FRANK R. WALLACE

THE WORLD'S #1 POKER MANUAL

With nearly $2,000,000 worth of previous editions sold, Frank R. Wallace's POKER, A GUARANTEED INCOME FOR LIFE *by using the* ADVANCED CONCEPTS OF POKER is the best, the biggest, the *most money-generating* book about poker ever written. This 100,000-word manual gives you the 120 Advanced Concepts of Poker and shows you step-by-step how to apply these concepts to any level of action.

Here are the topics of just twelve of the 120 money-winning Advanced Concepts:

- How to be an honest player who cannot lose at poker.
- How to increase your advantage so greatly that you can break most games at will.
- How to prevent games from breaking up.
- How to extract maximum money from all opponents.
- How to keep losers in the game.
- How to make winners quit.
- How to see unexposed cards without cheating.
- How to beat dishonest players and cheaters.
- How to lie and practice deceit. (Only in poker can you do that and remain a gentleman.)
- How to control the rules.
- How to jack up stakes.
- How to produce sloppy and careless attitudes in opponents.
- How to make good players disintegrate into poor players.

- How to manipulate opponents through distraction and hypnosis.
- How to locate or create new games for bigger and quicker profits.

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Poker: A Guaranteed Income for Life

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POKER

A GUARANTEED INCOME
FOR LIFE

The game on the cover has a seat open. Sit down. Many players are ready to lose tens-of-thousands of dollars a year to the reader of this book.

PREFACE

You can earn $150,000 a year by playing poker...even more, much more, if you want to. Wins of $1,000,000 and more per year are possible. Any man or woman can get rich by applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker. Moreover, poker is an excellent inflation hedge since both the money and the opportunities available to good players are increasing faster than the rate of inflation.

This book is for the penny-ante novice as well as the professional poker player; this book is for anyone who will ever pick up a poker hand. Once you are familiar with the Advanced Concepts of Poker, your only limitation in winning money is the extent to which you choose to apply those concepts.

What is your goal in poker? Do you want to get rich, be the biggest winner in the game, gain confidence, punish another player, or just have more fun? Define what you want, then increasingly apply the Advanced Concepts of Poker until you reach your goals. How far should you go? That depends on you, your conscience, and your goals.

CAUTION

The poker player armed with the Advanced Concepts of Poker knows how to play good poker -- he also knows how to force others into playing poor poker. He knows when to bet, raise, and bluff -- he also knows how to elicit bets, raises, and bluffs from those he has beat. He knows how to read the hands and intentions of opponents -- he also knows how to delude opponents into misreading his hands and intentions.

But most important, the poker player armed with the Advanced Concepts of Poker knows how to extract maximum money from his opponents -- he knows how to bankrupt them. And most dangerously, he knows how to control and manipulate the minds of players. He knows how to lure players into following their emotions, into losing control of themselves, into disorienting their psyches . . . even into destroying themselves.

INTRODUCTION

Every week millions of poker players around the world lose more money than many nations spend in a year.[1] Billions of dollars, pounds, marks, francs, yen await those knowing more than the basic concepts and techniques of poker. The opportunities for the good player are enormous.

Between 1850 and 1980, over 160 books were published about poker, but none focuses on the concept of extracting maximum money from a poker game. This book reveals methods to win maximum money from any game. This book also describes methods to generate more money by quickening the betting pace, raising the stakes, expanding the game, creating new games, and finding bigger games....This book shows how amateurs and professionals alike can win a guaranteed income from poker--in private games or in public casinos.

The player who knows and applies the Advanced Concepts of Poker is a rare person . . . few have ever played against him. He can win money so fast that he could bankrupt most games at will. But he controls his winnings and preserves the game in order to extract maximum money from his opponents. He camouflages his poker prowess so that his opponents seldom realize what he is doing.

Once familiar with the Advanced Concepts of Poker, any player can--

- recognize the good player
- guard against the good player
- develop into a good player.

The Advanced Concepts of Poker are objective and realistic. Some are ruthless. A few are immoral.[2] Know them and be wiser. Apply them and get richer.

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Footnotes:

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[1] A *Life* magazine article (August 16, 1968) about poker reported that 47,000,000 poker players in the United States wager $45 billion annually. By 1980, poker had become even more popular and inflation has doubled or tripled the amount wagered

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[2] None of the Advanced Concepts of Poker employs cheating but a few are immoral because they involve deception outside the poker game The good player however does not need to use a single immoral concept to achieve his goals So why include immoral concepts? Because, to be complete, this book must reveal *all* concepts related to poker. Moreover, the identification of immoral concepts allows the reader to recognize them and take defensive measures when such concepts are used against him

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The Advanced Concepts of Poker

How much money can you win at poker? It makes no difference if you are a professional poker player, a novice, or have never played poker before[3] ... the following 120 Advanced Concepts of Poker can guide any man or woman to unlimited winnings. How much you win depends on how fully and how many of these concepts you choose to apply.

PART ONE

DEFINITIONS

Definitions of the broadest aspects of poker (i.e., the game, odds, betting, players, emotions, and concepts) are given in the following pages as contextual descriptions. Definitions of specific words or phrases used in poker are given in the Glossary in Appendix C.

I

Game of Poker (1)

[4]

The object of poker is to win maximum money. Poker is not a card game; poker is a game of deception, manipulation, and money management. Cards are merely the tools for manipulating opponents and money. From the smallest penny-ante game to the largest table stake game, all money eventually goes to the good player. His key weapons are his mind and a license to use unlimited deception.

Poker is unique among money-making situations. In business, for example, opportunities to apply the proper business concepts are limited in number. The financial outcome, therefore, cannot be certain. But, in poker, while chance may influence each separate hand, the opportunities (hands) are so numerous that chance or "luck" becomes insignificant and success becomes certain. Application of the proper poker concepts assures financial success.

Poker concepts are best illustrated by players in actual game situations. The following players are the nucleus of a weekly Monday night game:

- **Sid Bennett**
- **Ted Fehr**
- **John Finn**
- **Quintin Merck**
- **Scotty Nichols**

Although other men play in this game from time to time, most of the poker situations in this book are illustrated with these five players.

"Four in the morning," Quintin Merck grunts at the dark-whiskered men still sitting around the rectangular poker table. It is not a real poker table, not the kind with trays for money and a green felt top ... it is the dining room table at Scotty Nichols' house. They have played here every Monday night for the past six years.

Layers of gray smoke mushroom around the overhead cluster of electric bulbs that light a leather table mat covered with $10 and $20 bills. The largest pile of money is in front of John Finn, a twenty-eight-year-old social worker -- so everyone thought.

In the sticky summer heat, the men slouch in squeaking wooden chairs. Only John Finn appears alert. The tall black-haired man slips on his glasses and hooks the gold rims around his ears. His dark eyes move from player to player.

On his left sits Sid Bennett, a thirty-five-year-old paving contractor. His large smiling head flops in a semicircle as straight yellow hair falls over his forehead and nearly touches his faded blue eyes. He's in a daze, John says to himself. Look at him grin.

On John's right sits Ted Fehr, a thirty-year-old gambler and restaurant owner. He coils a $50 bill around his skinny fingers while waiting for the next hand. Beneath a knotted mat of red hair, his freckled face wrinkles. Then his bloodshot eyes sag as he watches John Finn's arm hook around the huge pot. "The biggest pot of the night," he moans, "and look who wins it. You . . ."

John interrupts. "Wake up, Professor, it's your deal."

With a growling noise, Professor Merck deals. John watches the deck and sees the bottom card plus two other cards flash. He then studies Quintin Merck's green eyes ... they are watering from the cigarette smoke curling over his mustache and into his leathery face. Wearing a sweaty beret and an opened polo shirt, the wiry fifty-five-year-old college professor hunches over the table. Suddenly he looks up and frowns at John Finn.

Without flinching, John refocuses his eyes and looks into the kitchen. Then his eyes return to the game .. . he studies Scotty Nichols. The plump forty-two-year-old stockbroker slumps half dozing in his chair. His mouth droops to expose a cluster of gold-capped teeth. His thick glasses magnify his eyes into brown globes that float in circles between each squeezing blink. A tie droops from the frayed collar of his scorched white shirt.

They're all valuable to me, John Finn tells himself as his dark eyes draw into slits.

II
Poker Players (2)

There are good poker players and poor poker players. Most players fall in between these two extremes. The good player works hard to maintain maximum edge odds. He never compromises his advantage for the sake of others. He shares his abilities and earnings with no one. The poor player is usually lazy and generally lacks discipline. Unlike those in the non poker world, the poor poker player cannot live off the advantages or earnings of others.

1. The Good Player and the Maximum-Win Approach(3)

The good player plays solely for his own benefit. He *is not* a gambler[5] because he bets only when the odds are favorable. (Gamblers bet money at unfavorable odds and eventually lose all the money they risk.) The good poker player cannot lose; he eventually wins all the money that gambling players risk.

The ability to play good poker does not correlate with intelligence or the ability to play games such as bridge or chess. And, ironically, poker is a game of neither skill nor luck, but rather, is a game of discipline, aggression, and effort. The good player subjugates his impulses and motivates all his actions toward meeting the objective of poker, which is to win maximum money. He never gives anything away

or helps others without the motive of eventual profit. The good player thinks ahead and plans his moves in advance. He disciplines himself and maintains an emotional consistency. He objectively analyzes the game as well as each individual player, hand, and bet; he then adapts to any situation. The good player continuously expands his prowess by soaking up the experience of every play made by each player.

Good poker players are rare, and their paths seldom cross. In fact, most players have never encountered a good player. In the rare event that two good players are in the same game, their effective control is diluted and their edge odds are reduced by each other's presence. A good player searches for weaknesses in his opponents, but two good players do not waste time trying to analyze each other. They more profitably direct their mental effort toward studying the game and the other players.

The strategy of the good player often depends on creating impulse reactions in his opponents. Often, therefore, the best move against a good player is to act oppositely to initial impulses. For example, when undecided about calling a good player and the impulse is to fold, the best move may be to call or even raise.

2. Other Players(4)

The other players supply income to the good player. They are working for him and are his assets. He treats them with care and respect. He plans his actions to extract maximum money from them.

The differences in attitude between the good player and other players are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
ATTITUDES OF POKER PLAYERS

Situation	*Mystical Feelings of Most Poor Players*	*Objective Attitudes of Good Players*
Poker game	A relaxing mental diversion to escape reality.	A mental discipline requiring full focus on reality.
Evaluation of a play	Winning the pot is most important.	Playing the hand properly is most important.
Winner or loser	Play according to winnings or losses.	Never be influenced by winnings or losses.

Streaks of luck	Chances or odds are influenced by previous events. Luck runs in cycles.	Past means nothing except for the psychological effects it has on other players. Luck is an illusion.
Wild games	Such games are not real poker and require little skill. "Good" poker players will not play these games.	Complex or wild games require more skill and offer greater advantages to the good player.
Ante increase	Attitudes are mixed.	An increased ante encourages looser play and works against tight players.
Table stakes	Winner has an advantage when he takes money off the table.	The good player has more advantage with maximum money on the table.
No-limit poker	A dangerous game for pros only.	Requires more aggressiveness and bluffing. Gives the good player greater advantages.
Play past time limit	Chances of winning decrease.	Advantages for the good player increase as opponents get tired and careless.
Violation of rules	Enforce rules equally.	*Interpret* rules consistently and equitably. but *enforce* rules less rigidly against weak players.
Change in sequence of cards while dealing	The run of cards is broken--misdeal.	Makes no difference--keep on playing.
Opponents' errors such as betting out of turn	Scold or penalize the culprit.	Usually benefits the good player. Encourage sloppy and loose play.

Cheater	Throw him out of game.	If he is a regular loser, say nothing and let him play.
Good player	Welcome him.	Get him out of game.

The major enemy of poker players is their rationalization for their failure to think. They continually find excuses for their self-imposed weaknesses and their lack of self-control. Their losses are directly proportional to their mental laziness.

Many poor players evade thinking by letting their minds sink into irrational fogs. Their belief in luck short-circuits their minds by excusing them from their responsibility to think. Belief in luck is a great mystical rationalization for the refusal to think.

In method of thought, good players are right and poor players are wrong.

John Finn uses the mystical attitudes of his opponents to extract more money from them. In his black notebook, he has a chart that summarizes everyone's attitude:

Situation	Mystical Attitude	Objective Attitude
Evaluation of a play	Quintin, Scotty, Sid, Ted	John
Winner or loser	Scotty, Sid, Ted	John, Quintin
Streaks of luck	Scotty, Sid, Ted	John, Quintin
Wild games	Quintin, Scotty, Ted	John, Sid
Play past time limit	Scotty, Sid	John, Quintin, Ted
Violation of rules	Quintin, Ted	John, Sid, Scotty
Cheaters	Scotty, Ted	John, Quintin, Sid

III
Emotions (5)

Money affects emotions, and emotions control most players. Poker involves the winning and losing of money. Common emotions of anger, excitement, greed, masochism, sadism, and self-pity often take control of players during the action. Most players fail to recognize or are unable to suppress those emotional influences that decrease their objectivity and poker ability. The good player recognizes his own emotions and prevents them from influencing his actions.... He avoids acting on his whims and feelings.

Players respond emotionally to various experiences during the game. The good player uses those emotional reactions to his financial advantage. Some typical reactions and their causes are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2
EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Emotional Reactions	*Causes of Reactions*
Playing loose to recover losses Playing tight to minimize losses	A losing streak
Playing loose to push good luck Playing tight to protect winnings	A winning streak
Extending a "rush" or "streak *of* good luck" by playing recklessly	Winning a big hand or several consecutive hands . . . or having a "hot streak."
Playing poorly to avenge a loss or to retaliate for injured feelings	Losing a big hand or having feelings or pride hurt
Acting comical or silly	Fear, nervousness, lack of confidence, or desire for diversion
Becoming prone to impulsive actions and mistakes	Fear, nervousness, or desperation

Losing concentration and decreasing awareness of situation	Fear, laziness, fatigue, other problems
Losing assertiveness or aggressiveness	Fearing opponents, high stakes, or loss of too much money

Recognition and control of one's own emotions are difficult and require thinking effort. That is one reason why good poker players are rare.

The good player directs his actions to produce desirable emotions (e.g., pleasure and self-esteem); the poor player lets his emotions produce undesirable actions (e.g., poor concentration and carelessness).

Poker is a unique medium for studying people. Where else can one stare at and intensely observe another person for hours every week?

Poker offers opportunities to study people, often in highly emotional situations. Such opportunities that are probably better than those most psychoanalysts get to study their patients. The observant, good player will soon understand his opponents better than their own families do.

Poker players are often fatigued and under emotional stresses that expose their characters. On another page in John's notebook, he summarizes the emotional characteristics of his opponents as shown on the chart below:

Player	Prototype Player	Emotional Characteristics
Quintin Merck	**Sound**	**Fairly stable and objective. Can be upset when insulted or humiliated. His play then disintegrates. Becomes less objective during late hours as he fatigues.**
Scotty Nichols	**Average**	**Has inferiority complex and lack of confidence. Plays extremely tight if winning. Loosens up and plays recklessly after suffering a heavy loss or after losing several consecutive hands.**

| Sid Bennett | Wild | Hides lack of confidence with silly behavior. Humor him and keep atmosphere relaxed to bring out his worst. Be careful not to hurt his feelings, or he will sulk and play tight. Goes wild when winning. |
| Ted Fehr | Self-destructive | A compulsive gambler. Lacks self esteem. Wants to punish himself. Wants to lose. Deteriorates easily into a desperate condition. Insensitive to insults. No pride. |

IV
Poker Concepts (6)

Ideas on how to play poker can be assembled into concepts. The normal concepts described in most poker books are popular ideas based on a combination of common sense and generalizations. Those concepts can help some poor players improve their game. But good poker requires a much sharper definition of the problems, followed by actions based on more sophisticated and advanced concepts. The Advanced Concepts of Poker offer objective approaches to each aspect of the game and are designed for winning maximum money.

1. Common Concepts (7)

The most common concept for winning at poker has always been to play conservatively (tight) and to play according to the card odds. Most books on poker stress that concept. They usually include some basic techniques as well as some rules for betting, raising, and bluffing. They also present some common ideas about strategy and psychology. But none of those books offers or even considers a maximum-win approach to poker. (Appendix B lists all the known books about poker published since 1872.)

Table 3 identifies and analyzes the fallacies of many common concepts presented in the well-known and classic books on poker.

By applying the *common* concepts of poker, a player can win moderately in small-stake games that consist mainly of poor players. But in regular high-stake games, continual losses force most poor players to quit or to improve. High-stake games, therefore, often consist of experienced poker players advanced beyond the common concepts. But when a player using the common concepts enters a high-stake game, he usually feels confident that by playing tight he will eventually win over his looser playing opponents. Bewilderment gradually replaces confidence as he continually loses against players whom he considers inferior competition.

TABLE 3

EXAMPLES OF COMMON CONCEPTS IN POKER LITERATURE

Book	Concept	Failure of Concept
Abbott, 1.--1881 *Jack Pot Poker*	Never lend or borrow money.	Credit is necessary to keep most private high-stake games going week after week.
Allen, G. W.--1895 *Poker Rules in Rhyme*	"It's the game the boys like best Two or three times a week, One man often beats the rest With nothing else but cheek."	Action on objectively thought out plans (not cheek) is needed to win consistently.
Blackbridge, J.--1880 *The Complete Poker Player*	To play for a minimum loss or gain is what a gentleman should hope for.	To play for maximum gain is what the good player strives for.
Cady, Alice H.--1895 *Poker*	Bluffing should be shunned, for only an old player can experiment in this.	Only the weakest players will shun bluffing.
Coffin, G. S.--1949 *Fortune Poker*	Shrewd players in bad luck should call for a new deck of cards to break the cycle.	A sign of a poor player is one who calls for a new deck of cards to break his "bad luck" . . . he fails to understand poker.
Crawford, J. R.--1953 *How to Be a Consistent Winner*	Treat every bet as though it were your first one. Forget the money already in the pot.	Must consider the money in the pot to estimate the potential return on the present bet (Investment Odds).

Culbertson, E.--1950 *Culbertson's Hoyle*	Never raise early unless the purpose is to drive out players.	Raise early to start bluffs, build pots, control betting, keep players in, drop players out--depending on the situation.
Curtis, D. A.--1901 *The Science of Draw Poker*	New-fangled, high-low poker is mental weakness and should soon die out, even among the feeble-minded.	High-low poker requires more skill and offers greater advantages to the good player than does straight poker.
Dowling, A. H.--1940 *Confessions of a Poker Player*	Players acting out of turn should be penalized.	Players acting out of turn generally benefit the good player. Encourage sloppy play in opponents.
Encyclopedia Britannica--1965 "Poker"	In high-low seven-card stud, never play for high unless first three cards are trips.	When to play depends on the investment odds, not on fixed dogma.
Florence, W. l.--1891 *Handbook on Poker*	A good player will at times purposely play poorly to vary his game.	The good player never purposely plays poorly. With thinking, he finds infinite ways to vary his game at favorable investment odds.
Foster, R. F.--1904 *Practical Poker*	The compulsory ante is not based on judgment and has been the ruin of the scientific poker player.	The ante helps the loose player and usually benefits the good player.
Frey, R. L.--1947 *The Complete Hoyle*	Never open unless the probability is that you hold the highest hand.	Open without best hand to establish betting position, to defend against a larger bet, or to set up a play at favorable investment odds.

Henry, l R.--1890 *Poker Boiled Down*	Elements of poker success are good luck, good cards, cheek, good temper, and patience.	"Good luck" and good cards have no bearing on poker success . . . all players eventually get the same "luck" and cards.
Jacoby, O.--1947 *Oswald Jacoby on Poker*	The most successful bluffs are likely to be the innocent ones.	The most successful bluffs are likely to be the well thought out and properly executed ones.
Keller, l. W.--1887 *Draw Poker*	Playing poker without money is really an intellectual and scientific game. Playing poker with money becomes mere gambling.	The essence of poker is aggression and money.
Morehead, A. H.--1956 *New Complete Hoyle*	The most widespread mistake is to play long hours in a futile losers' game.	The greatest advantages occur in a game consisting of tired losers . . . they are usually the poor players at their poorest. Also, the losers' game will usually move at a faster pace and with sloppier play.
Morehead, A. H.--1967 *The Complete Guide to Winning Poker*	Many of the finest poker exploits are inspirational and intuitional.	The only fine poker exploits are the ones consciously thought out.
Moss, l.--1955 *How to Win at Poker*	Beware of poor players. Stay out of games in which there are fish.	Poor players are the most profitable opponents. Seek poor players and games in which fish abound.

Ostrow, A. A.--1945 *The Complete Card Player*	Wild-card and high-low poker increase the element of luck so greatly that rules for improving one's play cannot be set down.	The more complex the poker variations, the less the element of "luck" affects the outcome.
Philips, H.--1960 *Profitable Poker*	No sillier resolution is uttered than "Well, I must see it through."	If the pot is large and the final bet is small, the investment odds may heavily favor "seeing it through."
Radner, S. H.--1957 *The Key to Playing Poker*	To assure a night's winnings, sit to the left of loose bettors and to the right of tight players.	The good player usually sits to the right of loose bettors and to the left of tight players.
Reese, T. and Watkins, A. T.--1964 *Secret of Modern Poker*	To win consistently, you must play tight.	To win consistently, you must adapt to the game pace.
Rottenberg, 1.--1965 *Friday Night Poker*	High-stake games are played by grim, salty players.	High-stake games are played by all types of players.
Scarne, l.--1965 *Scarne on Cards*	Do not lend money. It often comes back to break you.	The good player lends money in order to win more money.
Schenick, R. C.--1872 *Rules for Playing Poker*	The dealer has no special advantage.	The dealer has an advantage in draw games . . . and a large advantage in low ball and hold 'em games.
Smith, R. A.--1925 *Poker to Win*	The yellowest, most contemptible form of cheating is welching.	The welcher has lost his money in the game before borrowing; therefore, he has been an asset.

Steig, I.--1959 *Poker for Fun and Profit*	When someone says, "There isn't much to poker," walk away from him; he is a lout.	When someone says, "There isn't much to poker," get him in the game; he will be a valuable loser.
Wickstead, J. M.--1938 *How to Win at Stud Poker*	In poker, fortune favors the brave.	In poker, the objective thinker makes fortune favor him.
Winterblossom, H. T.--1875 *Draw Poker*	The bluffing element in draw poker is fictitious.	The importance of bluffing depends on the stakes, not on the type of game.
Yardley, H. O.--1957 *Education of a Poker Player*	In all my life, I've never lost at over three consecutive sittings.	A good player at theoretical maximum edge odds (an impossible situation) will lose about once every four sessions . . . or lose in four consecutive sittings about once every 250 sessions. Also, the good player never brags about his success--he tries to conceal his success and understate his winnings.
General advice in most poker books from 1872 to 1968	Keep stakes down, hold to a rigid quitting time, play tight and according to the card odds.	The good player drives the stakes up, usually avoids a rigid quitting time, and plays according to the investment odds.

Scotty Nichols usually plays sensibly. He bets only good hands and is the tightest player in the game. He has studied many books about poker and faithfully follows their techniques and strategy. According to those books, he should be a consistent winner, particularly in this game with its loose and wild players. Why is he a loser? John Finn knows the answer . . . Scotty plays too tight. The pots he wins are usually small, and the pots he loses are often large. Why? Whenever Scotty shows betting strength or even stays in a hand, the other players either fold or stop betting.

When he wins, therefore, the pots are smaller than normal. When players do bet against him to make a large pot, they usually hold powerful enough hands to beat him. In other words, Scotty is a tight player who, like the wild player, has not adjusted to the game pace.

2 Advanced Concepts (8)

A player extracts maximum money from a poker game by using the Advanced Concepts of Poker. Use of those concepts involves--

- opponents who do not fully understand poker
- ownerless pots that separate players from their money[6]
- interactions among a good player, other players, and pots.

By using the Advanced Concepts of Poker, the good player eventually wins all the money that his opponents are willing to lose.

Objective, planned deception is the strategic basis for the Advanced Concepts of Poker. Unlimited deception is accepted and ethical in poker. John Finn makes full use of this unique license and will do anything -- except cheat -- that brings him an advantage.

The other players in the Monday night game believe they are deceptive. Their deception, however, is generally unimaginative and repetitive ... it seldom fools John Finn. He eventually wins all their money.

Footnotes:

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[3] *Complete Beginners:* The basic rules and concepts of poker are simple. They can be mastered after a few hours' exposure to any poker game. Beginners, however, should avoid the advice in most other poker books, for as shown in Concept 7 and in the bibliography, their advice is often based on spurious clichés and a faulty understanding of poker that assures one of never becoming a good player.

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[4] The 120 Advanced Concepts of Poker are listed in order by numbers in parentheses following each concept heading.

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[5] the footnote in Concept 82 for a definition of gambling.

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[6] In poker, unattached money in a pot belongs to no one and can be ethically won by any deceptive means, except cheating. But outside of poker, any poker like deception used to take money from an individual (rather than from an ownerless poker pot) would be dishonest or fraudulent.

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V
Odds (9)

Three types of odds are important in poker. Most players are familiar with the *card* odds, and most players base their playing and betting decisions on them. The card odds, however, can be meaningless unless the in*vestment* odds are also considered. Another type of odds is the *edge* odds, which evaluate the relative performance of each player. These three types of odds are described below.

1. Card Odds (10)

The card odds are the probabilities of being dealt or drawing to various hands. These odds are reviewed in most books about poker. Table 4 is based on the card odds and shows the statistical frequency with which different poker hands occur.

TABLE 4
CARD ODDS

High Hands	Approximate Deals per Pat Hand	Hands Possible
Total hands	1	2,598,960

No pair	2	1,302,540
One pair	2.5	1,098,240
Two pair	20	123,552
Three of a kind	50	54,912
Straight	250	10,200
Flush	500	5,108
Full house	700	3,744
Four of a kind	4,000	624
Straight flush	70,000	36
Royal straight flush	650,000	4
Five aces (with joker)[*]	3,000,000	1

[*] A fifty-three card deck with the joker has 2,869,685 possible hands.

Low Hands	Approximate Deals per Pat Hand	Hands Possible
Ace high (+)	5	502,880
King high (+)	8	335,580
Queen high (+)	12	213,180

Jack high (+)	20	127,500
Ten high (+)	37	70,360
Nine high (++)	36	71,860
Eight high (++)	70	35,840
Seven high (++)	170	15,360
Six high (++)	500	5,120
Five high (++)	2,500	1,024

(+) No straights or flushes. Ace is high.
(++) Including straights and flushes. Ace is low.

There are 2,598,960 different poker hands in a fifty-two-card deck. If a player is dealt 100,000 hands in his lifetime, he will never hold (on his first five cards) more than 4 percent of all the possible hands.

Other poker probabilities based on the card odds are tabulated in Appendix D.

The card odds can reveal interesting information. For example. how many pat straight flushes will Sid Bennett get during his lifetime? To determine that number, the expected number of hands that will be dealt to him during his life is estimated by the following calculation:

10 hands/hr.x5 hrs./gamex50 games/yr.
x40 yrs./poker life=l00,000 hands/poker life

From this estimation, the number of pat (on the first five cards) poker hands that Sid should get during his lifetime is calculated from the card odds and tabulated below:

	Approximate Number of Pat Hands in a Lifetime

No pair	50,000
One pair	40,00
Two pair	5,000
Three of a kind	2,000
Straight	400
Flush	200
Full house	170
Four of a kind	25
Straight flush	1.4
Royal straight flush	0.15

So statistically, Sid should get a pat straight flush on his first five cards once or twice during his life. He will, of course, catch straight flushes more frequently on the draw and in seven-card stud.

. . . Sid wins a big pot with a full house. He throws back his massive head and shouts, "I'm on a spinner! I'm going to break this game!" His head drops; he shakes his finger at the players and continues, "Just watch my luck. I'm getting a whole round of pat flushes ... starting next deal."

"That won't happen till the sun burns out," Quintin Merck snorts.

Statistically, Quintin is right. Sid will be dealt five consecutive straight flushes once in every 1.7×10^{24} deals, or once in every 700,000,000,000,000,000,000 years. Yet his five consecutive straight flushes could start coming with the next deal.

Let him hope, John Finn says to himself.

2. *Investment Odds (11)*

Investment odds are the estimated returns on money that is bet. These odds are approximated by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{(potential size of pot, \$) (probability of winning pot)}}{\text{potential loss, \$}} = \text{Investment Odds}$$

[Note: If you are a beginner or are not mathematically inclined, do not be discouraged or get bogged down by this formula. Forget the formula for now and read on. With experience, you will realize that accurate estimations of investment odds are achieved by the proper thinking methods and not by mathematical problem-solving. This formula is merely a shorthand expression of the thought process required for properly evaluating a bet.]

For example, if a player estimates that a $80 potential pot would require a $20 betting investment (his potential loss), and if he estimates that his probability of winning that pot is .4 (40 percent),[7] then his investment odds would be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(80)\ (.4)}{20} = 1.6$$

When the investment odds are greater than 1.0, the play is favorable and should be made.

Investment odds are important for making correct betting and playing decisions. Most players rely only on card odds, which often lead to wrong decisions. For example, investment odds sometimes favor drawing to an inside straight. At other times, investment odds favor folding three aces before the draw. In both cases, the wrong play may result if the decision is based on the card odds.

Determination of investment odds is not a mathematical problem. Numbers plugged into the investment-odds formula are quick estimations or guesses derived by gathering together and then objectively evaluating the facts of the game, players, and situation. Those estimations become more valid with increased thinking effort and experience. While the good player may never actually use or even think about the investment-odds formula, it does express his thought process for evaluating bets.

Quintin, Ted, and Scotty each draw one card. John Finn holds two low pair, tens and fours. What does he do? He considers the card odds, the past betting, probable future betting, his observations (e.g., of flashed cards), and his reading of each opponent ... and then estimates the following investment odds:

Draw one card to his two pair. . .

$$\frac{(\$200)\ (.2)}{} = .66 = \text{fold}$$

$60

Draw three cards to his pair of fours . . .

$$\frac{(\$300)\ (.1)}{\$20} = 1.5 = \text{play}$$

So instead of folding his two pair (and often the investment odds favor folding the two small pair), he breaks up his hand and draws to the pair of fours at favorable investment odds. The low $20 estimate of his potential loss is the key to making this play favorable. John figures his chances for catching and having to call the last bet are small.[8] When the high probability of a no bet or a folded hand (zero dollars) is averaged into the numerator, the potential loss becomes relatively small--even though the last-round bet may be large if he improves his hand. In other words, he will fold with no additional cost unless he catches three of a kind or better, which would let him bet heavily with a good possibility of winning.

In another hand, Sid and Ted draw three cards. Again John has two low pair. After objectively weighing all factors within the framework of the investment-odds formula, he estimates his most favorable play is to stay pat and then bet the *last* round as if he had a straight or a flush:

Play pat . . .

$$\frac{(\$100)\ (.8)}{\$60} = 1.33 = \text{play}$$

The advantages of this play are: If either Sid or Ted catches two pair or even trips, he may fold and let John win on a pat bluff. If either catches a strong hand and shows any betting strength, John folds with no additional cost. Also, neither will try to bluff into John's pat hand. And finally, if Sid and Ted do not improve, John Finn wins additional money if either one calls.

John Finn is the only good player in the Monday night game. He works hard, thinks objectively, and adapts to any situation. By applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker, he wins maximum money from the game.

To overcome mental laziness and restrictive thinking, he forces himself to think constantly and imaginatively about the game. That effort lets him make more profitable plays. For example, he breaks up a pat full house[9] to triple the size of the pot while decreasing his chances of winning only slightly (from 98 percent down to 85 percent). But that play increases his estimated investment odds from

$$\frac{(\$100)\ (.98)}{\$20} = 4.9 \text{ up to } \frac{(300)\ (.85)}{\$40} = 6.4.$$

John wins consistently, but still his opponents refuse to realize that they are paying him thousands of dollars every year to play in their game.

3. Edge Odds or Edge Percentages (12)

Edge odds indicate the relative performance of a player in a poker game. These odds are calculated by the following formula:

$\frac{\text{average winnings (or losses) of player, \$}}{\text{average winnings of the biggest winner, \$}}$ x 100% = Edge Odds % [10]

For example, if the biggest winner of *each* game averages plus $150, and if a player averages plus $75 per game, then the edge odds for this player are +75/150 x 100% = +50%. The more games used to calculate edge odds, the more significant they become. Edge odds based on ten or more games should reflect the relative performance of a player fairly accurately. The good poker player usually maintains edge odds ranging from 25 percent to 65 percent, depending on the game and abilities of the other players. An approximate performance grading of poker players based on the edge odds is tabulated in Table 5.

TABLE 5
EDGE ODDS

Grading	Edge Odds in Games without a Good Player	Edge Odds in Games with a Good Player
Good player	N/A	25 -- 65
Sound player	10 -- 25	5 -- 20
Average player	0 -- 15	(-5) -- 10
Weak player	(-10) -- 5	(-15) -- 0

Poor player	(-20) -- (-5)	(-65) -- (-10)

Edge odds are estimated for an average seven-man game.

The good player is a very expensive person to have in a poker game, as indicated by the sharp decreases in everyone's edge odds when he plays.

In a black leather notebook, John Finn keeps records of every player. After each game, he estimates their winnings and losses. After every ten games, he calculates their edge odds, as shown below:

Ten-Game Average Edge Odds, %

Player	*Estimated Average Win or Loss per Game, $*	*Edge Odds* *%*	*Grading*
John Finn	**+ 262**	**+ 59**	**Good**
Quintin Merck	**+ 45**	**+ 10**	**Sound**
Scotty Nichols	**- 10**	**- 2**	**Average**
Sid Bennett	**- 95**	**- 21**	**Poor**
Ted Fehr	**- 100**	**- 22**	**Poor**
Other Players	**- 135**	**- 30**	**Poor**

* The biggest winner for each game averaged +$445.

By reviewing his long-term edge-odds data (shown below), John notices slow changes in the players: Quintin is gradually improving, Scotty and Ted are deteriorating. while Sid remains stable.

Ten-Game-Average Edge Odds, %

Ten-game period #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
John Finn	+ 61	+ 53	+ 62	+ 59	+ 55	+ 60	+ 56
Quintin Merck	- 2	+ 2	- 5	+ 10	+ 8	+ 12	+ 15
Scotty Nichols	+ 4	+ 7	+ 6	- 2	+ 1	- 10	- 18
Sid Bennett	- 22	- 20	- 23	- 21	- 20	- 18	- 12
Ted Fehr	- 18	- 20	- 19	- 22	- 28	- 30	- 31
Other Players	- 23	- 24	- 26	- 30	- 25	- 22	- 20
Average biggest winner, +$	295	315	430	445	570	650	630

The steady increase in profit for the biggest winner also reflects John Finn's progress in driving up the betting stakes and pace.

VI
Betting (13)

Few players differentiate between the betting stakes and the betting pace. The betting *stakes* are the size of bets and raises permitted. The stakes are established by the house rules. The betting *pace* is the tempo or frequency of bets and raises. The pace depends on the games played and the willingness of players to bet. Both the stakes and pace determine how expensive the game is . . . or how much money can be won or lost.

The good player is seldom characterized as a tight player. His betting pattern is generally [but not always) aggressive,[11] and often lopsidedly aggressive. Pushing hard whenever he has an advantage (i. e., at favorable investment odds) and quickly dropping against stronger hands let him maximize his wins and minimize his losses.

When the good player bets, he generally bets aggressively. For the good player, increased

aggressiveness advantageously quickens the betting pace, while lopsided aggressiveness advantageously creates confusion and fear in his opponents.

As the stakes increase with each round of betting, the losses of the poor players will increase faster than the *potential* losses of the good player. Indeed, the investment-odds formula in Concept 11 suggests that a steeper and steeper betting progression within a hand (causing the numerator to increase more rapidly than the denominator) permits greater and greater betting aggressiveness, which in turn allows the good player to bet with poorer and poorer hands. In other words, the good player not only tries to drive up the betting stakes and betting pace within a game, but also tries to create a steeper betting progression within a hand.

1. Betting Stakes (14)

Most players think only of the betting stakes when they consider the size of the game.

The betting stakes in John Finn's Monday night games are as follows: In draw, $25 is the maximum bet or raise on the first round of betting. This maximum increases to $50 in subsequent rounds of betting. In stud, the maximum bet is $5 on the first up card. The bet then increases in $5 increments on each subsequent round of betting to $10, $15, $20, and so on. Only three raises are allowed except when only two players remain, and then raises are unlimited. Check raising is permitted.

2. Betting Pace(15)

The betting pace is often more significant than the betting stakes in determining the size of the game. The good player knows the betting pace of both the game and of each individual hand. The betting pace of the game (game pace) is determined by comparing the betting done on various hands to the betting normally done on these hands. The pace may differ markedly in different poker games. In a fast-paced game, for example, two pair after the draw may be worth two raises. In a slow-paced game, those same two pair may be worth not even a single bet.

The betting pace of each *hand* (hand pace) is determined by comparing the extent of betting, calling, raising, and bluffing to the size of the pot. Often the pace is too slow during certain phases of a hand and too fast during other phases. The good player controls his offensive and defensive game by altering his betting pace at various phases of a poker hand. The ratios shown in Table 6 reflect the betting pace during the various phases of a poker hand.

TABLE 6
BETTING PACES

Phase	Ratio	Increasing Ratio -->
Open	$$\frac{\text{(opening bet, \$) (\# callers)}}{\text{pot, \$}}$$	Slow pace --> Fast pace
Raise	$$\frac{\text{(raise bet, \$) (\# callers)}}{\text{pot, \$}}$$	Slow pace --> Fast pace
Final bet	$$\frac{\text{(last bet, \$) (\# callers)}}{\text{pot, \$}}$$	Slow pace --> Fast pace
Bluff	$$\frac{\text{(\# bluffs) (average \# final callers)}}{\text{\#hands played}}$$	Slow pace --> Fast pace

Few hands are played at the optimum betting pace. And if, for example, the betting pace is relatively slow, the optimum pace will be somewhat faster. A person increases his investment and edge odds by playing closer to the optimum pace.

In the Monday night game, John realizes that the betting in seven-card stud moves at a fast pace during the early rounds, but slows considerably in the late rounds of big bets. He takes advantage of that imbalance by laying back during the early rounds as players get drawn in and disclose their betting tendencies. Then in the later rounds, he quickens the pace by betting aggressively. But while playing closer to the optimum pace himself, John is careful not to correct the imbalanced pace of other players.

The following ratios illustrate how John Finn estimates and influences the hand pace of the Monday night, seven-card stud game.

Phase	Without John Finn Estimated Ratios	Pace	With John Finn Estimated Ratios
Open	$$\frac{\$4 \times 4}{\$23} = .70$$	Too fast	$$\frac{\$3 \times 5}{\$22} = .68$$
Raise (first round)	$$\frac{\$5 \times 3}{\$38} = .40$$	↓	$$\frac{\$5 \times 4}{\$42} = .48$$

Final bet	$\underline{\$20 \times 2} =.20$ $\$198$	Too slow	$\underline{\$25 \times 3} =.25$ $\$297$
Final raise	Best hand should raise, but often does not		John Finn often makes final raise

The techniques for applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker are described in Part Two of this book.

Footnotes:

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[7] How does a player estimate the probability of winning a pot? He does this by assessing his own hand and position against the behavior and betting of his opponents. Initially, the estimates may be little more than guesses. Accuracy will improve with practice, experience, integrated effort, and application of various concepts described in this book.

---

[8] The weakness of hands such as small pairs, four flushes, and four-card straights after the draw increases the investment odds because failure to improve those hands causes an immediate fold, thereby reducing the potential loss.

---

[9] The opportunity to profitably break a full house by drawing to three of a kind rarely occurs. The above case results when several players with weak hands would fold if the full house were played pat, but would call if a draw were made. Also, the full house would be broken to draw to four of a kind if sufficient evidence existed that the full house was not the best hand.

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[10] If you are not mathematically inclined and do not understand this or other formulas and ratios presented in this chapter, do not worry. Just skip over the formulas and read on. for these formulas are not necessary to understand and utilize the concepts identified in this book.

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[11] Good players are confident in their betting and generally play aggressively, Poor players are either too loose or too tight in their betting and seldom play aggressively.

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PART TWO

TECHNIQUES

(DTC METHOD)

Discipline, Thought, and Control are the techniques of good poker. The DTC method is the application of these three techniques.

VII
Discipline (16)

Discipline is the mechanism of good poker. Discipline leads to self-control, which is necessary to--

- prevent emotions from affecting actions
- allow total concentration to focus on the game
- permit continuous objective thinking in order to analyze past action, carry out present action, and plan future action.

Self-control develops by practicing during the game the disciplines listed in Table 7:

TABLE 7
DISCIPLINES

Discipline Practiced	Self-Control Developed
Consume no food or beverage	Awareness
Do not swear or display feelings	Emotional control
Maintain good posture--sit straight and keep both feet flat on the floor	Alertness
Memorize important hands played and performance of each opponent	Concentration
Mentally Review and criticize each play	Objectivity

The good player increases his advantage as the game grinds into late hours. His disciplines become more nagging and thus more effective for maintaining self-control. At the same time, the concentration and playing ability of his tired opponents decrease. Also as his opponents develop into big winners or big losers for the evening, they become less objective and respond more to their feelings.

A decrease in discipline has a cumulative effect that can cause even a sound player to deteriorate into a poor player. For example, if a loss in discipline generates a breakdown in self-control, then *a* process of deterioration starts. Deterioration may be only temporary . . . but it can be permanent, especially with compulsive gamblers.

Deterioration can start spontaneously or can be induced by--

- a long losing or winning streak
- entering a higher-stake or a lower-stake game
- a close loss of a big hand
- a bad play or bet
- an upsetting remark
- boredom or weariness
- a personal problem

The good player recognizes any loss of discipline during the game. He adopts the following attitudes to

prevent deterioration of his own discipline and play:

- Actual winning or losing of a pot is not important.
- Each well-played hand, won or lost, is a victory.
- Each poorly played hand is a defeat (even if the pot is won).
- Each move or action lacking discipline can eventually cost much more money than there is in any pot.

Consistent, tight discipline can build momentum toward a continuous string of flawless plays. If a bad play spoils this momentum, the resulting loss of self-control can lead to poorer-quality poker. A bad play to a good poker player can be as a cigarette is to an ex-smoker . . . one slip (betrayal of one's self) breaks the momentum of discipline and can bring disaster.[12]

A few minutes of postgame discipline are necessary to record valuable information and data about the game. In addition to his notes written after each game, the good player periodically reevaluates the game and its players. These evaluations point out slow changes occurring in the game and often suggest changes in strategy necessary to maintain optimum edge odds.

John Finn uses convenient photocopied outlines, as shown in Tables 8, 10, and 12, and periodically fills them out as shown in Tables 9,11, and 13. Those outlines provide him with consistent up-to-date information on the game and its players.

A few minutes of pregame discipline is needed to review past notes. Also, a nap before the game improves discipline and thought. A bath and a shave help restore the freshness necessary to sustain peak performance throughout an all-night session.

TABLE 8
WEEKLY GAME NOTES

[13]
GAME--
DATE--

Highlights--

Evaluation of game--

Evaluation of own performance--

<div align="center">

(a) errors--   **(b) unusual plays--**

(c) number of wins--   **(d) calculated edge odds--**

</div>

Information on opponents

<div align="center">

(a) observations   **(b) performance**

(c) winnings, losses, and debts, $ **(d) bluffs, tried/called--**

</div>

Statistics

<div align="center">

(a) number of hands played--   **(b) starting and quitting time--**

(c) maximum win--   **(d) maximum loss--**

</div>

Miscellaneous--

<div align="center">

TABLE 9
WEEKLY GAME NOTES
GAME--*Monday, weekly*
DATE--*9/10*

</div>

Highlights--

Sid cheats Quintin out of $700 pot Have talk with Quintin. Everything okay.... New player Jeff Klien is a good addition. Will be permanent loser.... Ted absent. Broke from playing horses. . . . Sid played wildly and poorly, but won big.

Evaluation of game--

Continues at fast pace. Near optimum stakes for now. Only Charlie appears in financial trouble. Scotty is starting to hurt.

Evaluation of own performance--$550 *win*
(a) errors --2

(details in black book, p. 52)

(b) unusual plays--3

(details in black book, p. 78

(c) number of wins--12

(7 full, 5 split)

(d) calculated edge odds--

550/650x100=85%

Information on opponents

(a) observations

Jeff blinks eyes when a bet is made against his weak hand. Keeps eyes open wide when he has a strong hand.

(b) performance

Aaron-fair; Quintin-good to fair; Scotty-fair to poor; Charlie- very poor; Jeff-fair; Mike- fair; Sid-poor; John-good

(c) winnings, losses, and debts, $

Sid +650 Aaron -250

John +550 Scotty -300

Mike +400 Quintin -350

Jeff +200 Charlie -900 (borrows 300)

(d) bluffs, tried/ called--*30/19*

Aaron-3/2 Jeff-1/1

Quintin-1/10 Mike-0

Scotty-0 Sid-15/10

Charlie-6/15 John-4/1

Statistics

(a) number of hands played--108

(% won=12/108=11%)

(b) starting and quitting time--

8:15 p.m.-5:00 a.m.

(c) maximum win--

+$650 (Sid)

(d) maximum loss--

-$900 (Charlie)

Miscellaneous--

* Need another regular player.

* Everyone absorbing losses okay, except Charlie, who is getting desperate.

* Problem about Ted's debts and bounced checks.

