. If you call and then miss your straight on the turn, what then?

Your opponent makes ANOTHER big bet. Do you call to see the river card? You feel pot committed, but you know the odds are against you. This is how you get

into trouble with gutshot straight draws. You become pot committed and you chase a hand that's not worth chasing.

As a general principle, you should NOT chase gutshot straight draws, especially on the river.

When I flop a gutshot, I might call a small bet but that's it. And that's only when the odds are worth it. As we'll discuss in a moment, you must also factor in the IMPLIED ODDS, but first, let's look at how to play open-ended straight draws.

For an open-ended straight draw, your odds of making your straight are MUCH better. If you flop an open-ender your odds of hitting are 31.45%. If you have an open-ender with just the river card to go, your odds are 17.39%.

Notice that you have BETTER chances of completing an open-ended straight draw just on the RIVER than completing a gutshot straight draw on both the turn AND the river. Interesting, huh? OK, so what's the right way to play an open-ender? Many players will just CHECK with an open-ended straight draw and then CALL any bets.

This is REACTIVE card playing and it's the WRONG thing to do. You need to be PROACTIVE and here's why:

Let's say you've got 6-7 of diamonds and the flop hits: 4, 5, K

You've got the top half of an open-ended straight draw, either an 8 or a 3 will give you the nut straight. The NATURAL TENDENCY here is to check. You don't have ANYTHING yet, no pairs, no high cards, nothing. So obviously you'd LOVE to wait to see if you make your straight before you risk any chips, right? Wrong.

If you just check, you're making three dangerous mistakes:

Mistake 1 - You're showing weakness.

Mistake 2 - You're not increasing the pot size.

Mistake 3 - You're giving your opponent a read on you.

There's a strange analogy I like to use for this. If you're ever in the forest or wilderness and you encounter a bear, mountain lion, bobcat, or any other PREDATOR, the NATURAL TENDENCY is to get scared. Most people would run away! However, the RIGHT thing to do is to SHOW AGGRESSION and NOT show fear. I'm dead serious here.

The right thing to do if you see a bear is to make a lot of noise, to raise your hands in the air and possibly hold up a coat or jacket (in order to appear bigger), and to snarl or growl. It's counter-intuitive, but it's what you MUST do if you don't want to get attacked (or eaten).

Now, back to Texas Hold'em. Lol. Your OPPONENT is your PREDATOR. Show them weakness and they will likely attack you. When you have an open-ended

straight draw, you want to see the next two cards and you don't want to risk a lot of chips to do so. So, the RIGHT PLAY is to BET or RAISE the pot.

In our example above, you want to throw out a reasonably-sized bet. Your opponents might fold right there. Or you might get one or two callers. NOW, when the TURN card comes, your opponents will probably check to you. So basically you're getting a FREE CARD. You can check and see the river for free.

If you HADN'T taken control of the betting, your opponents would have made you PAY A LOT to see the river card. And you might of been forced to FOLD your open-ended straight draw. By taking control of the betting and coming out strong after the flop, you're actually investing LESS money overall to see the next two cards.

Now, the other reason taking control is important is because it doesn't give your opponent a read on you. Say your opponent checks the flop and you also check. The turn card comes and it's a 3, giving you the straight. Your opponent checks again and now all of the sudden you come out betting strong. Obviously, your opponent will SEE what's going on here and will have a hunch that you just made your straight and he'll fold.

If you DON'T bet after the 3, the odds of you making any real money off of this hand are slim, and you've let your straight go to waste. So, the key is to bet EARLY, that way if you HIT you're golden and you'll get paid. And if you DON'T hit you won't have to invest any more chips.

Say you took control of the betting after the flop and your opponent called with A-5. He's probably putting you on the King, but isn't sure. He's got middle pair along with an Ace. The turn card comes and it's a 3, so you bet again. Your opponent calls again.

Finally the river hits and it's an Ace, giving your opponent TWO PAIR. By now he's confident that you have the King and not the straight since you were betting consistently after the flop. So, your opponent puts you ALL-IN with his hand, not knowing that you've got him DOMINATED. You win a big pot, all because you played the open-ender properly.

There's also what's called a "double belly buster" straight draw. A regular (single) belly buster is simply an inside straight draw. A DOUBLE means there are TWO different cards to make your straight, but it's not open-ended.