TABLE 10

SEMIANNUAL GAME PROFILE

GAME--
PERIOD--

Face and stakes--
Average maximum win--
Average maximum loss--
Performance of opponents--
Regular players--
New or occasional players--

Games played--

Ante per player--

Betting--

Raising--

Attitudes--

Personal performance--

Miscellaneous--

TABLE 11
SEMIANNUAL GAME PROFILE

GAME--*Monday, weekly*
PERIOD--*1/8 -6/4*

Pace and stakes--*Fast pace is near maximum..Pressure for higher stakes.*

Average maximum win: *+$550*

Average maximum loss: *-$450*

Performance of opponents-- *Average and fairly stable. Quintin is improving. Scotty, Aaron, and Ted are deteriorating.*

Regular players-- *John Finn, Quintin Merck, Sid Bennett, Ted Fehr, Scotty Nichols.*

New or occasional players-- *Aaron Smith, Mike Bell, Charlie Holland, Mac Zimmerman, Jim Todd, Jake Fehr, Lee Pennock, Jeff Klien.*

Games played-- *Draw and stud with twists, high-low, and qualifiers. Occasionally use wild cards and the Bug.*

Ante per player-- *$1 for stud. $5 for draw.*

Betting-- *In draw, $25 opens, then $50 in subsequent rounds. In stud, $5 first card, then increase by $5 for each additional card. Twists are free....80% of bets are at the maximum.*

Raising-- *Right-to-bet rule. Normally three raises. With only two players, raises are unlimited. Check raises okay.*

Attitudes-- *Generally good. Sid continues to cheat without problems. No one resentful or in danger of quitting.*

Personal performance-- *Good, but leveling off in effort. Areas to improve--Increase focus on broader aspects of the game. Increase flexibility in style during early rounds.*

Miscellaneous-- *Stakes are ready to move up to next level. Try doubling stakes for the last round in the next few games.*

TABLE 12
SEMIANNUAL PLAYER PROFILE

NAME--
PERIOD--

Classification--

Motive--

Attitude--

Performance--

Average won or lost/game--

Edge odds--

Behavior--

        Open--

        Bet--

        Call--

        Raise--

        Last bet--

        Bluff--

        Fold--

Weaknesses--

Strengths--

Changes--

Miscellaneous--

TABLE 13
SEMIANNUAL PLAYER PROFILE

NAME--*Quintin Merck*
PERIOD--*I/8-6/4*

Classification--Sound player and improving.

Motive--*Pass time. Satisfy ego....Shifting to motive of making money.*

Attitude--*Grouchy but Improving.*

Performance--*Above average.*

Average won or lost/game--*+$50 and increasing.*

Edge odds--*+10% and increasing.*

Behavior--

    Open--*When under the gun, he holds back good hands When dealing, he will almost always open*

    Bet--*Bets too lightly in early rounds. Same giveaway habits (listed in black book. p. 17)*

    Call--*Calls with much weaker hands than he is willing to bet.*

    Raise--*Too conservative. Seldom raises a good winning hand if it is of low value.*

    Last bet--*Bets only when sure, but calls with weak hands.*

    Bluff--*Seldom. Averages once every two sessions. Same giveaway habits (listed in black book, p. 17).*

    Fold--*Folds too easily early in hand and too hard late in hand*

Weaknesses--*Play deteriorates when he gets angry from personal insults or from humiliating losses. Betting is out of proportion. Too conservative, but tires in late hours, then plays too loose.*

Strengths--*Fairly objective. Conservative. Tries to concentrate.*

Changes--*Improving and becoming more objective. Making conscious effort to improve. Better control over emotions.*

Miscellaneous--*He becomes less valuable as he improves. If improvement and winnings continue, he will be a liability. May have to eliminate him from the game.*

How valuable is discipline? Obviously it is important in poker. But how valuable is discipline when it comes to refreshments? Did you ever eat a $600 sandwich? Well, such costly sandwiches are sometimes eaten in John Finn's game.

Consider Scotty Nichols, who tries hard to play a good game.... Sid deals draw poker. Scotty seems nervous, as if desperate to win a pot. He opens for $25 with a pair of aces. Sid raises to $50. Now Scotty is sucked in and calls. Nervous hunger seizes him. He rushes to the food table and rapidly piles many slabs of ham and cheese into a giant sandwich. In the meantime, Ted Fehr draws a card and carelessly flashes it--the ace of diamonds. Then the dealer, waving the deck around, exposes the bottom card for all to see--except Scotty, who is laying pickles on his sandwich. The bottom card? It is the ace of clubs.

Now it is Scotty's turn to draw. Hurrying back to the table, he smiles at his sandwich. Then his teeth chomp into the pile of food. Beads of mustard ooze over the crust and drip onto his tight slacks. With mustard-covered fingers, Scotty picks up his cards. John Finn watches him play. Yes, the pair of aces are still there. But wait--he also has four spades. Scotty wonders what to do. Staring at his sandwich, he continues to eat.

"Come on," Quintin grunts. "Speed up the game."

"Got to go with my best hand," Scotty finally blurts. He draws three cards to his pair of aces and then jams the rest of the sandwich into his mouth. The first card off the deck is the king of spades . . . his flush card. So what--he still catches another king to give him two pair, aces and kings . . . a pretty good hand.

That pretty good hand is enough to keep him in for a $50 bet plus a $50 raise. Quintin Merck wins with a queen high flush.

"What rotten luck," Scotty whines as he grabs an overflowing handful of potato chips. His words are followed by a slobbering crunch.

Rotten luck? If Scotty had stayed at the table, he would have seen the two flashed aces and drawn to his four flush to win the $600 pot. Instead he loses $150. That ham and cheese sandwich cost him $600!

Also, John Finn uses the mustard stains on Scotty's cards to identify them in future hands.

VIII
Thought (17)

Thought is the labor of good poker. Objectivity and steady concentration are needed to think properly. Thinking requires discipline. *Analytical* thinking is necessary to understand and predict the actions of opponents. *Objective* thinking is necessary to plan the proper action.

The good player continually thinks about poker during the game. He looks at his cards quickly to allow maximum time for observation and thought. He never wastes precious time by slowly looking at or squeezing open his cards. When involved in a hand, his thoughts concentrate on strategy. The good player gains a major advantage over other players by thinking ahead and forming several strategic plans based on anticipated hands. When an anticipated hand develops, he can make quicker and more accurate playing decisions.

When not involved in a hand, the good player studies the game, gathers data, and plans future strategy. Between hands, he analyzes the action of each concluded hand.

Intensive thought and concentration also help to overcome nervousness, which even a good player may experience when playing in a strange, an unfriendly, or a high-stake game.

Since thinking is the labor of poker, maximum thinking effort should yield maximum returns. How much *is* this effort worth in dollars? When a player wins an average of $40 per game, his winning rate is equivalent to a job paying $15,200 a year.[14] Average winnings of $150 per game is equivalent to a $57,000 per year job.

Compare the effort in poker to the effort required in a job yielding similar earnings. For example, a winning rate of $5 per game is equivalent to a job paying only $1,900 per year; such pay would not be worth the effort needed to play good poker.

Let us see how thinking pays off. John Finn is under the gun in draw poker. He has a four flush in hearts and checks. Next is Sid Bennett, who opens for $25. John check-raises to $50. Sid and Scotty call the raise. Now John draws and immediately looks at his card. He misses his flush. Does he give up? No . . . by paying attention and thinking, he still has a chance to win that $250 pot. John stays alert. and this is what he sees and hears:

Sid Bennett draws one card, sticks it in the center of his hand, then quickly looks at it. Is he drawing a flush, a straight, or two pair? Probably two pair because when Sid draws one card to the flush or straight he places the draw card at the back end of his hand and then looks at the card very slowly. That, along with his betting pattern (opens, then reluctantly calls a raise), suggests that Sid has two pair.

Ted Fehr flashes a black picture card when dealing Scotty's draw card. While ruffling the cards through his chubby fingers, Scotty exposes the deuce of hearts. Therefore, if he were going for the flush or straight, he missed it. Scotty slowly squeezes his cards open to look at his new card, then gives a blowing exhale. He usually inhales when he sees a good draw card.

Now John has a good view of the situation. The opener (Sid with two pair) looks weak with respect to the two one-card draw hands behind him . . . especially after John raised the first-round bet. Knowing that Scotty has a busted hand, John sits in a position of strength, despite his worthless

hand. He has the last bet, and the other players respect his hand because of his first-round raise followed by his single-card draw. John has an excellent chance of buying the $250 pot with a bluff.

If Sid and Scotty check and John bets $50, Sid will probably drop his winning hand because he would have to contend with Scotty's one-card draw as well as John's one-card draw. If Sid folds, Scotty will then fold his busted hand, leaving John the pot. John figures his chances of a successful bluff under the circumstances are better than 1 to 2. The return for winning the pot would be about 5 to 1. He estimates his investment odds at $250 x 0.3/$0 = 1.5 . . . those are good odds.

What if Sid bets his two pair? Does John fold his hand or does he still bluff by raising back? He would probably fold for the following reasons:

- After already betting $0, Sid would probably call John's raise--out of pseudo pride if for no other reason.
- Sid's bet would drive out Scotty, thus eliminating the key player needed to bluff Sid out. John's chances of a successful bluff would decrease sharply.
- John would have to risk $100 for a $300 pot -- 3 to 1 return on his bluff play rather than the 5 to 1 return if Sid does not bet. His investment odds would fall to $450 x 0.1/100 = 0.45 . . . a very unfavorable level.

What actually happens? Well, things turn out better than John hoped. Sid checks. Scotty hesitates and then suddenly bets $50. This is his normal pattern when bluffing--hesitate and then bet fast. Scotty's obvious bluff attempt makes John's bluff even easier. He casually raises to $100. Sid and Scotty fold immediately.... John wins a $300 pot with a worthless hand plus a little thinking.

Incidentally, John Finn earns $42,000 per year by playing 400 hours in the Monday night game. This equals $105 per hour, which is equivalent to a job yielding $200,000 per year.... A job paying that much is worth a concentrated thinking effort.

IX
Control (18)

The result of good poker is control--control of self, opponents, and the game. When the good player achieves self-control through discipline and understands his opponents through thinking, he can seize control of his opponents and the game. When in control, he becomes the center of attention. His opponents spend a major portion of their time and effort trying to figure out his moves and then adjusting to them ... they play according to his moves and actions. From this controlling position he can--

- influence the betting, raising, and bluffing of his opponents
- force opponents into traps and wrong moves
- dilute opponents' attention toward one another so he can play them off against each other.

The player who continually strives for maximum *investment* odds cannot control the game. Always making the play that yields the maximum return reduces the flexibility needed to control the players and to achieve maximum *edge* odds. The good player, therefore, chooses from a wide variety of plays available at slightly less favorable odds. For example, by backing away from the maximum investment odds, the good player can bet more aggressively and increase his flexibility in play-making so much that he can produce almost any desired effect. Also, by underbetting a hand and then overbetting a subsequent similar hand (with only occasional bets made at maximum investment odds), he makes his betting unpredictable. That flexibility and unpredictability let him control the betting.

Money flows toward the player who controls the betting. The best time to get that control is early in the hand while the bets are still small. The good player often gains control by unexpected or unusual bets (such as a raise into obvious strength of an opponent), by larger than usual first-round bets, or by weird bets (such as a $4 bet instead of the usual $5 bet). He then makes subsequent offensive or defensive betting manipulations designed to influence the big last-round bets and raises.

Offensive manipulations, designed to maximize a potential win, are done by altering (increasing or decreasing) the betting pace in order to--

- build pots
- encourage players to stay for the large last-round bets
- set up bluffs
- induce opponents to bluff.

Defensive manipulations, designed to minimize a potential loss, are done by altering (increasing or decreasing) the betting pace in order to--

- suppress bets or raises
- prevent bluffs
- drive out or keep in players in order to create favorable odds for drawing to a potential hand, such as a four flush or two pair.

Confusion and fear decrease the ability of players to think objectively and to play their hands properly. Most players fear the confusing play and unpredictable betting of the good player. By making spectacular shock plays, he further increases their fear of him. Many opportunities occur in which investment odds actually favor spectacular maneuvers such as--

- holding a high pair pat in draw poker
- breaking up a full house to draw to three of a kind
- raising and then dropping out on the next bet
- making a colorful bluff such as holding pat and betting four kings in a lowball game
- raising a weak-looking stud hand in the face of strong-appearing opposition
- dropping a strong-looking stud hand in the face of weak-appearing opposition.

John Finn has a big psychological advantage over his opponents. He confuses, shocks, bullies, frightens, and worries them into focusing their attention on him. They react strongly to his actions. Their moves and bets are often distorted because they base them on trivial moves by John, while ignoring significant moves by other players. Knowing how they will react to his moves, John can often make them do what he wants, while he alone retains a balanced view of the game. The results? He controls the game.... This is how that control works:

Immediately after bluffing Sid Bennett (in the previous chapter), John spreads his cards face-up across the table. Seeing John's four hearts with a big black club right in the middle, Sid moans and groans as the other players laugh at him. With his face blushing red, he mutters, "I'll sleep in the street before you bluff me out again."

The players are still talking about John's bluff as Scotty Nichols starts the next deal. Ted opens for $25. Sid fumbles with his money ... an indication that he wants to raise. John has a pair of aces that could be played with good investment odds if he can gain an offensive betting position and prevent Sid's raise. That is an easy problem for John. He just throws some confusion at the players by making a weird $3 raise.

Sid drops the money he was fingering. "What's Finn up to?" he says, wrinkling his nose. "He's either got nothing or a powerhouse. Uh . . . probably hoping for a raise."

Perfect. That is exactly the reaction John wanted. The silent players stare at him as they try to figure out his bet. The result? Everyone just calls and then anxiously awaits John's next move. With that $3 bet, John prevents any raising, gets everyone's attention, and assumes the offensive betting position.

Now the draw. John Finn takes three cards--Sid frowns at him. Immediately John looks at his draw. He catches a pair of jacks to give him aces-up two pair. His expression remains unchanged. Sid draws one card, glances at it, and then grunts, "I had John beat all the time. Should've raised him out of his seat."

A convenient statement for John ... it verifies that Sid still has two pair. Scotty also draws one card. By knowing his betting and playing habits, John reads him for two pair also. Ted draws one card; his freckled face stiffens as he slowly squeezes his cards apart. Then with a burst of swear words, he flings the cards across the table.

"Miss your flush?" Quintin Merck asks, smiling with a fluttering mustache. Ted just pouts his lip and looks at the ceiling.

John makes a nominal $1 bet. Sid, still mumbling about being bluffed out of the previous hand and then being tricked out of the first-round raise, reacts emotionally, "You ain't getting off cheap

this time," he snorts. "I raise fifty bucks."

Scotty Nichols hesitates a long time before calling. That confirms he has two pair. If Scotty had three of a kind or better, he would have called without hesitation. Now John is in a strong fundamental position with his aces-up; he raises to $100. Both Sid and Scotty, having already bet their hands heavily, feel compelled to call. So they do.... John's aces-up wins the $400 pot.

So with a normally unfavorable hand and position, John controls the betting and wins the pot. Also because he knows how to control the players, he builds a potential $100 pot into a $400 pot by tickling Sid's emotions.

John Finn is a good player because he disciplines himself, thinks objectively, and then takes control of the game. *Discipline, thought,* **and then** *control*--**the DTC method--is his technique for good poker.**

Parts Three, Four, and Five of this book show how the good player with the DTC method achieves--

- improved edge odds (increased advantage)
- faster money flow (increased income)
- more players and games (increased future earnings).

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Footnotes:

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[12] The good player does not consider an honest error in judgment a flaw. To him a flaw is the failure to think and act rationally. The flawless play, therefore, is not based on omniscience or perfect judgment, but rather on full rational thought.

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[13] Collecting and remembering the data for these Weekly Game Notes require discipline and concentration. Indeed, the chief value in acquiring these notes is not the data themselves, but the forced mental attention to the game that is required to collect the data.

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[14] This and the following figures calculated for a five-hour weekly game . . . and 1900 hours of actual work per year (estimated from data in the U. S. Government Bulletin, *Employment, Earnings and Monthly Report on the Labor Force.* vol. 12, no. 10).

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PART THREE

STRATEGIES

With discipline and objective thinking, the good player takes control of poker games. With the proper strategy, he molds those games to his maximum advantage. His prime strategical tool is deception.

X
Ingredients of Strategy (19)

Proper strategy depends on the game, opponents, and situation. Certain phases of poker remain more or less constant; other phases change from bet to bet, hand to hand, or game to game. The good player bases his long-term strategy on the more constant phases of poker and his short-term strategy on the variable phases. Good strategy contains the ingredients shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14
INGREDIENTS OF STRATEGY

Strategy	*Principal Ingredient*
Long-range	Understanding of game (a constant)
Short-range	Knowledge of opponents (a variable)
Immediate action	Awareness of situation (a variable)

1. Understanding Game (2O)

The mechanics of poker are simple and can be learned in a few minutes. Yet the strategy of poker has limitless possibilities. Strategy depends more on proper technique than on experience. Even a novice can acquire an immediate strategic advantage over seasoned opponents by applying the DTC technique (discipline, thought, and then control).

Long-range (general) strategy develops from an understanding of the game. The good player understands the game by knowing the--

- quality of players
- betting pace
- availability of cash
- credit situation
- general attitude and friendliness
- areas of resistance and resentment
- bluffing attitudes
- reasons for player turnover.

When a player fails to appraise a game accurately, he experiences--

- decreased edge odds
- errors and missed opportunities
- less effective strategy.

The good player continually evaluates the game in order to detect changes and inaccurate appraisals.

All sorts of game and player information are in John Finn's black leather notebook. Every month he summarizes his observations in a section labeled "General Appraisal of Game and Players." Here is a typical summary:

"Monday--7/9. The players have stabilized over the past month, except for the gradual disintegration of Scotty, who gets desperate when losing heavily and then makes poor bets and bluffs. The betting pace is increasing as wild modifications are added. The betting stakes remain stable. The cash situation is good despite heavy losses by Sid, Ted, and Scotty. But Ted is in financial trouble; he runs up large debts and then pays them off with borrowed money. He may soon go broke.

"Resentment is building between Quintin and Sid. Quintin sarcastically questions Sid's honesty. Sid shouts back angry insults about Quintin's stinginess. This quarrel must end before it hurts the game.

"The game is in good shape and yields a reliable and substantial income. No one seems about to quit, except Ted if he goes bankrupt. But the game needs one or two new players . . . Aaron Smith would be a profitable addition."

2. .Knowing Opponents (21)

Short-range strategy develops from knowledge of opponents. The good player knows his opponents by appraising their--

- personalities
- weaknesses and strengths
- behavior patterns
- motives for playing
- financial status
- betting and raising tendencies
- dropping and bluffing tendencies
- areas of confusion and errors

Classification of opponents is a major step toward understanding them. Poker players usually can be put into one of the eleven classes shown in Table 15A.

TABLE 15A
CLASSES OF PLAYERS

Class of Player	Ability to Control	Ability to Read	Performance
Good	Hardest	Very difficult	Biggest winner
Sound	↓	Difficult	↓
Daring and unconventional	↓	Medium	Decrease winnings
Loose winner	↓	Medium	↓
Tight winner	↓	Medium	↓
Tight loser	Increase ease to control	Easy	Loser
Loose loser	↓	Easy	↓
Very tight	↓	Easy	↓
Wild	↓	Medium	Increase losings
Desperate	↓	Medium	↓
Suicidal	Easiest	Medium	Biggest loser

Some players are a mixture of two classes. Also, the class of a player can change from moment to moment or over the long term, as shown in Table 15B.

TABLE 15B
CHANGES IN PLAYERS

Time Span for Change	Reasons for Change
Over long term	Increased experience, personality changes
From game to game	Feelings, emotions, stakes, financial condition
From one type of game to another	Differences in understanding various games
From hand to hand	Winning, losing, tired, upset
During play of a hand	Erroneous perspective on different phases of betting

The players in this Monday night game are classified as follows:

Player	Class	Ability to Control and Read	Performance	Changes
John Finn	**Good**	**Very difficult**	**Big winner**	**Stable. General long-term improvement.**
Quintin Merck	**Sound**	**Hard**	**Winner**	**General long-term improvement. Some deterioration when tired or insulted.**
Scotty Nichols	**Very tight**	**Easy**	**Loser**	**Deteriorates when losing heavily or on a long losing streak, then plays loose and poorly.**

Sid Bennett	Wild	Medium	Big loser	Plays wild when winning. Tightens up if feelings are hurt.
Ted Fehr	Suicidal	Easy	Big loser	Plays tight early in game and then disintegrates, especially if losing. His playing becomes even worse when on a horse-betting spree.

3. Situation and Position (22)

Action strategy depends on the immediate situation and involves decisions about calling, opening, betting, raising, dropping, and bluffing. In making those decisions, the good player correlates the following poker variables to the immediate situation.

1. *Estimated strength*[15] and *statistical value*[16] of his own hand
2. Game
      pace
      temperament
      atmosphere
      time (such as first hand, a late hour, last hand)
      size of pot
      potential size of pot
3. Opponents
      indicated strength
      attitude
      attentiveness
      win or loss status
      effect of previous bet
4. Position
      fundamental
      technical

The good player appraises his situation from both a fundamental and a technical position. His *fundamental position* is the *estimated strength* and *statistical value* of his hand relative to other players. His *technical position* is the strategic and psychological advantage he holds over his opponents at a

given moment. An important strategical consideration is *seat position.*

Seat position is important in nearly every decision. The good player adjusts his strategy according to his seat position relative to the dealer, opener, bettor, raiser, and the strong and weak hands. He considers his seat position in decisions about--

- bluffing
- betting or raising
- declaring hand (in split-pot games)
- calling or dropping
- playing of cards
- influencing opponents to call or drop
- inducing opponents to bet or raise
- planning long-range strategy.

(Increasing importance of seat position)
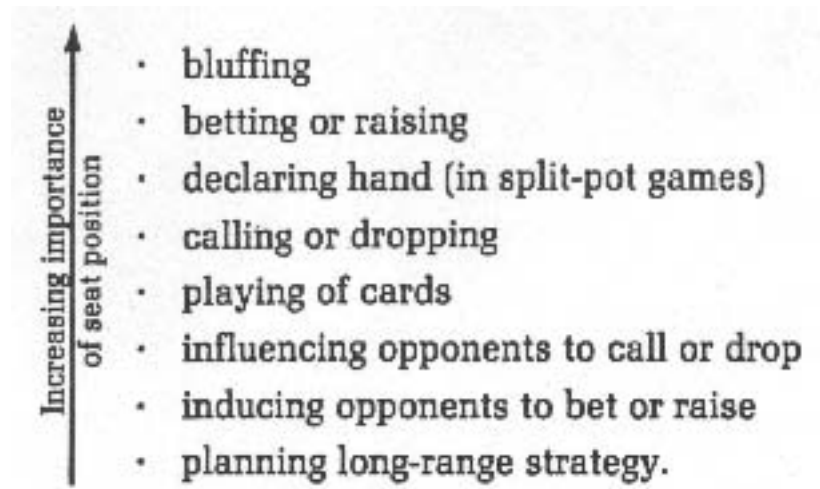
The best seat position depends on where the other players sit. The next anecdote about John Finn shows why the good player likes to position himself as shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16
SEAT POSITIONS

Good player prefers to bet before these types of players--	Good player prefers to bet after these types of players--
Weak	Strong
Wild, but readable	Impulsive, erratic, not readable or predictable
Loose, but predictable	Tight
Plays dealer-advantage games (such as twist and draw games)	Plays conventional stud games
Fast	Slow

The good player usually gets a desirable seat at the start of a game because his opponents seldom care where they sit. If an opponent is conscious of position, he generally tries to sit behind (bet after) the loosest or wildest player--the opposite position sought by the good player. A player can often pick a good position by arriving after the players are seated and then squeezing into the best seat position. (But continuous late arrival can hurt a game.) The good player can also use the excuse of "changing his luck" to swap seats with a player in a better seat position. That ploy also gives his opponents the erroneous but advantageous impression that he is superstitious.

The dealer has an advantage in hold'em, draw, or any form of closed-hand poker in which he bets last. When the same person always deals (e.g., a house dealer), that advantage is evenly distributed by using a marker, a button, or a buck that passes in turn to each player. Usually the player with the marker bets first, and the player to the right of marker bets last, as would a dealer.

Most regular players get into a habit of sitting in the same position. In the Monday night game, John quietly arranges the seating to his advantage, and then game after game the players sit approximately in the same positions. He maintains this arrangement by preventing the players from realizing that they keep sitting in positions favorable to him.

Ted Fehr's betting is wild, and impulsive. While John can usually read Ted's hands, he can seldom predict his betting actions. By positioning himself so Ted bets first, John can adjust his strategy according to Ted's play. Sid Bennett's betting is even wilder, but is predictable. By betting before him, John can often check his strong hands and let Sid do the betting for him. It makes less difference to John where Quintin (a sound player) or Scotty (a tight player) sit. The ideal seating arrangement for John is illustrated below:
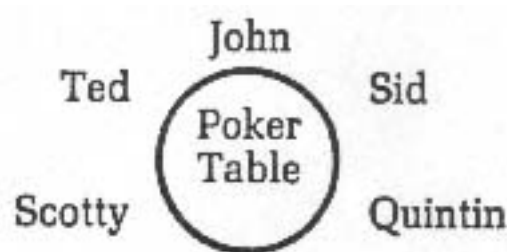
XI
Tailor-made Game (23)

The good player designs poker games to his maximum advantage by increasing the betting pace, the betting stakes, and his edge odds. A major step in this direction is to complicate the game by orienting the action around stud or hold'em variations of poker rather than draw poker. Stud variations offer the following advantages to the good player:

- More skill and effort are needed to assimilate the additional information and variables offered by the exposed cards.[17]
- Added rounds of progressively higher bets effectively increase the betting *stakes.*
- Faster and more rounds of bets effectively increase the betting *pace*.

1. Increasing the Betting Pace (24)

The good player increases the money flow in a poker game to increase his profits. But opposition to higher stakes exists in most games. Often a more subtle and effective way to increase the money flow is to increase the betting pace (rather than the betting stakes). A faster pace usually increases excitement in a way that is appealing to most players, especially weak players.

The betting pace is increased by adding modifications to the game such as those listed in Table 17.

TABLE 17
GAME MODIFICATIONS

Modification	*Advantageous Effects*
Twists (extra cards)	Provides additional large last-round bets. Induces players to stay for twist cards. Increases confusion. Amplifies players' weaknesses.
Split pots (high-low)	Allows more bets and raises. Provides more playing and betting opportunities. Creates dynamic betting situations. Increases confusion. Amplifies players' weaknesses.
Check raises	Allows more and larger raises.
Pick-up checks	Permits larger bets.
Right to bet	Allows more raises.
Early bet	Early buildup of pot. Keeps more players in for large last-round bets.

Bet or get, blind bets	Produces more betting. Early buildup of pot. Keeps more players in for larger bets.
Additional cards	Produces more calls.
Novel games	Increases confusion. Amplifies players' weaknesses.
Wild cards, freak hands	May or may not increase betting pace. Increases confusion.
Table stakes: pot limit or no limit	Allows direct control over the betting stakes. Permits more aggressive betting and bluffing.

The good player can usually work many advantageous modifications into most games -- even into games that are not dealer's choice. The following paragraphs describe some of those advantageous pace-increasing modifications.

a. Twist (25)

The twist increases the betting pace. At the normal conclusion of a poker hand, a card or cards may be exchanged (twisted) for a new card or cards. An additional round of betting follows each twist. As players grow accustomed to that modification, they usually become addicted to it and make the twist a permanent part of the game.

A single twist played with five-card stud is the gentlest way to introduce this modification. Most players will accept a twist as a good way to convert normally dull five-card stud into a more lively "six-card" stud game. As players become accustomed to the twist, the good player can further quicken the pace by adding other twist modifications such as--

Faster betting pace

- twist in seven-card stud
- twist in draw poker
- pay for each twist (e.g., an amount equal to the ante)
- double twists
- giant twists in stud or draw (as many cards as the player desires are exchanged on each twist)

progressive paying for unlimited twists (e.g., second twist costs twice the first twist, third twist costs twice the second twist, and so on).
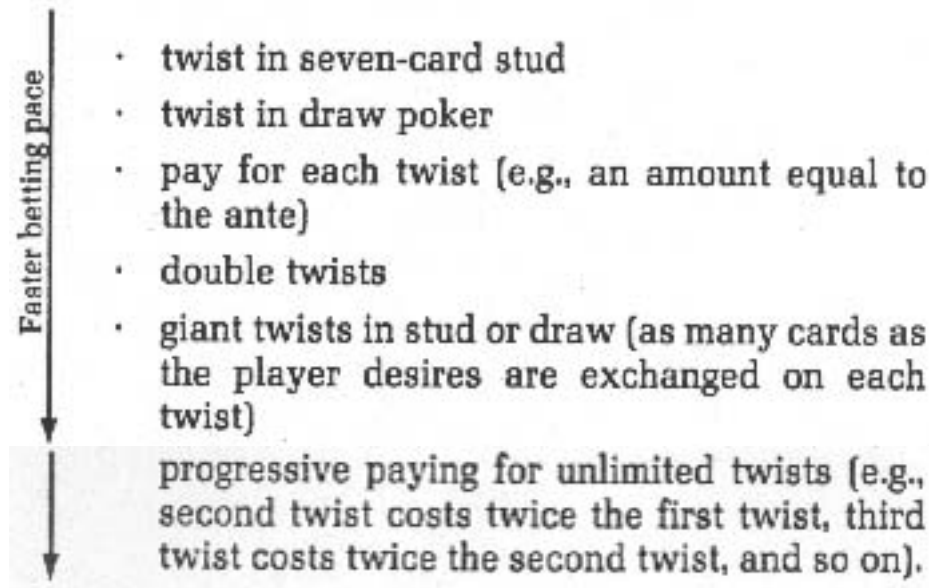
b. Split pot, high-low (26)

Because of the dynamic betting action between high hands and low hands, the betting pace increases markedly when pots are split between the highest hand and the lowest hand (high-low poker). Many players are initially hostile to high-low poker. Seven-card stud high-low is probably the easiest way to introduce split-pot games. With patience and persistence, the good player can usually generate great interest in high-low poker. Again, the good player can further quicken the pace by adding other high-low modifications such as--

Faster betting pace

- high-low five-card stud
- high-low draw
- high-low with qualifiers (minimum hands required to win, such as two pair for high and nine for low)
- high-low with a twist
- high-low with qualifiers and twists.
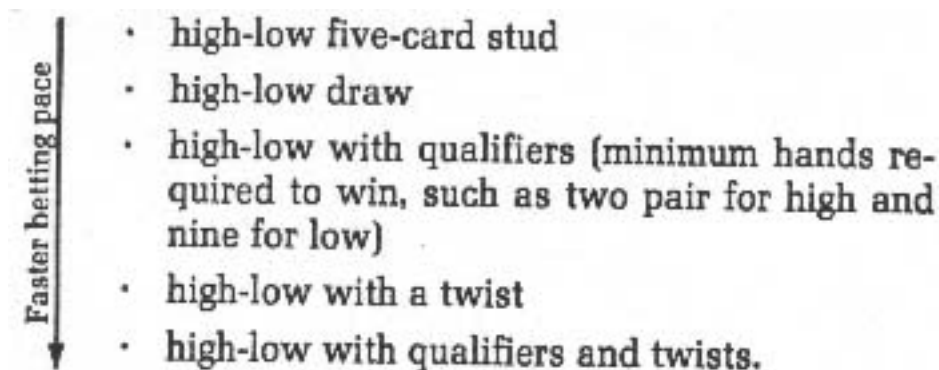
c. Check raise and pick-up checks (27)

Player A checks; player B bets; now player A raises . . . that is called *check raising*. Player A checks; player B checks; player C makes a bet three times larger than the maximum bet by making A's bet, B's raise, and then his own raise . . . that is called *picking* up *checks*. Check raising and picking up checks increase the betting flexibility as well as the number of large bets and raises. But if those modifications cause a defensive attitude among players, a decrease in the betting pace can occur. Also, house rules of many games prohibit check raising and picking up checks.

d. Right to bet (28)

Every player has a chance to bet or raise during each round of betting. With this rule, a player holding a strong hand cannot be shut out of his bet or raise by three minimal raises made in front of him. Right to bet increases the betting pace, particularly in split-pot games. Players seldom object to this seemingly equitable modification.

e. Early bet (29)

An indirect method to increase the ante is to permit a small bet after dealing the first hole card in stud or the second card in draw. The early bet usually holds more players in the game for the later rounds of more expensive betting. But if most players stay or drop on the strength of their early cards rather than on the size of the pot, this modification can drive out potential players and thus decrease the betting pace.

f. Bet or get and blind bets (30)

No checking is permitted with the bet-or-get rule ... each player must either bet or drop. This modification gets players involved early and keeps them in for the big last-round bets. Most players are unaccustomed to this modification and may object vigorously to it. A similar modification is blind betting (and raising) in which the first player after the dealer is forced to bet (and if called for, the next player is forced to raise). Blind betting and blind raising are common in public poker and are very effective for increasing the betting action.

g. Additional cards (31)

An additional sixth card is dealt to each draw hand. The hands are then reduced to five cards during the draw. That additional card keeps more players in the hand, particularly in lowball draw. Players seldom object when this simple modification is introduced.

h. Novel games (32)

Poorer playing normally results when new or novel games are introduced because most players do not understand the changes in play and odds that occur. Novel games may range from simple lowball draw or hold'em stud to a complex game such as "place-and-show-tickets split-pot-with-twist-your-neighbor." (That game is played as follows: At the conclusion of a stud or draw game, each player draws for use in his own hand a card from the hand of an adjacent player. The pot is then split between the second and third best hands.)

A decreased betting pace may result, however, if players become frightened or excessively confused by wild games or modifications that are too extreme or are introduced too rapidly.

i. Wild cards and freak hands (33)

Wild cards can increase the betting pace and loosen up certain games. As players become accustomed to wild cards, their fear of very strong hands usually dissipates. But if so many wild cards are used that hands such as five-of-a-kind and straight flushes become common and any betting strength suggests those maximum-value hands, the betting will dry up.

The bug card (the joker--used in low hands as a wild card, and in high hands as an ace or as a wild card for completing straights and flushes) can increase the betting pace without causing fear of maximum-value hands.

The good player rarely encourages the use of freak hands such as blazes, tigers, dogs, kilters, and skeets. While such hands could temporarily increase his edge odds by adding confusion, the use of freak hands may deter players from accepting other more profitable modifications such as twists and split pots.

j. No-limit table stakes and pot limit (34)

No-limit table stakes and pot-limit betting allow more aggressive betting and bluffing, giving the good player direct control over the betting. But such open-ended stakes can slow down the betting pace and normally cannot be used with split-pot games. In many games, therefore, no-limit table stakes or pot-limit betting (versus high-limit games) would actually decrease the financial opportunities for the good player.

Six years ago, Sid Bennett insisted that good poker players liked only straight draw and stud games. He claimed five-card was the greatest gambling game of all. As John Finn gradually increased the betting pace by adding one modification after another, Sid went to the other extreme:

Sid is winning; his pale lips are smiling. He grabs the deck, shoves his face over the table, and announces, "New game!" He then deals two separate hole cards to everyone.

"What's this?" Quintin says, frowning sourly.

"Seven-stud high-low. Everyone plays two hands. You can even raise yourself," Sid says with a snorting laugh. "And the hand to the left of the highest hand wins high and the hand to the right of the lowest hand wins low."

"I'm going home," Quintin says as he grabs his ante from the pot and stands up to leave.

"Sit down; we aren't going to play that," John Finn says. He then turns to Sid and explains gently, "I know its dealer's choice, but that's no poker game. You can't have hands next to the winners as winners."

"Bunch of ribbon clerks," Sid whines. "Okay, straight high-low ... play your left hand for high and right hand for low. And you can still raise yourself."

"That's more like it." John says.

Sid's toothy grin stretches wider as he continues to deal.

2. Increasing the Betting Stakes (35)

After increasing the betting *pace,* the good player can often increase the betting *stakes* sharply. Most games can withstand a tenfold to hundred fold increase in the betting stakes. Even when the big losers seem to be at their financial limits, the stakes can usually be increased significantly.

The good player increases the stakes in carefully planned steps. Several temporary increases may be necessary before higher stakes become permanent. But in some games, stakes can be increased immediately and rapidly. Opportunities to increase the stakes occur when players want--

- a chance to get even by increasing the ante or stakes in the late hours or during the last round
- a more equitable relationship to the ante by increasing the first-round or opening bets
- a chance to protect a hand by increasing the middle-round bets
- an opportunity to bet a good hand by increasing the last-round bets.

The stakes are normally easier to increase after the betting pace increases. Opposition to higher stakes and game modifications often diminishes when the resisting player is--

- tired
- losing heavily or winning big for the evening
- on a losing or a winning streak
- upset by some occurrence during the game
- affected by personal problems
- drinking.

A good way to increase the stakes is to let those players who want to double the stakes, for example, play at double stakes whenever they are the only players left in the hand.

When John Finn started playing in the Monday night game, it was already seven years old and the stakes had been stabilized for five years. A dollar was the maximum bet, and only straight draw and stud games were allowed. The chart on page 67 shows how both the betting pace and stakes steadily increased after John took control of the game:

Months after First Game	Pace	Stakes, $	*Money* Average Big Winner, $	*Flow* John Finn's Average Winnings, $	John Finn's Edge Odds, %
0	**Straight stud and draw**	0.50-- 1	25	8	30
1	---	1-- 2	40	14	35
2	**Add twist**	---	70	32	45
3	---	2-- 4	100	40	40
7	**Add high-low**	---	170	94	55
8	---	5--10	210	105	50
13	---	10--20	260	130	50
18	**Add qualifiers**	---	360	234	65
19	---	25--50	450	270	60
26	---	50--100	600	210	35
27	---	25--50	550	358	65
46	---	50--100	700	350	50
61	**Add complex and wild modifications**	50--100	1400	840	60

The data in the chart on page 67 show three interesting phenomena:

1. When the *stakes* increase, there is not a proportional increase in the average winnings or money flow because most players initially play tighter at higher stakes. But an increase in the *pace* causes looser play and a relatively large increase in the money flow.
2. John's edge odds go up when the *pace* increases and down when the *stakes* increase. This is because his opponents play more poorly as the pace increases, but more cautiously at higher stakes.
3. An increase in the pace eventually leads to higher stakes.

The data also show how the increases in stakes and pace affect John's profits. The doubling of stakes after twenty-six months causes his edge odds to drop sharply-- from 60 percent to 35 percent. At those higher stakes, he must spend a greater portion of his income to hold valuable losers in the game. On realizing that, John drops the stakes back to the previous level and brings his edge odds up to a healthy 65 percent. Why the big increase in John's edge odds when he lowers the stakes? After getting a taste of higher stakes, the players bet more loosely and play more carelessly when the stakes are lowered to the old level. Nineteen months later, John doubles the stakes again ... and this time the increase is profitable and permanent.

John usually tries raising the stakes soon after increasing the betting pace. Under the pretense of giving the losers a break, he often increases the stakes during the last round of the game. The following dialogue shows how he advantageously manipulates that last round.

"You're getting blasted again," Sid Bennett says to Ted Fehr. "Must be losing a grand."

"That's only four thousand hamburgers at my drive-in," Ted says, smiling weakly. "Wait till I get the deal. I'm doubling the stakes like we did last week. Got to make a big comeback."

"No sir, none of that," Quintin Merck interrupts as his cigarette falls from his mouth. "Next thing you know, we'll be playing the whole game at double stakes."

"Quintin's right," John says, trying hard to sound sincere. "If anything, we should ban double stakes even for the last round . . . it's too expensive."

"Yeah," Scotty Nichols says while counting his winnings.

Two hours later, John announces the last round.

"Hey, double the stakes for the last round," Ted cries.

"We made a rule against it," John says with a shrug. He then turns to the other players and continues, "We gave the losers a break last week. Ted is stuck bad. Let's double the ante and play a round of high-low draw--for Ted's sake."

"Yeah!" Scotty says as he checks his freshly emptied wallet.

"I'm in," Ted says, throwing his double ante into the pot.

"High-low draw? That's a stiff game," Quintin grumbles while anteing slowly. "That's worse than doubling the stakes."

What does John accomplish with that manipulation? He introduces the fast-pace, high-low draw game. He doubles the ante, which will make the stakes easier to increase at a later date. He creates the impression that he is both helping a loser and opposing higher stakes, while actually setting up conditions for both higher stakes and a faster pace.

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Footnotes:

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[15] *Estimated strength* of a hand is relative to the estimated strengths of opponents' hands.

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[16] *Statistical value* of a hand is relative to the number of opponents. The statistical value of a hand decreases with increasing number of opponents.

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[17] The good player often adds another variable by inconspicuously altering the order of his face-up cards.

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3. Increasing the Edge Odds (36)

The good player designs a game to yield maximum edge odds. The theoretical maximum edge odds occur only when the perfect player is in the most complex game, under the most confusing circumstances, against the poorest players. While the conditions for theoretical maximum edge odds can never be achieved, the good player strives to approach them. The perfect situation is represented by the completion of the Diamond shown on the next page. The Diamond measures the idealness of a poker game for the good player.

How far does John Finn go toward completing the Diamond? How much further could he increase his edge odds in the Monday night game? He makes the following estimations:

Side of Diamond	% Completed	Maximum Possible %	Limitation
Increase skill of good player	95	100	**None**
Increase weakness in opponents	45	65	**Availability of weak players capable of large losses**
Increase confusion in game	70	80	**Human tolerance**

Increase complexity of game	90	95	Opponents' capacity to comprehend
Total (average), %	‾‾ 75	‾‾ 85	

Playing with the Diamond 75 percent complete, John's edge odds are about 65 percent. He estimates that under the best conditions, the Diamond would be 85 percent complete, and thus his edge odds could improve to a maximum of 74 percent. That estimation of maximum edge odds establishes a goal toward which John Finn can strive.

THE DIAMOND
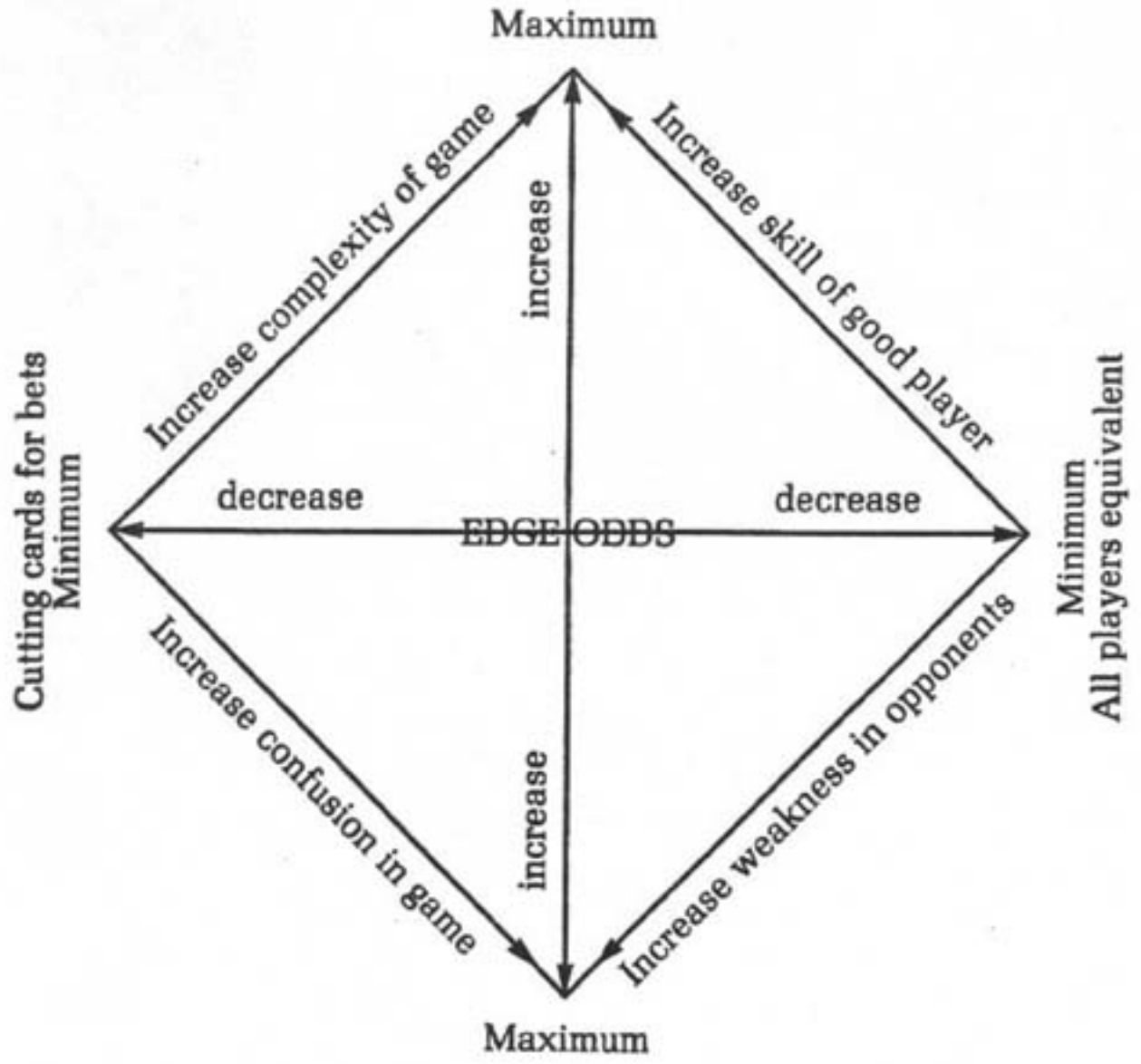
XII
Behavior (37)

The good poker player directs his actions toward achieving maximum advantages while preventing his opponents from realizing that he is motivated entirely by profit. He is a winner acting like a loser.

1. Systemization and Blandness (38)

To prevent opponents from reading his hand or sensing his strategy, the good player systemizes his--

- procedures for observing opponents
- physical movements
- verbal expressions
- vocal tones.

While playing his hand, the good player is seldom an actor. Instead he practices a bland behavior that--

- minimizes his readable patterns or tells
- frustrates and confuses his opponents
- allows greater concentration.

A good player never loses interest in his hand until the moment he folds. If opponents can sense his intention to fold before his turn, they will become more defensive when he does hold a playable hand, thus decreasing his edge odds.

Improvised acting while playing a hand is usually ineffective because the act does not develop from a well-planned basis. Yet when not involved in the action, the good player has many opportunities to act effectively on a carefully planned basis. Occasionally while playing in a hand, he deviates from his systemized behavior when he knows a certain behavior will cause an opponent to make a desired move (call, drop, bet, or raise).

"What's John doing now?" Scotty Nichols whines. He rubs his whiskered face while wondering if he should call John's $50 raise. "Can't ever read him."

"That's 'cause he sits like a tree stump," Quintin Merck says. "Gives you nothing to grab. You guys that act are easy to read."

John Finn will act, however, when he is reasonably certain of his opponents' reactions. Consider that hand in which he is supposedly sitting like the tree stump:

Wanting Scotty to call, John lets his fingers creep into the pot and spread out the money. He pulls out the big bills and lays them on top. Scotty stares at the money; he is a loser, and winning that pot would make him even . . . he licks his lips and calls.

Poor Scotty never should have called. His kings-up two pair were no match for John's full house. Was John acting? Yes, because Scotty was undecided and John varied his own behavior to make him call. John also did some long-range acting toward Quintin Merck. How was that? Quintin observed John's maneuver to make Scotty call. John heard Quintin snort when Scotty fell into the trap.

The following week, John and Quintin are battling for a large pot. John raises . . . Quintin scratches his head and then starts to call. John's fingers creep into the pot and spread out the money. He pulls out the big bills and lays them on top. Quintin snorts, shows his three deuces to everyone, and then folds with a prissy smile. His smile snaps into a frown when John throws his hand face up on the table. His hand this time? A four flush.

Why did Quintin fall into that trap? He forgot that John would not apply the same tactic toward a poor player like Scotty as he would toward a sound player like Quintin. John plays against the individual as well as the situation.

2. Personality (39)

The good player varies his personality to obtain the best advantage. Typical poker personalities he adopts are described below.

a. Unfriendly or Intimidating (40)

In public (club or casino) games or in games consisting mostly of professionals or strangers, tough or unfriendly and intimidating behavior may be best. Such behavior disorients opponents ... and disoriented players are easier to control. Unfriendly behavior irritates opponents, causing them to act more emotionally and to play poorer poker.

The following unfriendly and intimidating behavior can be advantageously practiced by the good player:

- Silently throw bets and raises into the pot. Give ill-tempered replies when asked about those bets or raises. Make disagreeable remarks when other players err because of your silent bets.
- At the conclusion of a hand, throw cards face-up on the table without comment. Make opponents figure out the hand. Capitalize on their errors that favor you.
- Stage displays of bad temper.
- Delay anteing and making good on lights (money owed to the pot).
- When dealing new games, give inadequate explanations. When asked for further explanation, give details grudgingly and unpleasantly.

- Push rules and ethics to the limit. For example, fake moves to make the next player believe that you have dropped, called, or raised . . . then when he reveals his move (a drop, bet, or raise), remake your play accordingly.

Planned unfriendly or intimidating behavior can be effective for increasing edge odds and for controlling opponents. Still, the good player uses caution when being unfriendly. He analyzes the game and evaluates the effects of any behavior on both his short-term and long-term profits.

In some games, intimidating behavior is tolerated if a little humor or congenial behavior is blended in. Also, the good player may adopt a split personality or may be unfriendly to certain players and congenial to others ... whatever is most advantageous.

b. Congenial (41)

Unfriendly and intimidating behavior is undesirable for most friendly or regular private games. Unpleasant behavior could break up the game, result in expulsion from the game, or cause valuable losers to quit. Congenial behavior is often necessary in such games. But most friendly traditions are disadvantageous to the good player, such as--

- no betting when only two remain in a hand
- no betting a lock hand (a sure winner)
- no squeeze raising when only three players are in a split-pot game.

Occasional but dramatic displays of friendly traditions will usually satisfy the other players.

Sometimes John Finn is the most congenial player in the game. At other times, he is not so congenial. He always behaves in a way that offers him the greatest advantages.

How can John switch his personality to fit the game? He keeps himself free from emotional ties to the game and the players. That allows him to think objectively and define what behavior offers the most advantage. For example, he will drive a good player out of the game with unfriendly behavior (see Concept 108). Why will he do that? Another good player would increase the financial strain on the losers, which in turn would cost John some of his profits to keep those losers in the game. In other words, a good player would cost John money . . . so why let him play? Why not replace him with a more profitable, poor player?

c. Introvert and extrovert (42)

The good player usually behaves oppositely to the general behavior of his opponents. For example, in a quiet game with serious players, an extroverted personality may be advantageous. In a wild or boisterous game, an introverted personality is often the most advantageous.

The extent of introverted or extroverted behavior that John Finn assumes depends on the game, as shown below:

Game	Players' Behavior	Advantageous Behavior (John Finn 's Behavior)
Monday	**Mixed**	**Ambiverted**
Tuesday	**Introverted**	**Extroverted**
Thursday	**Ambiverted**	**Ambiverted**
Friday	**Extroverted**	**Introverted**

3. Practicing Deceit (43)

Only in poker can a man lie and practice any form of deceit, except cheating, and still remain a gentleman ... and an honest person. The good player makes extensive use of his right to deceive. He conceals facts and lies about anything that offers him an advantage.

a. Concealing desires (44)

To keep his opponents off guard, the good player conceals his desires, as shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18
CONCEALING DESIRES

Desire	Method to Conceal
More weak players	Never discuss weaknesses of players.

Faster betting pace	Increase betting pace without verbally expressing a desire for a faster betting pace. Occasionally complain about the fast pace and wild modifications.
Higher stakes	Never suggest higher stakes unless chances for an increase are nearly certain, then suggest higher stakes as a way to give losers a break or to make the betting more equitable.
More games	Never reveal activities in other games. Organize games without expressing an eagerness to play.

b. Concealing facts(45)

The good player conceals facts to avoid arousing unfavorable suspicions, as shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19
CONCEALING FACTS

Facts	*Methods to Conceal*
Easiness of game	Never mention the poor quality of poker played in any game. Praise "skills" of opponents, especially of poor players.
Winnings	Never discuss personal winnings. After each game, report less than actual winnings or more than actual losses. But exaggerate only to a believable extent. Never reveal long-term winnings. Conceal affluence by driving an old car to the game.
Tight play	Fold cards without comment or excuses. Make loose-appearing or wild plays whenever investment odds are favorable.

Good play	Never explain the true strategy behind a play. Instead, give erroneous reasoning for strategy. Never brag . . . downgrade own performance.
Control over game	Assume a humble but assertive attitude.

To turn attention away from his poker success, the good player praises and exaggerates the poker ability of other winners. In a verbal smoke screen, he discusses and magnifies everyone's winnings except his own. When losing, the good player complains about the tough game and exaggerates his losses. But he never mentions the losses of other players.

c. Lying (46)

Lying is a key tool of strategy. For example, when asked about his folded cards, the good player lies about them to create the impression that he plays loosely or poorly. To lie effectively, he must always lie within believable boundaries to keep others from automatically doubting him.

With careful lying and calculated deceit, John Finn builds his image as a kind-hearted, loose player who is an asset to the game. Here is an example of how he builds this advantageous image:

The game is highball draw with a twist. John begins with a pair of aces, draws three cards, and ends up with two pair. During the betting, he notices Ted Fehr putting $25 too much into the pot. John says nothing and plays his two pair pat on the twist. Sid Bennett misses his flush and folds out of turn . . . that out-of-turn fold is very helpful to John.

Now with only two remaining in the hand, Ted bets $25. John reads him for trips and reasons Ted's bet like this: Ted thinks his three of a kind are beat by John's pat hand. So if he checks, John will bet the $50 maximum, and he will have to call. By making a smaller bet, he hopes that John will only call, thus saving him $25. Ted's strategy backfires . . . John raises to $75.

"How many cards did you draw in the first round?" Ted asks.

"One," John quickly lies.

"A one-card draw, then pat on the twist ... I can't call that," Ted sighs while folding his cards.

John places his cards face-down next to Sid's dead hand.

"What'd you have, the straight or flush?" Ted asks.

John pulls in the pot. He then picks up Sid's cards, gives them to Ted, and says in a low voice, "Don't tell anyone my hand."

"What!" Ted cries on seeing the cards. "You play a four flush pat to win a three-hundred-dollar pot?" John smiles and nods. Ted slumps in his chair.

"That's what I like," Sid says. "His wild playing beats all you tight players.... You're great, John."

John shrugs his shoulders and then throws $25 to Ted.

"What's this for?" Ted asks.

"Your last bet," John says "I don't feel right about taking it."

"Merciful guy." Ted smiles. Then, counting the money, he continues, "You might win all my money, but you're still a gentleman."

"That's no gift," Quintin Merck mumbles, "Ted put . . .

"Whose deal?" John interrupts.... So besides winning a $300 pot, he did a lot of favorable image-building with that hand.

4. Creating an Atmosphere (47)

Carefree, relaxed, and pleasant poker atmospheres are advantageous to the good player. He creates those atmospheres in the following ways.

a. Carefree(48)

A carefree atmosphere stimulates a careless attitude about money and causes opponents to play poorer poker. A carefree atmosphere is developed by--

- increasing the betting pace
- complicating the game
- using poker chips instead of money
- appearing careless with money.

The good player himself is never carefree about poker or careless with money ... he always respects

money. His careless behavior is a planned act.

b. Relaxed (49)

A relaxed atmosphere lulls opponents into decreased concentration, which diminishes their playing abilities and increases their readability. Contributing to a relaxed atmosphere are--

- a suitable location.
- good food and beverages
- a comfortable setting with proper table, chairs, and lighting.

To maintain peak concentration, the good player denies himself the effects of comfort and relaxation.

c. Pleasant (50)

A pleasant atmosphere holds weak players in the game and attracts new players. The good player creates a pleasant atmosphere by--

- being congenial (when advantageous)
- preventing unpleasant remarks and unfriendliness among players
- displaying a sympathetic attitude toward losers.

Most players gain pleasure from feeling accepted and belonging to the group. But the good player gains pleasure from his ability to win money and control the game.

Whenever the Monday night game gets serious, the players think more clearly and make fewer mistakes. When serious, everyone plays tighter and is less prone to John Finn's influence. So he keeps the game carefree and careless by behavior such as described below:

A newcomer, playing in the high-stake Monday game for the first time, is nervous and is playing very tight. He shuffles . . . the cards spray from his trembling hands and scatter all over the floor. Finally he deals five-card stud. John gets a pair of aces on his first two up cards. Everyone drops out except big loser Scotty Nichols. "Haven't won a pot all night," he says and then gulps. "I ...I gotta win one." John makes a few small bets. Scotty stays to the end and loses with his wired pair of queens. The pot is small, containing perhaps $35.

With quivering lips, Scotty slowly turns his cards over. Suddenly John shoves the whole pot across the table and into Scotty's lap while laughing, "Don't be so miserable. It's only money.... Take it all."

The newcomer's mouth snaps open. "What a crazy game!" he exclaims. "I've never seen anything like that!"

Scotty grims and mumbles something about John's generous act.

"Help thy neighbor, help thy luck," John tells everyone. "Nothing is cheaper than money."

That move will be remembered and discussed for a long time. The cost to John: about $35. The return to John: certainly many times that.

5. Observation (51)

The good player depends on his observations to plan his strategy. Observation of opponents requires an analytical technique. Observation of the cards requires a trained eye. And knowing what his opponents observe and know will also affect his strategy.

a. Reading opponents (52)

All players have repeating habits and nervous patterns that give away their hands. The task of the good player is to find and interpret those patterns. Most poker players offer readable patterns (tells) in their--

- initial reaction to looking at cards (freshly dealt hands, draw cards, hole cards, up cards, opponents' up cards, flop cards)
- behaviors on making calls, bets, and raises
- reactions to calls, bets, and folds of opponents
- ways of handling and looking at cards
- ways of handling money before and during each bet
- extents and directions of interest during the action
- behaviors and remarks during each phase of action
- mumbling and spoken thoughts
- tones of voice
- reactions to comments
- responses to questions.

Questions are potent tools for reading opponents' hands. Often players reveal their hands by impulsive responses to seemingly innocuous questions as--

- How many cards did you draw?
- Who made the last bet?
- How much was the last bet?
- Is it your bet? (when it really is not)
- Did you call the last bet?
- Are you light?

Ways of looking at opponents are also important: The good player controls the position of his head and eyes to avoid a direct stare at those opponents who become cautious and less readable when feeling observed. He will, however, stare directly at those players who get nervous and more readable when feeling observed. In some games, especially public games, the good player may wear dark glasses to conceal his eye actions.

When involved in action, the good player reads his opponents and then makes his play accordingly. When not involved in the action, he analyzes all players for readable patterns. At the conclusion of each pot, he correlates all revealed hands to his observations. By that technique, he can discover and build an inventory of readable patterns for each opponent.

The most valuable pages in John's black leather notebook describe the readable patterns of his opponents. For example, consider his notes about Scotty Nichols:

Readable Patterns of Scotty Nichols

Before hand--When winning, breaking even, or losing slightly, he plays very tight and never bluffs. Stays to end only when holding a strong hand. When losing heavily, he panics--he plays wildly while trying to bluff far too often. Once hooked in a hand, he stays to the end.

Receiving cards--Grabs for each dealt card when a good hand is developing. Casually looks at new cards when holding a poor-potential hand.

Dealing--Usually flashes bottom card when picking up the deck. Often flashes cards he deals to himself.

Looking at cards--When planning to play, he looks to his right. When planning to raise, he looks to his left. When planning to drop, he looks blankly into space.

Handling cards--Leaves cards on table when he intends to fold. If holding a playable pair, two pair, trips, a bobtail straight, or a full house, he arranges his cards and then does not disturb them. If holding a lowball hand or a four flush, he continuously ruffles the cards through his fingers.

Before bet--Touches his money lightly when going to call. His thumb lifts edge of money when going to raise. Picks up money when going to bluff. Does not touch money when going to fold.

Betting--Puts money in pot with a deliberate motion when not confident, with a flicking motion when confident, and with a hesitation followed by a flicking motion when sandbagging.

Raising--Cheek muscles flex when holding a certain winner. A stiffness develops around his upper

lip when worried. Breathes through mouth when bluffing.

Drawing--Inserts cards randomly into his hand and then ruffles cards when drawing to a four flush or a pair. Puts cards on one end with no ruffling when drawing to a four straight or trips. Puts card second from the end when drawing to trips with a kicker. Puts card in center of hand when drawing to two pair. With two pair, he looks at draw quickly. With all other hands, he slowly squeezes cards open. Squeezes very slowly when drawing to lowball, flush, or straight hands. Jerks hand when he misses.

Looking at draw--Exhales when he misses, and his eyes stare blankly at the table. Inhales when he catches, and his eyes glance at his opponents and then at the pot.

Stud up cards--After catching a good card, he touches it first and then reorganizes his cards. Confirms catch by looking several times at his hole cards.

Stud hole cards--When hole cards are good, he keeps them neatly organized and touches them periodically. Does not bother to organize or touch poor cards. If one fakes a move to grab his hole cards, he impulsively jumps and grabs the cards if they are good . . . does nothing if they are poor.

Last-round bet--A quick call means he will call a raise. Picking up all his money when calling means he will not call a raise. Watching the next caller without looking directly at him means he is hoping for a raise.

Questions--"Do you have three tens beat?" Scotty blinks his eyes if his hand does not beat three tens ... no blinking if it does. "How many cards did you draw?" Scotty hesitates and turns eyes up in thought if he is bluffing. Gives a casual answer if holding a normal hand. Hesitates and stares at the pot if holding a powerful hand.

After hand--He will play carelessly when sulking over losses. He will play extra tight when winning and counting his money.

With so many readable patterns, Scotty has little chance against John Finn. By putting together several of those patterns, John reads him with consistent accuracy. And Scotty's low awareness level keeps him from recognizing the habits that reveal his cards and intentions.

John also has similar dossiers on the other players and can usually read them accurately ... even a sound player like Quintin Merck. Because of Quintin's greater awareness, he occasionally recognizes and eliminates a habit that reveals his hand. But John uses several habits to cross-check readable patterns and can quickly detect when anyone changes or eliminates a habit. After each game, he records in his notebook any new or changed habits.... John Finn knows that all players have telling habits and readable patterns that give away their hands and intentions. The task of the good player is to identify and interpret those habits and patterns so he can accurately

read the hands and intentions of every opponent. Reading opponents' hands is much more effective than using marked cards and it is honest.

The question-type giveaways or tells are quite reliable and are particularly useful for pinpointing the exact value of an opponent's hand. For example, if John holds trips and reads his opponent for trips, he might use questions to find out who has the best hand. Excessive use of questions, however, can rouse suspicion and decrease the usefulness of question-and-answer tells.

b. Remembering exposed cards and ghost hands (53)

By remembering all exposed cards, a player increases his accuracy in estimating investment and card odds. In games with many players (eight or more), discarded and folded cards are often redealt. Knowledge of those cards can be crucial for estimating meaningful investment odds. In some games, discarded and folded cards are actually placed on the bottom of the deck without shuffling. (The good player encourages that practice.) If those cards are redealt during the late rounds, the good player will know what cards are to be dealt to whom . . . a huge advantage for the later rounds of big bets.

With disciplined concentration and practice, any player can learn to memorize all exposed cards. For the discipline value alone, remembering exposed cards is always a worthwhile effort. But many players excuse themselves from this chore by rationalizing that memorization of cards dissipates their concentration on the other aspects of the game. That may be true when a player first tries to memorize cards, but a disciplined training effort toward memorizing all exposed cards will ultimately increase his concentration powers in every area of poker.

Remembering the exposed draw hands or the order of exposed stud cards from the previous deal can bring financial rewards. Old hands often reappear on the next deal (ghost hands), especially when the shuffling is in complete (the good player encourages sloppy and incomplete shuffling). For example, a good player is sitting under the gun (on the dealer's left) and needs a king to fill his inside straight in five-card stud. But the last card dealt in that round (the dealer's card) is a king. The good player, rather than being discouraged, recalls that the winner of the previous hand held three kings. Since the deck had been poorly shuffled. the chances of the next card (his card) also being a king are good. Knowing this, he now has a strong betting advantage.

John Finn memorizes all exposed and flashed cards He mentally organizes every exposed stud card into one of the four following categories by saying to himself, for example, Sid's two of hearts would help--

- **my hand**
- **his (Sid's) hand**
- **another opponent's (e.g., Quintin's) hand**
- **no one's hand.**

That association of each card with a definite hand not only organizes John's thoughts but also aids his memory.

Now if Sid folds and his two of hearts is the first card to go on the bottom of the deck, John will remember that the fifty-third card is the two of hearts. Then by mentally counting the dealt cards, John will know when and to whom the two of hearts will be redealt. By that procedure, he often knows several cards that will be redealt. For example, he may know the fifty-third, fifty-fourth, fifty-seventh, sixtieth, and sixty-first card.... The cards he knows depends on how the folded cards are put on the bottom *of* the deck.

c. Seeing flashed cards (54)

Many important cards are flashed during a game. Players who see flashed cards are not cheating. Cheating occurs only through a deliberate physical action to see unexposed cards. For example, a player who is dealing and purposely turns the deck to look at the bottom card is cheating. But a player who sees cards flashed by someone else violates no rule or ethic. To see the maximum number of flashed cards. one must know when and where to expect them. When the mind is alert to flashing cards, the eye can be trained to spot and identify them. Cards often flash when--

- they are dealt
- a player picks up his hand or draw cards
- a player looks at his cards or ruffles them through his fingers
- a kibitzer or peeker picks up the cards of another player (peekers are often careless about flashing other players' cards)
- a player throws in his discards or folds his hand
- cards reflect in a player's eyeglasses.

The good player occasionally tells a player to hold back his cards or warns a dealer that he is flashing cards. He does that to create an image of honesty, which keeps opponents from suspecting his constant use of flashed cards. He knows his warnings have little permanent effect on stopping players from flashing cards. In fact, warned players often become more careless about flashing because of their increased confidence in the "honesty" of the game.

Using data from one hundred games, John Finn compiles the following chart, which illustrates the number of flashed cards he sees in the Monday night game:

Flashed by	*Average Number of Flashed Cards Identified per Hand [adjusted for a seven-man game] Draw*	*Average Number of Flashed Cards Identified per Hand [adjusted for a seven-man game] 7-Stud*

Dealer*	6	2
Active players	7	1
Kibitzers and peekers	2	1
Folded players	9	3
Total	___ 24	___ 7

*Also, the bottom card of the deck is exposed 75 percent of the time.

These data show that in addition to seeing his own cards, John sees over half the deck in an average game of draw poker--just by keeping his eyes open. The limit he goes to see flashed cards is illustrated below:

Mike Bell is a new player. John does not yet know his habits and must rely on other tools to read him--such as seeing flashed cards.

The game is lowball draw with one twist. The betting is heavy, and the pot grows large. John has a fairly good hand (a seven low) and does not twist. Mike bets heavily and then draws one card. John figures he is drawing to a very good low hand, perhaps to a six low.

John bets. Ted Fehr pretends to have a good hand, but just calls--John reads him for a poor nine low. Everyone else folds except Mike Bell, who holds his cards close to his face and slowly squeezes them open; John studies Mike's face very closely. Actually he is not looking at his face, but is watching the reflection in his eyeglasses. When Mike opens his hand, John sees the scattered dots of low cards plus the massive design of a picture card reflecting in the glasses. (You never knew that?... Try it, especially if your bespectacled victim has a strong light directly over or behind his head. Occasionally a crucial card can even be identified in a player's bare eyeball.)

In trying to lure a bluff from the new player, John simply checks. Having already put $100 into the pot, Mike falls into the trap by making a $50 bluff bet. If John had not seen the reflection of a picture card in Mike's glasses, he might have folded. But now he not only calls the bluff bet with confidence, but tries a little experiment--he raises $1. Ted folds; and Mike, biting his lip after his bluff failure, falls into the trap again--he tries a desperate double bluff by raising $50. His error? He refuses to accept his first mistake and repeats his error.... Also, he holds cards too close to his glasses.

John calmly calls and raises another $1. Mike folds by ripping up his cards and throwing them all over the floor. His playing then disintegrates. What a valuable reflection, John says to himself.

[Note: Luring or eliciting bluffs and double bluffs from opponents is a major money-making strategy of the good player. In fact, in most games, he purposely lures other players into bluffing more often than he bluffs himself.]

d. Intentional flashing (55)

The good player intentionally flashes cards in his hand to cause opponents to drop, call, bet, raise, or bluff. But he uses the intentional flash with caution. If suspected, intentional flashes are less effective and can cause resentment among players.

After the final card of a seven-card stud game, John Finn holds a partly hidden flush--three clubs showing and two clubs in the hole. He also has a pair of jacks showing and a pair of sevens in the hole. Ted Fehr has the other pair of sevens showing, and John reads him for two pair-- queens over sevens. Sid Bennett has aces up and makes a $1 bet. Ted, betting strong from the start, raises $25. John just calls.

"I should raise," Sid thinks out loud as he strokes his chin. "John is weak ... probably has jacks up. But Ted might have three sevens . . . no other sevens are showing."

John picks up his hole cards, shifts his position and crosses his legs. Accidentally-on-purpose he turns his hand so Sid can see two of his hole cards--the pair of sevens.

"I'll raise to fifty dollars," Sid says and chuckles. He knows that John has two pair and that Ted cannot have three sevens. Never thinking that John might also have a flush, Sid looks pleased with his sharpness in spotting John's hole cards.

After Ted folds, John raises back. Sid calls and then slaps his hand against his massive forehead when John shows him a flush. He grumbles something about bad luck, never realizing the trap he was sucked into.

e. Peekers (56)

Spectators and players who have folded often peek at undealt cards or at hands of active players. Most peekers exhibit readable behavior patterns that give away the value of every card and every hand they look at. Those patterns are found in their--

- levels of and changes in interest toward peeked-at hands
- timing of peeks and repeeks

- reactions (after folding) to peeking at hands of ex-opponents
- eye movements and areas of interest immediately after peeking at cards to be dealt.

Players who allow others to peek at their hands encounter problems of--

- readable patterns given to opponents
- flashed cards
- upset strategy
- disturbed concentration
- more frequent, unsolicited peeking.

The good player carefully selects those whom he lets look at his hand. He lets certain players peek at his cards in order to--

- convey certain information to the peeker or to the other players
- advertise plays that encourage loose or poor playing by others
- create a more carefree and careless atmosphere
- upset certain players by not allowing them to peek
- encourage peekers to look at hands of other players.

The good player controls peeking by the following methods:

- He never peeks at cards of other players. That avoids any obligation to let other players peek at his cards. After dropping out of a hand, he concentrates on observation and planning strategy rather than wasting his time on peeking.
- He develops a consistent way of holding his cards to prevent unwanted peeking.
- When players ask to look at his cards, he refuses gently by a remark such as, "I'll show you later."
- Whenever possible, he buries his folded hands before anyone can look at them. He can then advantageously lie about them.

A new player, Charlie Holland, sits next to John Finn. Playing in his first big-stake game, Charlie is nervous and impressionable. John takes full advantage of this by using his peeking strategy to throw Charlie into permanent confusion

In a hand of lowball draw, John discards a king and draws a seven low. Charlie holds a pat nine low. John has lured him into calling a large first-round bet and two raises. In the last round, Sid makes a defensive $25 bet; Charlie calls. John raises to $75 and everyone folds. John throws his cards on top of his discarded king and then pulls in the pot.

"What'd you have?" Charlie asks.

"A fat king," John says, smiling as he picks up the cards and shows him the king.

Charlie Holland groans. With a drooping face, he stares at the large pot. "I should've called," he moans as John slowly pulls in the pot while laying the larger bills on top for better viewing.

What does this have to do with peeking? Nothing yet.... The next hand is seven-card stud. Charlie drops out early to study John's technique. He stretches his neck to peek at John's hole cards. With an air of friendship, John Finn loops his arm around Charlie's shoulder and shows him the hole cards--John has an ace-king diamond flush.

"We'll kill 'em with this ace-king diamond flush," John says loudly.

Surprised that John announced his exact hand, Charlie looks at the cards again, then replies, "Yeah, man!"

But actually, John is not confident of his flush because he reads both Ted and Quintin for two pair, and all eight of their full-house cards are alive. He figures the odds are about 1 in 2 that one of them will catch a full house. He also knows that they fear his flush and will not bet unless they catch the full house.

Scotty Nichols, who folded early, is sitting between Quintin and Ted. With his head bobbing back and forth, he peeks at their hands as they catch new cards. Now, the last hole card is dealt. John watches Scotty: First his plump head points toward the highest hand--Ted's queens over jacks. He peeks at Ted's new hole card; immediately his head snaps over to check Quintin's cards. Obviously Ted's new card is not very interesting ... he failed to catch his full house, John figures.

Now Scotty looks at Quintin's new card. He looks again and then glances at Quintin's up cards ... then checks the hole cards once again. Scotty does not say a word, but he may as well be yelling, "Interesting! A very interesting catch for the full house!"

Adjusting his thick glasses, Scotty next looks at John's up cards; his eyes then dart back and forth between Quintin and John while ignoring Ted's hand.

What happens? Ted foolishly bets $25. Quintin raises $1. Scotty covers his smiling mouth with his hand. Expecting some lively action, he waits for John to get sucked into Quintin's great trap. And across the table, Charlie Holland smiles; he waits for John to blast Quintin with a big raise. John Finn folds.

Charlie rises halfway out of his seat while making gurgling noises. "You .. you know what you dropped?" he stammers

"Yeah, a busted hand," John says, shrugging.

"A busted hand." Charlie bellows. His hand shoots to the table and grabs John's folded cards. "Look, you had an ace-king diamond flush. You even announced it!"

"Oh, no! I thought it was a four flush," John lies. Quintin glowers at John's flush and then shows his winning full house.... Charlie sits down talking to himself.

Alert playing not only saves John money, but confuses everyone and sets up Charlie for future control.

6. Nongame Behavior (57)

Table 20 shows ways the good player behaves toward nongame contacts that could influence his poker activities.

TABLE 20
NONGAME BEHAVIOR

Nongame Contact	Behavior
Friend of a player	Praise the player and his performance in poker. Stress the merits of the game.
Potential player	Suggest the easiness of winning money in the game. Stress the social and pleasant aspects of the game.
Player from another game	Indicate a desire to play in his game. Extend an invitation to your own game. Create an image of being a loose, sociable player.
Family of a player	Flatter poker skill of the player. If they complain about his losses, suggest that his bad luck is due to change.
Other acquaintances	Indicate a desire to play poker. Downgrade personal performance in poker ... talk about losses.

Sometimes the good player practices contrasting *game* and *nongame* behavior. For example, if during the game he practices unfriendly behavior toward a certain opponent, he may find it advantageous to be congenial toward this same person outside the game.

Although all poker players in the Monday night game view themselves as independent men, some of their wives retain various degrees of control over them. John plans his behavior toward their wives according to the following notations in his notebook:

	Wife Summary
Betty Nichols	**Concerned about Scotty's losses. To calm her, recall his past winnings. She will not make him quit if reminded that poker keeps him from drinking.**
Florence Merck	**Supports Quintin's playing, especially since he is winning.**
Stephanie Bennett	**Thinks Sid is foolish for playing. Realizes he will never win and wants him to quit, but also realizes she has little control over him. Besides, having plenty of money, she is not too worried about his losses.**
Rita Fehr	**Does not care and makes no attempt to influence Ted, despite his suicidal losses.**

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XIII
Policies (58)

The good player forms policies about money, credit, and rules. These policies are his guidelines for strategy and are planned to yield both short-term and long-term advantages. Proper policies result in fewer mistakes and better decisions.

1. Money (59)

Poker is based on money. To win money is the only rational reason for investing time and effort in poker.

a. Maintaining proper attitude (60)

Since poker is based on money, the proper attitude about money is crucial. What is the good player's attitude about money? Realizing that each dollar represents an irreplaceable segment of life (the time required to earn that dollar, he respects money out of respect for himself.

b. Stimulating poor attitude in opponents (61)

A poor money attitude in opponents increases the edge odds for the good player. Since most players are influenced by the opinions of the good player, he uses that influence to stimulate poor money attitudes by advancing *erroneous* ideas such as--

- one must be dealt good cards to win
- luck is required to win
- streaks of luck run hot and cold, and cards should be played accordingly
- betting should depend on how much one is winning or losing.

The good player often encourages the use of poker chips instead of money in order to--

- decrease the sense of value for money
- stimulate looser play and a faster betting pace
- speed up the game.

In certain games, however, players will play for higher stakes when cash (rather than chips) is used.

c. Increasing money in game (62)

The good player tries to increase the cash brought to the game because more cash--

- allows the betting pace and stakes to increase more rapidly
- decreases opponents' respect for money
- makes more money available for loans.

An effective way to increase money brought to the game is to increase the money needed to play by limiting the use of credit.

Ted Fehr has been losing heavily on the horses. His cash position is low; he is borrowing excessively to stay in the action. John is worried because now Ted brings less than $100 to the game, loses his stake promptly, and then borrows for the rest of the game. John figures that each player should bring at least $300 to keep the game healthy at its current stakes. So he puts pressure on Ted to increase his cash position:

"Lend me a hundred," Ted says, turning to John after losing a pot.

"It's only the third hand and you're broke?" John growls and makes no move to lend him money. "I can't lend my cash right off ... what'll I play on?" The other players nod in agreement.

"Who'll lend me a hundred?" Ted asks as he looks around the table with his mouth smiling. When no one replies, his mouth droops.

Noticing Ted's sweaty forehead, John finally says, "Write out a check and put it in the game. Next time bring five or six hundred like everyone else does. Then if you run out, there'll be enough cash in the game to lend."

Ted's freckled face wrinkles as he pulls a blank check from his wallet. "I've lost thousands in this game," he says in a choking voice. "Can't even borrow a hundred. Isn't my credit any good?"

"Sure your credit is good," John explains as he cashes the check. "That's not the point. It's for your own protection. How can you possibly win without money to back you up? Got to have money to make money." . . . John knows this meaningless platitude will be swallowed as the truth by most players, especially gamblers like Ted.

"Got to have money to make money," Ted mumbles. "I'll bring plenty next week and overpower everyone."

During that week, Ted wins at the racetrack. Remembering John's advice and blaming his poker losses to a lack of cash, he brings over $1000 to the next game. The excess cash clouds his sense of value for money--he tries to overpower everyone. His overpowering play is an exhibition of wild, reckless poker. By two in the morning, Ted is writing a check; John Finn is a very big winner.

2. Credit(63)

Credit policies can determine the health of a poker game. The proper use of credit allows a faster betting pace and higher stakes. Since the good player is the most consistent winner, he is the prime source of credit and, therefore, exercises a major influence on the credit policies. He applies the following *credit rule* to poker games:

All debts must be paid by the start of each game.
No one may play while owing money from a previous game.

The above rule is effective in preventing bad debts that can damage or destroy a game. The credit rule also prevents a valuable loser from accumulating such a large poker debt that he quits the game and never plays again just to avoid paying the debt. When a loser is temporarily forced out of the game by the credit rule, he usually recovers financially, repays his debts, and then returns for more losses.

Enforcing the credit rule offers the following additional advantages:

- Provides a clear rule that forces prompt payment of poker debts.
- Forces more cash into the game, which means more cash available for the good player to win.
- Increases the willingness of players to lend money, which provides more cash for the losers.
- Detects players headed for financial trouble.
- Forces bankrupt players out of the game before serious damage is done.

The good player is flexible and alters any policy when beneficial. For example, he may ignore the credit rule to prevent a wealthy, heavily losing player from quitting the game. But he carefully weighs the

advantages against the long-range disadvantages before making any exception to the credit rule.

By not borrowing money himself, the good player avoids obligations that could reduce his influence over the credit policies. If the good player loses his cash, he writes a check. A check puts more money into the game and sets a good example for using checks instead of credit. If the good player must borrow, he does so from a player who rarely borrows himself and thus would seldom demand a reciprocating loan.

a. Extending credit (64)

The good player extends credit only for personal financial gain. He selectively extends credit for the following reasons:

- Available credit keeps big losers in the game. Steady losers who must constantly beg to borrow may quit the game out of humiliation or injured pride. But if big losers can borrow gracefully, they usually continue playing and losing.
- Opponents often play poorer poker after they have borrowed money.
- The good player can exercise greater influence and control over players who are in debt to him.

To obtain maximum benefits when lending money, the good player creates impressions that he--

- is extending a favor
- gives losers a break
- lends only to his friends
- lends only when winning and then on a limited basis
- expects other players, particularly winners, to lend money.

b. Refusing credit (65)

Easy credit automatically extended by a winning player will make him the target for most or all loans. Automatic credit decreases the money brought to the game, which in turn decreases the betting pace. Ironically, losers often feel ungrateful, resentful, and often suspicious toward overly willing lenders.

Refusal of credit is an important tool for controlling credit policies. The good player selectively refuses credit in order to--

- prod players into bringing more money
- force other players to lend money
- make borrowers feel more obligated and grateful
- avoid being taken for granted as an easy lender
- enhance an image of being tough (when advantageous)
- avoid poor credit risks

- upset certain players.

c. Cashing checks (66)

In most poker games, checks are as good as cash. The threat of legal action forces fast payment of most bounced checks. The good player likes to cash losers' checks, because --

- money in the game is increased
- losers get cash without using credit
- his cash position is decreased, which puts pressure on other winners to supply credit
- losers are encouraged to write checks, particularly if resistance is offered to their borrowing, while no resistance is offered to cashing their checks.

d. Bad debts (67)

A bad poker debt is rare. Losing players are gamblers, and most gamblers maintain good gambling credit. Some players go bankrupt, but almost all eventually pay their poker debts. When a loser stops gambling to recover financially, the best policy usually is to avoid pressuring him into paying his poker debt. Such pressure can cause increasing resentment to the point where he may never pay . . . or even worse, never return to the game to lose more money.

A house rule that allows bad debts to be absorbed by all players (e.g., by cutting the pot) has two advantages:

1. Lenders are protected; therefore, all players are more willing to lend money.
2. A debtor is less likely to welch against all the players than against an individual player.

Establishing a maximum bad debt that will be reimbursed by cutting pots is a wise addition to that house rule. Limiting this bad-debt insurance will--

- restrain excessive or careless lending
- provide a good excuse for not lending cash to a loser beyond this insurance level
- discourage collusion between a lender and a potential welcher
- avoid any large liability against future pots that could keep players away from the game until a large bad debt is paid by cutting the pot.

A gambling debt has no legal recourse (except debts represented by bad checks). A welcher, however, will often pay if threatened with a tattletale campaign. If he still does not pay, a few telephone calls to his wife, friends, and business associates will often force payment. The good player openly discusses any bad poker debt as a deterrent to others who might consider welching.

Handling credit is an important and delicate matter for John Finn. He must make credit available

to keep the game going, but must limit the use of credit to keep cash plentiful. He must appear generous in lending his winnings, while appearing tough against players abusing the use of credit. John pressures other winners into lending their money and pressures losers into writing checks. He must prevent hurt feelings on the part of losers as he enforces the *credit rule* (described in Concept 63).... All this requires careful thought and delicate maneuvering.

Sid Bennett is wealthy and loses many thousands of dollars every year. John takes special care of him. Usually Sid brings plenty of cash to the game, maybe $500 or $600. When he loses that, John gently pressures him into writing checks. Occasionally, Sid gets upset and refuses to write any more checks. He then borrows with gusto. Sometimes when he runs out of money, he scans the table for the biggest pile of money. Then, smash, his big fist descends without warning . . . he grabs the whole pile of money and peels off a couple hundred dollars. If the victim objects, Sid just grunts and looks the other way, but keeps the money. Most players grant him that liberty because they know he is rich and will always repay them.

Occasionally, Sid becomes bitter when suffering big consecutive losses and refuses to pay off his debts by the next game. John realizes that Sid might quit the game if the credit rule were applied to him. So if Sid owes him money under those conditions, John says nothing and lets the debt ride until the following week. But if Sid refuses to pay money he owes to another player, John pays off the debt while reminding everyone that debts cannot be carried over. Sid usually pays John later the same night or the following week. With his tantrums appeased, Sid happily goes on to lose many thousands more.

While lax with Sid, John Finn rigidly enforces the credit rule against other players. He is particularly tight about extending credit to Ted Fehr because of his poor financial condition. John often refuses him credit and makes him write checks That tough policy forces Ted to quit when he is broke. Then when he accumulates enough money, he returns to the game, pays off his debts, and loses more money.

When Ted quits for several weeks to recover financially, a losing player occasionally complains about holding one of Ted's debts or bounced checks. John offers to buy the debt or check at a 25 percent discount. Such transactions keep everyone happy: they give the losers more cash to lose, and John acquires extra profits from the stronger players.

At times, John Finn refuses to lend money to anyone. Such action forces others to lend their cash. At other times, he puts on subtle displays of generosity. For example, if players with good credit run low on money, John advantageously reduces his cash position by handing them money before they even ask for a loan. Everyone is favorably impressed with his acts of fake generosity.

In John's notebook is the following list:

	Credit Rating
Quintin Merck	Best
Sid Bennett	↓
Scotty Nichols	↓
Ted Fehr	Worst

When a player writes a check, John usually makes a quick move to cash it. To him, checks are often better to hold than money because cash winnings are more obvious targets for loans than are check winnings.

3. Rules (68)

The good player shuns fixed *poker rules.* He does, however, provide equitable and consistent solutions to poker problems because such a policy--

- decreases rule problems and arguments
- increases acceptance of complex games and modifications
- increases his control over the game
- improves his image as a fair and desirable player
- increases his invitations to other games
- establishes him as judge and arbiter of all poker problems
- increases his ability to control the *house rules.*

Poker, unlike other card games, is not subject to rigid rules. Published rules and the various "Hoyles" on poker are merely descriptions of conventions. Strict adherence to any set of poker rules produces an array of contradictions and inequities. By avoiding reference to Hoyle or to any fixed rules, and by consistently interpreting poker situations and equitably resolving poker problems, the good player can gain control of the rules.

a. Modified rules (69)

The rules found in poker books fail to cover many situations, especially in games involving split pots, twists, and other, more complex modifications. To cover the many ruleless situations, the good player equitably formulates new rules (actually, he formulates flexible guidelines rather than rules). He will

then consistently follow the guidelines, even when that costs him money. Why would he do something that costs him money? Because in the long run, such a policy delivers major financial benefits by giving him control of the rules. Furthermore, he can from time to time remind everyone of the money he has lost because of his "fairness," which reinforces everyone's confidence in him as the controller of the rules.

b. Disputed plays (70)

Because the good player interprets the rules consistently and fairly, his opponents implicitly trust him and depend on him to resolve disputed plays and technical problems about poker. Typical approaches he uses in settling commonly disputed plays are summarized in Table 21.

TABLE 21
DISPUTED PLAYS

Disputed Play	*Consistent Approach*
Misdeal	Cards are never redealt because of a misdeal. Each player is responsible for his own cards. Any misdealt hand having an uncorrectable advantage must be folded. Any misdealt hand that is correctable or left at a disadvantage can be played.
Exposed card during the deal	An exposed card can never be exchanged for a new one--all cards must be accepted.
Exposed card before the deal	All cards must come off in order. No one can ask for a reshuffle, a cut, or a different card.
Out-of-turn betting, calling, raising, or checking	Any play made out of turn (except folding) is meaningless and can be remade or changed during the player's proper turn.

Note: These approaches are for private games. Approaches for public games (casino and club poker) may be entirely different. See Part six for information on public poker.

The approaches in Table 21 provide clear and consistent solutions to disputes that commonly occur, especially in complex games involving split pots and twists.

c. Inequitable rules (71)

The good player may favor a chronic loser with an inequitable rule interpretation in order to keep him in the game (to everyone's benefit). Yet, he interprets and applies a rule with favorable bias toward a loser only if the financial value of that loser outweighs the financial value of interpreting all rules consistently and equitably.

d. House rules(72)

House rules are very important to the good player. They concern betting and playing procedures plus any other rules the players wish to adopt. The house rules determine not only the game stakes but also the game pace.

Since most players fail to differentiate between the house rules and poker rules, they often let the good player control the *house rules* because of his fairness in interpreting *poker rules.* Important house rules that the good player seeks to control and manipulate concern--

- stakes and antes
- games permitted
- rules for betting (e.g., betting limits for each round, table stakes, pot limit)
- rules for raising (e.g., pick-up checks, check raising)
- treatment of discards to be redealt (such as placing unshuffled discards on the bottom of the deck)
- courtesies (such as showing noncalled hands and hole cards).

The good player avoids well-defined or written rules to retain the flexibility needed to change the rules when advantageous.

In the Monday night game, John Finn verbally insists on adhering to the rules, but he carefully avoids any reference to specific rules. Instead, he mediates all disputes fairly, even when it costs him the pot. In his black notebook, he records his rule interpretations and dispute settlements. As a book of law, he refers to those entries in settling future problems. The entries in which he loses money are marked by big stars and recorded in accurate detail. He remembers those entries, and at every appropriate opportunity he reminds everyone how his honest rule interpretations cost him money. Of course, he never mentions the interpretations that favored him.

With his consistent policy of ''integrity'', John wins the confidence of the players. They know he is fair--everyone trusts him. They ask him to settle disputes, and they abide by his decisions. They accept him as the controller of the rules. Failing to realize that the *poker* rules bear no relationship to the *house* rules, they let John's influence spill into the house rules, thereby giving him a key tool for controlling the game.

Using his influence over the rules, John slowly alters and then obliterates the original house rules.

In the Monday night game, the original house rules allowed a maximum bet of $1 and permitted only straight draw and stud games . . . $50 winners were rare. Now $100 bets are made in draw. Wild and split-pot games with twists prevail. Thousand-dollar winners are common. After six years of controlling the rules, John increased his edge odds from 35 percent to 65 percent, and his profits soared from $2,500 to $42,000 per year.

4. Arguments and Emotional Situations (73)

The good player avoids involvement in emotional situations such as--

- personal disputes and arguments
- personal problems
- exposing cheaters.

He avoids involvement by outwardly ignoring the situation. The good player will, however, study an emotional situation in order to exploit it. He intervenes only in those situations that could cost him money. For example, he steps in to prevent a loser from quitting the game because of a personal argument.

When the good player faces a potential argument, he controls the situation either by yielding quickly or by standing firm. He avoids taking positions that he may have to compromise or yield. He takes a firm position only when financially profitable. When in doubt about yielding or holding firm, he usually yields before a confrontation occurs.

Sid's loud mouth constantly bellows good-natured insults at the players. Professor Merck does not like Sid to tease him about his mustache, his tight playing, or his beret. He tells Sid to stop. But Sid Bennett grins and rides him even harder by calling him a dirty old man. Quintin accuses Sid of running a-dishonest road-paving business and calls him a pasty-faced crook. Sid shouts back louder insults. Since their bickering hurts their poker playing, John increases his winnings from the upset men.... But their animosity increases each week and John begins to worry. Blows are nearly exchanged when Quintin threatens to expose Sid's payola on city paving contracts. Sid threatens to sue him for slander and then calls him a queer. Squinting his green eyes, Quintin cracks the edge of his hand on the table and threatens Sid with a karate blow. Sid vibrates his big fist close to Quintin's nose, calls him a queer again, and then storms out of the house while shouting that either he or Quintin must quit the game.

Fearing that Sid may quit, John telephones both men the next day and settles their argument. He explains how their feud is hurting their playing and is costing them money. They both agree and thank him for straightening out their problem.

John made extra money from their feuding. But when the feud almost caused the loss of the biggest loser, John stepped in and eliminated their argument in a way that improved his image as

a desirable player.

XIV
Cheaters (74)

[18]

The good player never cheats--he never needs to.

In friendly and private poker games, most players consider a cheater less honorable than a thief because a thief robs from strangers, but a poker cheat robs from his friends. The normal emotional impulse is to banish the cheater from the game ... or worse.[19] The good poker player, however, resists acting on emotions. He views any cheating situation objectively and then acts in his best long-range financial interest.

1. Cheating (75)

Cheating involves the following manipulations of cards, money, or betting:

- Cards are covertly switched to alter the value of a hand. Cards are purposely flashed to see undeaIt or unexposed cards. The deck is culled and stacked to change the sequence of cards to be dealt.
- Money is stolen from the pot or from other players. Wrong change is purposely taken from the pot. Lights are purposely not paid.
- Mechanical devices such as marked cards, strippers, mirrors, and hold-out equipment, and techniques to smudge, nick, or mar cards for future identification, are used.
- Secret betting agreements or partnerships are made; the colluding partners signal each other when to bet or raise.

Honest poker allows any behavior or manipulation, no matter how deceptive, except cheating. Cheating is the only dishonest, illegal, or unethical behavior in poker. But where does deception end and cheating begin? Actually, a sharp distinction exists between the two. Poker cheating is the conjuring up of advantages unavailable to others. Poker deception is the taking advantage of situations available to all. For example, *all* cards are marked. A sharp-eyed player can find printing imperfections in honest decks of cards. Some common printing imperfections are ink spots, inkless dots, and slightly off-centered designs on the back side of the cards. Also, the normal use of cards produces identifying smudges, nicks, scratches, and creases on their backs. (Purposely marring cards for identification would, of course, be cheating.) Those natural imperfections and markings that identify unexposed cards are available to any player willing to train his eye and discipline his mind. The good player willingly exerts the effort to learn and then use these natural markings. He may even increase that advantage by providing the game with cheaper (but honest) cards with less perfect printing patterns.

Sid Bennett cheats. While it is quite obvious, only John Finn fully realizes that he cheats. Quintin Merck suspects it, but never makes any direct accusations. The other players watch Sid's cheating, but refuse to suspect him. His crude cheating techniques include--

- **looking through the discards to select cards for use in his hand**
- **culling or sorting cards prior to dealing**
- **peeking at cards to be dealt, especially twist cards**
- **stealing money from the pot when going light**
- **slipping a good card into the hand of a losing player (Robin Hood cheating).**

John estimates that Sid cheats once in every eight or ten hands.