For example, if you were holding A-5 and the flop hit 3, 4, 7 you would have a DOUBLE BELLY BUSTER. Either a 2 or a 6 would give you a straight.

Double belly busters are great because your opponents will often never see them coming and your odds of hitting are the same as an OPEN-ENDED straight draw. When an opponent doesn't put you on a hand, THAT is when you'll be able to win the most chips. This is known as IMPLIED ODDS.

Implied odds means that when you make your hand, you're going to get paid a LOT for it. Implied odds is a very important part of making decisions in Texas Hold'em, just like regular odds. Except the key distinction is that implied odds doesn't necessarily involve numbers or math percentages.

Implied odds is more about getting a SENSE for how big the pot will be if you make your hand. When your implied odds are HIGH, you can often bet more early in order to build the pot size.

An example of high implied odds is when there's a straight draw on the board with HIGH CARDS. For instance, let's say you're holding J, 10 and the flop comes Q, K, 3.

You've got an open-ended straight draw, but you might face opponents who have a REALLY GOOD HAND right now...something like AK, AQ, or KQ. An opponent with a big hand is going to be very aggressive with his bets and if a 9 or an Ace hits, you're going to win a ton of chips. Those are high implied odds.

On the other hand, this type of flop is BAD for you because it means you'll probably have to PAY DEARLY to see the turn and river cards. Be careful, don't chase the straight if it's going to break your chip stack.

An example of a straight with LOW implied odds would be when it's all low cards on the board. After all, if no one has anything decent, no one is going to give you a lot of action.

When you have an open-ended straight draw with low cards and you sense weakness in your opponents, the best move is to act aggressively and take the pot down right there. After all, nearly 70% of the time you are NOT going to hit your straight. So, if you can win the pot by betting, do so.

If you do get a caller, that's OK too, because you still have a lot of outs and a good chance at busting your opponent (and now the implied odds are higher since he's pot committed and must have a good hand).

Another example of low implied odds is when the straight draw on the board is OBVIOUS. This is especially relevant when there's only ONE card needed to make the straight.

For instance, let's say you have K-7 and the board reads 3-4-5. And then the turn card comes and it's a 6. Of course, with 3-4-5-6 on the board, your opponents WILL be suspicious that someone has the straight. This type of situation is sometimes good for a check-raise or a strong bet to make it LOOK like you're buying the pot. (It just depends on your table image.)

With straight draws, be extra careful to pay attention to what ELSE is out there on the board. You will often encounter hands that BEAT you and wipe out your entire chip stack.

For instance, look for possible FLUSH draws. If your opponent might have made a flush, back off. Muck the hand if you need to and live to see another day. Full houses are dangerous too. If two cards on the board pair up, be careful. And last but not least, always think about what OTHER straights are possible. For instance, if you're holding 2, A and the flop hits 3, 4, 5, you have the BOTTOM end of the straight. Someone could have 7,6, or maybe 6,2, and would have you beat.

It's the same way with our double belly buster example. In that example the flop was 3, 4, 7 and you had A, 5. Let's say a 6 hit the board. Even though you have the straight (3, 7), it's NOT the best possible straight. Your opponent could be holding 8, 5...which would be the nut straight.

It's the same way with FOUR consecutive cards on the board. If the board reads 5, 6, 7, 8 and you've got the 9, that doesn't mean you have the "nuts". The nuts would be 9, 10 which would give someone the straight (6-10). The possibilities are ENDLESS and you'll soon discover that the more you play Texas Hold'em the more IMPORTANT every possibility becomes.

For the most part, keep in mind that you want to only "chase" a straight when the odds of hitting are most favorable, when the implied odds are good, and when you think you can see a cheap (or free) river card.

Knowing how to INCREASE your winnings and DECREASE your losses is the name of the game. Strategies like these will also minimize your risk during each pot and help you secure a CONSISTENT winning streak.

### The Right Times to Move "All-In"

I have a new idea that I wanted to share with you. I call it the "All-In Factor". No limit Texas Hold'em poker is the game of choice for most card players these days. I know I certainly prefer it. But, a lot of my opponents don't know how to truly USE and LEVERAGE the "All-In Factor" to their advantage.

What I mean is, going "all-in" is SO POWERFUL and SO IMPORTANT, yet most players don't know the right times to make this bold move. They just wait for the "nuts" to come along and THEN they go all-in. Make sense?