2. Accepting Cheaters (76)

The good player quietly accepts cheaters if they are losers. In fact, he often welcomes their cheating because they generally lose more money when cheating, particularly when cheating in complex games involving split pots and twists.... A player usually increases his losses when cheating because he--

- dilutes his attention toward the game by worrying about and concentrating on his cheating
- overestimates the benefits of cheating and thus plays looser and poorer poker
- makes his cards more readable.

Why does a player cheat if his cheating increases his losses? Some players cheat to satisfy emotional needs. Other players cheat out of financial desperation.

Sid cheats for emotional rather than financial reasons. His cheating costs him thousands of extra dollars every year, as shown by the data below. The data include a three-month period when Sid stopped his cheating because he was worried about getting caught.

Period	Edge Odds for Sid Bennett Cheating Frequency	Edge Odds for Sid Bennett Average Edge Odds, %
1st year	Seldom	--10
2nd and 3rd year	Regular	--23
3 months in 3rd year	Seldom	--12

4th year	Regular	--25

The data indicate that Sid doubles his losses when cheating. With his current losses in the Monday night game totaling $20,000 per year, his cheating costs him about $10,000 per year.

3. Rejecting Cheaters (77)

Under certain conditions, cheating by others can financially hurt the good player. For example, valuable losers might quit the game if they detected cheating. Or the game itself could be destroyed by cheating. If necessary, therefore, the good player can eliminate the cheater or his cheating in one or more of the ways shown in Table 22.

TABLE 22
REJECTING CHEATERS

Time of Action	Form of Action	Results
Indirectly, during game	Make the cheater feel that he is suspected and is being watched.	Cheating stops.
Privately, outside of game	Tell the cheater that if he cheats again, he will be publicly exposed.	Cheating stops.
Privately, outside of game	Tell suspicious players about the cheater. Point out that he is a loser and the best way to penalize him is to let him play.	Cheating continues, and the players are satisfied.
Privately, outside of game	Form a conspiracy with other players to collude in order to bankrupt the cheater.	Cheater is driven from game.
Publicly, during game	Expose the cheater during the game in front of everyone	Cheater quits or is expelled from the game.

The best action against a cheater depends not only on the situation, but on the attitudes of the other players as well. If a cheater must be eliminated, the good player assumes a righteous hero's role by exposing the "nefarious cheater." That righteous role enhances the good player's image of being the most honest and trustworthy player in the game-- an ideal image for manipulating opponents.

What about stealing money from the pot? If the good player does not win the pot, he keeps quiet when losers shortchange the pot or fail to pay their lights (money owed to the pot). But if chronic stealing upsets other players enough to hurt the game, the good player stops the stealing by taking one of the actions listed in Table 22.

Scotty Nichols barely beats Ted Fehr to win a $900 pot. While everyone's attention is focused on the action, Sid Bennett casually takes the $100 that he was light and slips it into his shirt pocket for a quick $200 profit. John notices Sid's theft, but says nothing. With saliva drooling over his lip, Scotty rakes in the huge pot; his breathing quickens as his fingers sort the money . . . he forgets about Sid's lights. Since Sid is a big loser and Scotty a big winner for the night, the theft has an equalizing effect that benefits John.

Several hands later, Sid pulls the same trick by pocketing his $40 lights for an $80 profit. John wins the pot and says nothing. As the next hand is dealt, he quietly gives Sid $20 and says, "You owe me another hundred." . . . Sid blushes and then nods in agreement.

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Footnotes:

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[18] For more details and information about amateur and professional cheating see Chapters XXIX-XXXI.

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[19] Stronger emotional reactions against cheaters are common. Some reactions can result in physical violence, even mayhem or homicide.

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4. Robin Hood Cheater (78)

Some players cheat for others without benefiting themselves. The beneficiary is usually a poor player or a big loser. That kind of Robin Hood cheating is relatively common and benefits the good player by--

- distributing losses more evenly among players
- decreasing losses of big losers
- making the hands of both the Robin Hood cheater and his beneficiary more readable.

Sid Bennett often cheats for big losers like Ted Fehr. For example, Sid folds, then looks at Ted Fehr's hand and sees a four-card heart flush. Quickly he grabs Ted's draw card--it is a club. Sid then rummages through the discards. Finding a heart, he switches it with Ted's club. . . . Ted smiles and wins the pot with a heart flush.

While Sid's card switch is crude and obvious, no one except John lets himself fully realize what happened. Later in the same game, Sid attempts a partnership with John. This is what happens:

The pot is large. Five players are in for the last bet-- including John and Sid, who are sitting next to each other. Sid bets and then his knee nudges John's leg. John promptly folds his three queens. Sid wins with a full house.

"Remember that," Sid whispers to John while pulling in the pot.

A few hands later, Sid Bennett is dealt a pat straight. Again he nudges John, who folds

immediately. Sid grins and winks a faded-blue eye at John.

Later that evening, John draws to a lowball hand that he has bet heavily during the first round. But he catches a pair of fives to ruin his lowball hand. Still John bets the maximum in trying to bluff out his two remaining opponents.... Ted Fehr folds because Sid is sitting behind him with a pat hand. John's knee nudges Sid's leg. Sid smiles and then shows everyone his eight low as he folds. "Thanks," he whispers to John. Promptly John Finn spreads his hand face-up on the table to win the $600 lowball pot with a pair of fives.... Sid looks at the ceiling and sputters dirty words.

Instead of simply saying no to Sid's collusion-cheating offer, John earns a good profit while making his answer clear.

5. Detection (79)

Most cheaters in private games use crude techniques that are easily detectable.[20] Yet most players ignore even obvious cheating to avoid arousing unpleasant emotions. When a player detects someone cheating, he often rationalizes it as a rule violation or a mistake. But the good player identifies cheating quickly and can detect even highly skilled cheaters without even seeing a dishonest move. How does he do that? Cheaters betray themselves by violations of logic and probability. The good player, with his sharply focused concentration on his opponents, the game, and the odds, has an acute awareness of any improbable playing and betting patterns. That awareness enables him to promptly detect cheating, even without seeing a suspicious move.

Professor Merck suspects Sid of cheating. One night, Sid cheats him out of a $700 pot. After sitting in silence for several hands, Quintin abruptly leaves without a word and slams the front door. Knowing that Quintin detected Sid's cheating and fearful that he will tell others, John pursues him out the door. Quintin stops under the street lamp when he sees John approaching. For a moment, neither says a word.

"You saw it too?" Quintin asks, squinting his green eyes.

"I see it in every game."

"So why haven't you said something!" the professor half shouts. "He should've been bounced from the game long ago."

"Look, who's the biggest loser in the game?" John quickly replies. "It's Sid. And you're a big winner. In the past couple of years, you've taken Sid for thousands of dollars. Sure he's cheated you, me, and everyone else out of pots. But what if we'd thrown him out two years ago? We'd have done him a $40,000 favor."

Quintin's mouth opens. He rubs his chin.

"Sid's a cheater and deserves to be penalized," John continues. "But the best way to penalize him is to let him play. We only hurt ourselves by bouncing him from the game."

"Never thought about it that way," Quintin says, scratching his head. "Maybe you're right.... Who else knows about his cheating?"

"No one who'll admit it. Cheating is a strange thing. Most players have strong feelings against acknowledging it.... Everyone subconsciously knows that Sid cheats. But no one wants an unpleasant emotional experience, so no one sees him cheat."

"Someday, someone will accuse him."

"Perhaps," John continues, "but visible suspicion will occur first. Take yourself--he cheated you out of $700 tonight. Yet, still you didn't accuse him. You passed it off till next time. The next time you may accuse Sid, or you may pass it off again."

"But what happens when someone does accuse him outright . . . what then?"

"If he's accused outright, we not only lose Sid, but other players might quit. The game might even fold. We must convince any seriously suspecting players that the best action is to let him play. If they won't accept this, then we must either stop the cheating or eliminate Sid from the game."

"So for now, we leave everything as is?"

"Right," John replies with a nod. "And when Sid steals your pot, just remember he'll pay you back many times."

"But why is he a big loser if he cheats?"

"A cheater, like a thief, is unrealistic. He overestimates the value of cheating and plays a poorer game. In fiction, the cheater may be a winner. But in reality, he's a loser, and usually a big one. The good player--the winner--never needs to cheat."

"True, true," Quintin mumbles.

"See you next week," John says as he walks away.

What does John accomplish by his discussion with Quintin? He keeps the game intact by pacifying Quintin, and keeps Sid in the game to continue his cheating and losing.

The good player can lose to cheaters in certain situations. Two or more professional cheaters, for example, can gang up on a good player to reduce his edge odds to a losing level. The good player, however, quickly detects team or gang cheating and either beats it or eliminates it or quits the game (see Chapter XXXI).

XV
Taxes and Laws (80)

For federal tax purposes, net annual poker winnings must be declared as *income.*[21] Poker income can be listed under the heading of "Other" on Federal Income Tax Form 1040. In most states, net poker gains can also be declared as income. Gambling losses can be deducted (on Schedule A) from poker income, but net gambling losses cannot be deducted from taxable income.

Poker players' winnings are not subject to the federal *excise* taxes on gambling.[22] Apparently the federal government does not classify poker players as gamblers (even though poker income is treated as gambling gains by the IRS).

A survey by the author (summarized in Table 23) shows that poker games are technically illegal in most states. Nevertheless, few if any states apply their anti-gambling laws to private poker games. But house games (in which pots are cut or raked for a profit or during which players pay collection fees) are vulnerable to legal action in most states.

Table 23 gives information about the legal and tax status of poker in each state.

TABLE 23
STATE LAWS ABOUT POKER

*Opinion for private poker games (for guideline use only).

State-- Is Poker Legal?*	Source of Information-- Legal Reference	State Income Tax 1980
Alabama No	NAACP of Montgomery, Alabama-- Alabama State Statutes	Yes

Alaska No	Bar Association Section 11.60.140	Yes
Arizona No	Bar Association-- Revised Statutes 13.431	Yes
Arkansas No	Assistant Attorney General-- Statutes Annotated 41-2011 and 3809 (Repl. 1964)	Yes
California No	Deputy Attorney General-- Penal Code 330: Refers only to stud poker as illegal	Yes
Colorado No	Bar Association-- Revised Statutes, Section 40-10-9	Yes
Connecticut No	State Police-- Sections 53-272-277	No
Delaware Yes	Assistant Attorney General-- Title II Code of 1953. Section 665	Yes
Florida No	Attorney General-- Section 849.08	No
Georgia No	Assistant Attorney General-- Georgia Code, Section 26-6404 and 6401	Yes
Hawaii No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Idaho No	Assistant Attorney General-- Section 18-3801, Idaho Code	Yes

Illinois No	Legislative Reference Bureau-- Criminal Law, Chapter 38, Section 28-1	Yes
Indiana No	Bar Association-- Act of 1905, Chapter 169, Statute 10-2307	Yes
Iowa No	Solicitor General-- Chapter 726, 1966 Code	Yes
Kansas No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Kentucky No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Louisiana Yes	Republican Party of Louisiana-- No specific reference given	Yes
Maine No	Assistant Attorney General-- Revised Statute 1964	Yes
Maryland No	Assistant Attorney General-- Maryland Article 27, Section 237-264	Yes
Massachusetts No	Bar Association-- Section 1, Chapter 37, General Laws	Yes
Michigan No	Democratic State Central Committee of Michigan-- Penal Code, 1945, Sections 750.314 and 750-315	Yes

Minnesota Yes	Attorney-- Statutes 609, 75	Yes
Mississippi No	Bar Association-- Code of 1942, Section 2190	Yes
Missouri No	Governor-- State Statute	Yes
Montana No	Attorney General-- Section 94-2401, R.C.M., 1947: Licensed poker clubs only	Yes
Nebraska Yes	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Nevada Yes	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	No
New Hampshire No	Bar Association-- 577.7 Gaming	No
New Jersey No	Deputy Attorney General-- Statutes 2A:112-a and 218:85-7	Yes
New Mexico No	Assistant Attorney General-- Section 40A-19-1 to 3, N.M. Statutes Annotated, 1953 Compilation (P.S.)	Yes
New York No	Assistant Council to Governor-- Article 1, Section 9 of N.Y. State Constitution, and Sections 970-998 of N.Y. State Penal Law	Yes
North Carolina No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes

North Dakota No	Bar Association-- Chapter 12-23-01	Yes
Ohio No	Bar Association-- Section 2915.06, Revised Code	Yes
Oklahoma No	Oklahoma State University-- Title 21 of Oklahoma Statutes, 1961, Section 941	Yes
Oregon No	Attorney General-- ORS 167.25 and 167.510 Licensed poker clubs only	Yes
Pennsylvania No	Deputy Attorney General-- No specific reference given	Yes
Rhode Island No	Attorney General's office-- No specific reference given	Yes
South Carolina No	Research Clerk-- Sections 16-804, 505	Yes
South Dakota No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	No
Tennessee No	Attorney General-- Section 39-2001, Tennessee Code Annotated	No
Texas Yes	Governor-- Texas Jurisprudence, 2nd volume 26	No
Utah No	Attorney General-- Section 76-27-1 to 3, Utah Code Annotated, 1953	Yes
Vermont No	Bar Association-- Section 2132 and 13, VSA 2133	Yes

Virginia No	Attorney General-- Section 18.1-316	Yes
Washington No	Assistant Attorney General-- Revised Code 9.47.010-9.47.030: Licensed poker clubs only	No
West Virginia No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Wisconsin No	Bar Association-- Chapter 945	Yes
Wyoming No	Attorney-- Statute 6-203, 1957	No
District of Columbia ? (not clear)	United States Attorney-- Title 22, D.C. Code, Sections 1501-1515	Yes
Puerto Rico No	Bar Association-- No specific reference given	Yes
Virgin Islands No	Attorney-- Sections 1221-1226, Chapter 61, Title 14	---
United States Government Yes	Deputy Attorney General-- Legality is up to individual states. Winnings are taxable income.	---

This section of the 1040 Federal Tax form shows how John Finn declared his $54,000 poker income over a decade ago.[23]

form

1040
U.S. Individual Income Tax Return

4 Pensions and annuities, rents and royalties
   partnerships, & estates or trusts (Schedule B) .

5 Business income (Schedule C) . . . .

6 Sale or exchange of property (Schedule D) . . . .   3,450 | 00

7 Farm income (Schedule F) . . . .

8 Other sources (state nature) . . . .

   . . . Monday Poker Games . . . .   42,000 | 00

   . . . Other Poker Games . . . .   12,000 | 00

                              Total other sources ▶▶▶▶   54,000 | 00

9 Add lines 2 through 8. Enter here and on page 1
   line 6, ... ▶▶▶▶   57,450 | 00

Footnotes:

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[20] See Chapters XXIX-XXXI for details about undetectable, professional cheating.

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[21] Carmack v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue. 183 E 2d l (5th Cir. 1950).

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[22] According to the United states Excise Tax Regulation 4401 (paragraphs 4020-4032) poker winnings are not subject to the 10 percent excise wagering tax. And according to Regulation 4411 (paragraphs 4075-4083) poker players, even professional players, are not required to register and purchase the wagering Occupational Tax stamp.

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[23] 1965 is the last year John Finn's poker records and tax returns were made available. With inflation and expanded poker action, John Finn's annual poker income is estimated at $200,000 for 1980.

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PART FOUR

OPPONENTS

In poker, all opponents are potential financial assets. The good poker player first gets his opponents involved in the game, then he exploits them to win their money.

XVI
Involvement (81)

As players become emotionally and financially involved in a poker game, they become easier to exploit and their chances of quitting the game decrease.

1. Emotional (82)

Emotional involvement can result from gambling impulses . . . and most poker players are gamblers. [24] When a gambler loses, he keeps on playing in an attempt to recover his losses. When a gambler wins, he forgets his losses and concludes that he has finally learned how to win. The gambler's subconscious desire to punish or destroy himself emerges as an abiding, irrational optimism. The good

player exploits that optimism in gamblers to generate a continuous income for himself.

Some players use poker as a narcotic-like diversion to escape reality. Others develop soul-mate friendships with other players. Such involvement can be emotionally soothing and pleasant--sufficiently so to compensate those losers for many large losses.

TABLE 24
INTENSITY OF INVESTMENT SITUATIONS

Investment Situation	Estimated per Investment Average Return Rate,%	Time Span	Investment Intensity*
Good poker Player (John Finn)	+25	6 minutes	+2,000,000
Sound poker player (Quintin Merck)	+ 5	6 minutes	+400,000
Bonds	+14	1 year	+14
Banks	+ 8	l year	+8
Stocks	+6	1 year	+6
Business	+ 6	1 year	+6

* Investment-intensity values are average-return values calculated on an annual basis.

TABLE 25
INTENSITY OF GAMBLING SITUATIONS

Gambling Situation	Estimated per Gamble Average Loss Rate, %	Time Span	Gambling Intensity*

Lottery	-50	1 week	-$2,500
Numbers	-40	1 day	-15,000
Average poker player (Scotty Nichols)	- 1	6 minutes	-90,000
Casino poker	varies according to casino rake[+]	varies according to casino rake[+]	varies according to casino rake[+]
Carp shooting	- 1	1 minute	-500,000
Horse racing	-15	12 minutes	-700,000
Poor poker player (Sid Bennett)	-10	6 minutes	-900,000
Poor poker player (Ted Fehr)	-10	6 minutes	-900,000
Roulette	- 3	30 seconds	-3,300,000
Slot machines	-20	5 seconds	-130,000,000

[*] Gambling-intensity values are the average-loss values calculated on an annual basis.

[+] Poker can be a gambling situation even for the good player if the pots are regularly cut or raked by the house, as they are in public casinos. A large arbitrary cut can reduce or eliminate the profitable edge odds of a good player. And while the good player can retain a great advantage over the other players in a casino poker game, he cannot stop that house cut. Also, he cannot take control of the public game and its players as he can in the private game. Still, the good player can earn a guaranteed income from public poker (Nevada-type casino poker or Gardena-type club poker) if he adjusts his game to a public-professional style of poker (see Part Six).

2. Financial (83)

For a losing player, financial involvement is a form of emotional involvement. When losses force him to

use his savings or to borrow money, he keeps playing in a vain attempt to recover his losses. An occasional win gives him enough encouragement to hold him in the game.

Ironically, a winning player can also get financially involved and entrapped if he becomes too dependent on his poker income. He can even turn into a chronic loser if a series of losses disrupts his income. How does that happen? If his temporary loss of poker income causes a loss of objectivity, then the quality of his play will deteriorate. If that cycle of decreased objectivity and increased deterioration continues, his future losses will be assured. Memories of past winnings will then sustain him through heavy losses.

John Finn and Quintin Merck bet only when they judge the odds to be in their favor; they are not gamblers. But the other players in the Monday night game are gamblers.... Each one is emotionally and financially involved as shown in the following chart:

	Emotional Involvement	*Financial Involvement*
John Finn	(minimum involvement)	Receives substantial income.
Quintin Merck	Supports ego; finds companionship; relieves boredom.	Receives moderate income useful for boasting about his poker skill.
Scotty Nichols	Avoids drinking problems; escapes business disappointments.	Tries to regain his past winning form.
Sid Bennett	Hides insecurities; finds companionship; releases tensions.	Seeks hot streak to recover past losses.
Ted Fehr	Satisfies gambling compulsion to hurt himself; escapes domestic problems.	Hopes for big win to parlay on the horses.

XVII
Exploitation (84)

Once players are involved in the game, the good player can take greater advantage of them through--

- their personal weaknesses
- their play of cards
- their betting and raising

- hypnosis
- distractions
- agreements.

1. Personal Weaknesses, Favors, and Bribes (85)

Most poor poker players become hooked on or involved in games through their personal weaknesses. The good player exploits those weaknesses. He knows that almost all players have one or more of the following weaknesses:

altruism	ignorance	nervousness
capriciousness	impulsiveness	parasitism
carelessness	inattentiveness	preoccupation
compulsiveness	inconsistency	self-pity
dishonesty	inexperience	stubbornness
exhibitionism	instability	subjectiveness
faith	irrationality	superstitiousness
fear	laziness	timidity
greed	mysticism	worry

Each personal weakness grows out of a player's resistance to objective thinking, discipline, and rational behavior.

The good player identifies and records the personal weaknesses of each opponent in his notebook. He then uses those weaknesses to influence their playing decisions, to read their hands, and to manipulate them into faster betting paces, higher stakes, and poorer-quality poker. He regularly reviews and revises his notes on their weaknesses in order to--

- refresh his memory

- devise new and better ways to manipulate his opponents
- better understand each opponent
- detect changes in opponents.

John Finn identifies and lists the personal weaknesses of his poker opponents as shown in the above chart. Indeed, the following incident shows how John uses his opponents' personal weaknesses to win extra money:

Missing his flush in draw poker, John finds himself in a good position to bluff, so he bets $50. Scotty and Sid fold immediately. Ted Fehr holds two pair and thinks he should drop, but is desperate and considers calling. John must prevent him from calling.

Everyone knows that Ted is superstitious about pennies and never keeps any ... especially when gambling. So when Ted leans over and shows Sid his hand, John takes a penny from his pocket and slips the coin onto the edge of Ted's money.

"Call!" Sid bellows as he gazes blankly at Ted's two pair. "He's got nothing."

"Yeah," Ted says and then grins as he picks up his pile of money to call. "What!" His grin fades as the penny tumbles from the money. "No wonder I'm losing!" he yells while picking up the coin and throwing it across the room. As the penny bounces off the wall and rolls around the floor, Ted folds his hand and says, "At least that penny made me fold. I saved fifty bucks..." His voice fades when John shows his winning hand ... a four flush. Ted's eyes water. His superstition cost him a $200 pot.

Consider another example of John's exploitation of an opponent's weakness:

Sid Bennett injures his foot and cannot leave the house. At the last moment, John switches the game to Sid's house so the injured loser can play. Knowing Sid's house will lack a good supply of food, John stops at a delicatessen and invests in a gigantic Italian submarine sandwich nicely wrapped in cellophane.

At three in the morning, Scotty Nichols grips his stomach. He rummages through Sid's bare kitchen and finds a couple handfuls of dry cereal to eat.

The next hand is seven-card stud, high-low with two twists. John's hole cards are the ace and the joker[25]; he has another ace face-up . . . the best possible start for high-low poker. He wants the maximum number of callers. Now is the time to use his investment. He reaches under the chair and pulls the huge sandwich from a brown paper bag. All eyes turn toward the juicy submarine. Scotty moans as his tongue laps his puffy lips.

John lays the elongated sandwich across the pot. "The winners split it," he declares.... Scotty's face

is sweating, and his stomach is growling.

Personal Weaknesses

John Finn	*Quintin Merck*	*Sid Bennett*	*Scotty Nichols*	*Ted Fehr*
greed[*]	greed[*] laziness stubbornness superstitiousness	capriciousness carelessness dishonesty exhibitionism impulsiveness inattentiveness irrationality laziness stubbornness	carelessness faith fear greed (uncontrolled) inattentiveness laziness mysticism preoccupation self-pity subjectiveness timidity worry	capriciousness compulsiveness faith fear impulsiveness instability irrationality laziness preoccupation self-pity subjectiveness superstitiousness worry

[*] **Greed can be a personal strength if rationally controlled.**

With eyes fixed on the sandwich, everyone calls the first bet. John aggressively bets his strong hand. Many players keep calling. The final bets are large. Scotty keeps calling with a poor hand. "Should fold," he says, catching his breath. "But that sub ... yum." The red-faced man spends over $100 on calls. Three other players also call as their eyes remain fixed on the sandwich. The pot is the largest of the night--over $700. John wins both high and low with an ace-high full house and a six-five low. He also wins back the sandwich, which he later used to build another pot.

With a small investment, John Finn exploits opponents' lack of discipline to win may extra hundreds of dollars.

The good player continually exploits man's most pervasive weakness--laziness. Laziness foments desires to gain values without effort. That, in turn, leads to seeking unearned approval, respect, and money. The good player uses those desires to manipulate his opponents with "favors" that symbolize (and falsely promise) approval, respect, and money. His victims bend to his will in seeking those pseudo favors.

"Favors and bribes that the good player extends and withdraws for his personal profit include--

- loans
- advice
- compliments
- sympathy
- showing of cards.

Out of the loser's desire for "favors" and approval from a respected winner, the good player can often get, for example, a loser's support for changes in house rules that further benefit the good player at the loser's expense (e.g., faster-paced games and higher stakes).

2. Play of Cards and Betting (86)

The good player constantly exploits his opponents as they play their cards. He repeatedly lures them into playing poorer and poorer poker. With the proper strategy, he causes them to--

- make mistakes
- improperly estimate the value of their hands
- play a looser game
- play hands that should be dropped
- drop hands that should be called.

An exploitation ploy that John Finn uses (especially in split-pot games) involves the following maneuver to make a hesitant player call a bet:

The game is high-low, five-card stud with two twists. John has a winner--a lock on low. Quintin and Ted are playing for high. Quintin bets $20. Ted has a four flush and wants to call, but is afraid that John will raise and Quintin will reraise, thus costing him $40 more. He starts to fold. John picks up a $20 bill and holds it over the pot. Now, knowing that John will only call and not raise, Ted calls. He then catches a flush on the twist. After more betting and raising, Ted ends up beating Quintin for high. John wins low and makes an extra $50 by not letting Ted fold.

John seldom fakes that maneuver. So when players see him holding the call money, they know with confidence that he will not raise. But he will often fake the reverse maneuver of not holding the call money and then not raising.

The good player also exploits his opponents through betting. When holding a strong hand, he can build much larger pots by getting other players to do his betting and raising. Successful *indirect* betting requires accurate reading of opponents' hands and knowledge of their betting habits. Miscalculation of indirect betting can result in smaller pots. Thus, when uncertain about his opponents' intentions, the good player will bet aggressively rather than check his strong hand.

Disproportionate betting can throw opponents into more vulnerable and exploitable betting positions.

For example, by making a bet or a raise completely out of proportion to the normal or expected bet, the good player can confuse opponents into making the desired bet, raise, call, or drop. Disproportionate betting is useful as both an offensive and a defensive tool.

Scotty deals draw poker with one twist. John Finn gets a four-card straight flush. For his best investment odds, John wants the maximum players calling a bet big enough to keep them in for the large last-round bets. He also wants to avoid raises that would make players fold. So John opens for $14 instead of the normal $25. Noses wrinkle. Players with poor hands smile and call at this bargain price. Potential raisers, suspicious of the weird bet and fearing a sandbag, only call. The results are perfect for John ... everyone calls and no one raises. John's estimated investment odds soar to a highly favorable--

$$\frac{(\$600)\,(.4)}{\$80} = 3.0.$$

But if John had bet the normal $25 and only two players called, his estimated investment odds would have tumbled to--

$$\frac{(\$250)\,(.5)}{\$75} = 1.7.$$

Now suppose John had bet $25, someone raised to $50, and everyone else folded. If John had called the raise (which he probably would not have), his estimated investment odds would have fallen to an unfavorable--

$$\frac{(\$222)\,(.4)}{\$100} = 0.8.$$

By making the disproportionate $14 bet, John sets up the hand for maximum profits while gaining control of the betting. Moreover, if he checks his bet on the next round, usually one or more players will feel deprived of a full opening-round bet and thus bet aggressively. John can then passively let them do the betting and raising for him. On the other hand, if John bets on the next round, the other players will probably remain defensive and avoid betting or raising.

So with that disproportionate S14 bet, John increases his investment odds and leaves himself in a flexible betting position. John's checking will induce his opponents to bet aggressively; his betting will cause them to remain defensive. Thus he can conveniently turn the betting into either an offensive tempo (by checking) or a defensive tempo (by betting) . . . whichever is more

advantageous to him.

Footnotes:

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[24] Gambling is defined in this book as "The wagering of money at unfavorable odds." In poker, the good player with favorable edge odds is *not* gambling, but players with unfavorable edge odds are. Horse players, casino patrons, and losing poker players are gamblers. That definition is consistent with definitions given in: (1) Webster's Third New International Dictionary--"To wager money or stakes on an uncertain outcome." The good player's outcome is certain; therefore, he is not gambling; (2) Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary-- 'To lose, squander, or dispose of by gaming." By that definition, the good player is not gambling, but losing players are; and (3) The Random House Dictionary--"Any matter or thing involving risk or hazardous uncertainty." The good player's situation is essentially riskless and, therefore, is not a gambling situation.

A gambling situation yields a *statistically minus* return on money wagered, while a nongambling (investment) situation yields a *statistically plus* return on money invested.... The intensity of the situation (rate of loss or rate of return) is determined both by the time span of the wager or investment and by the percent loss or the percent return. The intensity of' gambling and nongambling (investment) situations is illustrated by Tables 24 and 25. The tables, compare the Monday night poker players to other investment and gambling situations: The good poker player is in by far the best investment situation. By contrast, the poor poker player is in one of the worst gambling situations.

---

[25] The joker (also called the bug) is a wild card for low, an ace for high, and good for filling straights and flushes. In high-low games the joker can be used as both a high card and a low card in the same hand.

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3. Hypnosis (87)

Because the good player is able to intensely study and closely scrutinize each poker opponent, he quickly gets to know their minds and psyches. With planned experiments, he can discover subconscious responses in many players and then actually hypnotize certain players--particularly the dull, emotional, or mystical ones. Typical hypnotic stimuli are--

- staring into the subject's eyes (psychological)
- moving a finger through the pot (visual and motion)
- breathing audibly during a tense silence (sound)
- tapping fingers on the table (sound and motion)
- repeating sub audible chant-like commands (e.g., "fold--fold--fold," or "raise--raise--raise").

Various repeated motions, sounds, or muffled voices can subconsciously instruct or signal vacillating opponents to make specific folds, calls, bets, or raises. The alert player can discover subconscious or hypnotic signals that will trigger automatic or trained reactions in his opponents.

While the good player can get certain opponents to bet, call, or fold by hypnosis, he uses hypnotizing actions cautiously to avoid revealing his own hands and intentions to alert opponents.

After the draw, John Finn takes the final raise for $100. He has Scotty Nichols beat and wants him to call. Scotty groans. Looking at the huge pot, he sees John's finger slowly stirring the pile of money--stirring slowly and smoothly. Ten and twenty-dollar bills are moving in circles. Scotty's floating brown eyes start rotating with the money. His chubby hand slowly picks up a $100 bill. He

calls the bet.

Scotty tries to smile as John pulls in the pot. Eventually he may become aware of that hypnotic trick. But then John will simply use another trick.

John estimates his earnings per life of hypnotic trick range from several hundred to several thousand dollars.

4. Distractions (88)

The good player can exploit his opponents more easily when they are distracted. A radio or television for sporting events has excellent distraction value. A late newspaper is usually good for several hands of distracted play from opponents checking horse-race results, the stock market, and the news. Pornographic literature offers an absorbing distraction. Good spreads of food and assorted drinks provide steady and effective distractions.

Availability of beer and liquor usually benefits the good player. One drink takes the sharpness off a player's ability to think and concentrate. Even a single beer will reduce the effectiveness of a superior player. That is why the good player never drinks before or during the game. And that is why the good player is glad to see superior-playing opponents take a drink.

Moderate amounts of alcohol have less effect on poor players because their concentrations are already at reduced levels. The poor player must drink enough to become intoxicated before his edge odds are reduced to even lower levels. But the advantages of having intoxicated opponents are sometimes canceled by disadvantages such as slowing down the game and causing drinking problems that may drive profitable opponents from the game.

Each week, John Finn is a good fellow and brings beer to the game, along with the late evening paper containing the complete stock-market closings and horse-race results. Ted and Sid read this paper while playing their hands. Every now and then they lose a pot to John because of that distraction.

Those newspapers cost John less than $15 per year, but are worth about a $1000 a year in distractions--or about $20 per newspaper.

By encouraging and creating distractions, John Finn increases everyone's confusion. At the same time, he keeps the action moving. In the Monday night game, however, he discovers his opponents will play for significantly higher stakes when using cash rather than faster-moving poker chips. (In most games, the reverse is true, and thus the good player normally prefers using poker chips.) To offset this, John speeds up the game by alternating two decks of cards between each shuffle and deal.

By using an array of distractions, John increases his edge odds by about 20 percent. That means $8000 additional income per year at his current winning rate. He estimates that while playing their hands, his opponents are distracted 35 percent of the time. And they are distracted a much higher percentage of the time when they are not involved in the action. The chart on page 142 estimates the in-action distractions of each player:

Time Distracted, %
(when in action)

	Eating	*Gossiping*	*Daydreaming*	*Radio, TV, Newspaper*	*Miscellaneous*	*Total*
Quintin Merck	2	5	10	5	2	24
Scotty Nichols	10	2	15	2	5	34
Sid Bennett	2	25	5	10	5	47
Ted Fehr	slight	slight	25	15	2	43
John Finn	0	1	slight	slight	2	4

5. Agreements (89)

The good player sometimes makes profitable agreements with other players. Occasionally, he can make an agreement with a loose player whereby each time either one wins a pot he will pay the other, for example, $5. Such an agreement will give the good player a guaranteed side income. Even when the loose player is a big loser, he will usually win more pots than the good player. Many poor players will gladly make such an agreement because they erroneously believe that a winner must win more pots than a loser. Also, most losers desire an association with a winner (the good player); such an association boosts their self-esteem by making them feel they are on the same level as the winner. Often a loose player happily maintains such an agreement indefinitely without ever admitting or even realizing that he is providing the good player with a steady side income.

Compared to John Finn, Sid Bennett plays more then twice as many hands, wins about 50 percent

more pots, but loses nearly three times as often. He eagerly accepts John's suggestion that they pay each other $5 every time one of them wins a pot. Two years later, Sid is still pleased with this arrangement as indicated by his comments:

"At least I keep collecting these side bets," he says with a broad smile as John wins a huge pot and gives him $5. "Don't understand why you made such a stupid bet."

"Ha!" Quintin Merck snorts. He knows John makes money from the agreement. John knows it too, and his notebook data prove it:

The Sid Bennett Agreement

	# of Plus Weeks, Average Gain	# of Minus Weeks, Average Loss	Net Income
1st year	40, +$30	10,--$10	+1100
2nd year	40, +$35	8,--$10	+1320

So far, Sid has lost $2,420 on John's "stupid bet," and is very happy about it--an ideal arrangement for John.

XVIII
Money Extraction (90)

The good poker player is involved in a long-term process of extracting maximum money from the game as well as from each individual player.

1. Winning Too Fast (91)

Money extraction at the maximum rate is not always in the best long-term financial interest of the good player. Uncontrolled maximum money extraction can cause the following problems:

- Players who would be long-term sources of important income may quit the game.
- Stakes or rules may be disadvantageously changed.
- Unfavorable attitudes may develop.
- Game may break up.

To extract maximum money, the good player often decreases his winning rate in order to control the flow of money. In other words, maximum-money extraction over the long term may require a slower winning rate.

2. Uncontrolled Money Flow(92)

Over a period of many games, uncontrolled money flows in a pattern similar to that illustrated by the *top* diagram on the Money-Flow Pattern chart shown after Table 26. As the good player accumulates performance data on each player, these money-movement patterns become increasingly obvious.

Data for uncontrolled money flow are tabulated in Table 26. Notice the heavy losses absorbed by poor players A and B compared to players C and D. In that game, the good player, E, is extracting winnings through a natural, uncontrolled money flow. But poor player A may quit, for example, because continuous losses hurt his pride. And poor player B may insist on lower stakes because his sharp losses are causing him financial problems. The good player may be risking his future earnings unless he alters the money flow to a controlled pattern similar to that illustrated by the *bottom* diagram of that Money-Flow Pattern chart.

TABLE 26
UNCONTROLLED MONEY FLOW FOR TEN GAMES
Dollars Won (+) or Lost (-), $

Player-- Rating--	A Poor	B Poor	C Weak	D Sound	E Good	Irregular Players*
12/4	+200	-200	+100	+200	-220	-100
12/11	-200	+300	-100	+50	-80	+50
12/18	-100	-200	-150	+50	+440	-50
1/8	-150	-400	-200	-250	+860	+100
1/15	-350	Absent	Absent	+200	+260	-100
1/22	-400	-100	+550	0	-100	+50

1/29	Absent	-300	+250	+150	+240	-350
2/5	-200	+100	-250	-150	+680	-200
2/12	+400	+50	-200	+100	+20	-350
2/19	-100	Absent	-100	+100	+520	-400
Totals	-900	-750	-100	+450	+2620	-1350
Average+	-100	-95	-10	+45	+262	-135
Edge Odds, %++	-22	-21	-2	+10	+59	-30

* Average winnings or losses for all the irregular players combined.

+ Averages are calculated by dividing the number of games attended by each player into the net winnings or losses of that player.

++ The biggest winner for each of the ten games averages plus $445 per game. Edge odds of the good player E, for example, are calculated as $262/$445 X 100 = 59%.

MONEY-FLOW PATTERNS
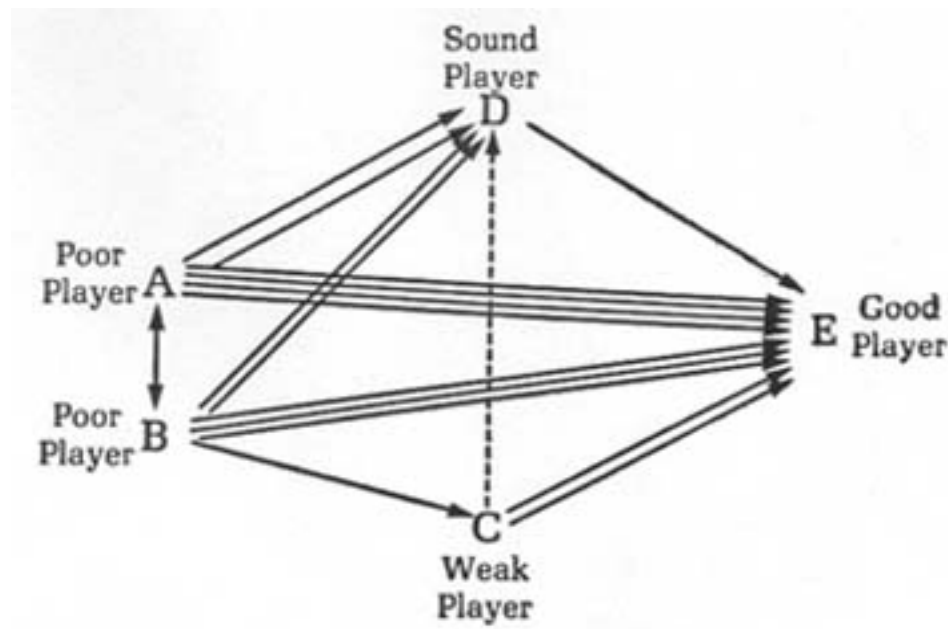
Normal, uncontrolled money flow
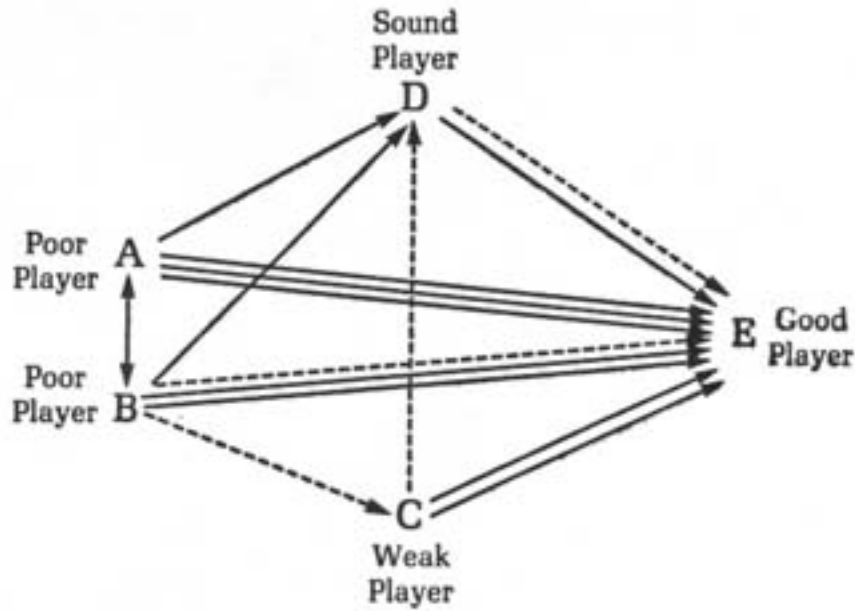
Controlled money flow

Broken arrow represents half the money flow of a solid arrow.

The ideal money-flow pattern for the good player occurs when he wins at the maximum rate each player can tolerate. That usually means winning less from the poorest players and more from the better players.

3. Controlled Money Flow (93)

The good player evaluates the money-extraction patterns on both a short-term and a long-term basis. If a controlled pattern seems desirable, he then determines how the money flow should be altered (extent and direction). In a controlled pattern, he usually extracts money more evenly from his opponents ... he extracts less from the poorer players and more from the better players. Controlled money flow shifts everyone's performance, as shown in Table 27.

TABLE 27
PERFORMANCE DATA

(Averages for 100 games)

Player-- Rating--	A Poor	B Poor	C Weak	D Sound	E Good	Irregular Players*

Uncontrolled money flow, $/game	-102	-85	-22	+54	+196	-41
Controlled money flow $/game	-58	-52	-35	+6	+174	-35

[*] Average values for the irregular players.

That controlled pattern costs the good player an average of $22 per game. But if the money flow were not controlled, the continued heavy losses of poor players A and B could destroy the game, costing the good player his $17,400 winnings over those one hundred sessions. That $22 per session is his insurance premium for keeping the game going at high-profit conditions. The good player keeps performance records to determine the cost, value, and effectiveness of his control over the money flow. Money-flow control normally costs him 10-15 percent of his net winnings.

The good player usually takes control of the money flow during the early rounds, when his betting influence can be the greatest at the lowest cost. He alters the money-flow patterns by the following methods:

- He helps and favors the poorest players at the expense of the better players whenever practical.
- He drives the poor players out with first-round bets when a better player holds a strong hand. And conversely. he uses first-round bets to keep the better players in when a poor player holds a strong hand.
- He avoids, when practical, playing against a poor player after everyone else has folded in order to decrease his advantage over the poor player at a minimum cost. He also tries to make his least favorable plays (e.g., his experimental, image-building, and long-term strategy plays) against the poorest players.

John Finn spends some of his winnings to hold big losers like Sid Bennett and Ted Fehr in the game. The following data from John's records indicate that his insurance costs are profitable investments.

Breakdown of Poker Income and Insurance Costs
For One Year

Source of Income	Estimated Net Income, $	Estimated Insurance Costs, $ (calculated losses)

Quintin Merck	2,500	100
Scotty Nichols	5,500	500
Sid Bennett	13,000	2,000
Ted Fehr	9,000	700
Others	12,000	1,200
Total	42,000	4,500

Without paying that insurance, John theoretically could have won $4500 more during that year. Yet without the insurance, the greater psychological and financial pressures on the big losers might have forced them to quit . . . and each big loser is worth much more than the entire $4500 insurance cost. Also, if several big losers had quit, the poker game could have been destroyed. John, therefore, considers the insurance cost an important and profitable investment.

How does he spend this $4500? The money buys him the valve that controls the money flow. He watches the losers closely. When they are in psychological or financial trouble and on the verge of quitting, he opens the valve and feeds them morale-boosting money until they are steady again.

Winning players are of little value to John. Since there is no need to help them or boost their morale, he keeps the valve closed tight on them. He may even spend money to drive them out of the game if they hurt his financial best interests.

John Finn never spends money on any player except to gain eventual profits.

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PART FIVE

GAMES

More players and more games mean more income for the good player. He increases his poker activity by--

- finding other games
- organizing games
- expanding current games
- maintaining or reviving games
- starting new games.

XIX
Other Games (94)

Other poker games offer new sources of income. Even if the stakes are not financially worthwhile, the good player enters new games in order to--

- take control of them and then increase their betting paces and stakes to worthwhile levels
- evaluate the losers--some may be good candidates for higher-stake games
- make contacts with new players that may lead to still other poker games and other new players.

When John Finn first entered the Monday night game, the stakes were not worth the effort required to play winning poker. But he took control of the game, reorganized it and then steadily increased the pace and stakes. The chart shown in Concept 35 tabulates John's progress during five years as his profits climbed from $200 to $42,000.

1. Finding a Game (95)

Practically every regular poker game needs, at times, additional players. Likewise, most games need more permanent players. When a "desirable" player spreads word of his poker interest, he usually gets invitations to other games. Most poker players consider a player desirable if he--

- plays a clean game
- arrives on time
- is cooperative and congenial
- acts respectful toward other players
- plays to the end regardless of his winnings or losses
- keeps the game organized.

The good player by design has those "desirable" traits, but considers such traits in his opponents as neither important nor desirable. Since he is interested only in extracting maximum money from the game, his desirable opponents are--

- poor players
- steady players
- players with plenty of excess
- money players who will not harm the game.

Ironically, most players will invite the costly good poker player to their game in preference to a profitable poor player.

The players in the Monday night game consider John Finn a desirable player and an asset to the game. They refuse to realize that he is their biggest liability--staggering liability of $42,000 per year. They are glad John is in the game because he is cooperative, congenial. and respectful. He plays a clean game, always arrives on time, and plays until the end. They are grateful that he keeps the game organized. He is a pleasant, soothing, comfortable player. Everyone appreciates him.

John works hard to keep his opponents satisfied and happy. His fee for the effort -- $42,000 per

year.

2. Becoming a Permanent Player (96)

Once in a game, the good player gets a repeat invitation by making the other players feel favorable and obligated toward him. He does that with "thoughtful" gestures such as--

- lending money at the first opportunity
- offering his own cigars, candy, and gum to the players (even if he does not smoke, eat candy, or chew gum)
- helping to pick up the cards between deals
- sympathizing with losers
- praising winners
- complimenting good plays of his opponents
- helping to clean up after the game
- offering to bring refreshments (especially beer) to the next game.

If the new game is financially worthwhile, the good player plans his behavior to get a permanent invitation by--

- avoiding the image of being a tight or a tough player
- keeping quiet about his activities in other poker games.

The good player generally will not press for maximum edge odds until he becomes a permanent player. Once a permanent player, he concentrates on taking control of the game. He builds the ego of key players (those with important influence over the game) in order to gain their friendship and confidence. With the support of key players, he is in a strong position to take control of the game.

The first time John Finn played in the Monday night game, he was a nice fellow--humble, quiet, even timid-- and very considerate in passing out his cigars and admiring everyone's poker skill. Best of all, he lost money and played loose. And he never slowed down the game or irritated anyone.