I'd like to share with you some of my thoughts on how, when, where, and why to go "all-in" against your opponents. Not only is this move what makes no limit poker so EXCITING, but this is also the KEY DISTINCTION between limit and no limit Hold'em and it's why no limit requires more of a "ballsy" personality.

Contrary to popular belief, the All-In Factor actually adds MORE SKILL to the game of poker, just not in the sense of math or odds. Instead, "all-in" requires the skills of PSYCHOLOGY, intimidation, and bluffing.

When you learn the right times to go all-in, you'll have a consistent EDGE over your opponents and THAT, my friend, will help you beat the game over and over and over (even when you don't have good cards).

OK, let's get started. One of the core principles of poker is that it's always much easier to BET than it is to CALL.

I mean, think about it: You can make a BET without actually having good cards - you might be on a bluff, you might be "representing" the board, you might just have middle pair and so on.

But to CALL a bet, you want to have a strong hand. Because now your OPPONENT is representing good cards. If you don't have a read on him, then it's going to be harder to CALL his bet.

I look at it this way: It's much easier to SHOOT a bullet than to DODGE a bullet (and I'm not talking about Aces here).

That's one of the reasons why I like to go with an aggressive style of play. I win a lot more pots even when I DON'T have good cards, because my opponents are forced to fold to me.

Anyway, this idea that it's easier to BET than CALL couldn't be more true than with ALL-IN BETS. It is TEN TIMES EASIER to push all your money in the middle than it is to CALL an all-in bet.

When your opponent goes all-in, he has put you to a decision for all your chips. Your life in the game/tournament could be OVER with just this one pot. In order to call, you must be CONFIDENT that you have him beat. But, in order to make an all-in bet yourself, you just need to be confident that your opponent will FOLD or that you have him beat. This gives the person MAKING the all-in bet the advantage every time. And that leads to our second main principle, which is this:

If you don't risk chips, you can't win chips. Period. Now obviously, your strategy should be to MINIMIZE your risk and MAXIMIZE your winnings, but no limit Texas Hold'em gives you the unique opportunity to win big pots with all-in bets, even when you don't have the best hand.

The All-In Factor is what allows you to BULLY your opponents and take a DOMINATING position. One of the best times to go all-in is to STEAL a pot from your opponent, but when you steal pots, you must be sure the hand meets these conditions:

1. You want OUTS. If your opponent calls, there should be cards left in the deck that can help you still win the hand. Even if the odds are not good, you want outs.
2. You must have a solid read on your opponent. If you're stealing a pot, you must be confident the other player is going to fold.

3. You want good positioning. This isn't as important as the first two conditions, but positioning is what usually allows you to get a read on your opponents.

Let's look at an example. Say you've get dealt 8-7 of diamonds while you're on the button. That means you've got a "hidden hand" with the best positioning. Three players limp-in and the action is to you. You raise the pot to \$15, a nice raise in this \$1-2 no limit cash game. The small and big blinds fold. But, then Brian, who's under the gun, comes back over the top of you and raises it to \$30.

Ouch. You forgot that Brian is a smart player who doesn't play anything but premium hands while under the gun. He limped-in, which was the "red flag" that he had something good. Anyway, the action goes around and Jared, the guy to your right, ALSO calls the bet of \$30.

So, it's \$15 more to call and the pot size is already up to \$80. With your positioning and the pot odds, you decide to call and see a flop. You don't like the way this hand is going so far, because now you have \$30 invested with just suited-connectors and you're putting Brian on a hand like A-K, A-Q, or maybe something like pocket Jacks. If he had anything better he would have been more aggressive than simply raising \$15.

OK, so the flop comes out: 3s, 4s, 5s

Wow. Interesting flop. 3-4-5 of spades.

Brian bets \$10 into the pot. You know this flop didn't help him one bit. The only reason he's making this small bet is because he raised before the flop. You can tell right away that he doesn't like what he sees on the board.

Jared mucks his hand. So, now the action is to you. There's \$90 in the middle. You've got about \$350 more in chips, and Brian has about \$225. THIS is one of those times to consider going all-in.

You don't have a single spade and that's not good. But, you do have the gutshot straight draw. There's a 16.47% chance that a six will hit on the turn or river.

But, that's not why you're going all-in. You want to make a move at this pot because you've VERY confident that Brian is going to fold.

For all Brian knows, you could have two spades, or the straight, or a straight draw and flush draw, or even a straight flush.

The truth is, Brian probably has the best hand right now with two overcards. He may even have a high spade. But, that won't be enough for him to justify calling an ALL-IN bet. Brian's smart. There are simply too many cards out there that can beat him. So, you go all-in and he mucks it, making you \$90 richer.

When stealing a pot like this, be sure it's worth the risk. The fewer players in the hand, and the more money in the middle, the better the payoff is to you. The key is knowing that your opponent is going to fold. If you're up against someone who's too smart (or too dumb) to muck it, then you're in trouble.

That's where the OUTS come in.

Let's say Brian looked at you and said, "Well, I know you've got the flush, but I can't lay this down." And then he called, flipping over an Ace of hearts and an Ace of clubs. Now you're in trouble, of course. But at least you left yourself some outs, you've got a 16.47% chance of hitting that six. And you've also got the slight chance that two more spades come out or the board makes a straight (which would be a split pot).

And last but not least, if everything goes wrong and you lose this pot to Brian, you've still got \$125 in chips. Which brings me to my next point...and that is the SIZE OF YOUR STACK. Stack size is an extremely important component of the All-In Factor. Here's what I mean:

First of all, if you're going to play a hand aggressively, you always know that it COULD lead to all-in bets. That's why you want to go after players with SHORTER stacks than you. If the worst case scenario occurs and you lose an all-in match, at least you're not out of the game.

This has a secondary benefit, too. If a player has fewer chips, he'll be easier to "push around" and "bully". That lowers your risk further. Of course, this gets more complicated. You want to be very careful about stealing pots or making stone cold bluffs against anyone who's "short-stacked".

If you've got \$400 in chips and your opponent has \$40 in chips, you wouldn't make the same kind of bluff as you did against Brian in the example. A player who's short-stacked is ITCHING to move all his chips in as soon as he picks up ANY type of hand. So, you can't bluff him out of the pot.

What you CAN do, however, is put the short-stack all-in BEFORE THE FLOP when you have something decent, therefore putting him to a decision for all his chips. If he calls, it will probably be a loose call, and you have a chance at winning a good pot. If he folds, you win the blinds. And if he wins, you only lose 1/10 of your stack.

Let's look at another quick example. Say Brian has \$40 in chips and you've got \$400 in chips. You're third to act before the flop, which isn't very good positioning. Brian's second to act. Brian goes all-in with his short stack. You look down to see pocket Kings. You know you've got him beat. What should you do?

The answer is NOT to call. Instead, you should ALSO go all-in. With Kings, you don't want multiple players in the hand seeing a flop. You just want to take Brian's \$40 and the blinds that are already in there. You must make a move to

scare out the remaining three players behind you, otherwise there's a good chance you'll get run down.

Let's say you just CALL, and then Drew also calls with an A-8 suited. The flop hits: A, 4, J

And now you lost the hand, because Drew caught his top pair. But, if you had moved all-in before the flop, Drew and everyone else would have folded. Then, it'd just be you and Brian, as Brian flips over his losing pocket 8's.

That brings up another good point:

Players will make LOOSE CALLS to all-in bets when there's a chance at eliminating someone from the table. This is most relevant in tournament play. You see, eliminating someone from the table means each player is CLOSER to finishing in the money. So, it's in everyone's BEST INTERESTS to "knock off" the short stack.

This is something you can use to your advantage when YOU are playing short-stacked. If you pick up a monster hand, you can be assured that you'll get lots of action with it and if it holds, you might even TRIPLE up (or better).

But, that's also a reason why you cannot make an all-in BLUFF when you're short-stacked. You can't bluff anyone out of a pot because you don't have enough chips to scare them off.

"All-in" is only intimidating when you have lots of chips. When you DON'T have lots of chips, your opponents will be HAPPY you're all-in, because it means you're that much closer to getting eliminated.

Even if you're NOT short-stacked, this principle is true when facing players who have a LOT more chips than you. Let's say you're 4th in chips at a 6-man table with about \$80 in front of you. Don't try to bluff at a pot with an "all-in" against the chip leader, who's got \$400. He can afford to make a call with just a mediocre hand or a draw. For him, \$80 won't hurt his stack much and the chance of knocking you out is worth the risk.

So, when WOULD BE the right time to go all-in when you're short-stacked?