A fish, an ideal player, a nice guy--so everyone thought. How about those nutty plays he makes? Raising, then drawing four or five cards. Loosest player I've ever seen. Did you see how he lent Sid $50 even though Sid never even asked him for it? He even offered to pick up the refreshments for the next game. Sure hope he becomes a regular player. At least he'll come back next week to collect Sid's loan.

Over the next few sessions, John put zest into the game. He played wild, exciting poker. Everyone knew he was bound to be a big loser. His popularity grew; his friendships deepened. He established himself with supporters, and no one had an excuse to get rid of him. As soon as John

became a permanent player, he began taking control of the game. Five years later, he had taken $90,000 from the game, but was just as popular. John Finn never gave anyone a reason to dislike him.

In public games (casino or club poker) or in other one-shot games, especially those with strangers, the good player will press for immediate and maximum advantages over his opponents. Many of his tactics are opposite to those he would use in regular games: His behavior in one-time games may be almost unbearably tough, unfriendly, and aggressive. He concentrates on extracting money at a maximum rate from the weakest players. He is not concerned about being a nice fellow if his opponents have no future value to him.

3. Quitting a Game (97)

The good player quits a game that is not financially worthwhile or that conflicts with a more profitable game. He normally quits under the best possible circumstances and retains good relationships with its players. Even after quitting, he may occasionally play in the game to renew his contacts and to recruit players for bigger games.

John Finn quit the Thursday night game because it was not profitable enough to consume another weekday night on poker. He quit under congenial circumstances and occasionally returns to play and recruit new players for the bigger games. In the past two years, he has recruited four players from that game for the higher-stake Monday and Friday night games. He won an estimated $10,000 from those four players in one year.

4. Breaking up a Game (98)

The good player sometimes breaks up a game to free its players for more profitable games. If he controls the game by keeping it organized, he can usually destroy the game simply by not organizing it. He can then feed its players to other games.

Besides the Monday night game, John Finn regularly plays in a Friday night game and occasionally in Tuesday and Thursday night games. The low-stake Tuesday game has the least profit potential, but one of its players would be a good addition to the high-stake Monday game. John estimates that his entire income from the Tuesday game is less than the money he could win from that one player if he were shifted to the Monday night game. So John breaks up the Tuesday game by focusing his aggression on the two worst players, causing them to suffer consecutive, morale-damaging losses. After three weeks, those two losers quit and the game collapses when John makes no effort to reorganize the players.

By destroying that game, John gains a free night, along with a new player for the high-stake Monday night game. Also, he can now feed the other players from the defunct Tuesday game into the Friday and Thursday games.

XX
Organization (99)

The financial potential of a game depends on how well it is organized. The good player organizes a game by--

- scheduling it on a regular basis at a time and place best for maximum attendance
- establishing a firm starting time
- contacting players before each game to get commitments to play.

1. Regular Game (100)

Compared to the occasional game, the regular weekly game is easier to organize because players can plan for it in advance. A regular weekly game also provides more frequent opportunities for money extraction. But most important, poker players get more emotionally and financially involved in games that are regular and frequent.

If a game is about to collapse because certain players are losing at rates beyond their financial limits, the good player may temporarily reduce the betting pace or stakes. Or, occasionally, he may temporarily reschedule the game on a biweekly or monthly basis instead of reducing the betting pace or stakes.

To keep the Monday night game going on a weekly basis, John Finn increases the stakes until some players are losing at rates beyond their financial limits; he then lowers the stakes. He may raise and lower the stakes several times before permanently establishing them at a higher level.

In going to higher stakes, the losing tolerances of players increase as they adjust and get accustomed to their greater losses. When John lowers the stakes, the big losers are usually the first to insist on returning to higher stakes.

Sometimes John stabilizes a shaky game by bringing in new players. Those new players not only contribute to his income, but they also help hold the game at higher stakes. By controlling the betting pace and stakes and by adding new players, John has kept the highly profitable Monday game going on a regular weekly basis for the past six years.

2. Starting Time (101)

An indefinite starting time can eventually destroy a game. If players must wait for others to arrive before starting the game, then the early-arriving players may come later the next week to avoid waiting--thus causing progressively later starting times and a subsequent loss of disgruntled players. The following methods encourage players to arrive on time:

- Make a firm starting time clear to all players.
- Emphasize the reason and importance of being on time.
- Admonish late-arriving players.
- Establish fines or penalties for late arrivals.
- Fill the game early so late-arriving players will not get a seat.

The Monday night game is supposed to start at eight o'clock. As more and more players arrive late, the game starts later and later. Eventually players start arriving at ten and eleven o'clock. Attendance begins to drop, so John Finn takes action. He suggests a $5 fine for anyone arriving after the game starts. The players, disgusted with the late starting times, all agree.

The following week, six players arrive by eight o'clock and the game starts at eight fifteen--the earliest start in months. At nine o'clock, Quintin Merck wanders in.

"Get it up!" Sid roars.

"Uh, what ya mean?" Quintin grumbles as he seats himself at the table.

"You're late," Sid says, grinning. "Five-buck fine, buddy."

"Ah, don't give me that kid stuff. Deal the cards," Quintin says. He then puffs hard on his cigarette.

Sid deals Quintin out.

"Hey!" Quintin slaps his hand on the table. "What about my hand?"

"You ain't playing till you pay your fine," Sid says. The other players nod in agreement.

"We play for thousands of dollars and you boy scouts hound me for five bucks," Quintin growls while throwing a $5 bill at Sid.

The following week, all the players are at Scotty's house by eight o'clock. Since the fine was put into effect, the game never starts later than eight fifteen.

It's amazing, John thinks to himself. They'll casually lose thousands through lack of effort, but they'll make a big effort to avoid a $5 fine.

3. Quitting Time (102)

As a game continues through the night and into the morning, most players tire and their ability to concentrate on poker decreases. That increases the good player's edge odds. He therefore encourages an indefinite or late quitting time. But if players start avoiding the game because the late hours are interfering with their jobs or harming their health. the good player may enforce an early quitting time (at least temporarily) to keep the losers playing and to preserve the game. He will also quit early in lower-stake games that are not worth staying up all night for. The good player often breaks up a game when he leaves in order to keep the poorer players from losing their money to the better players after he is gone. He breaks up the game so he can win this money for himself in future games.

Making players quit early is easier when the last round is played at higher stakes. Higher stakes not only benefit the good player, but serve as a psychological climax to the game as well. If the good player wants to enforce an agreed-upon quitting time, he plans the final round so the last deal ends with him. He then gathers the cards after he deals the last hand, cashes in his chips, and leaves before anyone can start a new deal.

But the need for a definite or an early quitting time decreases if any player, winner or loser, feels free to leave whenever he wishes. Furthermore, the game becomes more relaxed under those conditions and more profitable for the good player.

John Finn plays all night on Mondays because the additional profits he garners after midnight are worth his time. In one year, he played about 400 hours of Monday night poker and won $42,000. Of that amount, $23,000 was won after midnight at the rate of $115 per hour, while $19,000 was made before midnight at the rate of $95 per hour. The following data show another important reason why John plays all night in this high-stake game.

Estimated Edge Odds, %

	P.M. 8:00-12:00	*A.M. 12:00-4:00*	*Change*
John Finn	+56	+62	+ 8
Quintin Merck	+15	+5	-10
Scotty Nichols	-2	-8	- 6
Sid Bennett	-24	-16	+ 8
Ted Fehr	-24	-18	+ 6

Others	-27	-31	- 4

The data show that John's edge odds increase by 6 percent after midnight. Also, the losing rates of poorer players (Sid and Ted) decrease at the expense of better players (Quintin and Scotty); that advantageous shift in money flow is accomplished without costing John money. In other words, John controls the money flow at lower costs during the late hours.

In determining the value of playing all night, John considers the effects of his job, health, and personal life. He evaluates each game, and then enforces an earlier quitting time in games of lesser value.

The data in the following chart indicate that personal considerations outweigh the additional $28,000 per year that John could have earned by playing as late and as often in the lower-stake games as he does in the high-stake Monday night game.

Game	Quitting Time	One-Year Income (# games)	Estimated Income for 50 Games Played until 4:00 am. d = The difference between columns 3 and 4.
Monday	None (4-5 a.m.)	$42,000 (50)	$42,000 (d=0)
Tuesday and Thursday	12:30 a.m.	$2,500 (17)	$17,600 (d=$15,100)
Friday	1:00 a.m.	$ 9,500 (48)	$22,400 (d=$l2,900)
Totals	---	$54,000	$82,000 (d=$28,000)

4. Contacting Players (103)

A list of players and a telephone are two important tools for organizing a game. The good player usually asks other players to help him organize the game. (Eager players and recent winners will normally help.) To conceal his eagerness for losers to play, the good player asks other players to call the big losers. If negative feelings develop about his organizing efforts, he simply stops telephoning anyone for a few games. His "strike" quickly makes the other players appreciate and support his organizing efforts.

The best time for telephoning players is late in the afternoon before the game. This is early enough so everyone can plan for the game and late enough so those available will seldom have a subsequent excuse for not playing. The good player then knows who his opponents will be for that evening.

An important and convenient tool is a photocopied form (as shown in Table 28) that lists the players' names and telephone numbers along with a column for their responses. By filling out those forms (as shown in Table 29) and periodically reviewing them, the good player obtains valuable information about the--

- health of the game
- attendance patterns
- character of his opponents and their motives for playing
- losers with declining attendance records who may need special treatment to bring them back as regular players
- ways to keep the game organized and players interested.

TABLE 28
TELEPHONE CALLS

MONDAY GAME   DATE _____

Player	Phone # (O) = office phone, (H) = home phone	Called by (Time)	Response	Comments
Quintin Merck	568-7295 (O) 564-1467 (H)			
Scotty Nichols	966-3460 (O) 837-0446 (H)			
Sid Bennett	964-8391 (O) 548-7382 (H)			

Ted Fehr	389-5267 (O) 732-8793 (H)			
Charlie Holland	964-9006 (O) 548-3388 (H)			
Aaron Smith	964-1147 (O) 732-5493 (H)			
Others Mike Bell	?			

TABLE 29
TELEPHONE CALLS

MONDAY GAME   *DATE* <u>Monday 6/4</u>

Player	Phone # (O) = office phone, (H) = home phone	Called by (Time)	Response	Comments
Quintin Merck	568-7295 (O) 564-1467 (H)	*John (3:30)*	*Yes*	*Quintin will call Sid and Charlie*
Scotty Nichols	966-3460 (O) 837-0446 (H)	*John (3:40)*	*Yes*	*Seems shaky and upset, but eager to play. Must be a personal problem.*
Sid Bennett	964-8391 (O) 548-7382 (H)	*Quintin (5:30) (6:30)*	*Yes*	*Check--not contacted Check--OK*

Ted Fehr	389-5267 (O) 732-8793 (H)	*John* *(3:45)* *(5:30)* *(7:00)*	*Yes*	*Not contacted. Must be at the races.* *Not contacted.* *OK, 30-minute discussion about the game, finances, and credit. Sounds like he's in bad shape.*
Charlie Holland	964-9006 (O) 548-3388 (H)	*Quintin* *(5:30)*	*No*	*Stunned and disgusted by heavy loss last week, but probably will play next week.*
Aaron Smith	964-1147 (O) 732-5493 (H)	*John* *(3:35)*	*Yes*	*Check -- OK, excited about winning last week.*
Others Mike Bell	?	*Scotty* *(5:40)*	*Yes*	*Check -- OK, concerned about recent losses.*

In some games, players do not expect telephone calls. The game is played on a regular basis, and everyone just shows up. While such a game is convenient, the good player generally prefers to organize each game because his telephone calls provide opportunities to--

- get or provide "confidential" information
- increase his control over the game
- propagandize players and talk to them about their problems
- obtain definite commitments that make the game less vulnerable to collapse from a lack of players.

John Finn telephones the players each Monday afternoon and fills out the telephone-response form as shown in Table 29.

5. A Place to Play (104)

A game kept in one location is easier to organize, which benefits the good player. Usually, at least one player is willing to establish the game at his house permanently. The good player seldom plays in his own house in order to avoid the impression that it is "his game." If necessary, a player is induced to keep the game permanently at his house by, for example, cutting the pot for weekly cleaning expenses.

Playing at the same location each week offers the following advantages:

- The game is more stable.
- The burden of locating suitable places to play is eliminated.
- Players not contacted always know where the game is.

Still a game played at a different location each week offers advantages:

- There is closer control over who is invited (e.g., undesirable players, such as other good players, cannot drop in and play if they do not know where the game is located).
- There is more flexibility because the game can easily be changed to locations offering the greatest advantage.
- The possibility of a robbery (particularly in a high-stakes game) is decreased.

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XXI
Expansion (105)

The good player gains the following advantages by filling a poker game to capacity:

- The game becomes more stable.
- More sources of income (players) are available.
- Choices for selecting profitable opponents (losers) increase.
- Losses are spread more evenly among losers.
- Confusion increases.
- Greater control over the game is possible.
- Betting pace and stakes are easier to increase.
- If tight play offers better edge odds, any such tight play is less obvious and less resented in a full game.

A poker game is expanded by adding new players and by improving the attendance of current players.

1. New Players(106)

The good player mentions poker to all potential losers. He gauges his comments to bring out their poker interests. The more he mentions poker, the more potential players are revealed. He hunts for losers, and evaluates all potential players with respect to the maximum income that could be extracted from them.

John Finn tries to fill the Monday night game with at least eight players. He has a nucleus of five players (Sid, Ted, Scotty, Quintin, and himself) who have played regularly over the years. Two or three other players regularly circulate in and out of the game; they usually survive three to twelve months, sometimes longer. Also eight or nine different men play sporadically or when coaxed. Those irregular players provide important income and are valuable for filling and stabilizing the game.

About half of the new players are introduced to the Monday game by John. His major source of new players is other, lower-stake poker games. Mentioning poker to social and business acquaintances generates a few players, especially for the smaller games. Some of those players later graduate to the big game.

a. Keeping players (107)

If a new player is a financial asset, the good player keeps him in the game by--

- being friendly and helpful to him (especially if the new player is timid or nervous)
- making him feel that the game is relaxed and enjoyable
- countering other players' remarks and actions that may upset him (probably more players quit poker because of hurt feelings than because of hurt finances)
- avoiding overpowering or scaring him
- not taking full advantage of his weaknesses
- making him feel that he is a welcome member of the group
- favoring him whenever possible
- flattering him when he wins and offering him sympathy when he loses
- giving him encouragement and advice about the game.

John Finn brings a new player, Aaron Smith, to the big Monday night game. Although Aaron plays in the lower-stake Friday night game, he is timid and nervous. Knowing that Aaron will lose many thousands of dollars if he becomes a permanent player, John sits next to him and helps him whenever possible. He protects Aaron from upsetting losses that could scare him out of the game. He shields him from derogatory remarks that could insult him out of the game. John knows that Aaron will absorb large losses and take insults gracefully once he gets accustomed to the game and its players.

Whenever John folds, he studies Aaron's hand and gives him sound advice; John helps him to a winning night. Aaron is excited ... his confidence increases and his fear decreases. Whenever Sid throws an insulting remark at Aaron, John counters with an ego-boosting comment. By his third game, Aaron Smith is hooked; he loves the Monday night game and its players. At that point, John withdraws his help and Aaron is on his own.

When Aaron Smith (or any big loser) gets discouraged and contemplates quitting, John Finn

extends his protection to hold the loser in the game through the crisis.

b. Rejecting players (108)

If a new player is a financial liability, the good player gets him out of the game. The simplest way to eliminate an undesirable player is not to invite him to the next game. If this is not possible, the good player forces him out by--

- instigating unpleasant and unfriendly incidents toward him
- insulting him
- hurting his feelings
- refusing him credit
- telling him not to play again.

Scotty Nichols brings a new player, Boris Klien, to the Monday night game. John Finn quickly realizes that Boris is a winning player who will drain money from the game. Boris's winning will increase the financial strain on the losers, which in turn will force John to reduce his winnings in order to keep those losers in the game. Boris is a financial liability and therefore an undesirable player. John wants him out of the game, quickly and permanently:

"Highball draw with a twist," Quintin Merck announces. John notices how Boris carefully watches the deck for flashed cards during the deal.

John checks. Boris opens for $5.

"Five bucks? We ain't playing penny-ante," Sid says while raising to $30. "You've gotta bet something in this game."

"I'll just call; now you can reraise to fifty," Quintin adds as he winks at Boris.

"I'll raise ... fifty-five dollars," Boris responds in a clipped voice.

"Hey, he knows what he's doing," Sid says. "He sandbagged us!"

On the draw, Boris raps his knuckles on the table. "Pat!" he says sharply and then bets $50. Sid folds and Quintin calls.

On the twist, Quintin draws one card. Boris again plays pat and then holds a $50 bill over the pot.

"Put your money in if you're betting," John Finn snaps and then turns to Quintin and continues, "That's an old bluff trick . . ."

Boris scowls at John.

"Forget it," Quintin says, folding his hand without realizing what John is telling him. "I just had two little pair."

Boris grabs the pot and shouts, "Looky here!" He then spreads his cards face-up across the table to reveal a worthless hand.

"He's got nothing!" Ted Fehr rasps "He pulls a pat bluff on his first hand and wins a three-hundred-dollar pot!"

"Wise guy," Quintin says while scowling at Boris' worthless cards. The other players sit in frowning silence.

Over the next hour, Boris Klien plays very tight. He avoids all action until a lowball hand with John Finn. The pot is large; and after the last bet, only Boris and John remain. Boris turns his cards face-up and declares his hand. John says nothing, so Boris reaches for the pot.

"Keep your hands off my money," John snarls.

"Uh? What do ya mean?" Boris asks. "I won, didn't

"Can't you read?" John says while turning his winning hand face-up on the table. He then snatches the pot from under Boris' stiffened fingers.

"Why didn't you declare your hand?" Boris asks.

"Why didn't you look at my cards?" John growls out of the twisted corner of his mouth. "This is a poker game, buddy boy. Cards speak for themselves, remember?"

"Wish I hadn't come to this game," Boris mumbles to Scotty Nichols. "I'm not only losing, but I'm getting a bad time."

"Wish I hadn't come myself," Scotty whines. "Lost all my money I won last week."

"Yeah, but I . . ."

"Listen," John says, shaking his finger close to Boris' face, "no one made you play. If you don't like our game . . . get out!"

Three hours later Boris Klien is winning over $400.

"He's taking all our money," Sid Bennett remarks.

"I started out losing four hundred," Boris says, trying not to smile. "I'm still stuck a hundred."

"Liar!" John snaps. "You're up four hundred bucks.... Scotty, where'd you dig up this clod?"

"At this point, I don't know or care," Scotty groans. "I'm losing plenty, and Boris won most of it."

"This is my last round," Boris says. "I've . . ."

"The bore is even a hit-and-run artist!" John cries while snapping his hand on the table. "Plan on this being your last round--permanently!"

Boris frowns. Then, looking at his pile of money, his frown disappears.

"Seven-card stud, high-low with qualifiers and one twist," John announces as he deals. "Trips-eight,"[26] he adds in a whispering voice.

After the sixth card, John raises on his low hand and drives out the other low hands. By the last card, only Boris remains; he calls John's final $30 bet.... John wins low.

"Don't know why you were wasting our time by betting," Boris says, while showing his two pair. "We just split the pot. Obviously you're low and I'm high."

"Look at that hand!" John hoots as he points to Boris' cards. "The sucker calls all my big bets and doesn't even qualify for high. I get the whole pot!"

"What do ya mean I don't qualify?" Boris sputters. "I got two pair."

"Three of a kind qualifies for high, you creep," John says as he shoves Boris' cards into the deck.

"Trips for qualifiers!" Boris shouts. "They've been two pair all night."

"I announced trips-eight," John says with a laugh. "You'd better clean your ears, clod."

"I heard him announce it," Ted Fehr mutters weakly.

"Yeah?... Well, then it'd be impossible for me to call," Boris says, reaching for the pot. "I'm taking back my last bet."

"It stays in the pot," John growls, slapping his hand over the money. "When you make a stupid play, buster, you pay for it."

"I've had enough," Boris says, getting up to leave.

"You're winning," Scotty whines. "Sit down and play awhile."

"Let the rock go. We'll play longer without him bothering us," John says. Then, turning to Boris, he makes a sharp hitchhiking motion toward the door. "So long, sucker, hope we never see you again."

"I won't be back," Boris huffs.

"Good!" John yells. Boris grabs his coat and leaves, slamming the front door.

"He'll never come back," Scotty Nichols says while scratching his head. "Why so rough on him? He's an honest player."

"He's a milker," John explains gently. "He hangs back and waits for a big hand to kill you with. Look how he hurt you tonight. Why should we let a stranger in our game to leech money from the regular players? Not only that, he cries when he wins, tries to take back bets, lies about his winnings, and leaves early when he's ahead."

"Don't understand it," Scotty says. "Seemed like a nice guy outside of the game. Maybe we should give him another chance."

"Don't ask him back," John replies. "He'd ruin our game."

"You're probably right," Scotty says, nodding his head. "I'll tell him to stay away."

"Besides, he's a good player," Sid Bennett adds. "We need more fish with lots of money."

"More players like Sid," Quintin says as his leathery face breaks into a smile.

c. Women Players (109)

The mind and character are neuter. Rationality, competence, and objectivity are human traits, not sexual traits. Poker, therefore, is an activity in which women not only can compete with men, but can regularly beat them by applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker.

Moreover, women have basic advantages over men players. For example, because women represent only

a small minority of players in serious or high-stake poker games, they can gain more experience against male opponents than men can gain against female opponents. That advantage is similar to the advantage held by left-handed pitchers, boxers, and tennis players who can gain more experience against right-handed opponents than their right-handed counterparts can gain against left-handed opponents.

A woman's greatest advantage, however, comes from exploiting her opponents' misconceptions about women lacking the "killer instinct" to compete against tough players in high-stake poker. As shown by the Advanced Concepts, winning poker requires discipline, thought, and control--not the so-called killer instinct. Winning poker demands objective attitudes and clear conceptions of reality. The "inferior-player" view of women is a nonobjective, flawed view. So the woman player who is not inferior can profitably exploit all opponents who stereotype her as an innately inferior player and thus misplay her.

Still, the woman player will encounter stubborn machismo attitudes, especially when she tries to organize and control high-stake, male-dominated games. But by using the Advanced Concepts, she can exploit any erroneous attitude in her opponents to beat them.

Since the Advanced Concepts have been published, the near-total male dominance of professional poker has been crumbling. Today, about 10 percent of the public professional poker players are women using the Advanced Concepts. And in private poker, perhaps 1 percent of the professionals are women. As the Advanced Concepts of Poker become more widely known, the percentage of women poker players (both amateur and professional) should increase, especially in private games.

The Advanced Concepts provide women with the tools needed not only to compete against men, but to beat them. Increasingly, women are discovering that they can exploit the erroneous and machismo attitudes imbued in most male poker players. And because of the subtle but real advantages women players hold over men, women could eventually dominate public poker and regularly win the major tournaments.

As with all opponents, the good poker player considers female players only from a financial viewpoint. If a woman player is an overall financial asset, she is a welcome player. A woman player can cause men to be less objective, thereby increasing the good player's edge odds. But, on the other hand, if she is a good player and a steady winner, she is a financial liability and unwelcomed. Also, control over men players and attempts to increase the betting stakes can be more difficult when a woman is present.[27] For that reason, the good player more often than not tries to keep women out of the game.

As the game starts, Scotty informs the players that Sid is bringing his wife, Stephanie Bennett, to play poker. All object to having a woman, particularly the wife of a player, in the game. Quintin even threatens to quit if she plays.

"I don't want her playing either," John says. "But she's already expecting to play.... Let her play tonight; we'll keep her from playing again."

Just as the players finish their first hand, Sid and Stephanie arrive. She is wearing a tight dress with a hemline well above the knees. All the players stand up to greet her.

"Just treat me like one of the boys says the woman while touching her hair which sweeps up in a French twist with curls on top; she sits down and crosses her long, curving legs.

"Impossible," Quintin rasps as his nose sniffs the air.

The game becomes erratic; eyes keep focusing on the woman. When Stephanie is in a hand, the betting becomes subdued; the players are reluctant to bet into her. When she is not in a hand, the betting and raising become heavier than usual as the men show off in front of the perfumed woman. John Finn takes full advantage of their distorted betting to increase his edge odds.

After two hours of playing, Stephanie is winning about $50 and her husband, Sid, is losing $300. Some players begin to fidget and grumble under the strain of her presence. John gets involved with Stephanie in a game of five-card stud with two twists. On the third up card, she has a pair of aces showing and bets $15. Sid raises to $30 with his pair of kings showing; Stephanie raises back. Quintin folds while mumbling that Sid is raising to build the pot for his wife.

"Aye," Sid snorts. "Greed is a many-splendor thing."

Abruptly John raises to $60. Sid emits a gagging cough.

After the next card, John has a king, queen, jack, and the ten of diamonds showing--a four-card straight flush. On the twist, Stephanie pairs her fives to give her two pair showing--aces and fives. John stays pat.

"Pat!" Sid exclaims. "He's got to have the flush or straight."

John bets $25, and Sid folds. Stephanie calls and then twists her hole card. John plays pat again and bets S30. - - Sid advises his wife to drop.

"He might be bluffing," she says while starting to call.

"Naw!" Sid shouts. "Not after staying pat with all that betting and raising. Any fool can figure that out."

"Sid's right. I can't take your money," John says, waving his hand. "I've got the diamond flush."

"Thanks for saving me money," Stephanie replies as she throws away her cards.

John Finn peeks at his hole card--the jack of clubs. He then quickly mixes his worthless cards into the deck. Handing Stephanie $25, he says. "Here's your last bet. Guess I'm not a good gambler. Can't take money from a woman. So I'll quit while you're playing."

"No, no," Stephanie says, handing the money back and standing up. "I lost it fairly. And you already lost money by not letting me call that last bet. Now you keep on playing. I'm tired and going home now.... I've had my fling at poker."

Sid Bennett drives his wife home and then hurries back to the game.

"Stephanie should play instead of you," Quintin says when Sid returns. "She'd win if you'd . . ."

"That lovely woman doesn't belong in this tough game," John interrupts. "Don't let her play again."

"You're right," Sid sighs as he counts his money. "I'll never let her play again."

2. Improving Attendance (110)

Players are attracted to a full game. In fact, they become eager to play in games that are completely filled. So an effective way to expand a game is to fill it. For example, if eight players are the maximum for a game, the good player may make sufficient telephone calls to invite nine or ten players--or more. When the game is so crowded that some players cannot be seated, an interesting phenomenon occurs . . . irregular players become regular players, and the scheduled starting time becomes rigidly adhered to. Good attendance is also encouraged by keeping the game well organized and by maintaining the proper atmosphere. Excess attendance means excess players who can be shifted to other games.

John tries to keep the Monday night game filled. The full game helps draw the big losers back each week. The crowded table and fast action excite the players, especially poor players like Sid and Ted who feel they are missing something if left out of the action.

A packed game increases John's flexibility. With excess players, he can increase the stakes and pace more quickly since the loss of one or two players would not seriously hurt the game. Excess players also lessen the need for him to reduce his earnings in order to keep losers from quitting.

XXII
Maintenance (111)

Maintenance of a poker game determines its health. The good player keeps losers in the game by protecting them, lifting their morale, and by making the game attractive.

1. Making the Game Attractive (112)

A player often tolerates heavy financial losses if he enjoys the game. Also, an attractive game will draw new players.... The good player makes the game more attractive by--

- encouraging a carefree and relaxed atmosphere
- keeping players out of serious arguments or feuds
- preventing or ameliorating complaints about the game
- selecting the more pleasant and weaker players for the game, especially when available players are abundant
- keeping the game well organized
- keeping the action exciting
- providing good refreshments and new cards.

John Finn makes certain that at least a dozen new decks of cards are available for every Monday night game. Although the pots are cut to pay for these cards, the players appreciate the luxury. Losers like Sid feel important when they can call for a new deck of cards at their whim, just like big gamblers in a big game. And big gamblers in a big game bet more money.

Other small deeds by John also help make the Monday night game relaxed and carefree. For example, he spends a few dollars on a dozen green plastic eye shades. At three in the morning, when most players are glumly reflecting on their losses, John pulls the eye shades from a brown bag and hands one to each player. Everyone appreciates John's sudden "thoughtful" gift. When Scotty suggests they cut the pot for the eye shades, John refuses with a shaking head and a waving hand. All players smile as they don their green shades and laughingly make remarks about gambling at Vegas and on Mississippi riverboats. John Finn smiles too as he silently surveys the money still in front of each player.

2. Helping Losers(113)

Poor players are valuable assets to the good player. He keeps them in the game by shielding them from--

- personal comments that could hurt their feelings
- arguments
- unpleasant players
- personal problems of other players
- bad credit.

Poor players and big losers are usually grateful for the good player's "protection." They don't allow themselves to realize that he is the one who sets them up for their heavy losses. Still, if big losers *never* win, they will lose interest and may quit the game long before they are broke. So occasionally the good player helps them to a winning night. He helps poor players (relative to better players) by--

- increasing the ante
- increasing the betting pace for early bets
- decreasing the betting pace for late bets
- interpreting the rules to favor the poorest players and biggest losers
- assisting the poorest players and biggest losers whenever possible.

But the good player helps others only to the extent that he can profit himself.

Big losers like Ted Fehr think that John is helping them when indeed he is bankrupting them. Consider the following incident with Ted Fehr

Ted is losing over $1000. It is four in the morning; Quintin and Sid get up to leave.

"Hey! Play a little longer," Ted says in a shaky voice. "Don't quit now. I'm stuck a fortune. I ... I never quit when you're hooked."

"You never quit 'cause you never win." Sid laughs.

"I'm going," Quintin grumbles. "You can win it back next week."

Ted turns his sweaty face toward John and rasps, "We can't quit now."

"Look," John says, raising his hand, "Ted is way down. Give him a break. Everyone play another hour at double stakes. We'll all quit at five o'clock sharp."

"Yeah," Ted says, now smiling. "Everyone play another hour at double stakes."

Quintin Merck objects to the higher stakes. Sid, who is winning nearly $1000, objects to playing another hour. But they both sit down to resume playing.

"Thanks," Ted says, leaning over and patting John on the shoulder. "You're the one guy who always gives losers a break."

At five in the morning the game ends. In that extra hour, Ted loses another $800. He is pale and staggers around the room with unfocused eyes. In that extra hour, John wins another $1000. He leaves quietly.

After a few days, Ted forgets his losses; but he always remembers the favors his friend John does for him . . . such as keeping the game going when he is losing.

3. Raising the Morale of Losers (114)

The good player raises the morale of losers whenever possible. Sympathy and understanding properly offered can keep losers in the game indefinitely--or until they are bankrupt. Yet, after suffering sharp losses, some players develop attitudes that could decrease the good player's profits, such as demanding a slower betting pace or lower stakes. A good player can often change those attitudes by talking to the losers in private about their troubles. Private "little talks" usually have comforting and therapeutic effects on big losers.

New player Mike Bell is a valuable financial asset to John Finn. After losing several weeks in a row, Mike becomes discouraged. Fearful that he may quit, John moves to boost his morale. By leading him into several winning pots, he carries Mike to a winning night. Then with the following dialogue, he further boosts Mike's morale:

"The way you're winning, you'll break the game," John says. "How much you ahead?"

"A few big bills," Mike says as he splits a high-low pot with Quintin. Suddenly he looks up at John and grins while adding, "I've been lucky."

"Lucky? The way you caught that full house--I call that skill," John remarks while adjusting his voice to a deeper tone. "Why'd you throw your ace and keep the ten kicker?"

"The other three players drew one and two cards," Mike replies in a gloating tone. "They probably were going for low hands--so they'd be holding aces rather than tens. My chances were best for drawing another ten." Mike Bell then glances around. Bored expressions cover all faces except John's--he listens with an open mouth while slowly nodding his head up and down. Mike leans toward him and says in a low voice, "I drew the ten to catch the full house, didn't I?"

"Right," John replies. "Pretty smart thinking."

"Ban Mike from the game!" Sid cries. "Smart thinking is illegal in this game."

"Don't listen to him," John says as he puts his hand on Mike's shoulder. "We respect a man who plays good poker."

"Look who's talking about good poker!" Sid cries again. "You win lowball games with full houses. You hear about that one, Mike?"

"Sure did. Scotty told me all about it," Mike answers. He then shakes his finger at John. "Don't ever pull that on me. I'd call you from my grave."

"At least John plays more than two hands a night," Sid says. "If we all played tight like Quintin, the game would die from boredom."

Mike Bell counts his winnings, smiles, and then says to John, "Guess I'll be playing permanently in this game."

4. Off-Days(115)

When a good player has an off-day or is not feeling well, he may skip the game to avoid a breakdown in his concentration or discipline. Or he may play on an off-day (knowing he may not be playing at his best) in order to--

- alter the consistency of his play
- make money with decreased but still favorable edge odds
- maintain the continuity of the game (even when he misses a game, he helps organize it whenever possible.).

John Finn seldom misses the Monday night game. Even when feeling below par, he still makes an effort to play. Consider the following Monday night game:

"Where's John?" Mike Bell asks.

"Recovering from the flu," Scotty replies.

"But he called me this afternoon about playing," Mike says with a wrinkling forehead.

"He'll organize the game even if he's sick."

"Mighty thoughtful guy."

"He's also mighty thoughtful about taking all your money," Quintin grumbles. "He's won a fortune in this game."

"Still he takes your money pleasantly . . . hardly mind losing to him," Mike says. "He's always fair."

"But he's tough on anyone who's wrong," Sid adds. "Remember how he tore apart that Boris jerk?"

About midnight, John walks in and says with a weak smile, "I'm never too sick for a poker game."

"Good!" Sid cheers. "We need your money."

"I took a nap after dinner," John replies as he sits next to Sid. "Woke up about eleven feeling pretty good. I'm ready for action."

After two hours, John Finn is losing over $600.

"You're playing a lousy game," Sid remarks. "You're losing almost as much as me."

"When my luck turns bad, I lose big," John says while forcing a sigh. "Losing over a thousand-- going for the all-time record loss."

"Great act," Quintin Merck mumbles. "Great act."

5. Leaving the Game Early (116)

When a good player must leave early and wants the game to continue, he minimizes any disturbance and resentment over his leaving by--

- announcing before the game starts that he must leave early
- announcing his last round before going, then quietly leaving without breaking up the game.

The Monday night game usually breaks up about four or five in the morning. Occasionally it continues into the next day. John Finn seldom leaves before the end.... The longest Monday night game on record is twenty-seven hours (from eight thirty Monday night until eleven thirty Tuesday night). This is how John leaves after twenty-two hours:

At seven in the morning, Scotty's wife chases the players from the house. Heavy loser Ted Fehr is playing with money from the second mortgage on his restaurant. He has $1000 left and begs everyone to continue playing at his place. The five players eat breakfast at a diner and then go to Ted's barren apartment.

Ted continues to lose--slowly at first, then at an increasing rate. By eleven in the morning, most of his cash is gone. He plays carelessly and is involved in nearly every hand. He no longer seems to care . . . he even smiles when he loses a pot.

John Finn is a big winner, but avoids getting involved in hands with Ted. Yet, Sid and Scotty continue to beat Ted and win most of his money. By now, all of Ted's cash is gone; he asks John for a loan.

"They've won all your money," John says, nodding toward Sid and Scotty. "They'll lend it back."

By five-thirty in the afternoon, Ted's bloodshot eyes gaze into space. He has lost all his cash and has borrowed over $2000. Now Sid and Scotty are running out of cash, even though they are winning.

"We broke the record--over twenty-one hours of poker," John announces. "You guys keep playing, I'm leaving at six."

After another round and in the middle of a big hand, John Finn silently leaves. He has most of the cash in the game and escapes without lending money to Ted.

At six-thirty, Ted asks for another loan. Sid and Scotty are out of money. The only person with cash is Quintin, and he refuses to lend Ted any more money. Then with trembling fingers, Ted writes another check. When Quintin refuses to cash it, the freckle-faced man sits in a stupor and stares blankly at him with his mouth open. After a moment of eerie silence, Quintin stands up and says, "I'm going home." After another moment of silence, Sid and Scotty stand up to leave.

"No, you can't leave!" Ted suddenly screams, rising from his chair. The players start rushing toward the door. "You took all my money! Please don't quit! I'm due for a comeback! I gotta win my mortgage money back!...I gotta!" Ted sinks back into his chair with his arms falling to his side as everyone runs out the door. Continuing down the hallway, the players hear him calling out, "Please, give me a break . . . give me a break like John always does . . . like my friend John!"

No one ever saw Ted Fehr again.

XXIII
Major-League and
Minor-League Games (117)

For continuous and expanding income, the good player organizes several regular games at different stakes. He runs those games as major-league and minor-league games with a sort of baseball farm-system relationship among them.

1. Major League (118)

A major-league game is the highest-stake game; it is the most valuable game to the good player. He tries to populate that game with (1) players having the most money to lose, (2) compulsive gamblers, and (3) players "trying their luck" in the big game. In that game, the good player continually pushes the pace and stakes to the maximum. The size and health of the big game depend on the availability of poor players and their financial resources.

The minor-league or smaller-stake games are a major source of poor players for major-league games.

2. Minor League (119)

The good player can garner worthwhile income from lower-stake games. But more importantly, he uses the lower-stake or minor-league game as--

- a pool for selecting new players for higher-stake games
- a place to break in new players (many players who never intended to play in a higher-stake game will gradually accept such a game after becoming accustomed to or bored with the lower-stake game)
- a proving ground to test and develop new plays, concepts, and modifications before deploying them in higher-stake games
- a game in which poor players who will never play in the higher-stake games can conveniently lose their money to the good player
- a resting place for players dropping out of higher stake games. (Lower-stake games provide a place to hold valuable losers who are driven out of the big game. Without a lower-stake game to fall back on, those losers might quit poker completely. With a lower-stake game, they can continue to play and, in time, they usually recover their confidence, nerve, or finances and return to the big game.)

When playing in several different games, the good player must carefully plan his schedule in order to budget and invest his limited time into the most profitable situations.

3. Farm System (120)

The good player controls both the major-league and minor-league games. He directs advantageous transitions of players from one game to another. That system allows him to make the best use of his resources (poker players). He promotes players to higher-stake games when they appear ready to move up. Conditions that indicate when a player is ready for higher-stake games are--

- an increase in financial resources
- a winning streak that provides capital and courage
- development of experience and confidence
- a personal situation or problem that makes the player want to play in higher-stake games.

An obvious sign that a player is ready to drop back to a lower-stake game occurs when he quits playing poker. In approaching him about a smaller game, the good player must be tactful to avoid injuring his pride. The proper approach depends on his reason for quitting. Reasons that a player quits a high-stake game include--

- going broke

- discouragement from a losing streak
- loss of too much money
- hurt feelings or pride
- personality conflicts
- personal problems
- time conflict
- health reasons.

If the reason for his quitting is identified and if the approach is proper, that player will usually welcome the opportunity to continue playing in a lower-stake game (or even to return to the higher-stake game).

The following chart summarizes John Finn's system of poker games for one year and his earnings from each game (for the final year for which his records were made available).

John Finn guarantees himself a substantial income by applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker. By continuing to work his system of games and allowing for escalating inflation, he will earn over $1,000,000 from poker in the next five to ten years ... or much more if inflation occurs.

Weekly Poker Games

Game League, Purpose	Games Played in a Year Annual Earnings (average $ per game)	Regular Players, #	Irregular Players, #	Major-League Candidates, #
Monday Major, Income	50 $42,000 (840)	5	12	---
Tuesday Minor, New contacts	7 $ 1,100 (160)	4	7	1
Thursday Minor, New contacts	10 $ 1,400 (140)	6	8	2

Friday Intermediate, Farm team, Income	48 $ 9,500 (200)	6	8	4
Totals	115 $54,000 (470)	21	35	7

Footnotes:

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[26] Trips-eight means that three of a kind are needed to qualify for high, and an eight low is needed to qualify for low.

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[27] Women players often bring out and amplify the dominant or macho characteristics in men players, making those men players more difficult to manipulate and control.

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PART SIX

PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC POKER

XXIV
A Guaranteed Income from Public Poker

Any man or woman using the Advanced Concepts of Poker can earn a guaranteed income by playing public poker (i.e., poker in casinos and in commercial card clubs). But first this person must understand the difference between *private* poker, as discussed in Parts One through Five of this book, *and public* poker, as discussed in Part Six.

The two major differences (or problems) of public poker are (1) the house cut that permanently extracts large amounts of money from every player in every game, and (2) the professional cheating that pervades the higher-stake games.

With the information in Part Six, the good player not only can win in most club and casino poker games, but also can identify those games in which he cannot win. In addition, Part Six provides the information needed to accept or reject public poker as a source of income.

XXV
Private Poker vs.
Public Poker

Over 95 percent of all poker played in the United States and throughout the world is private poker. Generally, the good poker player can make much more money from private games than from public (club or casino) games. That is why over three-quarters of this book is devoted to explaining concepts for extracting money from private poker games.

Nevertheless, many private-game players will try public poker sometime during their lives. And almost all private-game players will wonder at times:

- What is it like to play poker in public clubs and casinos? How do those games compare with the games I play in?
- How well would I do in public poker? Could I win consistently? Could I make a living by playing poker in clubs and casinos?
- The constant availability of games, players, and money in clubs and casinos seems attractive, but how much would the house cut and professional competition decrease my odds? Could I beat the professional players? Would I encounter cheaters? Could I beat the cheaters?

Part Six answers those questions.

To win consistently in public club and casino poker (such as played in the California card clubs and in the Nevada casinos), the good player must use the Advanced Concepts of Poker that are relevant to public poker.

To compete in public poker, a new player must first understand the differences between private and public poker. Table 30 summarizes the major differences. By understanding them, the good player will know which of the Advanced Concepts of Poker are applicable to public poker.

In addition to the differences listed in Table 30, public poker differs from private poker in minor and subtle ways that influence the good player's strategy. Part Six identifies many of those subtle differences, and the good player will discover others as he plays public poker.

TABLE 30
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRIVATE POKER

AND PUBLIC (CLUB AND CASINO) POKER

(All data are estimates based on author's direct experience)

	Private Poker (Worldwide)	*Casino Poker (Las Vegas, Nevada)*	*Commercial Club Poker (Gardena, California)*
Availability	Whenever and wherever game can be organized.	24 hours, 365 days.	24 hours (20 hours on Sundays), 365 days. (On separate days, each club is closed one day a week.)
Game stakes	Any agreed-upon stakes. Usually controlled by the good player. Most flexible.	$1-$2 up to no limit. Established by each casino according to player and market demands. Flexible.	$1-$2 up to $200 maximum bet. Established by law. Least flexible.
Speed of play	Very slow to fast.	Fast.	Very fast.
Betting pace	Controlled by good player. Betting pace increased by introducing game modifications such as twists, wild cards, bizarre games.	Controlled by dealer and all players collectively. Generally fast paced within limits of games permitted.	Controlled by all players collectively. Some influence by strongest players. Generally fast paced within limits of games permitted.

Poker games played	All types of poker. Generally controlled by good player.	Mostly seven-card stud and hold 'em. Also highball or lowball draw and stud. A few split-pot games. No wild cards, except jokers in lowball.	Only draw poker, high and low. No oddball games, twists, or wild cards, except jokers in lowball. Stud or open-hand poker prohibited by law.
Profitability for good players	Most profitable.	Varies, depending on house cut or rake. High % rakes (e.g., 20%) eliminates profits for good players. Highest-stake games have lowest % cut.	Generally better than casino poker because of smaller % house cut - an advantage partly offset by the higher percentage of better players in Gardena and recent increases in collection fees.
Skill of average player	Least.	Intermediate.	Most.
Quality of average professional	Best--the most independent, secretive, honest, and successful of the professionals.	Most dependent on cheating and collusion with dealers, shills, and fellow professionals.	Better than casino professionals, but many are dependent on the professional establishment and cheating.
Professionals in high-stake games, %	2-5	10-40	5-30
Extent of cheating	Least.	Most.	Intermediate.
Professionals who cheat, %	10	60	40

Average winnings of top professional players Without cheating	Unlimited.	$20,000-$100,000.	$20,000-$50,000.
Average winnings of top professional players With cheating	Winning potential decreases with cheating.	$20,000-$200,000 with cheating in high table-stake games.	$20,000-$70,000 with cheating in highest-stake lowball games.
Cheating techniques most commonly used	Crude culling, stacking, collusion and peeking by amateurs and losers. Cheating by professionals or good players is rare.	Undetectable collusion between professionals and house dealers who know hole cards in high-stake stud and hold 'em poker.	Signaling and card flashing between professional partners in highest-stake lowball games. Occasional opportunities for card manipulation.
Neocheating	Just beginning.	Spreading.	Spreading.
Danger of violence or robbery	Some risk, depending on players, game, and location.	Essentially none.	Almost none.

* In any given year, the earnings of a top professional player could significantly exceed these average amounts.

TABLE 31
EFFECT OF CHEATING AND HOUSE CUTS --
GARDENA CLUB POKER

(For 3000 hours of poker per year. All data are estimates based on author's direct experience.)

	Professional Cheating (estimates)	*Earnings of Best Professionals* *(with cheating)*	*Earnings of Good Players (noncheating)*	*House Cut + per Player*	*Earnings of Good Players in Equivalent Private Games*
High Draw $ 5-$10 $20-$40 $30-$60	Little Some Considerable	$ 10,000 $ 25,000 $ 40,000	$20,000 $30,000 $50,000	$15,000 $30,000 $42,000	$ 30,000+ $ 80,000+ $100,000+
Low Draw $ 5 blind $ 20 blind $100 blind	Some Considerable Extensive	$ 10,000 $ 30,000 $100,000	$15,000 Uncertain Possible loss	$15,000 $30,000 $60,000	$ 35,000+ $ 90,000+ $250,000+

* Earnings are estimated for the *best* professional players observed in Gardena. The *average* professional in Gardena (including house shills and proposition players who are paid by the club for starting and maintaining poker games probably nets less than $15,000 per year. The net average earnings of *all* the professional poker players in Gardena are estimated at $15,000 per year per professional player.

+The average Gardena table extracts an estimated $109,000 per year from its players, as shown in Table 33. The house-collection schedule is shown in Table 34.

TABLE 32
EFFECT OF CHEATING AND HOUSE CUTS--
LAS VEGAS CASINO POKER

(For 3000 hours of poker per year. All data are estimates based on author's direct experience.)