The obvious answer is "when you have a hand". But, as you know, you won't always get good cards. As a general rule, I "make my stand" when I'm getting down to about ten times the big blind. Lower than that will be too short-stacked to make bluffs that will scare anyone out of the pot.

With more than 10x the big blind, I'm usually able to steal some blinds and get myself back in the game. If I run into a monster, or get outdrawn, oh well. There's nothing I can do. But usually, since I make my stand based on chip stacks, positioning, and sensing weakness, I WON'T get any callers to my bold "all-in" and I'll rake in the pot.

This is also one of my fundamental techniques for not getting "blinded to death" and for staying in a game even when I'm NOT catching good cards.

OK, let's review:

The "All-In Factor" is a key technique for no limit Texas Hold'em. Not only does it separate limit from no-limit, but it also separates the "men from the boys", so to speak.

When you go all-in WITHOUT a monster, be sure you have OUTS. These will come in handy over the long term.

Don't bluff against someone who's got way more chips than you and don't bluff when you're the short-stack at the table.

If you're getting low on chips, make your all-in move when you're getting down to about 10x the big blind.

If the short-stacked player at the table goes all-in and you've got a big hand, don't CALL. Be sure YOU go all-in too, that way you scare the other players out and decrease the chances of getting run down.

Remember, it's always easier to BET than CALL, and you can never win what you don't put into the middle.

The All-In Factor is a strategic maneuver that you can use to "own" your opponents and win more money at the poker tables. But, it's not the only one.

Do you make these 7 poker mistakes?

In my time as a card player, I've found these 7 simple mistakes to be responsible for TONS of lost pots and lost money. Ultimately, if you make them, you'll end up like the rest of the "suckers" out there.

Either that, or you'll give up at poker (claiming that it's based on "luck"), and never play again...

So, here are the seven mistakes to avoid:

#### 1. Getting Too Emotional

Don't let your emotions come out at the card table! It's easy to get "into" the game, but you've got to practice self-control! By staying cool, calm, and disciplined, you'll be able to concentrate on your strategy and winning the hand.

#### 2. Focusing Too Much On The Cards

Remember, poker is about the PLAYERS rather than the HANDS. Sure, what cards you have is definitely important, but the only way to consistently WIN

Texas Hold 'EM poker is if you are able to "read" the other players at the table. Study their habits, watch their faces, observe their peculiarities and THEN focus on your own hand.

### 3. Folding Instead Of Checking

Don't fold if you can check! Unless it's part of some "bigger strategy" you've got going (like the ones I talk about in my book), then it's silly to fold a hand when you can just check instead.

### 4. Trying Too Hard To "Fool" The Opponent

Many beginners try to deliberately "fool" the other players by "acting" a certain way. This usually backfires. Most people are good at reading body language, and your pretending will only give you away.

A better strategy is to let your ACTIONS fool the other players. Keep your poker face straight and calm and let them fall for the bait by making bets or placing action in ways that will confuse them.

### 5. Being Too Consistent

The easiest way to win easy money at the poker table is to just study a person's habits for awhile, and then take advantage of them hand-by-hand because they're so predictable.

Don't be this kind of sucker!

If you make the same moves and same bets at the table every time you play, other players will pick up on it so fast that you'll be out of chips in no time.

Be "spontaneous" in a calculated way, and be unpredictable. It will frustrate the other players and you'll win all their chips.

### 6. Not Adapting To The Skill Level Of Others

Everyone knows that some of poker's greats are most frequently beat by BEGINNING players at the card table. A lot of professionals refuse to play with "newbies" because they know there's such a high risk of losing and being embarrassed.

So how exactly can these beginners beat these PROS? It's simple. The pros are SO MUCH BETTER at poker, that they are actually FOOLED by how BAD these new players are.

The pros are USED TO playing against other pros, which makes it difficult for them to even "remember" how to play against beginners.

Every card table is different. You need to learn how to adapt your game to each different situation. Sometimes you'll have to increase the complexity of your

strategy. Other times you'll need to "dumb down" the strategy and only focus on the habits of the players.

## 7. Not Getting Help.

You weren't BORN knowing how to play Texas Hold'em. You were TAUGHT how to play. The problem is, most players never bother to take their skills to the NEXT LEVEL, by getting professional instruction.

In less than a few hours, you can increase your skill at this game TREMENDOUSLY. You can win more pots night after night and discover the secrets to making tons of cash playing poker in your spare time.