	Professional Cheating (estimates)	Earnings of Best Professionals* (with cheating)	Earnings of Good Players (non cheating)	House Cut[+] per Player	Earnings of Good Players in Equivalent Private Games
High Stud and Draw			$15,000		
$ 5-$10	Little	$ 5,000	$20,000	$15,000	$ 40,000+
$10-$20	Some	$10,000	$25,000	$20,000	$ 75,000+
$20-$40	Considerable	$15,000	$30,000	$25,000	$100,000+
$40-$80	Extensive	$20,000	$30,000	$30,000	$125,000+
$100+	Extensive	$25,000	Possible	$35,000	$150,000+
Table Stakes	Extensive	$35,000	loss	$35,000	No limit
Low Stud and Draw			$20,000 Uncertain Probable		
$ 5-$10	Little	$10,000	loss	$15,000	$ 45,000+
$10-$20	Considerable	$15,000	Probable	$20,000	$ 85,000+
$20-$40	Extensive	$20,000	loss	$30,000	$125,000+
$40-$80	Extensive	$30,000	Probable	$35,000	$150,000+
$100+	Extensive	$35,000	loss	$35,000	$175,000+

* Earnings are estimated for the *best* professional players observed in Las Vegas. The *average* professional in Las Vegas (including house shills who are paid by the casino for starting and maintaining poker games) probably nets less than $18,000 per year. The net average earnings of all the professional poker players in Las Vegas are estimated at $18,000 per year per professional player.

[+] While most Nevada casinos have a harsh percentage rake averaging about 10 percent, some have a $2-$3 maximum rake per hand for higher-stake games. (For high-stake games, some casinos have a lower-percentage Gardena-type time collection.) Even with a $2-$3 maximum cut per hand, casinos can remove $1400-$2000 per day per table, which is $500,000-$700,000 per year per table. Accounting for low-stake games and slack periods, the average casino poker table extracts an estimated $300,000 per year from its players (see footnote in the survey of Casino Poker, Table 39). Additional money lost to house dealers in tokes or tips can exceed 10 percent of the house-cut total.

XXVI
The House Cut

For the good player, the most negative feature of public poker is the damage that the house cut (time collection or casino rake) does to his profit potential. Card clubs and casinos, through their continuous collections and raking, gradually but permanently remove most of the available cash from all public games. In private games, the bulk of that house-removed cash would have ended up in the good player's pocket. Tables 31 and 32 illustrate the draining effect that the house cut has on the earnings of the good player. If the house cut is sufficiently high (e.g., 15 percent or more), the good player may be unable to win over the long term, no matter how great his advantage is over the other players.

The far-right-hand columns of Tables 31 and 32 show that the house cut diminishes the good player's earnings much more than the amount actually collected from him. That is because the house cut relentlessly drains cash away from every opponent, steadily shrinking the amount of money available for extraction from poor players by the good player. Because of the constantly draining house cut, the poorest players (the good player's most valuable assets) are driven from the game more quickly than are the tougher players. That phenomenon results in higher concentrations of tough or superior players than would occur in comparable games without a house cut. Also, the house cut produces more losers who, in turn, will play tighter poker, thus further diminishing the good player's advantage and edge odds.

Adding to the cash drain in casino poker is the toking (tipping) of the house dealer by the winner of each pot. Because of the arbitrary raking power of most casino dealers, toking is necessary to avoid extra-heavy rakes from future pots that the player may win. Toking increases by as much as 20 percent the money removed from the game by casinos. Since public card clubs have no house dealers, their customers are spared that additional drain (although toking of floormen does occur in some high-stake club games).

The house cut (rake) in poker is actually higher than the house cut in most major gambling games such as blackjack, craps, and roulette. The primary difference between gambling and playing public poker is that in gambling, individuals play directly against the house (the casino) and have no way to overcome the house cut or house percentage.[28] But in poker, individuals play against one another, not against the house or casino. The good poker player can, therefore, consistently extract money from all inferior players. He will win in casino and club poker if his money extraction from the other players is greater than the amount the house extracts from him. Conversely, the loser or the inferior player takes a double loss in public poker--the loss to the winners and the loss to the house.

In calculating his edge odds, the good player must include the house as the biggest winner. As indicated by Tables 31-34, the house will be the biggest winner in almost every game, with the good player averaging a distant second. In private poker, the good player tries to eliminate any competing big winner as quickly as possible (or he quits that game and finds a more profitable game without a competing big winner). But in public poker, the good player can never escape from or eliminate the biggest winner (the club or casino). By playing only in private games and avoiding the house cut, the good player makes *himself* the biggest winner.[29]

The time collections of public poker clubs (e.g., Gardena, California poker club[30]) are generally less expensive and less harmful to the good player's earnings than are the percentage rakes of Nevada casinos [31]. Still, the Gardena-type time collections relentlessly and permanently remove the major portion of available cash from every game. Table 33 shows that each year, the six Gardena clubs end up with more than ten times the cash that is won by all the professional poker players in Gardena combined. The table shows that the six Gardena poker clubs extract over $22,000,000 per year from their customers.

TABLE 33
MONEY EXTRACTED BY GARDENA POKER CLUBS VIA TIME COLLECTIONS

	Minimum Collection $1/half hour (for $1-$2 game)	*Average Collection* $2/half hour (Average for all games)	*Maximum Collection* $12/half hour (for $100-$200 games)
Each hour/seat	$2	$4	$20
Each day/seat (22-hour day)	$44	$88	$440
Each year/seat (310-day year)	$13,640	$27,280	$136,400
Each year/filled table (8 seats/table)	$109,120	$218,240	$1,091,200
Each year/average table (50% filled)	$54,560	$109,120	$545,600
Each year/club (35 tables)	---	$3,819,200	---
Each year/Gardena (6 clubs)	---	$22,915,200	---

Estimated money extracted per year by professional poker players	---	$1,500,000 to $3,000,000	---

TABLE 34
HOUSE-COLLECTION SCHEDULE

(Public Card Clubs in Gardena, California)

Stakes, $	Approximate Half-Hour Collections $/PIayer*	Average Hourly Rates, $/Player
1-2	1.00	2.00
2-4	1.25	2.50
3-6	1.50	3.00
5-10	2.50	5.00
10-20	3.00	6.00
20-40	5.00	10.00
30-60	6.00-7.00	13.00
40-80	8.00	16.00
50-100	9.00	18.00

100-200	10.00-12.00	22.00

* An extra $1-$2 is added to collections from lowball games with blind bets.

Poker generates substantial profits for the club owners--even after subtracting business expenses, high taxes, and an annual payroll of over $8,000,000 (according to the Gardena Chamber of Commerce). Who, then, are the smartest and most prosperous poker players in Gardena? The answer is the quiet, invisible club owners. Indeed, those club owners deserve admiration. What player could ever match their edge odds and consistent winnings from poker?

Still, how do the other poker players fare? If the average professional poker player in Gardena nets about $15,000 per year (estimated in footnote to Table 31), then the estimated 100 to 200 professionals in Gardena would extract $1,500,000 to $3,000,000 per year from all the other poker players. After allowing for those seats occupied by the professionals plus the empty seats and vacant tables during slack periods, the nonprofessional players occupy an estimated average of 800 seats in the six Gardena poker clubs. Those clubs, therefore, must extract $28,500 per year from each of these 800 seats to account for the $22,000,000 permanently removed each year. That means that the nonprofessional regular customer who plays forty hours per week must lose an average of $7000 per year *if he* plays better than half the other players in Gardena. (And, as a group, the Gardena players are the best and the toughest poker players in the world.) If he does not play better than half the players, he will lose more than $7000 per year by playing forty hours per week. If he is a much better player than the average Gardena player and can extract a net gain of $7000 per year from the other players, he will break even. And if he is good enough to extract a net gain of $22,000 per year from the other players by playing *sixty hours* every week, he will be in the same class with the average professional poker player by earning $15,000 per year. In other words, except for the few very best and toughest players, people pay dearly in both time and money for the privilege of playing poker regularly in Gardena. And as indicated in Table 32, players in the lower-stake games pay even more dearly for the privilege of playing poker regularly in Nevada casinos because of the higher percentage casino rake, but less dearly in most higher-stake games because of the lower percentage rake.

To earn a steady income from public poker requires an exceptionally tough player with poker abilities far superior to those of the average player. To be a professional poker player in the Gardena clubs or the Nevada casinos requires long, hard hours that yield relatively poor yearly incomes. So most professional casino or club players seem to be wasting their abilities in unrewarding careers. And most other public poker players (the losers) are throwing away their time and money with methodical certainty.

Footnotes:

[28] The single exception to the unbeatability of casino games occurs when a Thorpe-type counting system is properly used in blackjack. The validity of blackjack counting systems is limited and provides at best a theoretical advantage of less than 1 percent (or investment odds of less than 1.01). Furthermore, such systems are mainly mechanical and inflexible--they are difficult and boring to apply and basically impractical for accumulating any significant or reliable income. Casinos can eliminate any player advantage in blackjack whenever they want to or need to (which is seldom) simply by increasing the frequency of shuffles until counting becomes impractical or unprofitable. Moreover, by publicizing their feigned dislike and fear of counting systems, casino managements surreptitiously promote and encourage the use of blackjack counting systems. The burgeoning interest in those systems has caused major increases both in blackjack activity and in profits for the casinos. (Technically the game with a house dealer as played in all casinos is "21"; not blackjack in which the deal constantly changes or rotates.)

[29] In private poker, the good player can sponsor a game with pleasant distractions and discipline-breaking amenities (e.g., "free" gourmet buffets, rich desserts, expensive liquors). But if the good player acts as the house (with profitable collections or rakes), he could cause his opponents to believe that he is sponsoring the games solely for profit (which, of course, would and should be true). Such a belief would make his opponents more defensive and harder to manipulate, and thus harder to control and extract money from. Besides, the good player can win by finesse all available money without having to compete against himself by mechanically collecting money through a house cut. Also, most states consider running a profitable game with regular house cuts an illegal gambling operation. Such activity could leave the sponsoring player vulnerable to a criminal complaint filed, for example, by an unhappy loser ... or by the loser's wife.

[30] California has 400 legal poker clubs. A few other states such as Montana, Washington and Oregon also have legal poker clubs. But by far the most important area for public club poker is Gardena, California, where legalized poker began in 1936. Today, Gardena has six of the most prosperous poker clubs in the country and is the mecca for both amateur and professional public-club poker players.

[31] Some Nevada casinos are switching from harsh percentage rakes to milder, Gardena-type time collections, especially for their higher-stake games. Increasing competition for poker players is causing

this trend toward milder house cuts as more and more Nevada casinos, attracted by the profitability of public poker, are adding poker to their operations or are expanding their existing poker facilities. In fact, the maximum rake for some high-stake casino games has fallen below $2.00 per hand, reducing the house cut to well below 5%. But the competition in those games is much stiffer since the best players and professionals gravitate to the low-cut games.

But countering the trend toward lower rakes in Nevada casinos, the California card clubs are raising their collection fees as shown in Table 34.

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XXVII
Learning Public Poker

The good player can extract a steady income from the unlimited supply of players and money offered by public club and casino poker. But the house cut, the stiffer competition (resulting from the higher percentages of superior and professional players in public poker), and the rigid rules and betting limitations of public poker all serve to reduce the good player's edge odds, flexibility, and income. As a result, private poker is generally more profitable than public poker.

1. Club Poker

Public poker in the Gardena card clubs is tough, fast, and different. As a group, the Gardena poker players are the best in the world. Most newcomers to public club poker lose money not only because of the house collection and the superior competition, but also because of their own confusion, errors, and lack of knowledge. Even the experienced private-game player will be confused, perhaps shaken, the first time he plays public club poker--especially if the first time is in Gardena, California.

Unlike casino poker, in club poker there are no house dealers to protect, help, or guide new players. Also, club poker moves faster and is higher pressured than casino poker. The newcomer to Gardena poker often encounters harassment, intimidation, and pressure from other players. The nonprofessional regular players in the lower stake games especially try to press for advantages by intimidating newcomers into losing money through confusion and errors. Superior players and professionals in higher-stake games, on the other hand, usually do not harass new players because they want to hold

them in the game for longer-term money extraction Thus, the newcomer can learn public poker more comfortably in the higher-stake games, but he will pay more for his lessons because he will be up against superior competition.

After twenty to forty hours of Gardena poker, the good player begins integrating the unique characteristics of club poker into his own poker experience and skills. The good player will then start to detect patterns among different games and players. As he continues to play club poker, those patterns will become increasingly familiar. After a dozen or so games, the good player will start to recognize a sameness for each kind of club game (e.g., low-stake, high-stake, highball, lowball) and for each class of player (e.g., losers, winners, sporadic players, regular amateurs, regular professionals). Because of the rigid customs and rules in club poker, the playing and betting actions of club players fall into more predictable patterns than do similar actions by private-game players. Once familiar with club poker and its patrons, the good player can enter any club and after a few hands be able to read and predict most actions of both amateur and professional players with good accuracy.

The good player can reduce or even eliminate the cost of learning Gardena poker by rattling his opponents by switching the pressures and intimidation from him to them. The good player's normal technique for rattling and intimidating opponents requires a confidently bold and aggressive style. But, for the newcomer, such a style would be unconvincing and ineffective because of his weak, defensive position during his first few ventures into public poker.

Ironically, that temporary weakness places the good player in an ideal position to use unorthodox behavior or bizarre actions to confuse and frighten his opponents. By such actions, he can often nullify the disadvantage of his own initial confusion by throwing his opponents into even greater confusion. Being a stranger, he can effectively induce bewilderment and fear in others through the unknown. For example, feigning insanity can induce paralyzing fear in others. Who would not fear a deranged stranger? Few players would dare to pressure or intimidate a psychotic at their table. Indeed, most players would be rattled into making errors. Feigning a physical disorder such as a severe tic or emitting strange guttural sounds will also rattle opponents into errors. Feigning deafness, muteness, or severe handicaps usually eliminates harassment and provides peace.

John Finn first experienced public poker in the Gardena, California, card clubs. He promptly canceled the disadvantages of being a newcomer by rattling his opponents into errors. He learned public poker at their expense.

After arriving in Gardena, John Finn parked his rented car in the self-park area behind the Eldorado Card Club. He entered the club through the automatic glass doors. He walked past the darkened lobby partly illuminated by a large gas-fed fireplace and abruptly stopped and stared into the brightly lit pitlike playing area filled with rising layers of white smoke. A low rumble of voices came from the cloudy pit. For an instant, John felt he was witnessing several hundred vagabonds huddling around tables in a cavernous Salvation Army hall. He moved to the observation rail that partly circled the poker pit and studied the scene. Some people were poorly

dressed, which gave the entire crowd a tacky appearance. Everyone seemed to homogenize into a blend of middle-aged and elderly men and women. A few looked younger, but most looked pallid and wan . . . some looked cadaverous. About 25 percent of the players were women--some seemed slack and bored, others were tense and desperate. John observed more closely. Contrary to his first impression, many faces reflected an intelligence and a strength ... or at least a faded intelligence and perhaps a surrendered strength, especially in the older people. He estimated that 70 percent of the players were addicted smokers ... John Finn knew he could extract money from this crowd.

After watching from the rail for thirty minutes and reading through a house-rule booklet obtained in the lobby, John Finn went to the large chalkboard that listed the poker games in progress and the waiting list for each game. The lowest-stake game was $1-$2 high draw, jacks or better to open. John gave the boardman the false initials "J.R." to be listed for that low-stake game. In ten minutes, "J.R." was announced over the speaker system. Moments later, John was sitting in his first public poker game. ...His opening ploy was to rapidly cross himself several times in view of everyone.

After an hour, John was still winless and had forfeited two pots because of technical errors: On his first forfeited pot, he had turned up his pair of queens to show openers after no one called his final bet. When he tossed his other three cards face-down on the discards, a collective shout from the other players informed John that his hand was dead. (According to Gardena house rules, all five cards--not just openers--of the opening hand must be spread face-up before any of those cards touch the discards.) John forfeited the pot. Several hands later, he held three kings. His only opponent held two pair and stayed pat. John was the dealer. He drew one card, but forgot to burn a card (deal a card into the discards) before drawing. Again a collective shout informed John that his hand was dead. The player with two pair promptly spread his cards face-up, grinned, and yanked the pot into his pile of chips.

John decided he had learned enough from that game and wanted to establish a stronger psychological position in a higher-stake game. Looking at the game board, he noticed that a $3-$6 draw game had no waiting list. John played one more hand. He opened with three tens. Everyone folded. He promptly spread his hand face-up and pulled in the 40-cent ante--his first pot in public poker. As he stood up to leave, a wizened old woman sitting across from him looked up, stretched her skinny neck, and cackled. "Hey, buster, don't tell 'em where ya won all that money."

As he moved to the $3-$6 game, John already knew his strategy. He would nullify the disadvantages of his inexperience by rattling his opponents into yielding advantages to him.

After silently slipping into the empty seat, he put his chips on the table, anted for the next pot, touched his fingertips together in a praying position, bowed his head, and waited for the cards to be dealt. Someone asked him a question. John did not look up or even acknowledge the question. He looked at no one, said nothing, and moved with squared, mechanical-like motions. Between

movements he sat with fingertips joined and stared silently at the "action spot" on the table. The conversation at the table diminished as the players began casting glances at him and then at one another. John knew they were worried about his behavior.

His total withdrawal gave John Finn a two-way advantage: First, it allowed him to shut out interference and distractions from the other players so that he could concentrate, learn, think, and plan strategy. Second, since the other players were reluctant to pressure or intimidate him because they were nervous about his behavior, John had the solitude and time to think and act deliberately, thereby decreasing his confusion and errors.

But this technique, being a short-range tool, needed constant reinforcement as new players entered the game and as other players became tired of John's behavior and began challenging it with intimidation. For example, after a profitable hour of this silent playing, John bowed his head as a portly player entered the game and sat beside him. The stout man began chatting with other players. After two hands, he noticed John's silent, mechanical-man behavior and jabbed John's shoulder several times while blurting, "Hey, man, you alive? You some kind of a robot? Say something so I know I'm not playing against a computer."

Without moving or looking at the man, John kept staring at the table while answering in low monotones, "Doctors at state hospital make me like this ... to control myself. They keep accusing me of being paranoid . . . they keep lying about me. They keep accusing me of being violent. This way I stay controlled and peaceful."

Several players shuddered. But the portly neighbor pressed on, "Hey, man, what hospital? Who's your shrink? I need someone to make me stay controlled and peaceful. I need someone to make me quit gambling and eating. Man, how do I get committed to that hospital?" He punched John's shoulder again.

John Finn jumped up, pointed a stiff finger at the man's face, and shouted, "Don't bug me! Don't bug me or I'll lose control!"

The stout man picked up his chips. "No ... no offense, sir," he said. "I'm leaving. See, I'm leaving." He stood up and left.

Everyone became silent. Another player abruptly stood up and left. John played two more hours in peace while winning $100. As other players left, new players entered the game. Gradually the players became hostile toward John because of his mechanical behavior. So he decided to reinforce his act again at their expense.

The opportunity came several hands later. Before the draw, John had the last bet and raised the maximum on his two pair--jacks and fours. He drew one card and caught the third jack for a full house. He knew his three opponents held weak hands; they would check and probably fold on any

betting strength from him. After catching his full house, John had to change his strategy in order to build a larger pot for himself. So he used his abnormal behavior to elicit bluffing and betting action from his opponents: With a jerk, John rose from his seat and faced the player on his left. Lifting his upper lip to expose his teeth, he bowed and whispered, "Thank you, sir, for my straight flush." Turning clockwise, John bowed and uttered his thanks to every player. With each bow, he flashed the jack of hearts and the four of clubs in his carefully arranged hand that concealed his other three cards. He then slumped into his seat, closed his eyes, lowered his head to the table, and continued muttering words of thanks.

The first player snorted and bet the maximum. The second player raised. And the third player called. Without lifting his face from the table, John shoved all his chips toward the pot and said in a muffled voice. "Reraise the maximum." After long pauses, each player called. Still pressing his forehead against the table, John spread his full house face-up against the table. All three players threw down their cards and promptly left the table. Another player stood up and left. The game had been broken. John grabbed the $110 pot, picked up his chips, and left.

Perhaps John Finn overacted in that last hand, causing the players to flee. But so what? Unlike private games, each public game is a one-shot combination of opponents. What they think, feel, or experience has little bearing on future games. So by acting abnormally, John rattled his opponents and won an extra-large pot on top of the $100 he had won earlier--all while learning to play club poker in Gardena. If John had not rattled his opponents, he probably would have lost money in that game--$100 or more. A little planned acting made at least a $300 difference. John exchanged his initial weakness for a bizarre aggressiveness that intimidated and confused his experienced opponents into making multiple errors. With careful planning and unorthodox action, he beat his opponents while learning their game.

2. Casino Poker

Casino poker is easier to learn (especially in the major casinos) than club poker because the nonplaying casino dealer controls the game and protects the new player by guiding him through unfamiliar rules and customs. That help from the dealer reduces the new player's technical errors and allows him more thinking room to analyze the game and execute strategy. The good player makes a wise investment by toking (tipping) dealers who provide him with pressure-relieving protection and helpful information. With the dealer's protection and help, the new player can win pots that he might otherwise have lost or forfeited because of his inexperience. But, in the faster-moving higher-stake games, dealers are more reluctant to help or protect the newcomer. Yet even here, the inexperienced good player can beat experienced professionals by rattling them with unorthodox actions.

When he first moved up to higher-scale casino poker, John Finn twice assumed the role of a mute in order to play in peace and to gain the thinking time necessary to turn certain high-pressure situations into winning hands. On another occasion, he faked a severe tic to successfully bluff a professional player out of a $240 lowball pot.

Once John Finn had control of casino and club poker, he dropped most of his short-term ploys for the more profitable long-range strategy of tough, sound poker based on the Advanced Concepts of Poker.

When to use unorthodox or bizarre acts and which act to use depend on the game and its players. Such acts benefit the good player when he is first adjusting to or learning a new game situation--such as casino or club poker. Once he has the new situation and its players under control, the good player will find his straight poker skills are more effective than unorthodox or bizarre behavior.

3. Notes on Public Poker

John Finn made the following notes while playing poker in the Gardena card clubs and in the various Nevada casinos:

1. **Advantages of private poker over club and casino poker: (1) No house cut to drain away available cash and profits. (2) The same players are available week after week for the long-range manipulation necessary for increasing money extraction and a growing poker income. (3) Generally weaker players.**
2. **Advantage of club and casino poker over private poker: The constant supply of fresh players allows maximum aggressiveness and ruthlessness without fear of destroying the game. If best strategy dictates, unrestrained action can be directed toward upsetting opponents. No need to mollify losers. Establish psychological dominance early. Only limitation -- avoid excessively obnoxious tactics that might alienate club or casino management and result in banishment from their establishments.**
3. **The six card clubs in Gardena, California, provide simultaneous action for up to 1680 poker players. Over 400 licensed card clubs in California and more than 80 Nevada casinos continuously offer thousands of fresh poker players for money extraction, every hour of every day and night, all year round.**
4. **Major poker clubs and casinos always offer a selection of games and players. Carefully select the most advantageous game with the weakest players. Keep aware of the other games, and promptly abandon any game for a more advantageous game (e.g., more profitable stakes or weaker players).**
5. **Seek games with careless players, nervous players, women players, drinking players, players with tattoos or unkempt beards, and especially players wearing religious crosses or medals, good-luck charms, astrology symbols, or other mystical amulets. Avoid games with high ratios of calm, controlled, or intelligent-looking people.**
6. **Because of his initial confusion and inexperience when first learning public poker, the good player's statistical game (the mechanical aspects--the figuring of odds and money management) is *weaker* than his strategical game (the imaginative and thinking aspects--the strategy and bluffing). Conversely, the statistical game of most public-game professionals is stronger than their strategical game because of their greater dependence on mechanical routines and rules designed to yield statistically maximum investment odds on every play.**

Their more rigid consistency makes them more readable and predictable. The good player, on the other hand, does not strive for maximum investment odds on every play; thus he is more flexible and unpredictable.

7. Collection fees or time cuts in public games range from $2 per hour per player for a $1-$2 game to about $24 per hour per player for games with blind bets and, raises of $100. The casino rake (from every pot) can range from a 5 percent maximum up to a 25 percent maximum--or even higher for snatch games designed for naive tourists. Maximum rakes in casinos are usually posted in the poker area. And in most snatch games, the casino dealer immediately drops the raked chips into the table slot rather than stacking them on the side for all to see until the hand is over.

8. House cuts are less harmful to the good player's profits in the faster-moving, higher-stake, time-cut games (versus the slower-moving, lower-stake, pot-raked games).

9. In public poker, lowball games are generally less flexible (more mechanical) than equivalent highball games. Therefore, the good player can usually use the Advanced Concepts of Poker more advantageously in highball games. But the faster betting pace of lowball can outweigh this advantage. Professional players, however, cheat more frequently and more effectively in high-stake lowball.

10. The narrow and fixed betting ratios (e.g., $10-$20) in all public club games and in most casino games diminish the effectiveness of the good player's poker abilities, especially in executing bluffs and power plays. Casino table-stake games usually offer the best profit opportunities for the good player experienced enough in public poker to be highly aggressive.

11. Most casino and club shills (house players) play conservative and predictable poker (especially women shills), making them dependable decoys and unwitting partners for manipulating other players.

12. In public poker, women are generally weaker players than men. Many women lack the aggressiveness necessary for good poker. They play more mechanically and more predictably than men. In Gardena, during weekdays, up to 40 percent of the players are women. (The percentage of women players drops by half by nightfall.) Many are poor players--some are desperate players gambling with their Social Security checks and grocery money. Still, an estimated ten to twenty good, tough women professionals work the Gardena clubs. Successful women professionals are rarer in the Nevada casinos, but are increasing.

13. Opponents generally play looser and poorer poker on or immediately after paydays (e.g., on the first of the month and on Friday nights).

14. Best to enter games fresh and rested at 1:00 a.m.-5:00 a.m. (while faking tiredness, nervousness, or drunkenness) in order to work over groggy players, drunk players, loose winners, and desperate losers.

15. To conceal poker abilities and to throw good players off guard, wear a religious cross.

16. Rattle opponents through physical invasions of their "territories" (e.g., by using elbows or hands, by pushing poker chips or money around, by knocking over drinks). Foist feelings of outrage, guilt, inferiority, or fear onto opponents through personal verbal attacks. Temper bad-boy behavior only to avoid physical attacks or banishment from games.

17. **Never give opponents a break. Make them sweat. Grant them no mercy.**
18. **In highball, elevate height with extra chair cushions to see more carelessly exposed hands. In lowball, diminish height and sit low in order to see more cards flash during the shuffle and on the deal and draw.**
19. **Highly visible and self-publicized professional poker players, including those who play in and have won the World Series of Poker, reveal a composite character (with individual exceptions) of a prematurely aged, physically unfit heavy smoker who is prone to boasting, gross exaggeration, and gambling. Yet he is a character who is basically intelligent and shrewd -- though vulnerable to manipulation through his flaws. He is a character who can be exploited and beaten by the good player.**

In six days, John Finn put both public club and casino poker under his profitable control--at least for the lower-stake and medium-stake games. For the higher-stake games, John had an additional major problem to deal with--the problem of professional cheating.

XXVIII
Professional Poker Players

Professional poker players generally fall into two classes: (1) those who extract money from private games, and (2) those who extract money from public games.

Successful private-game professionals explicitly or implicitly understand and use many of the Advanced Concepts of Poker. Private-game professionals are usually quiet, ostensibly self-effacing, independent loners who never need to join an establishment[32] or cheat to extract maximum money from their opponents. (Cheating would actually decrease both their investment odds and their long-range edge odds.) Private-game professionals generally prosper more and spend fewer hours playing poker than do public-game professionals.

While all public-game professionals explicitly or implicitly must understand and use enough of the Advanced Concepts of Poker to generate a regular income, many public-game professionals misunderstand or violate various key concepts. For example, many public-game professionals not only openly boast about their poker abilities, but compromise their independence by joining a tacit professional establishment. Because of their compromised independence, most of those public-game professionals limit both their potential winnings and their future. And more and more of those professionals are depending on cheating (at the expense of playing good poker) to extract money for their livelihood.

But some public professionals have considerable financial incentives for maintaining a braggadocio, flamboyant style. Those professionals are supreme hustlers who use their visibility to attract victims. By becoming famous and highly visible, they not only attract gamblers to back them to high-stake games, but they also attract wealthy challengers who want action against a big-name player. The better-known

big-name players have won up to $1 million in a single session against such wealthy but foolish challengers. But some big-name professionals have also set themselves up for being cleaned out by shrewd, unknown Advanced-Concept players posing as foolish challengers.

XXIX
Professional Cheating

Perhaps the most profound difference between private poker and public poker (club or casino) is the collusion cheating practiced by many professional players in public poker. Few outsiders or victims detect or even suspect professional cheating in public poker because such cheating is visually undetectable. Public-game professionals execute their collusion so naturally and casually that upper management of major casinos and card clubs generally remain unaware of their cheating, even when it routinely occurs in their casinos and clubs. Many public-game professionals accept and practice collusion cheating without qualms. They consider their cheating a natural and legitimate trade tool that enables them to offset the draining effect of the house rake or collection.

The most important classical and modern professional cheating methods and devices are listed in Table 35.

TABLE 35
CHEATING METHODS AND DEVICES

Card Manipulations	Card Treatments	Other Devices
* blind shuffling	* daubing (Golden Glow, nicotine stains, soiling)	check copping
* crimping	corner flash	cold deck
* culling	denting and rounders	* collusion
dealing seconds,	luminous readers	partners
dealing bottoms,	marking	* card flashing
dealing middles	nailing (indexing)	* crossfiring
* false cutting	punching	* signals
* false riffling	sanding	* spread
foiling the cut	slicked-aced deck	holdouts
palming	stripping	shiners
* peeking	waving	
* pull through		

       * stacking
         * Las Vegas riffle
         * overhand stack
         * riffle cull and stack
         * undercut stack

[See the Glossary in Appendix C for definitions of these terms.]
* Professional cheating methods most commonly used today in public poker.

To win consistently at high-stake casino or club poker, the good player has two choices: (1) join the professional establishment and become part of their collusion-cheating system,[33] or (2) develop and use techniques to profit from the cheating of others. But in certain games such as high-stake lowball, collusion cheating by professionals can prevent even a good player from winning. As identified in Chapter XXXI, professional collusion cheating in lowball poker can diminish the good player's investment odds so greatly that he cannot win, even with his superior alertness, poker skills, and strategy.

Table 36 summarizes some of the important cheating techniques that professional poker players use in public clubs and casinos. That table also includes the classical but crude cheating techniques occasionally used by amateurs.[34] Contrary to popular belief, almost any player can master effective, invisible cheating methods with only a few hours of practice. A book, *Neocheating -- The Unbeatable Weapon in Poker, Blackjack, Bridge and Gin*, by Frank R. Wallace, Mark Hamilton, and William S., identifies and describes in detail those new and easy cheating techniques that professional players are using today in poker clubs and casinos.

TABLE 36
CHEATING TECHNIQUES USED IN PUBLIC (CLUB AND CASINO) AND PRIVATE POKER

Manipulation Techniques-- more common in private poker	Uses	Methods

Classical and amateur manipulations (solo)	Least effective, most detectable. Shunned by today's professional establishment. Crudely used by amateurs in private games. Effectively used only by the rare, classic card-sharp who is highly skilled, dexterous, and experienced.	Classical deck stacking, holding out cards, palming, second and bottom dealing, shaved decks, shiners, marked cards, and various mechanical devices used to cheat opponents.
Full flashing of draw and hole cards (dealer to partner)	More effective for stud and hold 'em games.	With smooth, imperceptible motions, the dealer lifts or tilts cards just enough for his partner to see. Done only when others are not looking or are unaware. The dealer may also allow his partner to see cards during the riffle.
Modern and professional manipulations (solo)	Most effective, easiest to learn, usually undetectable. Used by professional players in both private and public poker. Neocheating.	Easy techniques of culling cards, blind shuffling, false riffling, false cutting, foiling cuts--especially the new and easy Neocheating techniques.
Collusion Techniques--more common in club poker	*Uses*	*Methods*
Partial flashing of draw and hole cards (dealer to partner)	Most effective for high-stake, lowball draw.	Player sits low enough to see shades of darkness, blur intensities, or the actual values of cards being dealt face-down--with or without the dealer's help.*
Collusion betting (partner to partner)	Most common in high-stake lowball and in bluff-dependent games.	Requires system of "strength of hand" and "when to bet, raise, or fold" signals between colluding partners.

Combined Techniques--more common in casino poker	Uses	Methods
Collusion and manipulation (house dealer to partner)	Most effective and common in casinos with house dealers who manipulate cards and work in collusion with professional players.	The dealer culls or manipulates memorized cards to top of deck. He then knows everyone's hole cards and signals his partner when to bet, raise, or drop.

* Good players train themselves to evaluate the shades of darkness or blur intensities of partially flashed cards (e. g., darker shades or more intense blurs indicate higher-value cards--valuable information for lowball). If a player sees flashed cards without dealer collusion, he is not cheating since the same advantage is available to all players who choose to be equally alert. Alert players also watch for flashed cards as the dealer riffles, shuffles, and cuts.

In club poker, the alert player detects professional cheating most often in the highest-stake lowball games in which signaling systems and card-flashing collusion are devastatingly effective. In casino poker, the alert player detects collusion cheating most often in the highest-stake stud and hold 'em games.

Not all public-game professionals are cheaters or part of the professional establishment.[35] Not all high stake public games have cheaters, or even professionals, present. But any high-stake public game free of cheaters and professionals is ripe for exploitation and quickly attracts professionals and cheaters. Still, out of justice and fairness, the good player never considers anyone to be a cheater until he has adequate proof of cheating. Moreover, the good player strives to be just and fair in order to know more accurately what is going on and thus avoid costly errors. Being just and fair boosts his profits.

The good player resists the temptation to blame tough or painful losses on being cheated (rather than on coincidence or on his own errors). Because of the extra quick folds and the extra-aggressive bets used to beat cheaters, the good player can make an expensive error by misreading an opponent as a cheater.

Since cheating harms the long-range business interests of all public card clubs and casinos, management of the major clubs and casinos seriously oppose any form of cheating. They have always taken firm measures to eliminate and prevent cheating in their operations. For them, cheating means only bad publicity, lost business, lower profits, and potential legal problems. Without cheating, clubs and casinos can eventually extract all the money gamblers have to offer. With cheating, clubs and casinos could eventually go out of business.

Using tight controls and effective surveillance systems, the management of major casinos keeps all gaming operations (except poker) free of major, organized, or chronic cheating. All casino games,

except poker, function between casino and player, allowing management to closely monitor and tightly control the action. But in poker, the game functions between player and player (not between casino and player), leaving the management unable to monitor and control the action. That uniquely uncontrollable situation combined with the undetectability of professional collusion cheating makes poker the only casino game in which management has no practical way to detect or eliminate such cheating. Also, casino management and its employees are less motivated to ferret out poker cheating because in poker, the players (not the casino) lose money to cheaters. But in other games, the casino (not the players) loses money to cheaters.

The public view of casino cheating differs markedly from the actual situation. Several years ago, for example, a major poker-cheating conspiracy was publicly exposed in the Las Vegas MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, the world's largest gambling establishment. The police arrested the cardroom manager, the floorman, two dealers, and five outside partners--all were charged with illegal conspiracy and felony swindling. That publicized incident coincides with the public view of professional cheating in casino poker. But the authorities caught those alleged "professional cheaters" only because they were amateurish and crude in their techniques of culling, stacking, and peeking. Allegedly, they even resorted to copping chips from pots. But the MGM cheating scandal did not involve or even touch on the real professional cheating that flourishes with casual finesse in higher-stake poker games, unchecked by casino management and unnoticed by the public.

Even if professional cheaters were eliminated from a high-stake game, a wave of new professionals and cheaters would fill the vacuum in order to exploit the "easy pickings" inherent in any new or clean public poker game. The financial incentive is too great to prevent professionals and cheaters from quickly moving into high-stake poker games filled with tourists, losers, and other easy amateurs.

What will happen when management and the public become increasingly aware of this uncontrollable professional cheating? Most casinos could simply drop poker from their operations (or at least eliminate cheater-prone high-stake poker) with little lasting effect on their profits. But how will commercial poker clubs handle undetectable professional cheating? Nearly their entire business depends on poker, which, in turn, depends on the trust and confidence of their most important customers--the losers. Unless management can stop the spread of professional cheating (especially Neocheating), the commercial poker clubs could encounter business difficulties if the majority of their customers (the losers) began discovering and understanding the extent of professional cheating in their games.[36]

Since many professional poker players depend on collusion for a living and since their cheating is generally undetectable, management currently has no practical way to eliminate their cheating. One long-range solution might be tamper-proof mechanical or electronic shuffling and dealing devices that would not only eliminate undetectable dealer-player collusion, card flashing, and most card manipulations, but could also reduce operating costs by eliminating dealers, accelerating the action, and automating house collections. In turn, lower operating costs could result in lower-percentage house cuts. Also, elimination of competition from professional cheaters would further increase the profits of good players and independent professionals who win through their own skills rather than through cheating.

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Footnotes:

[32] Professionals who get involved with establishments or cliques usually limit their potentials and acquire rigid, stereo-typed characteristics that the good player can identify. Once he has identified the stereotyped characteristics of those professionals, the good player can predict their actions and consistently beat them--even when they cheat. The good player or superior professional, on the other hand, usually remains independent and avoids stereotyped characteristics. And often his opponents never realize that he is a good player who is winning all of their money.

[33] Most public-game professionals admire and respect the good poker player and readily accept him into their establishment (especially in Gardena and Las Vegas). Their ready acceptance of the good player seems contradictory to their best interests since such acceptance increases competition for the losers' money. But those professionals both respect and fear the independent good player. He is a threat to their system. They eliminate that threat by making him a part of their system. By contrast, the private or non establishment good player tries to get rid of any competing player who is good enough to drain money from the game.

[34] Classical cheating (e.g., stacking specific hands, second dealing, holding out cards) seldom occurs in club or casino poker. Occasionally amateurs, strangers, or newcomers attempt classical cheating in public poker. But since their techniques are almost always crude, they are usually caught and banished from the game. Few professional cheaters today approve of or practice that kind of obsolete mechanical cheating. New cheating methods (called Neocheating) are so much easier, more effective, and essentially undetectable.

[35] Likewise, not all private-game professionals are independent loners or above cheating.

[36] Chronic or heavy losers might even sue those card clubs and casinos in which they had systematically lost money to professional cheaters. But those losers would probably need corroboration from several professional cheaters to support any serious litigation.

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XXX
Why Professionals Cheat

The canons of poker, as clearly understood and tacitly accepted by every player, allow unlimited deception to win maximum money from ownerless pots. Therefore, everyone can and should freely use unlimited deception in every poker game. But no one should use deception outside of poker. If a person "plays poker" outside of a poker game, he becomes a dishonest person. Even *in poker*, however, a person becomes dishonest if he violates the understood and accepted canons of poker by usurping money through cheating. (Cheating is any manipulation of cards or any collusion that gives a player or players advantages not available to other players.)

Many poker players, including most professionals, do not fully distinguish between what is honest and what is dishonest, in and out of a poker game. For example, many professional players who day after day lie and practice deceit in poker ironically do not grasp the *rightness* of their poker deception. To them, lying and deception in poker become little different from cheating in poker. Their ethics become hazy and ill-defined. They feel the only barrier to crossing the line from lying and deception to cheating and stealing is the threat of being caught. By removing that threat (e.g., through undetectable Neocheating techniques), they cross over the line and begin cheating.

The failure to understand the black-and-white moral differences between deception in poker and cheating in poker is one reason why many players react so strongly (often violently, sometimes murderously) against a cheater. They fear that without strong anticheating reactions, everyone would easily cross over the line from deceiving them to cheating them. Sensing their own capacity to cheat, they assume the same capacity resides in everyone. Thus, even if they never cheat others, they fear that

others will cheat them. Generally those who react most violently against cheaters are those who would most readily cheat others if their fear of being caught and evoking similarly violent reactions from their opponents did not restrain them.

Most amateur poker players hold the classical but misleading views about cheating. They perceive nearly all cheating as being done either by bumbling amateurs who are easily caught or by highly dexterous and invincible cardsharps who have perfected sleight-of-hand skills through years of laborious practice and dangerous experience. In holding those misleading classical views, most amateur poker players remain unsuspecting of the casual, natural-appearing collusion cheating and Neocheating practiced among the professional establishment.

As the stakes of public games increase, the percentage of professional players increases--as does their motivation to cheat. Every player should increasingly expect and look for cheating as he progresses to higher-stake club or casino games ... right up to the highest-stake games, including the finals (down to the last three players) of the million-dollar world championship, freeze-out tournaments held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Most finalists in those tournaments are public-game professionals who have worked in the professional establishment for years. Few members of the professional cheating establishment would have qualms about making collusion arrangements in those tournaments or any high-stake game: Two of the three final players could safely and swiftly squeeze the third player out of the game with collusion betting to assure both the remaining players, for example, a several-hundred-thousand-dollar return on their original $10,000 stakes (their entry fees). By their collusion, the final two players would vastly improve their investment odds--they would eliminate any possibility of losing while guaranteeing themselves a large win.

When, how, and why does a public-game professional begin cheating? Imagine a lonely public-game player struggling against the house cut to become a full-time professional and suddenly discovering a friendly professional establishment with an ongoing cheating system readily available to him . . . an undetectable cheating system requiring no special skills and available for his immediate profit. Such a player, especially if he is a mediocre or marginal professional, will often embrace that opportunity by tacitly cooperating with the establishment professionals in perpetuating their system. He accepts their collusion cheating as a trade tool required for playing competitive, professional poker. As he blends in with those professionals and adopts their system, he becomes increasingly dependent not only on their establishment but on collusion cheating to survive. He loses his independence and becomes a stereotyped, public-game professional. With a sense of professional righteousness, he becomes a cheater.

XXXI
Beating Professional Cheaters

The alert player who is familiar with the basic professional cheating techniques can detect any cheating, even the most skilled and invisible cheating, without actually seeing the cheating. An alert player usually can tell who is cheating, what technique is being used, and exactly when the cheating is occurring by detecting patterns and combinations of illogical betting, raising, pace, and playing style by his opponents.

[37]

Once a player has detected and confirmed cheating in public poker, he has five options:

1. Join the cheating.
2. Beat the cheaters through the poorer playing, greater readability, and greater predictability that result from their cheating.
3. Eliminate the cheating.
4. Expose the cheating.
5. Quit the game.

The good player rejects his or her first option as not only dishonest and unhealthy, but also as the least profitable option. Several of John Finn's encounters with professional cheating described next in this chapter illustrate the other four options.

Although John Finn played mainly in private poker games because of their greater profitability, he did recently spend several months playing public poker in the Gardena, California, card clubs and in the Las Vegas, Nevada, casinos. In both the clubs and casinos, he discovered professional cheaters operating in the higher-stake games. John's public-game experiences uncovered six common cheating methods used in public poker (see A-F on the following pages). He also learned how the good player can routinely beat professional cheaters in public poker. More important, he learned to identify those situations in which he could not beat professional cheating.

1. Gardena, California

A. Collusion Cheating -- Reciprocal Card Flashing

During his first two days in Gardena, John Finn played in each of its six poker clubs. After the second day, he became aware of a cliquish network of amateur players, professional players, floormen, and cardroom managers woven through those six clubs. The continuous circulation of poker players among the clubs allowed everyone in that network to effectively communicate (and gossip) with each other. While most of the habitual amateur players in Gardena recognized they were a part of a clique, few recognized that the professional establishment was using them as fodder.

In the lower-stake games, John Finn found mainly amateurs; the few professionals were usually shills. In those games, he detected no cheating. On the fourth day, he graduated to a $20 blind, lowball draw game. In that game, he discovered from their poker styles and conversations that players in seats 2 and 5 were professionals involved in collusion cheating. Even before identifying them as full-time professionals, he knew they were colluding. Their methods were simple, effective, and unnoticeable. Both players sat low in their seats . . . each slumping a little lower when the other dealt. On dealing draw cards with smooth quicker-than-the-eye motions, the dealer would

expose key cards as fleeting blurs perceptible only to his partner. The partner would return the favor on his deal. The cheaters accomplished their card flashing with out suspicion despite the great pressure on dealers in the Gardena card clubs not to flash cards. (Only once did John observe a collusion cheater being scolded for his "careless" dealing. Ironically, John observed on numerous occasions non cheating dealers being scolded for flashing cards.)

By knowing when his own lowball draw card had been flashed, John Finn could outmaneuver the cheating partners by more accurately predicting what they would do as the result of their knowing his draw card. The cheaters, therefore, were constantly misled by John's counter actions--they repeatedly misjudged what he would do. John Finn exploited and beat both collusion partners by using the cheating counteractions described in his notes on lowball cheating:

1. Save money by folding promptly against a cheater's more readable winning hand.

2. Lure the cheater into making an expensive bluff when he draws a picture card or a pair in low-ball and knows you have drawn a high card such as a ten or a jack. The cheater's overconfidence often encourages him to bluff excessively.

3. Set up the cheater for an easy bluff. For example, a strong lowball bluff position develops when the cheater knows you have drawn a good low card (e.g., a six or lower), but does not know you paired the low card.

4. When you draw a powerful low hand, the overconfident cheater can sometimes be misled into believing you did pair, causing him to call a final bet.

5. When the readable cheater bluffs, use his aggressive betting to drive out other players who have you beat. When the other players are driven out, simply call the cheater's bluff. Or when necessary, bluff out the bluffing cheater with a final raise.

In each of the above examples, the cheater would have either won more money or lost less money if he had concentrated on playing sound poker to gain broad information about his opponent (rather than on cheating to gain information only about his opponent's draw card).

Throughout the night, John Finn used those counteractions to exploit and beat both collusion cheaters. And on occasion, when positioned properly, John saw cards flash between the partners. He used what he saw to further improve his advantage. When the game ended at seven in the morning, the two professional players were big losers. They left the table cursing their "bad luck," never realizing that their own cheating had victimized them.

Over the next several days in Gardena, John Finn noticed five trends while moving from lower-stake to higher-stake games:

1. **The ratio of professional players to amateur players increased. But the proportion of out-of-town losers decreased only slightly.**

2. **The skill of the professional players increased.**

3. **The incidence of collusion cheating increased.**

4. **Cheating became more dominant and profitable in lowball poker (compared to highball poker). Also, professional players became more dependent on cheating in lowball draw, but were more dependent on skill in highball draw.**

5. **The edge odds for outside players generally decreased, especially in lowball draw. (In the highest-stake lowball games in which the best professional cheaters operate, the edge odds for the good player can drop to unprofitable levels.)**

Because the best public-game professionals and cheaters concentrated on the highest-stake lowball games (in which professional cheating was most effective and profitable), John Finn found that he could often improve both his edge odds and his investment odds by dropping back a level or two from the highest-stake games. When he dropped to lower-stake games, competition lessened--money extraction was easier and often more profitable because of the decreased ratio of tough professionals and cheaters to easy losers and amateurs.

In public poker, great pressure is on the dealer not to flash cards, especially in high-stake lowball. But these games offer professional collusion cheaters the greatest profit incentive to flash cards. Most card flashing, therefore, occurs in the high-stake lowball games. The flashing motions are usually so quick and smooth that very few outsiders ever notice or even suspect card flashing. And most professional collusion cheaters use cautious discretion and avoid flashing cards whenever they sense suspicion by others. If flashing is suspected, the colluding partners will usually switch to a less effective signaling system or move to another game.

Still, many professional cheaters in Gardena use only reciprocal signaling systems because they are not sufficiently knowledgeable about systematic card flashing. And while collusion *signaling* is more commonly used among cheaters, card *flashing* is more effective and flexible because the colluding partners need no prearrangements, no agreements, no payments, no splitting of loot, no secret signals, no collusion betting, no deck stacking, and not even card flashing on the initial deal: They need only to flash draw cards toward their fellow professionals--toward any fellow professional who will tacitly return the favor. Their flashing movements are usually so natural and guiltless that few if any opponents ever see them. And if they are suspected, neither the victims nor the poker club management can directly accuse the colluders of cheating because they have no concrete evidence. Furthermore, the cheaters can have different, unplanned collusion partners for every game so no fixed set of partners can ever be pinned down and accused of collusion cheating.

In any case, collusion cheating of all varieties among establishment professionals is becoming increasingly common as they silently extend to one another their mutual, professional "courtesies." In fact, some California card clubs have compiled lists of suspected collusion cheaters who are either barred from the club or are not permitted to play at the same table.

But whenever a poker player cheats, the quality of his play declines because his time, energy, and thought must shift from sound-poker actions to cheating actions. He usually becomes overconfident and careless about playing poker--his objectivity, concentration, and discipline diminish as his thinking efforts become diluted. His betting becomes distorted and usually overly aggressive. And most importantly, his hands become more readable and his actions become more predictable whenever he cheats.

The classical card-manipulation type of cheating is rare among the Gardena professionals. John encountered that kind of cheating only once, and he made a quick profit from the cheater by pulling an old ploy against him--the torn-corner flash:

In his final lowball game at Gardena, John sat to the left of a collusion cheater who had switched a card with his partner to win a pot. After the hand, John saw the cheater ditch a face card on the floor. No one noticed the missing card. On the next hand, the cheater summoned the floorman for new cards. The cards were exchanged, but the ditched card remained on the floor. Two hands later, when the same cheater was involved in another pot, John leaned under the table to pick up some money he had purposely dropped. While under the table, he quickly tore the corner off the ditched card and slipped the corner into his jacket pocket.

Several hands later, John had a powerful six low. The cheater on his right had a callable low hand. John reached into his pocket, withdrew the torn face-card corner, and positioned it at the top edge of his cards. Then while concealing his other cards, he accidentally-on-purpose flashed his hand to the cheater, who immediately spotted the "picture card" in John's hand. John bet the $20 maximum. Now positive that John was bluffing a busted lowball hand, the cheater raised. John inconspicuously dropped the torn corner beneath the table and reraised. Since they were the only two players remaining in the hand, the number of raises was unlimited. They reraised each other the maximum $20 bet many times. Suddenly the cheater stopped betting. He choked, pushed back his chair, and looked on the floor. Dropping his hand face down on the table, the red-faced man promptly left the game without even calling John's last $20 raise. John pulled in the $460 pot.

John Finn left Gardena knowing that he could consistently beat both the professionals and the cheaters to earn a regular income from any club game, except possibly from the highest-stake lowball games that were dominated by the best professional players and cheaters.

2. Las Vegas, Downtown

B. Collusion Cheating with House Dealer-- Natural-Play Technique

John Finn first encountered professional casino cheating in a large poker room of a major hotel casino in downtown Las Vegas. The cheating involved the dealer, the cardroom manager, and his friend--and was unusual because management was involved.[38]

Initially, John Finn was not suspicious of or looking for cheating patterns because (1) the game was fairly low stakes $5-$10 high stud (although that was the highest-stake game in the cardroom at the time), and (2) the cardroom manager was not only playing, but was sitting next to the dealer. The game seemed safe from cheating.

Moving clockwise from the dealer's left sat (1) the cardroom manager, (2) a professional poker player, who was also a friend of the manager, (3) a poor-playing tourist, (4) a regular player, (5) [an empty seat], (6) an ex-poker dealer, (7) John Finn, and (8) a woman who was an off-duty blackjack dealer.

Within an hour, newcomer John Finn was the biggest winner. He was playing aggressively, winning heavily, and badly beating the other players--especially the woman player in seat 8, who was playing poorly.

The manager and several other players seemed annoyed and confused over John Finn's unorthodox and unpredictable play. After a shift change of dealers, the woman player switched to empty seat 5. Two hands later, another tourist sat in empty seat 8. He found a loose card beside John's elbow. The card apparently had slid under a napkin left by the woman player, and the dealer never noticed the missing card. (Some dealers can feel when one card is missing by the bulk and weight of the deck.) Several players glanced sharply at John as if they had discovered how he was beating them. The manager left the table and returned moments later.

Before the next hand, a floorman brought two fresh decks of cards to the dealer. John Finn became puzzled on noticing the cards were in a brown box bearing an orange-shield label from the Normandie Club in Gardena, California. Two hands later, John maneuvered into a strong position and was betting heavily. The manager beat him in a series of illogical but infallible calls and bets that did not coincide with the manager's poker style or ability. Staring straight at John Finn, he pushed the large pot to the woman player--the heavily-losing, off-duty blackjack dealer in seat 5. She took the money without appearing grateful or surprised by the manager's "generous" action.

Several hands later, John Finn again maneuvered into a strong and favorable position; he bet heavily, but once more was beaten in a similar series of illogical calls and raises by the manager's friend--the professional player. John became alert and suspicious. At first he thought his hole cards were being flashed, especially since the professional player sat low in his seat. Trying to counter that possibility, John was unsuccessful as he lost two more large pots to the manager, who again won through a series of illogical but infallible moves. John then noticed a slight crimp in his

cards--such as might occur if a dealer had crimped for a false cut and then failed to bend out the crimp. In addition, the dealer gripped the cards in a way to facilitate false cutting. Yet, John detected no evidence of card culling, discard sorting, or deck stacking. After certain hands, however, the dealer would periodically glance at face-down discards as he gathered cards for the next deal. Still he made no attempt to rearrange any cards.

John Finn lost another large hand to the manager's friend. While assuming that he was the victim of collusion cheating, John did not know how or when it was occurring. His counteractions not only failed, but increased his losses. He had lost his winnings and was losing over $200 before he realized how the cheating was occurring. The method was simple, essentially undetectable, yet devastatingly effective. After each hand, the dealer simply gathered the face-up stud cards in a natural way, making no attempt to cull, sort, or stack them ... he merely remembered the value and order of the exposed cards. If too few cards had been exposed, he would simply glance at some face-down cards. By remembering fourteen cards[39] and by keeping them in an unchanged order on top of the deck through blind shuffles, false riffles, and false cuts, the dealer would know everyone's hole cards--thus, he would know everyone's exact hand right up until the seventh and final card. From that omniscient position, the dealer would then make all the playing and betting decisions for his partner (or partners) by signaling when to fold, call, bet, or raise. The playing partner would never need to know anyone's hand, including his own; he would only need to follow the signals of the all-knowing dealer.

On losing his third large pot to the low-sitting professional, John Finn realized that he could not beat that kind of collusion cheating and that his only choice was to quit the game. In order to gain some benefit, in order to analyze player reactions, John decided to openly declare his suspicion of cheating without revealing how much he really knew. He wanted to leave himself in the most knowledgeable and strongest position should he decide to return to the game.

After losing the pot, John placed one of his crimped hole cards on the flat palm of his hand and lifted the card to eye level. The dealer was waiting for the card as everyone watched John Finn. "Are these cards marked?" he asked, knowing that except for the crimping they probably were not. At that moment, he yanked his hand from beneath the card. It fell in an irregular motion to the table. Everyone stared at John ... everyone except the dealer, the manager, and the professional player--they kept glancing in different directions. John Finn picked up his chips and left. He had learned something.

An all-knowing collusion dealer greatly increases the investment odds for his playing partner while leaving the playing partner immune to errors and detection as well as to having his hands and intentions read by the good player. Furthermore, the cheater's cards always appear normal and above suspicion. No dramatic or improbable set-up hands occur. The cheater may fold at any time during the hand and sometimes is beaten on the last card . . . all normal in appearance and above suspicion-- except for the cheater's illogical playing and betting patterns and his unnaturally improved investment and edge odds.

More important to the good player, such a cheating system is difficult if not impossible to beat. The good player has only the seventh and final down card with which to outmaneuver and beat the cheater. (That final card is the only unknown to the signaling collusion dealer.) But by the final bet, the good player's investment odds would be so diminished by the previous four bets controlled by an infallible pair of collusion cheaters that he probably could not beat them over the long term. If the cheating technique includes the dealer's knowing or peeking at the final down card or if the game is five-card or six-card stud with no final down card,[40] the good player then has no way to beat the dealer-player collusion cheaters, even if he could crack their signaling code.

The strength of their collusion system lies in its simplicity and natural-appearing play. By contrast, the classical cheating systems involve dramatic big-hand or certain-win setups. Such setups are not necessary or even desirable. The dealer-player collusion system quietly extracts money from its victims. Such a collusion system is ideal for casino poker because the house dealer[41] deals every hand, thus leaving the collusion partners in an ideal cheating position for every hand (unlike club or private poker in which each partner deals only once each round.) That constantly favorable cheating position allows a slower, more casual and natural method for extracting money from victims. Furthermore, no player touches or cuts the cards except the house dealer, thus greatly facilitating and simplifying the cheater's card manipulations and false cuts. But in club or private poker, a non dealing player usually cuts the cards, making card manipulations and deck stacking more difficult for the dealer.

C. Collusion Cheating with House Dealer--Culling and Stacking

On the following afternoon, John Finn entered a newly remodeled downtown casino that had introduced poker only a few weeks before. The card area was small and offered only $1-$3 stud games. Wanting to examine low-stake casino poker, John Finn sat in the open seat on the dealer's left. Again, he did not expect cheating in a low-stake game. He soon realized that the other four players were locals--they all knew one another and the dealer. But none of the players appeared to be professionals or good players. The players and the dealer chatted amicably among themselves. John Finn played the role of an inexperienced tourist by asking naive questions about the rules. The game was loose. On the third hand, all four players stayed until the final card. Sixteen face-up cards were exposed, including an exposed two pair of aces and queens. Another ace and another queen were also among the face-up cards. John Finn watched with narrowing eyes as the dealer picked up the cards--he scooped up a queen and an ace and then three other cards. His hand darted back to scoop up the second queen and ace and then three more random cards before scooping the final queen and ace. He then gathered the rest of the cards.

After carefully squaring the deck, the dealer made several false riffles and a false cut before dealing. John knew what was going to happen. He did not even look at his two hole cards. His first up card was a queen. The first up card of the player on his left was an ace. The player with the ace looked twice at his hole cards and then bet $1. Everyone folded to John. He paused and looked at each player and then at the dealer. Everyone was watching him and waiting. The dealer stopped smiling when John placed the edge of his right hand firmly over the lower half of his hole cards

and tore them in half. He then turned over his two torn queens, placed them face-up alongside his third queen. John then quickly flipped over his opponent's hole cards, which were aces, and placed them face-up alongside that opponent's third ace. Everyone remained silent.

"Redeal." John ordered. The dealer glanced toward the mirrors in the ceiling over the blackjack tables and then quickly collected the cards--including the torn ones. He redealt from a new deck. Over the next dozen hands, John Finn aggressively manipulated his now tense and confused opponents. In twenty minutes, he ripped $50 from the low-stake game and left. As he walked down the aisle of blackjack tables, he glanced toward the poker area. The dealer and the players he left behind were still staring at him.

That was a mistake, John Finn thought to himself. I revealed too much about myself for only $50.

3. Las Vegas, the Strip

D. Collusion Cheating trough Partner Crossfire Betting

That evening, John Finn entered a major casino on the Strip. The casino had a large poker area. The action was heavy. In addition to many low-stake and intermediate-stake games, several high-stake stud games ($30-$60 games of high stud, low stud, and high-low stud) were in progress. John began in a $5-$10 game, moved up to a $10-$20 game and then graduated to a $15-$30 stud game before encountering professional cheating.

The cheating was simple collusion between two professionals who signaled the strengths of their hands to each other. The cheater with the strongest hand or position would indicate to his partner when to check, bet, or raise. Their collusion entrapped or drove out players and increased or decreased the betting pace--whatever was most advantageous to the cheaters at the moment. The collusion partners increased their investment odds by either sucking in or driving out players to improve their betting position and their odds for winning. They entrapped players and then generated bets and raises to build larger pots whenever either cheater held a strong hand. They consistently bilked the tourists and transient players . . . at least until John Finn entered their game.

He promptly detected collusion cheating by the illogical patterns of checks, bets, and raises between the partners. Since the dealer was not involved with card manipulations or flashing, John easily turned the collusion to his own advantage at the expense of the cheaters. He beat the cheaters because their collusion actions markedly improved his accuracy in reading their hands and intentions. When either partner held a strong hand, John read their strength more quickly and folded sooner--thus saving considerable money. Moreover, when the cheating partners revealed a strong hand and John held a stronger hand, he quietly let them suck him and other players into the pot. He let them build the pot for him with extra bets and raises. On the final bet, John would end his passivity with a maximum raise.

Also, the colluding partners doubled their losses to John whenever they bet as a team into pots that John won. If they had not colluded, normally only the player holding the strongest hand (rather than both players) would have been betting into John's winning hand.

To further increase his advantage, John Finn manipulated the readable hands and intentions of those cheaters against the other unsuspecting players. But John reaped his most profitable advantages from the cheaters when they bluffed. (Most collusion cheaters are overconfident and often can be lured into bluffs.) John would keep calling with a mediocre or even a poor hand as the bluffing partners kept betting aggressively to drive out players who held superior hands. John would then simply call the final bluff to win the pot. Or when necessary, he himself would bluff by stepping in with a raise after the final bet to drive out the bluffer and any remaining players to win the pot with a busted or a poor hand.

In three hours, John Finn converted the two professional cheaters from substantial winners into the biggest losers at the table and drove them from the game. With a $600 profit, he left that table to explore other games. He sat down at a table where four professional players were operating as two separate teams of colluding partners, cheating each other as well as the other three players. John assumed the role of a slightly drunk, wild-playing tourist--an ideal fish. He promptly broke the game open by playing all four cheaters against one another and against the other three players. In an hour, John ripped $900 from the game and then abruptly left the table. As he walked away, some of the players mumbled about his "unbelievable hot streak" and his "dumb luck."

John walked over to the highest-stake game in the house--a fast-paced, $30-$60 lowball, seven-stud game (razz). As he studied the action, he wondered about the unusual house rule that allowed five raises instead of the standard three. The five raises greatly increased the flexibility and advantage of collusion cheaters over their victims. John also wondered about the much higher proportion of professional players and collusion cheaters he observed in this casino. Was the management aware of their collusion cheating, he wondered. Did the management establish the five-raise rule to accommodate the cheaters? Or were the professional collusion cheaters drawn to this casino because of a five-raise rule innocently established by management to increase the betting action? . . . John assumed the latter to be true.

Standing behind the dealer, John Finn continued to watch the high-stake game. For nearly an hour, he studied the two biggest winners. From their conversation and style, he knew they were professionals, yet neither seemed to be cheating or colluding. Still he noticed that in spite of the large pots, the dealer was not being toked (tipped) when either professional won a pot. John Finn studied the dealer more closely: Gathering the face-up cards in a routine left-to-right order, the dealer made no attempt to rearrange the cards. But as players folded, the dealer would make a pile with their face-down discards and then gather their face-up cards and flip them on top of the discard pile. He would then flip the later-round face-up cards directly on top of the discard pile while slipping dead hole or face-down cards beneath the pile. If the hand ended with fewer than

fourteen up cards being exposed, the dealer would casually glance at several face-down discards and toss them on top of the discard pile.

Although John could not actually see any blind shuffles, false riffles, or false cuts (or verify any illogical cheating patterns[42]), he speculated that the dealer was memorizing everyone's hole card and then signaling the best moves to one or both of the professional players ... in a way similar to that used by the dealer who was colluding with the casino manager and his friend two days earlier in the downtown casino. And, as in the downtown casino, John Finn concluded that with his current knowledge and experience, he could not beat that kind of dealer-collusion cheating. He therefore left the casino without playing in the $30-$60 game.

E. Amateurish Collusion Cheating with Sanction of House Dealer

Traveling south on the Strip, John Finn came to another major casino with a large cardroom. He observed the various poker games for thirty minutes. After considering the higher-stake games, he sat in a medium-stake ($10-$20) seven-card stud game because more of its players looked like losers. All were out-of-town gamblers and tourists, except for two women players sitting together across from John. Although their conversation revealed they were experienced local players, both women played poorly. Nevertheless, they were winning moderately because of their collusion cheating, which was crude and obvious. They blatantly showed their live hole cards to each other and then coordinated their betting to produce a collective advantage. The other players either did not notice their collusion or were too indifferent or timid to object. By quietly taking advantage of their much more readable hands, John converted the two women from winners to losers.

John then lost a fairly large pot to the women cheaters. During the hand, they had flashed their hole cards to each other. Then in a crude and visible manner, they actually swapped their final hole cards during the last round of betting, allowing one woman to win with a full house. After she turned her hole cards face-up, John Finn stuck his arm over the pot when the dealer started pushing it toward the woman. John then silently removed all the chips he had put into the pot. "Any objections?" he asked, looking at the two women and then the dealer. No one objected. John had his information. He picked up his chips and left for a higher-stake game.

F. Unbeatable Collusion Cheating through Dealer-Player Partnerships

John Finn entered the casino farther south on the Strip that normally offered the highest-stake poker games in Las Vegas. For twenty minutes, he watched six players in a $100-$200 seven-card stud game. He detected two professional players in the game and studied them (one was apparently losing slightly, the other was winning heavily). They were working over four out-of-town gamblers, all of whom were losing. While the two professionals did not seem to be in direct collusion with each other, when winning a pot neither player toked (tipped) the dealer. And while the dealer never glanced at face-down cards when gathering cards for the next deal, he did riffle and shuffle the cards several extra times whenever the previous hand produced fewer than twelve

face-up cards. Without seeing anything else, John speculated that when the dealer was riffling the cards he was also memorizing the hole cards of every player. As before, John knew he could not beat collusion cheating involving a house dealer who knew everyone's hole cards. So he left without playing.

After three days in Las Vegas, John Finn realized that professional collusion cheating was well ensconced in higher-stake casino poker. He also knew that the alert good player could subvert and beat most forms of professional cheating in public poker. And most important, he identified those collusion situations that he could not beat.

In theory, even collusion cheating involving all-knowing house dealers can be beaten by the good player with superior strategy and better money management. Yet to beat such cheaters, the good player needs to know what the cheaters know ... he needs to know the concealed or hole cards of every opponent through near perfect card reading. But few if any players can achieve such perfection. Therefore, essentially all players, no matter how good, will lose money in games dominated by well-executed dealer-collusion cheating.

In any case, justice prevails in poker. The honest good player will generally win more money from poker than will the professional cheater. Furthermore, as a professional player becomes increasingly dependent on cheating for his support, he will become increasingly entrapped in an unproductive career and a limited future. The honest player, on the other hand, retains his independence and freedom to seek more creative and profitable opportunities, both inside *and* outside of poker.

Nevertheless, because of the cosmopolitan and dynamic nature of public poker, it is often a harbinger or indicator of what will eventually occur in private poker. Indeed, today the new and subtle, yet simple and invisible, cheating techniques (Neocheating) that are spreading throughout public poker are already infiltrating private home games.

XXXII
Survey of Clubs and Casinos

Six commercial poker clubs in Gardena, California, are surveyed in Table 37. Those six clubs provide 210 poker and pan tables with 1680 seats. Throughout California, 400 licensed poker clubs have a potential capacity of 14,000 tables and 112,000 seats. State licensed poker parlors are also found in Montana, Oregon, Washington, and other states.

Thirty-three major casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada, are surveyed in Tables 38 and 39. The growing interest in public poker and the attractive profit margins possible from a well-run poker operation have caused sharp increases over the past few years in the number of poker tables in Nevada casinos. In addition to the more than thirty major poker rooms in Las Vegas, at least forty additional casino poker rooms exist in other cities and towns in Nevada. And major casino poker rooms are found in Reno at Cal

Nev, Circus Circus, Harold's Club Harrah's, Horseshoe Club, MGM Grand, and Sahara Reno: and in Lake Tahoe at Park-Tahoe and Sahara Tahoe.

TABLE 37
SURVEY OF CLUB POKER IN GARDENA, CALIFORNIA

(Clubs open 24 hours Monday through Saturday, open 20 hours on Sunday)
(Games subject to change)

Card Club	# of Tables	Draw Games*	Stakes, $	Comments
Eldorado Club 15411 South Vermont Avenue Gardena, California (213) 323-2800 (Closed Thursdays)	35	**High** Jacks **Low** Blind Blind raise **Pan**	1-2 to 50-100 1-2 to 100-200	More emphasis on high-stake lowball. Attracts toughest lowball professionals. Rough on beginners and amateurs.
Horseshoe Club 14305 South Vermont Avenue Gardena, California (213) 323-7520 (Closed Wednesdays)	35	**High** Jacks California High-low **Low** Straight Blind open Blind raise Razz	1-2 to 50-100 2-4 to 100-200	Most crowded. Greatest variety of poker. More higher-stake games. Highest percentage of tough professionals. Roughest on beginners and amateurs.

Club		Games		Stakes	Comments
Monterey Club 13927 South Vermont Avenue Gardena, California (213) 329-7524 (Closed Tuesdays)	35	**High** Jacks **Low** Straight Blind **Pan**		1-2 to 40-80 2-4 to 50-100	Same management as next-door Rainbow Club. Some of the best professionals work these two clubs.
Rainbow Club 13915 South Vermont Avenue Gardena, California (213) 323-8150 (Closed Tuesdays)	35	**High** Jacks Blind **Low** Straight Blind **Pan**		1-2 to 50-100 2-4 to 100-200	Same comments as Monterey Club. More emphasis on pan.
Normandie Club 1045 West Rosecrans Boulevard Gardena, California (213) 323-2424 (Closed Thursdays)	35	**High** Jacks High-low **Low** Straight Blind Razz **Pan**		1-2 to 10-20s 1-2 to 20-40	Tendency toward lower stakes. Fewer professionals. Generally less crowded than other clubs. Good club to learn in.
Gardena Club 15446 South Western Avenue Gardena, California (213) 323-7301 (Closed Wednesdays)	35	**High** Jacks **Low** Straight Blind **Pan**		1-2 to 20-40 1-2 to 20-40	Same management as Horseshoe Club. More relaxed atmosphere. More regular players, but fewer professional players. More low-stake action than other clubs. Best club to learn in.

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Footnotes:

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[37] To detect invisible cheating, a player must be involved in at least one hand and perhaps several hands in which cheating occurs in order to observe the illogical poker patterns and variables. For that reason, every player must be cautious about high-stake or no-limit games in which he could be lured into a single cheating setup and financially wiped out before detecting any cheating. A player must never relax his vigilance against being set up for a one-shot, big-hand play designed to wipe him out. Indeed, the wise player views with suspicion and is prepared to throw away without a bet any super-powerful hand (e.g., four of a kind or a straight flush) that he receives in high-stake games with strangers.

The alert and adroit player, nevertheless, can beat the one-shot, big-hand cheating setup by scalping the bait but not swallowing the hook when the setup hand finally appears. Being aware of a cheating setup, the shrewd player can sometimes extract sizable bait (e.g., $5000) by staging an illusory huge payoff (e.g., $100,000). After plucking the bait, he must fold without a bet on the first super-powerful hand dealt to him. Or better yet, he should leave the game before the big hand is sprung--in which case, he may even be able to return for more bait.... But the good player is also smart--he never tries conning unsavory players who might rob, assault, or even kill him for his counter-intrigue.

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[38] Normally even the lowest-level management in major casinos is unaware and innocent of professional cheating in their cardrooms.

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[39] Rapid memorization of large groups of cards can be difficult. But, with practice, most players can learn to rapidly memorize fourteen or more cards (even the entire deck) by association, mnemonic, and grouping techniques. (Reference: *Perfecting Your Card Memory* by Charles Edwards, Gambler's Book Club, Las Vegas, Nevada, 1974.)

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[40] Six-card stud with no final down card has nearly replaced seven-card stud in Reno and is beginning to appear in Las Vegas. Without an unknown final hole card, five-card and six-card stud give

an unbeatable advantage to the dealer-player collusion cheaters.

[41] Not every house dealer cheats. In fact, most casino dealers never cheat and are probably unaware of any professional collusion cheating occurring around them. When a collusion dealer is temporarily relieved by a non cheating dealer, the collusion partner will sometimes leave, but will often continue playing while waiting for the collusion dealer to return. Agreements with and payments to collusion dealers are usually made off shift, away from the casino. Payments are by a flat rate, by a percentage of winnings, or by a combination of both.

[42] The alert player detects and verifies illogical cheating patterns by evaluating the actions of cheaters relative to his own playing and betting actions. But without actually playing in the game, an outside observer, even an alertly suspicious and knowledgeable observer, cannot easily see or verify the illogical patterns of a competent cheater . . . at least not in a short period of time. (That is one reason why casino management is seldom aware of professional cheating in poker; few people can detect competent poker cheating without actually playing against the cheaters in order to notice and evaluate illogical cheating patterns.)

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Notes on draw games

- By law, only draw games are allowed in California card clubs
- *High draw* is played with fifty-two cards. *Low draw* is played with fifty-three cards using the joker as a wild card.
- *Jacks* is draw poker that requires a pair of jacks or better to open. *California* is draw poker that can be opened on anything.
- *High low* is *not* a split-pot game, but is high draw with aces to open. If the pot is not opened, the game switches to low draw.
- *Blind open* means the player on the dealer's left must bet. *Blind raise* means the player to the left of the blind opener must raise.
- *Razz* played in Gardena poker clubs is not lowball stud, but is a blind, lowball draw game in which the winner of the previous pot bets last and may be required to double the blind bet
- *Pan* (Panguingue) is not poker, but a form of rummy that requires less skill than poker. *Pan* is of little interest to good poker players.

TABLE 38
CASINO POKER ON THE STRIP
IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

(Starting south on the strip and moving north)
--22 casinos. 167 tables with 24-hour poker--

Casino	# of Tables	Games Played	Stakes, $*
Hacienda (739-8911)	4	7 Stud	1-3
Tropicana (739-2222)	6	7 Stud Razz	1-2 to 3-6 1-4
Treasury (739-1000)	3	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em	1-3 1-3 2-4
Marina (739-1500)	4	7 Stud Hold 'em	1-4, 5-10 2-4
Aladdin (736 0111)	9	7 Stud Hold 'em	1-3 to 5-10 3-6, 5-10
Dunes (734-4110)	10	7 Stud Hi Lo Stud Hold 'em Razz 2-7 Lowball	1-4 to 500-1000 15-30 to 50-100 3-6 to 500-1000 1-3 to 30-60 100-200 to 1500-3000
MGM Grand (739-4111)	16	7 Stud	1-3 to 5-10
Caesar's Palace (731-7110)	9	7 Stud	1-3 to 5-10
Barbary Coast (737-7111)	5	7 Stud	1-3, 3-6
Castaways (731-5252)	2	7 Stud	1-3

Holiday Casino (732-2411)	8	7 Stud	1-2, 3-6
Imperial Palace (731-3311)	6	7 Stud Draw Low	1-2 to 5-10 2-5 to 2-10
Desert Inn (733-4444)	7	7 Stud Hold 'em	1-3, 3-6 1-5
Silver Slipper (734-1212)	6	7 Stud Hold 'em	1-3, 3-6 3-6
Stardust (732-6111)	20	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em	1-3 to 15-30 15-30 to 50-100 3-6
Landmark (733-1110)	4	7 Stud Hold 'em Razz	1-2 to 3-6 2-4 to pot limit 1-3
Silver City (732-4152)	6	7 Stud Hold 'em	.50-1 to 1-6 pot limit
Circus Circus (734-0960)	13	7 Stud 6 Stud Hold 'em	1-3, 3-6 2-4, 4-8 1-5
Riveria (732-0960)	14	7 Stud Hold 'em 2-7 Lowball	1-3 to 500-1000 3-6 to no limit no limit
Sahara (737-2111)	8	7 Stud Hi Lo Stud Razz	1-4 to 15-30 10-20, 15-30 3-6 to 5-10
Bingo Palace (876-8223)	3	7 Stud Hold 'em	1-3 2-4 to pot limit

Vegas World (382-2000)	4	7 Stud Hold 'em Draw	1-2, 1-3 1-5 1-3

* See footnote to Table 39.

TABLE 39
CASINO POKER
IN DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

(Starting at Fremont Street and moving east)
--12 casinos, 79 tables with 24-hour poker--

Casino	*# of Tables*	*Games Played*	*Stakes, $\$^*$*
Union Plaza (386-2110)	7	7 Stud Hi Lo Stud Razz Hold 'em	1-3 3-6 3-6 1-3, 1-6
Holiday International (385-2181)	6	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em	1-2, 1-6 1-3 2-4
Las Vegas Club (385-1874)	4	7 Stud Razz	1-2, 1-6 1-3, 3-6
Mint (385-7440)	10	7 Stud Hold 'em Draw (low)	1-2, 1-3 1-2, 2-4 3-6
Golden Nugget (385-9086)	12	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em Draw (low)	1-2, 1-3 3-6 1-2 to 20-40 3-6

Horseshoe (382-1600)	0	No poker, except the annual World Series of Poker in May.	---
Fremont (385-3232)	16	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em Draw (low)	1-3 to 3-6 3-6, 5-10 2-4, 3-6 2-5
Four Queens (385-4011)	9	7 Stud Hold'em Draw (low)	1-3 1-4 1-5
Lady Luck (384-4680)	4	7 Stud Draw Draw (low)	1-3 1-3 2-4
El Cortez (385-5200)	4	7 Stud Hi Lo Stud	1-2, 1-3 3-6
Sam's Town (456-7777)	4	7 Stud Hold 'em Dealer's Choice	1-3 2-4 1-4
Nevada Palace (458-8810)	3	7 Stud Razz Hold 'em	1-3, 3-6 1-3 1-3, 2-4

* Maximum rake at some casinos is as low as $1.50-$2.00 per pot (ask the cardroom manager or floorman for information on game rules and house cut). With thirty to forty hands played per hour, even that low rake permanently removes $45-$80 per hour or about $1000-$2000 per table per day. Allowing for lower cuts and slack periods, the amounts removed from a low-rake table with four or five players averages $500-$1000 per twenty-four-hour day. The average casino poker table extracts from its players an estimated $850 per day or about $300,000 per year. (Also see the second footnote to Table 32.)

The buy-in (the minimum cash value of chips a player must buy to enter the game) is usually ten times the limit of the first bet.

XXXIII

The Billion-Dollar Poker Industry

Public poker is a billion-dollar-a-year industry involving 400 California card clubs, scores of card clubs in other states, and about 100 Nevada casinos.

The public poker industry could collapse if a majority of its customers--the losers--ever fully realize the amount of money that they will lose with automatic certainty to the winners (good players, professionals, and professional cheaters) and to the casinos or card clubs (through automatic rakes or time collections). Once they clearly understand their inevitable and inescapable loser's role, some public players might quit poker to save their time and money. Others might switch to private poker to eliminate their automatic losses to the house, the professionals, and the cheaters. Still others might switch to other gambling or casino games to eliminate their losses to the good players, the professionals, and the cheaters. Or would they quit or switch? Would the losers abandon public poker despite knowing the inescapable multiple tributes they must pay to the house, the good players, the professionals, and the cheaters?

All other legalized games have a sound and honest operating base that mechanically extracts fixed percentages from all players. Professional players and widespread cheating do not exist for any casino game (except poker) because in those other games, players cannot extract money from other players-- and no player can extract money from the house or casino over the long term. Therefore, no true professional player can exist for any casino game (except in poker and perhaps rare cases in blackjack) because no player can support himself by gambling against immutable odds that favor the house or casino.

The public poker industry, on the other hand, is built on a unique establishment of genuine professional players who make a living by applying superior poker abilities, collusion cheating, or a combination of both to consistently extract money from the other public players--the losers.

Could the billion-dollar public poker industry survive if the losers clearly understood their role of being permanent milch cows to the house, the professionals, and the cheaters? Perhaps . . . perhaps not . . . depending on how many public players would continue to accept their role as suckers and losers.

If the losers ever began rejecting their sucker's role by quitting public poker, the public poker industry would collapse.[43] Indeed, the entire gambling industry would collapse if customers ever became imbued with rational self-interest and began rejecting their loser's role.

Footnotes:

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[43] The demise of public poker could benefit good players in private games by causing an influx of losers into their private games, especially in Nevada, California, and other areas in which public poker now exists. But a disadvantageous influx of public-game professionals and cheaters into their private games could also occur.

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PART SEVEN

POKER NOTES

XXXIV
Poker Notes--1968 to 1980

This chapter compiles and summarizes some poker ideas and concepts accumulated since the Advanced Concepts of Poker were first published.

1. Who Is Buying the Poker Manual?

More winners than losers are buying this book. The most profitable advertising for the Poker Manual comes from successful-oriented publications such as *Forbes, Fortune,* and *The Wall Street Journal. A* scanning of letterheads from orders confirms that the majority of Poker Manual buyers are successful individuals. In other words, winners are more interested than losers in improving their performance.... That is logical.

The Poker Manual exposes the rationalizations and self-deceptions of chronic losers. It strips away their

excuses and facades. Many losers resentfully reject the identifications made throughout the Manual. As long as they reject the identifications, they will remain losers. Yet, any loser who owns the Manual can become a winner if he chooses to apply the Advanced Concepts of Poker.

2. What Will Happen When All Players Own the Poker Manual?

As sales of the Poker Manual increase, more and more players ask, "What will happen when all poker players own the Manual? Will the advantage gap between good players and poor players narrow? Will the potential earnings for those players applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker diminish?"

The answer to the last two questions is no. The potential earnings of good players should increase as the circulation of the Poker Manual increases. This paradox is explained by examining the nature of the game, the good player, and the poor player, in the following four paragraphs:

Thousands of players around the world already own the Poker Manual. By clearly identifying the total nature of poker, the Manual is gradually but permanently changing the game and its players. The Advanced Concepts of Poker are dispelling the myths that have always worked against the good player in his efforts to create faster-paced, higher-profit games. The Manual eliminates most objections to profitable poker innovations such as hold 'em, split pots, twist cards, and lowball variations by disproving the myth that such pace-increasing variations change poker from a game of skill to a game of luck. As the distribution of the Poker Manual continues, the more profitable, fast-paced games will become increasingly acceptable and easier to introduce--thus allowing the good player to increase his profits at faster rates and to higher levels.

But will the dispelling of other poker myths (e.g., the validity of luck) improve the performances of poor players and chronic losers, thus decreasing the edge odds for the good player? On the whole, the answer would be no. A few poor players (those who would work to steadily improve their game even without the Manual) will benefit from the Manual. But most poor players are static players who will not use the Advanced Concepts of Poker or do anything to improve their game. Why? Consider the nature of chronic losers: Most chronic losers have deeply entrenched habits that militate against the ingredients of good *poker--discipline, thought,* and then *control.* The Advanced Concepts of Poker demand intensive discipline and continuous thought--the very efforts that chronic losers seek to avoid. In fact, they build elaborate rationalizations or excuses to avoid any such discipline and thought. They play poker to "relax" their minds. Applying the Advanced Concepts of Poker would contradict and threaten their rationalized excuses for losing.

Revealing the Advanced Concepts of Poker to chronic losers is similar to revealing the logical advantages of being sober to chronic alcoholics, or revealing the unbeatable casino odds to inveterate gamblers. Few chronic losers will change their self-destructive habits when confronted with their errors.... On reading the Advanced Concepts of Poker, some chronic losers temporarily become wary of the good player and alert to some of his techniques. But in most cases, their alertness soon fades and their awareness sinks even lower because of a tranquil confidence that develops from now "knowing"

the good player's techniques and from "being savvy" to his tricks. They quickly let themselves forget that his techniques and deceptions continue to extract money from them.

Yet any loser at any time can choose to use his mind[44] to make himself a winner. The mind is the instrument required to use the Advanced Concepts of Poker Winners make themselves winners by choosing to effectively use their minds. And losers make themselves losers by choosing to default on the effective use of their minds. Responsibility for the results of poker rests squarely and solely on the individual.

3. Why Does the Author Reveal the Advanced Concepts of Poker?

In addition to the answer above (that revealing the Advanced Concepts of Poker will not diminish the good player's profits), the author gives two additional answers:

1. Compared to playing poker and extracting money from a limited number of players, the potential profit is greater for selling the Advanced Concepts of Poker to 47,000,000 poker players domestically and to an estimated 75,000,000 poker players worldwide.
2. After writing the Manual and identifying the nature of winning poker as a highly profitable but time-consuming, nonproductive activity that requires bringing out the worst in opponents, the author stopped playing poker.

Poker can work against the good player's self-esteem and happiness no matter how much money he wins since the source of self-esteem and happiness lies in being productive,[45] and poker is a nonproductive activity. Also, in the long run, a person will almost always earn more money by pursuing productive routes rather than nonproductive or destructive routes.

Furthermore, in poker, the good player must strive to surround himself with losers--with people who are constantly defaulting on the use of their minds--the opposite kind of people whom the good player could respect and enjoy. That poker is not a very satisfying or rewarding way for him to consume large, irreplaceable portions of his life.... The good player, therefore, may be the biggest loser in the game.

And the superior professional player is perhaps the biggest loser in poker, especially in public poker. Constantly surrounded by losers, he consumes his intelligence and time in a situation that provides a guaranteed income, but offers neither an interesting nor a productive future.

4. John Finn's Notes on Private Poker

(See Chapter XXVII for John Finn's notes on *public* poker.)

1. Beat opponents through their personal weaknesses- through their irrationalities. Smoking, for example, is a self-destructive irrationality that represents a vulnerability--a lack of discipline and

control. If an opponent constantly hurts himself through irrationalities such as smoking (or drinking excessively, chronic gambling, mysticism, dishonesty, or physical unfitness), he can certainly be manipulated into hurting himself through a much more subtle irrationality such as poker.

2. Probe all opponents for weaknesses that can be manipulated in order to extract maximum money from them. Also identify and eliminate your own weaknesses (or at least guard against losing money through your weaknesses). Constantly strive to identify and correct your errors--and then capitalize on corrected errors (i.e., by springing traps on those alert opponents who were capitalizing on your past errors).

3. Be alert to changes. Opponents can undergo drastic changes during a poker session. In a few minutes, an opponent can change from a tight, careful player to a loose, reckless player--or vice versa. To maintain the best investment odds, constantly monitor and adjust to all changes in all opponents.

4. To evaluate more accurately the quality of poker played by any individual, analyze his game in two separate segments--his statistical game and his strategical game. The statistical game is the shorter-range card-playing and money-management aspects (the mechanical aspects) that depend on an understanding of the odds or probabilities and on discipline and control. The strategical game is the longer-range imaginative aspect that depends on alertness and on independent and objective thinking effort. The good player usually beats professional players and cheaters with a superior strategical game.

5. Concentrate on areas that provide maximum advantages. For example, in a game with weak players, concentrate more on opponents' play and do more manipulating. In a game with strong players, concentrate more on your own play and do less manipulating (which can give away your hand and intentions). Better yet, avoid playing with strong players.

6. Breathe deeply to release tensions, especially in the neck, shoulders, and buttocks. Tension-free relaxation makes a player more effective for extracting money from opponents. Also, being physically fit (especially being aerobically fit via regular roadwork) can make a significant contribution not only to your stamina, but also to your ability to concentrate and implement the Advanced Concepts of Poker.

7. Use hypnotic motions and whispered chants to condition and train players to react favorably-- to "obey commands" (e.g., to fold, bet, or raise).

8. Often you can profitably check strong hands from deeper positions than most players realize (e. g., you can profitably check four sevens from a deeper position than two high pair). Not too serious if no one opens after checking a strong hand, since opening against all non-bettors would normally result in a small pot with few, if any callers--and they would be weak callers. The rewards of winning larger pots by check raising are greater than the risks of losing smaller, passed-out pots. But also avoid underbetting hands-- especially strong hands.

9. Opponents holding openers or good hands tend to be more alert. Players who suddenly start policing the game usually have at least openers. Players glumly staring at their cards will seldom open. Players who are tense and not looking at their cards (but are alertly looking at the pot or other players) will usually open.

10. By learning to read opponents' hands accurately, the card odds become less important as the manipulation of opponents and bluffing become easier and more important.

11. Predicting cards and odds becomes increasingly accurate--especially in stud games--as the hand progresses. For the more dealt cards a player knows, the more accurately he can predict what cards remain in the deck--or how rich or lean the remaining deck is for any particular card. (The good poker card-counter has a much greater winning advantage than the good blackjack card-counter, whose maximum advantage is less than 1 percent.)

12. By knowing how rich or lean the remaining deck is in various cards, a player can predict with increasing accuracy both his own and his opponents' probabilities for drawing specific cards as the deck diminishes. Furthermore, the observant player can often discover the actual value of cards being dealt in two ways: First, he can often see the cards flash while being dealt or while being picked up and handled by opponents. And second, he can discover the value of cards about to be dealt from markings on their backs that occur during normal play--such as spots, creases, nicks, folds, and stains.

13. Since neither total inconsistency nor total consistency is possible, all hands of all opponents potentially can be read by the observant player.

14. Usually the more an opponent tries to hide the strength or weakness of his hand, the easier and more accurately his hand can be read The player who never looks at his cards until his turn to bet is often the hardest player to read, but he leaves himself with less time to plan strategy relative to his cards.

15. Evoke giveaway reactions from opponents by hesitating before betting. Pretend the pot is light and then count the chips to induce giveaway reactions. Also evoke card-reading or giveaway reactions with surprise moves, unusual acts, or point-blank questions. To extract useful information or reactions, ask opponents point-blank questions about their hand, their bet, or what they plan to do.... Be careful not to give away your own hands or intentions through those tactics.

16. Most losers look hard for excuses to bet or bluff. When holding winning hands, provide those excuses for them.

17. Reading bluffs of opponents offers major moneymaking opportunities. Players often reveal pat-hand bluffs by not looking at their cards long enough to assure themselves of pat hands. When bluffing, many players try to project confidence and strength with fast bets or by feigning relaxation or cheerfulness. Also, players who back out of bluffs early in a hand will often try to bluff again within the next few hands.

18. The purpose of every bluff should be to win the pot. The advertising value of a bluff is only a secondary benefit.

19. In early developed bluffs, make players believe that they must improve their hands to win. In general, cancel bluff plans if opponents do improve their hands.

20. To reinforce a loose-player image, never admit to folding good hands and generally show weak hands that win. Never reveal poker skills or the ability to read opponents' hands by betting too confidently, by folding too quickly, by giving "lessons," or by explaining strategy.

21. Fiction and movies like *The Cincinnati Kid* offer cliched and misleading views of poker, cheating, and good players. In reality, prosperous good players are not flamboyant "big-man" types. Instead, they strive to appear mundane. They are nonfamous. They are Clark Kents. They are stealthy and clandestine. Moreover, they play wide-open, fast-paced games--not five-card stud. And they never need to look under tables or examine overhead lamps to protect themselves from cheating. The stereotyped, fictionalized, and romanticized views of poker and good players

provide helpful covers for the real-life good players as they surreptitiously extract all available money from all opponents.

22. Usually the good player benefits more by focusing his concentration on playing sound poker than by diluting his concentration on acting. But in games with several good players or world class professionals (games that the good player would normally avoid), the faking of carefully planned *tells* (behavior patterns that give away a player's hands or intentions) can make a good player essentially unbeatable against superior competition. In fact, the better his opponents are, the more easily they can be drawn into traps by subtle, preplanned tells. Because both good players and experienced professionals look for, detect, and use tells projected by each opponent, they are vulnerable to fake or set-up tells. A variety of effective set-up tells also distracts observant opponents from detecting unintentional tells projected by the good player. Indeed, a good player can beat other good players and dramatically win major professional poker tournaments with a series of preplanned, well-executed tells that "give away" good hands, poor hands, and bluffs. The good player beats superior competition by systematically training his observant opponents to react to his set-up tells and then reversing or faking those tells for the crucial, big pots.... But again, such faking or acting is generally not worthwhile against poor or average poker players.

23. Poker is actually a game of discipline and effort--not luck or skill. Almost any novice armed with the Advanced Concepts of Poker and a few weeks practice can with sheer discipline and effort beat experienced poker experts. By contrast, activities requiring skill such as tennis, violin playing, and brain surgery take years to develop the skills and experience needed to compete with the experts. Once those skills are developed, however, the effort required to properly execute them diminishes. But in poker, no matter how much experience a player gains, the discipline and effort required to execute good poker never diminishes.

24. No-limit, table-stake games offer the most advantage to the good player. In such games, his tools of aggressiveness, manipulation, psychology, and bluffing become much more effective for outplaying opponents. On the other hand, the most lucrative losers often stay away or are quickly driven from such no-limit games. So ironically, the best long-term profit opportunities for the good player usually exist within limit stake games that he can control. In such limit games, the good player can extract increasing amounts of money from his opponents, game after game, year after year.

5.

Neocheating -- The Rising Menace to Poker, Blackjack, Bridge, and Gin

Neocheating is the ultimate evolution of cheating. It is a new kind of cheating--an invisible, incredibly easy kind of cheating. Once a person understands Neocheating, he can quietly beat all his opponents in poker, blackjack, bridge, or gin.

The maneuvers of Neocheating are so subtle and the mechanics so easy that they can be invisibly executed with relaxed confidence. Guaranteed winning hands such as four aces can be routinely obtained. And more than one powerful hand can be dealt at a time to ensure a big score (e.g., in poker:

four aces to the Neocheater and four jacks to the victim). Yet, the Neocheater seldom arranges such powerful hands or goes for big scores (although he easily can). Instead, he casually uses just enough of his power to give him constant, unbeatable advantages. His steady, hidden attack lets him win consistently and comfortably in poker, blackjack, bridge, and gin.[46]

Neocheating is not like classical or traditional cardsharping that requires years of practice or a dangerous reliance on aids such as marked cards and hold-out devices. Neocheating requires no special skills, gall, or devices; it requires only a special knowledge and a few hours of practice.