## My Trip To The World Series Of Poker

I just got done playing in the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas. How did I do? I've posted a full run-down of the tournament on my site, and believe me, you DO NOT want to miss this. Click here to check it out. (With pics! I'm sure you'll recognize some of these faces.)

<http://www.Texas-Hold'em-Secrets.com/cmd.php?af=276620>

## Know EXACTLY What Your Opponents Are Holding

\*\*\*QUESTION FORM A READER\*\*\*

Rory, Your newsletters have greatly helped my play I used to be a tight wad player. Now that I have changed gears (play more aggressively) in my head its thrown players off balance a lot. take notes on my friends poker play so it helps me remember betting patterns etc.

I am really good at sniffing out stone cold bluffs (I've been known to call with queen high before) or strong hands that are hard to recognize like small sets and low and medium straights. I've even folded full houses before knowing that other players have four of a kind by their erratic breathing and confidence in their voice and shaky hands.

However, I need advanced improvement on reading tells and avoiding traps. Other then the ones mentioned in Caro's book of poker tells; it is a little outdated. Especially since I have had also a problem with reading people when they play medium strength hands aggressively. Especially in casino tournaments unlike my weekly poker games with my friends.

After a while you learn your friends play but in tournaments they are all strangers how to get a read on them? Some players bet medium strength (not weak strength hands) aggressively. Does your e-book cover these questions?

Does it also have a section on poker tells, as well? I've played players giving off false tells as a trap such as acting weak when weak and strong when strong?

My friends do this as well, giving off false tells doing the opposite of the opposite of what you would expect - we've read the same books.

Thanks, A.C.

\*\*\*MY COMMENTS\*\*\*

I want to start off by saying CONGRATULATIONS, my friend. Calling bluffs with a queen high and laying down full boats is a sign of a BALLSY player. That level of faith in your abilities is a CRUCIAL step towards a successful poker career.

I am also impressed by your choice to take notes on your opponents. I notice that there are a lot of players who CLAIM to want to be better, but don't take the TIME to do what is needed.

As far as your question about reading poker tells against players you aren't familiar with, here's what you can do:

When you are at a new table, it is obviously VERY important that you pay close attention to the GAME and to the PLAYERS right away. Most players, when they sit down, get so caught up in themselves and their own heads that they don't even make it to this first step. To put it bluntly: "SIT DOWN, SHUT UP, and WATCH."

Don't start running your mouth. Don't try to act cool and don't daydream. The first few minutes you're at the table is the most IMPORTANT time in the game. Once you've done this, be sure not to rush into any hands. In fact, I recommend NOT getting involved in any hands at the very beginning and here's why:

If you're an experienced tournament player, you know that most players are eliminated from tournaments when they are in "shuffle times" (when they are moving from table to table). It is at these times when the BIGGEST MISTAKES are usually made.

Let's say that you sit down at a new table. You may have been playing at a tight table where you could buy a lot of pots. You sit at this new table and fall right back into your betting pattern. You make a bold move, try to buy a pot, and get burnt because THIS TABLE is much LOOSER than the last one.

This puts you at a disadvantage right away. One which you might not recover from. When I move to a new table or begin at a game where I don't know the players. I always wait at least 3-4 rounds of betting before I get involved in a hand and a lot of times I wait EVEN LONGER.

This gives me a chance to get to know my opponents BEFORE I risk any chips. I call it my "Study Period." Of course, the WHOLE GAME is a study period in itself, but these first few hands is 100% devoted towards just watching my poker opponents. And here's the added benefit:

If I don't know my competition, THEY don't know ME, either. By taking my time and doing my study period, I learn about THEM, but they DON'T LEARN ABOUT ME. If anything, they just ASSUME that I'm a tight player.

That means within 10 minutes, I immediately have an advantage over all the other players at the table, even if I haven't won a pot yet or even played a hand.

OK, so when you do your study period, what should you look for?

A lot of newbies think it's all in the face and in the eyes, which is a mistake. Most poker tells are the COMBINATION of an entire set of movements and behavior. On TV, especially in movies, poker tells are portrayed as something as simple as the twitch of a nose or the movement of a leg.

Kind of like in "Rounders," when Mike McDee figures out Teddy KGB based on how he ate his cookies.

TAKE NOTE. For the most part, this type of portrayal of poker tells is a TOTAL MYTH. If you think you can figure out a player's hand just based on how he blinks, you're in for a rude awakening and you'll lose your chips fast.

In REAL LIFE (where you play), tells are much more complex. VERY RARELY are they "cut and dry." When you study your opponents, here are the things you should think about:

#### 1. Past Play

Think about how this player has acted in the past. Is he usually strong or weak? Aggressive or timid? Smart or dumb? And so on...

#### 2. Timing

If your instinct tells you that a player deliberated for a long time trying to make a choice, chances are that his hand isn't too strong. However, you should also note how long he has taken to play in the past, to make sure that the move wasn't just a regular timing move.

#### 3. Posture

Especially with bad players, the posture of a player is a key tell that will reveal a lot about a hand. If the person leans back, that USUALLY represents strength. If he leans forward, that USUALLY represents weakness.

Once again, poker tells aren't black and white. It's a gray area, where everything needs to be considered together.

#### 4. Bet Amount

If a player tends to make small bets, but then places an unusually large bet, he could be holding a strong hand. Or he may be trying to buy the pot.

Always watch for irregularities in betting patterns. Most amateurs don't mix up their bets enough, which gives you an easy edge if you pay attention.

#### 5. Pulse

This is one of the only "body tells" that I find works most of the time. You can usually see the intensity of a player's pulse by looking closely at his neck. Often if a player gets "shaky," he usually has a great hand. If the player is cool and collected, it's probably a fake.

#### 6. Your Gut Feeling

Depending on your poker experience, your gut will often be your best guide. I've been playing poker for so long now that when I sit down with newbies, I can usually read the players almost INSTANTLY, without much thought.

It just comes naturally and it will come naturally to you, too...once you gain a lot of experience under your belt and once you spend enough time studying the game.

With the pros, of course, you've got to be much more careful, because they DO know how to disguise their tells and play their hands in an unpredictable manner.

So, to recap:

1. When you sit down to play at a table of strangers, especially in a tournament, take your time before becoming involved in a hand.
2. Go through a careful "Study Period." During this time, SHUT UP and STUDY the players intensely.
3. When you start betting, watch for the six things we discussed: past play, timing, posture, bet amount, pulse, and your own gut instincts.

Finally, there's one more step to add. And that is: NEVER REVEAL THE WAY YOU THINK. Here's what I mean: Poker is truly a BATTLE of minds. The tells we've been discussing are mostly simple REFLECTIONS of how a player is thinking at the time of a bet.

For some reason, it's a natural tendency in all of us to share our thoughts at the poker table. ESPECIALLY when we aren't involved in hands. This is more common during "home games" than in tournament play or casinos.

For instance, let's say there's a heads up match between Drew and John after the river card. Drew goes all in. The river was the third diamond on the board. John has trip aces. (Of course, a flush would beat John's three of a kind.)

Anyway, John's has to decide whether Drew is a on a bluff or if he caught the diamond flush. THIS is where everyone starts screwing up:

Since Drew is all in and can't change his mind, John shows his trip aces to the other guys at the table who aren't in the hand.

He says, "Man, I don't know whether to call. Drew made a pre-flop raise. I think he's just pot-committed and is trying to buy it." Someone else chimes in, "Yea, but he seems like he's got the flush. Did you notice how he's been quiet the whole hand?" Someone else says, "C'mon wuss. Just call his bet and go all in. I'm getting tired and want to get going." And so on...

Do you see where I'm going with this?

John should NEVER show his aces to the other guys, of course, because now they just saw an entire "free hand" and got to see how John acted the whole way with his three of a kind.

The next guy just revealed that he's been watching how SILENT Drew has been which clues everyone in on how this guy thinks about tells. Now you know to be very conscious about how much you talk around this player.

And the third guy reveals an attitude of carelessness, which means as soon as I caught a good hand I'd try to get in a heads-up match with him and go all in, because there's a decent chance he'll call.

When you reveal your THINKING PROCESS, you're simply GIVING AWAY tons of crucial information...FOR NO REASON. The other players at the table with pick up a read on you quickly, both consciously and subconsciously. So don't do it. Period.

As you know, Texas hold'em is filled with TONS of techniques and strategies like these, that anyone can understand if they just take the time to learn them. Unlike popular belief, poker is NOT about having "natural" talent. It's about LEARNING through experience, analysis, and expertise, how to MASTER the game.