Many card players would cheat if not for (1) their fear of being caught, or for (2) the time and effort required to learn how to cheat effectively. But Neocheating eliminates both deterrents. And as this easy, invisible form of cheating spreads, it will not only increasingly menace players of poker, blackjack, bridge, and gin, but also tempt players to Neocheat in all games played for money or prestige.

This is what John Finn says about the Neocheater:

For the first tine, good players need to worry about getting wiped out . A new breed of player is invading the card tables. He is the Neocheater. And the Neocheater does not lose.

Neocheating is invisible. How can it be stopped? The Neocheater is impossible to catch in the act and hard to get rid of. In fact, all honest players unaware of Neocheating are in financial danger. The Neocheater is the most dangerous threat to ever invade the card tables.

What can stop Neocheating from spreading? Publicly revealing the techniques of Neocheating may initially cause a cheating spree that could create chaos at the card table. But ironically, that same knowledge, as it becomes widely known, will begin to expose and nullify Neocheating. Players no longer need to be helpless or doomed when confronted with Neocheating. Instead, they will be able to counter and eliminate that menace.

Footnotes:

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[44] The effective use of the mind is not related to intelligence. A genius can (and often does) default on the effective use of his mind to make himself a loser. Conversely, a man with mediocre intelligence

can elect to use his mind effectively--to beat competitors of superior intelligence.

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[45] Productivity is defined as adding to the sum total of mankind's material, intellectual, physiological. psychological, or aesthetic well-being. Humans earn genuine self-esteem and happiness through the pursuit of productive goals.

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[46] Reference *Neocheating--The Unbeatable Weapon in Poker, Blackjack, Bridge, and Gin,* by Frank R. Wallace, Mark Hamilton, and William S., 192 pages, Neo-Tech Publishing Company, Las Vegas, Nevada (1980).

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CONCLUSION

Poker is merciless.

Poker is a game of money and deception. The consequences are always deserved. The penalties go to the weak--the rewards go to the strong. The loser dissipates his time and money. The winner earns satisfaction and money. But what is the net result of poker? Is it merely time consumed and money exchanged with nothing positive produced? Is the net result a negative activity?

Poker exposes character ... poker is a character catalyst that forces players to reality. Those who evade thinking and act on whims cannot escape the penalties. Those who use their minds and act on logic are rewarded. The results are clear and true: The lazy evader loses--he can never fake success. The thinking performer wins--he is always rewarded.

The good poker player functions rationally. He views all situations realistically. With objective thinking, he directs his actions toward winning maximum money. He pits the full use of his mind against the unwillingness of his opponents to think. Thus, the good player cannot lose.

In poker, a person is on his own. He must act as an individual. No one will help him. Success depends on the rational use of his mind. Success depends on exercising his positive qualities and overcoming his negative qualities. Success depends on him alone. In poker, a person can function entirely for his own sake. The results are his own. The loser makes himself a loser. The winner makes himself a winner.

Poker is sheer justice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

History

The memoirs of an English actor (Joseph Crowell) touring America in 1829 described a game being played in New Orleans in which each player received five cards and made bets--then whoever held the highest combination of cards won all bets. Mr. Crowell was probably describing the earliest form of poker or its immediate predecessor, the Persian game of Âs.

The first direct reference to poker was found in Jonathan H. Green's book, *An Exposure of the Arts and Miseries of Gambling* (G. B. Zieber, Philadelphia, 1843). Green described poker games on a steamer running between New Orleans and Louisville. His book indicated that poker began in New Orleans about 1830.

Research on the evolution of poker (outlined on p. 277) revealed that poker descended directly from the Persian game of Âs Nas and not, as commonly believed, from the French game of Poque, the German game of Pochen, or the English game of Bragg. But those and other European games soon exerted their influence on the original game of poker, as shown in the following two diagrams on the derivation and

evolution of poker.

Sailors from Persia taught the French settlers in New Orleans the gambling card game Âs, which was derived from the ancient Persian game of Âs Nas. The Frenchmen would bet by saying, for example, "I poque for a dollar," and would call by saying, "I poque against you for two dollars." Those were the betting expressions used in their game of Poque, a three-card game first played by commoners in France and then by Frenchmen in America as early as 1803. Poque was similar to Bouillotte, a card game popular with the aristocrats in France just prior to the French Revolution of 1789.

Combining the words "Âs" and "Poque," the game became known as "Poqas." Then, influenced by the German bluff game of Pochen and the southern accent, the pronunciation of "Poqas" became "Pokah." Under Yankee influence, the pronunciation finally became "Poker."

Poker moved from New Orleans by steamboat up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. From the river towns, the game spread east by the new railroad and west by covered wagons. Between 1834 and 1837, the full fifty-two-card deck replaced the original twenty-card deck. Soon after that, the flush was introduced. During the Civil War, modifications such as open cards (stud poker), the draw, and the straight became popular. When the joker was introduced as a wild card in 1875, the European influence of poker ended. Further development of the game was essentially American.

Jackpot poker (draw poker requiring both an ante and a pair of jacks or better to open) began about 1875. Split-pot and lowball poker started around 1903. Two Missouri assemblymen (Coran and Lyles) introduced a bill to the state legislature in 1909 to control and license poker players in order to prevent "millions of dollars lost annually by incompetent and foolish persons who do not know the value of a poker hand." In 1911, California's attorney general (Harold Sigel Webb) ruled that closed poker (draw poker) was skill and beyond antigambling laws . . . but open poker (stud poker) was luck and therefore illegal. That stimulated the development of new draw games and the use of wild cards. The variety of poker games grew steadily, particularly during the First and Second World Wars. In the 1960s, poker variations further developed with innovations such as twists (extra draws) and qualifiers (minimum hands to win).

In 1968, Wallace's *Advanced Concepts of Poker* was first published. By 1972, the publication had become the largest-selling poker book in the world. The Advanced Concepts of Poker fully identified for the first time the potentially ruthless, manipulative, but highly profitable nature of poker. In addition, the characteristics of consistent winners, and chronic losers were identified. Also identified for the first time were three different kinds of odds, the effects of the betting pace versus the betting stakes, the advantages of aggressive betting, and the advantages gained by the good player when complex and fast-paced games were played. And most important, the Advanced Concepts of Poker clearly identified the differences between the financially profitable good poker and financially destructive gambling as well as the differences between winners and losers.

DERIVATION OF POKER

China 894 AD first known cards		Hindue Pukka 900 AD		Persia Mah Jongg. build rummy like sequence

China
Ching-tsze-tung played
by the wives of
Emperor Seunho
1120

France
1377 → gajifeh → Varak I asanas → Persia Âs Nâs 1600

Frances
Ambique
(Le Mesle)
1654 → England Post and Pair 1674

Italy
Il Frusso
and
Primiera

England
Gleek
=1600 → England Bragg 1714

France
Gilet

France
Hoc

Trionfetti

England
Edmund
Hoyle
1672–1769

Spain
Primero

France
Brelan

America
"Âs"
New Orleans
1829

France
La Prima

France
Bouillotte

France Poque ↔ Germany Pochen

America
Pokas → Pokah
New Orleans
1830

Commerce ↔ Brandeln

European Influence

American
Poker
Mississippi
River
1834

United States Influence
(Civil War 1860)

Stud Poker

Draw Poker

Wallace's Advanced Concepts
of Poker

EVOLUTION OF POKER

American Influence

Wallace's Advanced Concepts
Developed and Published — 1970

Unlimited Modifications
(twists and qualifiers) — 1960

California law—Draw poker
is skill. Stud is gambling — 1911

Split pot and lowball — 1903

Jack pots — 1875

European Influence

Joker wild card
Straights — 1875
The draw — 1865–1870
Open card—stud — 1860–1865
Flushes — 1860–1865
— ?
Full deck — 1837
— 1829

Magistris
52 cards plus
an extra wild
card

England—Bragg
52 card deck
3 cards per player

France—Ambigu
40 card deck
4 cards per player
A draw

France—Brelan
3 cards per player
Count sequences and flushes

France—Bouillotte
20 card deck
3 cards per player
One open card

New Orleans

Original Poker (1829–1837)

20 card deck
4 suits of
Aces, Kings, Queens, Jacks and
tens
5 cards to 4 players
Rank: fours, fulls, trips, two pairs,
pairs
No straights or flushes
No draw
Bluff important

Âs Nâs

20 card deck
4 suits of
Lions, Kings, Ladies,
Soldiers and Dancing girls
5 cards to 4 players
Rank: fours, fulls, trips, two
pairs, pairs
No straights or flushes
No draw
Bluff important

Derivation of the Word "Poker"

Âs Nâs → Âs + Poque → Poqas + Pochen → Pokah → Poker
Persian   Persian French   French German   Southern   American

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Appendix B
Bibliography

Early poker literature tried to establish firm rules for the game. Unlike other card games in being a uniquely dynamic game (a competitive money-management game rather than a routine card game), poker could never be bound in rigid rules. Continuously changing within a loose framework of traditions, poker remained a versatile, living game always subject to modifications and variations (over 150 varieties of poker are described in the literature).

As early as 1674, *Cotton's Complete Gamester's* (published in England) described a card game called Post and Pair, a predecessor to Bragg, which, in turn, was a predecessor to poker with a full deck. Bragg and the art of bluffing were first described in Cotton's 1721 edition. Poque, a French card game that directly influenced the development of poker, was described in the eighteenth-century editions of *Acadence Universelle des Jeux*.

Until 1850, there were no printed rules for poker.[47] Neither of the two American Hoyles then in print (George Long, New York, 1825, and G. Cowperthwait, Philadelphia, 1838) mentioned poker. The English Hoyle *(Bohn's Handbook of Games)* made no reference to poker in either its 1850 or its 1887 edition. But the 1850 American reprint of Bohn's book mentioned poker in an addendum. Also in 1850, *Hoyles' Games* (H. F. Anners, Philadelphia) had a brief note about poker that described a full deck, ten players (therefore, no draw), and a bonus paid for any hand of trips or better. In 1857, Thomas Frere's *Hoyle* (T. W. Story, New York) described poker without referring to a draw.

The first mention of draw poker appeared in the 1867 edition of *Hoyles* (Dick and Fitzgerald, New York). Also, that edition was the first book to mention an ante, a straight (which beat two pair, but not trips), and the straight flush (which beat four of a kind). The 1875 edition of *Hoyles* (Dick and Fitzgerald, New York) mentioned jackpot poker and the joker used as a wild card.

The first printed poker rules in England were written by General Robert E. Schenck, the United States minister to England. He introduced poker to the guests at a country house in Somersetshire. The hostess, a prominent duchess, persuaded him to write down the rules. In 1872, the duchess privately printed those rules for her court. The game caught Queen Victoria's fancy, and the popularity of poker spread through Great Britain. Poker in England soon became known as "Schenck poker,"

In 1875, a description of poker appeared in Cavendish's *Round Games of Cards* (De La Rue & Co.).

After 1875, books about poker appeared regularly in America, England, and Continental Europe. Data on all poker books (whose locations and dates of publication are known) published in the one hundred years between 1875 and 1975 have been tabulated below.

Number of Books	%	Country Where Published
93	72.6	United States
22	17.2	England
8	6.2	France
2	1.6	Italy
1	0.8	Germany
1	0.8	Holland
1	0.8	India
-----	-----	(for 1875-1965)
128	100.0	

Years (in 10-year intervals)	Number of Poker Books Published
Up to 1875	2
1876-1885	13
1886-1895	18
1896-1905	13
1906-1915	11
1916-1925	9
1926-1935	9
1936-1945	4
1946-1955	11
1956-1965	17
1966-1975	20
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[Note: From 1976 to 1980. an additional 20 poker books were published.]

The Addendum Bibliography at the end of this Appendix B reviews each poker book published since 1968.

A bibliography of all known poker books is tabulated below:

Books on Poker in The Library of Congress

Catalog Number	Subject Heading "Poker" Library of Congress Card Information (verbatim)
1. GV1251 A15	Abbott, Jack. A treatise on Jack pot poker, with the game of sancho pedro, when played for stakes. New Orleans, Clark & Hofeline, printers, 1881. 64 pages
2. GVl258 A43	Allen, George W. Poker rules in rhyme, with chances to improve the hand by drawing. St. Louis, Mo., 1895. 74 pages
3. GV1251 B6 (other editions)	Blackbridge, John. The complete poker player. A practical guidebook to the American national game: containing mathematical and experimental analysis of the probabilities at draw poker. New York, Dick & Fitzgera1d, 1880. 142 pages
4. GV1253 B8 1916 (other editions)	Brown, Garrett. The autocrat of the poker table, or, How to play the game to win. 3rd ed., Boston, R.G. Badger, 1916. 105 pages
5. GV1251 C15	Cady, Alice Howard. Poker: the modern game. With passing description of its origin. New York, American Sports Publishing Company, 1895. 37 pages
6. GV1251 C65	Coffin, George Sturgis. Fortune poker: a world-wide roundup of the traditional American game. Complete with new laws according to Hoyle. With a forward by Ely Culbertson. Philadelphia, D. McKay Co., 1949. 198 pages
7. GV1251 C67	Coffin, George Sturgis. The official laws of poker. Baltimore, Ottenheimer, 1956. 64 pages
8. GV1251 C68	Coffin, George Sturgis. Pocket guide to the play of poker. Baltimore, Ottenheimer, 1956. 64 pages

9. GV1251 C95	Curtis, David A. The science of draw poker; a treatise comprising the analysis of principles, calculation of chances, codification of rules, study of situations, glossary of poker terms necessary to a complete understanding of the great American game. New York, D. A. Curtis, 1901. 216 pages
10. GVl253 D62	Dowling, Allen Nicholas. Confessions of a poker player by Jack King (pseud.). New York, I. Washburn, Inc., 1940. 209 pages
11. GV1253 D62	Dowling, Allen Nicholas. Under the round table by Jack King (pseud.). Philadelphia, Dorrance, 1960. 219 pages
12. ?	Edel, Edmund. Poker ein spieler--roman. Charlottenburg, E. Beyer, 1912. 176 pages
13. GV1253 E26	Edwards, Eugene. Jack pots; stories of the great American game. With over fifty original pen and ink illustrations. Chicago, Jamieson-Higgins Co., 1900. 342 pages
14. GV1251 F5	Fisher, George Henry. How to win at stud poker . . . instruction for the novice, principles of strategy, problem hands, hand valuation, card probabilities, complete set of rules, history of the game, etc. Los Angeles, The Stud Poker Press, 1933. 111 pages
15. GV1251 F83	Florence, William Jermyn. The gentleman's handbook on poker. New York, London, G. Routledge Sons, Ltd., 1892. 195 pages
16. GV1251	Foster, Robert Frederick. Practical poker. New York, Brentano's 1905. 253 pages
17.GV1251 G47	Gilkie, Robert J. Experimental drawing at poker from five thousand hands. Dorchester, Mass., 1886. 13 pages
18. GV1251 G5	Girardet, Philippe. Philosophie et mathematique du poker. Paris, M. Senac, 1929. 160 pages

19. GV1251 G77 (other editions)	Gray, E. Archer. Hints on poker. Washington, D.C., 1886. 16 pages
20. GV1251 H2	Hardison, Theodore. Poker: a work exposing the various methods of shuffling up hands, as well as other ways of cheating that are resorted to by professional gamblers, also embracing the cardinal principles by which every sleight-of-hand trick known with cards may be played. St. Louis, Hardison Publishing Co., 1914. 120 pages
21. GV1251 H4	Heineman, Walter Raleigh. Draw poker, a compilation of rules governing the game of "Jack pots," by Jack Pot (pseud.). New York, Chrisholm Printing Co., 1923. 48 pages
22. GV1251 H52 (other editions)	Henry R. J. Poker boiled down . . . the latest authentic rules ... on the great national game ... 1st edition. Boston, Massachusetts, Tourist Publishing Company, 1890. 13 pages
23. GV1233 H8 (temporary entry)	History and anecdotes of card games (especially poker). 43 cuttings from newspapers, etc.... bibliographical notes in ms ... Gift of Prof. Brander Matthews
24. GV1251 J2 1947 (other editions)	Jacoby, Oswald. Oswald Jacoby on poker, with a forward by Grantland Rice, and an introduction by William E. McKenney. Rev. ed. Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947. 175 pages
25. GV1251 J22	Jacoby, Oswald. Winning poker. New York, Permabooks, 1949. 189 pages
26. GV1251 K59	Keller, John William. The game of draw poker. Including the treatise by R.C. Schenck and rules for the new game of progressive poker . . . New York, White, Stokes & Allen, 1887 84 pages
27. GV1251 M15	MacKenzie, Collins. Jack pots. A collection of poker stories. By A. Pair (pseud.). Chicago, the Illustrated Publishing Co., 1887. 160 pages

28. GV1251 P32	Patton, F. Jarvis. How to win at draw poker. Showing all the chances of the game. New York, Dick & Fitzgerald, 1896. 45 pages
29. GV1253 P6 (Office)	Unknown. Poker as it was played in Deadwood in the fifties. Palo Alto, California, Wheatstalk Press, 1928. 5 pages (A reprint from an article in Hutching's California magazine in August, 1858-Vol. III, pg. 85)
30. GV1253 P77 (Houdini Collection) (other editions)	Poker: how to play it. A sketch of the great American game with its laws and rules, and some of its amusing incidents. By one of its victims. London, Griffith & Farran, 1882. 109 pages
31. QA/273 P96	Proctor, Richard Anthony. Chance and luck: a discussion of the laws of luck, coincidences, wagers, lotteries, and fallacies of gambling; with notes on poker and martingales. London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1887. 263 pages
32. GV1251 R3 (other editions)	Radner, Sidney H. The key to playing poker and winning. Owing Mills, Maryland, Ottenheimer Publishers, 1964. 189 pages
33. GV1251 R37	Reese, Terence. Secrets of modern poker. New York, Sterling Publishing Co., 1964. 148 pages
34. GV1251 R4	Renaudet, G. Le poker; regles completes et commentaires, L'art de gagner au poker, poker a 52 cartes; a 48, 44, 40, 3 et 32 cartes; freeze out; la partie a la cave; calud des probabilities; le blugg, physiologie du jeu. Paris, S. Bornemann, 1922. 31 pages
35. GV1253 R47	Rhoades, William Morston. Poker, smoke, and other things; fun and pictures. Rules of poker, recipes, toasts, mixed drinks. Chicago, the Reilly & Britton Co., 1907. 69 pages

36. BF21 A7 (other editions)	Riddle, Ethel Maris. Aggressive behavior in a small social group; bluffing, risking, and the desire to beat . . . studied by the use of a poker game as an experimental technique. New York, 1925. 19 pages (Also published as a Ph.D. thesis in psychology, Columbia University)
37. GV1251 R65	Rottenberg, Irving. Friday night poker, or, Penny poker to millions, by Irv Roddy (pseud.). New York, Simon Schuster, 1961. 222 pages
38. GV1251 S32	Schenick, Robert Cummings. Rules for playing poker. Brooklyn, New York, Private printing, 1880. 17 pages (1st edition, 1872)
39. GV1251 S32 1881 (Toner Collection. Office)	Schenick, Robert Cummings. Draw poker. Published for the trade, 1880. 8 pages
40. GV1251 S5	Smith, Russell A. Poker to win. El Paso, Texas, 1925. 110 pages
41. GV1251 S68	Seig, Irwin. Common sense in poker. New York, Cornerstone Library, 1963. 188 pages
42. GV1251 7	Steig, Irwin. Poker for fun and profit. New York, McDowell, Obelensky, 1959. 181 pages
43. GV1251 T2	Talk of Uncle George (pseud.) to his nephew about draw poker. Containing valuable suggestions in connection with this great American game. New York, Dick & Fitzgerald, 1883. 50 pages
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47. GV1251 W5 1944 (other editions)	Wickstead, James M. How to win at stud poker. Louisville, Kentucky, Stud Poker Publishing Co., 1944. 115 pages
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49. GV1251 X3	Xavier, Francois. Le poker, sa technique, sa psychologie, suivi d'une etude sur le stud poker. Paris, B. Grasset, 1955. 222 pages
50. GV1251 Y3	Yardley, Herbert Osborn. The education of a poker player, including where and how one learns to win. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1957. 129 pages
51. GV1243 C8	Culbertson, Ely. Morehead, Albert H. and Goeffrey, Matt Smith. Culbertson's Hoyle: the new encyclopedia of games, with official rules. New York, Gray stone Press, 1950. 656 pages
52. Reference	Encyclopedia Britannica. Poker. Volume 10, pg. 128, Chicago, William Benton, 1965. 4 pages
53. GV1251 F79	Fox, Richard K. Poker, how to win, together with the official rules. New York 1905. 90 pages

54. GV1243 F85	Frey, Richard L., ed. The new complete Hoyle: an encyclopedia of rules, procedures, manners, and strategy of games played with cards, dice, counters, boards, words, and numbers. Philadelphia, D. McKay Co., 1947. 740 pages
55. GV1239 J3	Jacoby, O., et al. The fireside book of cards. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1957. 364 pages
56. PZ3 L628P	Lillard, John F. B., ed. Poker stories, as told by statesmen, soldiers, lawyers, commercial travelers, bankers, actors, editors, millionaires, members of the Ananias club and the talent, embracing the most remarkable games, 1845-95. New York, F. P. Harper, 1896. 251 pages
57. GV1243 D8	Ostrow, A. A. The complete card player. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945. 771 pages
58.GV1291 P6	Poker-bridge; een nieuw kaartspel. Amsterdam. A. J. G. Strengholt, 1954. 32 pages
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[Note: The Library of Congress does not catalog books about poker under the subject of "Gambling." The 375 books listed under "Gambling" include books on blackjack, boule, cards (nonpoker), cardsharping, craps, fero, horse-race betting, parimutuel betting, probabilities, raffles, roulette, speculation, trente-et-quarante, and wagers . . . but none on poker. Apparently, the Library of Congress does not consider (classify) poker as gambling.]

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Addendum Bibliography
of Poker Books Published
since 1968
(through 1980)

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18. Silberstang, Edwin, *Winning Poker Strategy,* New York, David McKay Co., Inc., 1978. The best primer on poker. Few errors. Recommended for *all* beginners and losers.

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22. Smith, Al, *Poker to Win,* Las Vegas, Nevada, Gambler's Book Club, 1975. Good outline of cheating techniques used in poker. But presents many erroneous views about poker.

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36. Zahrobsky, Robert F., *The Computer Guide to Hold 'em Poker,* Las Vegas, 1979. A misleading emphasis on mathematics. Still worthwhile--some unique and interesting tables of data for hold 'em percentages. Almost nothing on strategy and other crucial aspects of poker.

Notes:

1. The most complete source of poker and gambling books (both in and out of print) is Gambler's Book Club, 630 South 11th Street, Dept. PB, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101. A free catalog listing over 700 titles on poker and gambling is available.
2. The University of Nevada (Las Vegas) library has a special collection of nearly 2000 gaming books, including more than 83 different titles on poker. Many historic poker books were donated by I&O Publishing Company.

Footnotes:

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[47] The common reference "poker according to Hoyle" is curious because the English writer and lawyer, Edmund Hoyle (1672-1769), never heard of poker: he died sixty years before the game originated. Hoyle was a famous whist player. His original book described three card games--whist, piquete and quadrille. But his authority for card-game rules grew until all card and board game rules became known as "Hoyles." Since many different "Hoyles" now exist, "poker according to Hoyle" depends on the editor and publisher of that particular Hoyle.

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Appendix C
Glossary

Over a thousand words and phrases used in poker literature and heard in poker games are defined below. While this is the most comprehensive glossary ever compiled, it provides something much more than a long list of colorful jargon: Reading through the glossary provides unique insights into poker, available nowhere else.

- A -

A-C Player--The Advanced Concept Player.

Aces Up--A pair of aces with one other pair.

Action--The betting.

Action Spot--The table area where the betting is occurring.

Active Player--A player competing for a pot.

Add-them-up Lowball--Draw poker where the hand with the lowest point total wins.

Advanced-Concept Player--A player whose style is based on the Advanced Concepts of Poker. (A-C Player).

Advanced Concepts of Poker--The concepts used by the good poker player to win maximum money from opponents.

Advertise--To have a bluff called in order to encourage opponents to call later.

A-game--The highest stake game in the house.

Age--First position to the left of the dealer (A, Able, or Edge).

Agent--A confederate or collusion partner in cheating.

Alien Card--A card not belonging to the deck in play.

Alive Card--See Live Card.

All Blue, or All Pink--A flush.

All-In--The betting by a player of all his money on the table.

All the Way--Cincinnati with a progressive bet.

Alternate Straight--A sequence of every other card, such as two, four, six, eight, ten (Dutch Straight, Skipper, Skip Straight).

Ambique--A French card game that influenced the draw variation of poker.

American Brag--A game where the raiser shows the first caller his hand and the worst hand folds.

Anaconda--A seven-card game with bets made on five rolled-up cards.

Announce--To declare high, low, or the moon in high-low poker.

Announced Bet--A verbal bet made by a player before putting his money in the pot.

Ante--Money put in the pot before dealing.

A Priori Odds--The probability that an event will occur.

Arkansas Flush--A four flush.

Around the Comer Straight-- A sequence running from the highest to the lowest values, such as queen, king, ace, two, three.

Âs Nas--A Persian card game from which poker was directly derived.

Assigned Bettor--The player who bets first.

Australian Poker--Draw poker with a blind opening.

Automatic Bluff--A lowball situation that almost always requires a bluff.

- B -

Baby--A small card, usually a five or less.

Back-in--To win by default or unexpectedly.

Backer--A nonplayer who finances an active player.

Backraise--A reraise. To make a minimum raise to avoid a larger raise.

Back-to-back--A pair on the first two cards dealt in stud (Backed Up).

Bait--A small bet that encourages a raise.

Bank--Where the money from purchased chips is kept.

Banker--The person responsible for selling and cashing chips.

Bank Night--High-low five-card stud with two twists.

Barn--A full house.

Barracuda--A tough player.

Baseball--A stud game involving nines and threes as wild cards.

Beans--Chips.

Bear--A tight player.

Beat the Board (Table)--To have a hand better than all others showing.

Beat Your Neighbor--A five-card game that requires each player in turn to expose his cards until his hand beats the board.

Bedsprings--Similar to Cincinnati except ten cards are dealt face-up for use in everyone's hand.

Belly-Buster Straight--An inside straight.

Belly Hit--When a draw fills an inside straight (Gut Shot).

Belly Strippers--Cards with slightly trimmed edges that taper from a wider center to the ends (Humps).

Best Flush--A game in which only flushes win the pot.

Bet Into--To bet before another player who apparently has a better hand.

Bet or Get--A rule that one must either bet or fold with no checking allowed (Bet or Drop, Passout).

Bet the Limit--To bet the maximum amount allowed.

Bet the Pot--To bet an amount equal to the pot.

Bet the Raise--The maximum bet being twice that of the previous bet or raise.

Betting Interval--The period from the first bet to the last call in any given round.

Betting Pace--The degree, extent, and aggressiveness of bets and raises.

Betting Stakes--The dollar limits of all bets and raises permitted.

Betting Ratios--The differences in maximum bets allowed with each round of betting.

Betty Hutton--Seven-card stud with nines and fives wild.

Bicycle--A straight to the five . . . ace, two, three, four, five (Wheel).

Bid--To declare for high or low in split-pot poker.

Big Bill--A hundred dollars or a thousand dollars.

Big Blind--The final and largest blind bet.

Big Bobtail--A four-card straight flush.

Big Cat--Five unpaired cards from the king to the eight.

Big Dog--(1) Five unpaired cards from ace to nine. (2) A big underdog.

Big Full--The highest possible full house.

Big One--A thousand dollars.

Big Squeeze--Six-card high-low stud with one twist.

Big Tiger--See Big Cat.

Bill--A dollar or a hundred dollars.

Bird Dog--One who gets players for a game.

Blaze--A five-card hand containing five picture cards.

Blaze Full--A full house in picture cards.

Bleed--To slowly bleed money from a game or a player.

Bleeder--A tight, winning player.

Blind--A mandatory or forced bet before the deal by the first player to the dealer's left.

Blind Bet--To bet before looking at one's hand,

Blind Low--Five-card stud bet blind all the way to the last bet.

Blind Open--An opening bet made without looking at one's cards.

Blind Shuffle--A cheater's shuffle used to stack cards or to leave stacked cards undisturbed after shuffling (False Shuffle).

Blind Tiger--Draw poker with a blind open and a blind raise (Open Blind and Straddle).

Block System--An ante, open, and first raise automatically done in the blind by the dealer.

Blood Poker--A higher-stake poker game played primarily for money rather than for social reasons.

Blow Back--A raise after previously calling or checking.

Bluff--The attempt to win a pot by making better hands fold.

Blur Intensity--The lightness or darkness of printing visible on partially flashed cards, indicating a high or a low card.

Board--(1) The poker table. (2) All face-up cards in stud or hold 'em.

Bobtail Flush or Straight--A four-card flush or a four-card, open-end straight.

Bolt--To fold.

Bone--A white chip, the lowest denomination chip.

Bonus--A fixed sum established by house rules that is paid by each player to the holder of a very high-value hand such as a straight flush (Premium, Royalty, Penalties).

Book--A three-card draw.

Boost--To raise.

Border Work--Markings added by cheaters to the printed borderlines of cards to identify their value.

Bottom Deal--To deal cards off the bottom of the deck when cheating.

Bouillotte--A French card game that influenced the open-card stud variation in poker.

Boxed Card--A card turned the wrong way in a deck.

Boy--A jack.

Brag--The betting expression in the English game of Bragg.

Bragg--An English three-card game that influenced the use of the full fifty-two-card deck in poker.

Braggers--Jacks and nines as wild cards. Or the ace of diamonds, the jack of clubs, and the nine of diamonds as wild cards.

Brandeln--A card game similar to Commerce.

Breakers--Openers.

Breathe--To pass the first opportunities to bet.

Brelen--(1) A French card game that influenced the use of straights and flushes in poker. (2) Three of a kind.

Brelen Carre--Four of a kind.

Brief--A single stripper card in a deck used to facilitate illegal cuts.

Buck--(1) A marker used to designate the dealer. (2) A marker or a knife used to designate the player permitted to deal a special hand, usually a hand with a dealer advantage such as draw. (3) A dollar.

Buddy Poker--To avoid betting against a friend or a partner.

Buffalo--To fool opponents.

Bug--(1) The joker used in high-hand poker as an ace or as a wild card for filling straights and flushes. A wild card in lowball. Can be used in high-low as both a high card and a low card in the same hand (Joker). (2) A device fastened beneath the poker table by a cheater to hold out a card or cards.

Bull--A player who raises frequently.

Bull or Bullet--An ace.

Bull Montana--Five-card stud with betting, then jacks required to open the final bet.

Bull the Game--To bluff or bet aggressively.

Bump--A raise.

Buried Card--A card randomly inserted in the deck.

Burn--(1) A full house. (2) To lose a hand. (3) Deal a burn card.

Burned, Burnt, or Burn Card-- (1) An exposed card put face-up on the bottom of the deck (2) A card dealt face down into the discards.

Busted Hand--(1) A worthless hand (Bust). (2) A hand that failed to fill a straight or a flush on the draw.

Busy Card--Any card that completes a hand.

Butcher Boy--An open-hand form of poker where four of a kind is needed to win.

Button--(1) A marker used to signify a theoretical dealer when there is a house dealer. (2) A second or third pair.

Buy--(1) To call bets in order to draw cards. (2) To bluff someone out.

Buy In--The stack of chips that a player buys at the start of a game.

By Me--An expression meaning to pass or check.

- C -

California--Draw poker, open on anything.

California Lowball--Low-ball in which ace, two, three, four, five is the best hand.

Call--Money put in the pot to match a bet or raise.

Calling Station--A player who calls almost any bet (Telephone Booth).

Carding--Noting of exposed cards during a hand.

Card Odds--The probabilities of being dealt or drawing to various hands

Cardsharp--A cheater.

Cards Speak--A rule that the value of a hand is based on what the cards are rather than on what a player declares.

Case Card--The last available card of a particular value or suit.

Cash In--To exchange poker chips for cash and then to quit (Cash Out).

Casino Poker--Public poker played in gambling casinos.

Cat--Any big or little tiger or cat hand.

Catbird Seat--A position in high-low poker that assures a player at least half the pot.

Catch--To be dealt a certain card or hand ... usually a desirable card or hand.

Chalk Hand--An almost certain winner.

Chase--To stay against a better hand.

Cheater--A player who intentionally violates the rules to gain advantage unavailable to others.

Check--To pass without betting.

Check Blind (Check in the Dark)--To check without looking at one's own cards.

Check Cop--A paste palmed in a cheater's hand and used to steal poker chips or to hold out cards.

Check Copping--To steal poker chips.

Check Raise--To check and then subsequently raise in the same round of betting.

Chicago--Seven-card stud in which the hand with the highest spade wins half the pot.

Chicago Pelter--A kilter.

Chicken Picken--A game with eleven cards--two cards in hand and nine on the table in rows of three.

Chink Ink--A special ink used by cheaters to mark the edge of cards.

Chip--Money represented by a plastic disc.

Chip Along--To bet the smallest amount possible.

Chip Declaration--To use chips in declaring for high or low.

Chip In--To call a small bet.

Chipping--Betting.

Choice Pots--Dealer's choice.

Cinch Hand--A certain winner (A Lock, an Immortal).

Cincinnati--A ten-card game with five in each hand and five face-up for everyone's use (Lame Brains).

Cincinnati Liz--Like Cincinnati, except the lowest face-up card is wild.

Clam--A dollar.

Class--Rank of a poker hand.

Closed Card--A concealed card in one's hand.

Closed Game--A game barred to newcomers or outsiders.

Closed Hand--The concealed cards in one's hand as in draw poker.

Closed Poker--Any form of poker in which all cards are dealt face-down.

Close to the Chest--To play tight (Close to the Belly).

Club Poker--Poker played in public card clubs. (See Gardena, California.)

C-Note--A hundred-dollar bill.

Coffee Housing--To act oppositely to one's emotions or situation.

Cold Deck--(1) A deck from which poor hands are being dealt. (2) A prestacked deck.

Cold Feet--A description for a player wanting to quit the game early.

Cold Hands--(1) Showdown hands. (2) A run of poor hands.

Cold Turkey--A pair of kings, back to back, on the first two cards in five-card stud.

Collection or Axe--See Time Cut.

Collusion--Two or more players working together to cheat other players.

Come--See On the Come.

Come In--To call.

Come Off--To break up a lower-value hand to draw for a higher-value hand.

Commerce--A three-card game with three cards in the widow.

Common Card (Communal Card)--An exposed card for use in every player's hand.

Consecutive Declaration--A rule for declaring high-low hands in consecutive order.

Contract--To declare for high or low at the conclusion of split-pot poker.

Contract Poker--High-low split-pot poker with oral declarations.

Cop--To steal chips from the pot.

Corner Card--An eight-card game--five cards in hand and three on the table, with the last card up and all like it as wild.

Corner Flash--To tear off a corner of a foreign card and to flash it as a real card in one's hand.

Cosmetics--Preparations such as ashes, waxes, abrasives, aniline pencils, and luminous inks used by cheaters for marking cards (Daub).

Counter--(1) One chip. (2) A player who continuously counts his chips.

Count Cards--The jack, king, and queen (Court Cards, Face Cards, Picture Cards).

Coup--A brilliant play.

Cowboy--A king.

Crank--To deal.

Crazy Otto--Five-card stud with the lowest card as wild.

Crimp (Bridge)--To bend and hump the upper or lower section of the deck to make a false or an illegal cut. (See Debone)

Crisscross--Same as Southern Cross except five cards are laid out with the center one wild.

Crooked-Honest System (C-H System)--The system of two cheaters in partnership: One catches a strong hand, and he signals the other to raise, thus squeezing all callers (Cross Life, Crossfire).

Cross (The Cross)--Like Cincinnati, except the five cards are in a cross formation with the center card and all similar cards as wild.

Crosscards--A ten-hand poker solitaire game (Patience Poker).

Crossfire--See Crooked-Honest System.

Crossover--A combination of draw and stud poker involving wild cards.

Cull--To arrange or cluster good cards together for cheating.

Curfew--The agreed-upon quitting lime.

Curse of Mexico--The deuce of spades.

Curse of Scotland--The nine of diamonds.

Customer--An opponent who calls.

Cut the Cards--Putting the bottom cards of a deck on top of the deck.

Cut the Pot--Money withdrawn from pots for a purpose, such as to pay for refreshments.

- D -

Dame--A queen.

Daub--See Cosmetics (Golden Glow brand).

Dark Bet--A blind bet.

Dead Cards--Discarded or folded cards.

Dead Hand--A foul hand that cannot be played.

Dead Man's Hand--Usually aces and eights, two pair. Sometimes aces and eights, full house ... or jacks and eights, two pair.

Deadwood--Dead cards.

Deal--To distribute cards to the players.

Dealer--(1) A person who deals the cards. (2) The operator of a gambling game in a casino.

Dealer-Advantage Game-- Any game where the dealer has an advantage.

Dealer's Choice--The selection by dealer of game to be played.

Dealer's Percentage--Any game offering the dealer a significant advantage (Dealer's Game, Dealer's Advantage).

Deal Off--To deal the final hand of the game.

Deal Out--To omit a player from a hand.

Debone--A card or portion of a deck that has been crimped lengthwise or crosswise.

Deception--An important and accepted tool of poker.

Deck--All the cards used in the game (Pack)

Declare--To announce if going for high or low.

Deep Low--The lowest hand for any card (i.e., a deep seven is an ace, two, three, four, seven).

Defensive Bet--A bet designed to decrease one's potential loss.

Dent--To mark cards by creasing their corners (Rounding).

Deuce--A two.

Deuces Wild--Playing all deuces as wild cards.

Devil's Bedposts--A four of clubs.

Diamond--See Poker Diamond.

Dig--To replenish one's stake or money while playing a hand.

Discard--To exchange old cards for new cards during the draw or twist.

Disproportionate Bet--A peculiar bet or a bet much larger or smaller than the normal bet.

Doctor Pepper--Seven-card stud with deuces, fours, and tens wild.

Dog--(1) Any big-dog or little-dog hand. (2) An underdog. Doghouse Cut--Any cut that divides the deck into more than two stacks.

Double--To raise.

Double-Barreled Shotgun-- High-low draw with four rounds of betting after the draw as each card is turned face-up (Texas Tech).

Double Bluff--A bluff made by making a bluff bet on the final round and then reraising a subsequent raise.

Double-End Straight--See Bobtail.

Double Header--(1) A pot not won that passes to the next deal. (2) A second game that follows an earlier one.

Doubling Up--Betting twice as much as the previous bet.

Down and Dirty--The final hole card dealt in seven-card stud.

Down Cards--Cards dealt face-down.

Down the Chute--To take a heavy loss.

Down the River--Seven-card stud.

Drag (Snatch)--Money separated from a pot to signify the amount owed by a player (Light).

Draw--The exchange of a card or cards for new ones.

Draw Out--To catch the winning hand with the last card or with draw cards.

Draw Poker--One of the two basic forms of poker (the other is stud). Played as a closed five-card hand with a closed draw.

Drawing Dead--Drawing a hand that cannot win.

Drib--An inferior player.

Driller--A loose player. A player who bets and raises frequently.

Driver's Seat--The player holding the best advantage.

Drop or Drop Out--To retire from a hand by not calling a bet or raise (Fold).

Drum--To play tight.

Drummer or Drummer Boy-- A tight player.

Dry--To be out of money (Broke).

DTC Method--The technique of good poker . . . Discipline, Thought. and then Control.

Duck--A deuce.

Duffer--An inexperienced or poor player.

Duke--A hand of cards.

Dutch Straight--See Alternate Straight.

Dynamite--A two-card poker game.

- E -

Eagles--The cards of a fifth suit in a sixty-five-card deck.

Early Bet--A small bet after the first card in stud or the first two cards in draw.

Edge--(1) An advantageous position. (2) The dealer or sometimes the Age.

Edge Odds--The advantage or disadvantage of a player relative to all other players.

Edge Shot--A bet made from an advantageous position.

Eldest Hand--The first player to the dealer's left.

Elimination--Like Cincinnati, but cards matched with table cards are discarded (Weary Willie).

End Bet--The last bet of an interval.

End Bets--Last-round bets.

End Strippers--Cards tapered along the ends for cheating.

English Poker--Draw played with a blind opening.

English Stud--A stud game with a draw.

Ethics or Etiquette--The understandings and courtesies of which violations do not constitute cheating.

Exposed Cards--Cards purposely dealt face-up as in stud.

- F -

Face Card--Any picture card.

Faced--(1) A face-up card. (2) To receive a face card.

Fall of the Cards--The order in which cards are dealt.

False Cut--A cheater's cut in which the stacked portion of the deck remains intact on top of the deck.

False Openers--A hand that has been opened improperly.

False Riffle--A cheater's riffle used to keep stacked cards undisturbed after riffling.

False Shuffle--See Blind Shuffle.

Family Pot--A pot in which everyone calls the bet.

Farm System--Several poker games at different stakes under control of a good player.

Fast Game--A game with a fast betting pace.

Fatten--To increase the money in the pot (Sweeten).

Feeble Phoebe--Like Hollywood, except table cards are turned over two at a time and played for high and low.

Feed the Pot--To bet or raise foolishly.

Feeler Bet--A small or nominal bet made to seek out strength or raising tendencies of opponents.

Fever--A five.

Filling--Drawing and then catching a full house, flush, or straight.

Fin--Five dollars.

Finger Poker--A game run on credit.

Finn Poker--To play poker with the objective of winning maximum money.

First Jack Deals--A method to determine who has the first deal.

First Hand--The first player allowed to bet a hand.

Fish--An easy or a poor player.

Fish Hook--A seven or a jack.

Five and Dime--A hand containing a five and a ten with three unpaired cards in between.

Five-Card Stud--Stud poker played with one hole card and four exposed cards.

Five of a Kind--Five cards of the same value.

Fix--To prearrange the cards or stack the deck.

Fixed Limit--Betting with agreed-upon limits or maximums.

Flash--(1) To expose concealed cards (2) To turn up a common card for everyone's use when insufficient cards are available to complete a stud game. (3) Five cards, one of each suit plus the joker.

Flat Limit--A game in which only one consistent amount is allowed for all bets and raises.

Flat Poker--Poker with a blind open.

Flicker Flicker--Five-card, high-low stud.

Flinger--A wild or crazy player.

Flip Stud--Five-card stud in which the optional hole card and matching hole cards are wild.

Floorman--(1) A cardroom manager. (2) Shift boss in a casino.

Flop--The first three exposed cards in hold 'em poker.

Flush--Five cards of the same suit.

Fluss (Flux]--A flush.

Foiling the Cut--A cheater's method of returning cards to their original position after a cut.

Fold--To drop out of a hand by not calling the bet or raise (Drop).

Football--A stud game similar to baseball involving sixes and threes as wild cards.

Force-in--A mandatory blind bet, usually with an option to raise.

Foul Hand--A hand containing the wrong number of cards.

Four Flush--Four cards of the same suit.

Four-Flusher--(1) A cheater. (2) One who tries to win pots by purposely miscalling his hand.

Four Forty Four--Eight-card stud with fours wild.

Four of a Kind--Four cards of the same value (Fours).

Fox--an expert player.

Freak--A joker or a wild card.

Freak Hands--Nonstandard poker hands such as Blazers, Dutch Straights, Kilters, and Skeets.

Free Ride--Playing without paying.

Free Roll--A lock on half the pot with a chance to win the whole pot.

Free Wheeler--A bankrupt player allowed to play free until he wins a pot.

Freeze Out--A rule requiring player to leave the game after losing a certain amount of cash.

Freezer--A call for less than the amount of the bet in table stakes (Short Call).

Friend--A card that improves a hand.

Full House, Full Barn, or Full Tub--Three of a kind with another pair (Full Hand).

Fundamental Position--The value of a player's hand relative to the other player's hands.

Fuzzing--Mixing the cards by continuously stripping off the top and bottom cards (Milking, Snowing Cards).

- G -

Gaff--A cheater's device or technique.

Gallery--Nonplaying spectators.

Gambler--A player who wagers money at unfavorable edge odds.

Gambler's Last Charge--A game played with five hand cards and five table cards with the last card turned up being wild when matched in one's hand (If).

Gambling--Betting money at unfavorable investment and edge odds.

Game Behavior--Artificial behavior used in a poker game.

Game Pace--Betting done on various hands compared to betting normally done on those hands.

Gang Cheating--Two or more players cheating in collusion.

Gap--The missing space (card) required to fill a straight.

Garbage--The discards.

Gardena, California--The Mecca for public club poker.

Gardena Razz--See Razz (2).

Ge--A pair.

Ghost Hand--A hand that reappears on the next deal because of inadequate shuffling.

Giant Twist--A twist allowing the exchange of up to all of one's cards.

Gilet (Gillet or Gile)--An old French card game that was the predecessor of Brelan.

Gimmick--See Gaff.

Girl--A queen.

Gi-Till-Satisfy--Unlimited giant twisting with progressively increasing costs for new cards.

Gleek--{1) Three of a kind. (2) An early English card game.

Go--To start dealing.

Go All In--To bet all of one's money in table stakes.

Going Better--A raise.

Going In--A call.

Golden Chairs--Player with four held cards and three table cards with one's low card sometimes played as wild.

Golden Glow--A superior brand of daub. (See Cosmetics.)

Good Hand--A winning hand.

Good Player--A player who extracts maximum money from the game.

Go Out--To drop.

Grand--A thousand dollars.

Gravy--One's winnings.

Greek--A cardsharp (Grec).

Greek Bottom--The second card from the bottom dealt by a dishonest player.

Grifter--A cheater.

Gut Shot--See Belly Hit.

Guts to Open--To allow any value hand to open.

- H -

Half-Pot Limit--A betting limit equal to half the size of the pot.

Hand--The cards dealt to a player.

Hand Cards--Concealed cards that are dealt face-down.

Hand Pace--The extent of betting, calling, raising, and bluffing compared to the size of the pot.

Head to Head--Two people playing poker.

Heavy--A pot with too much money.

Hedge Bet--A side bet to limit possible losses.

Heeler--A kicker.

Heinz--Seven-card stud with fives and sevens wild and also penalty cards.

Help--To improve a hand on receiving additional cards in stud or draw poker.

Hidden Declarations--A rule for declaring high-low hands by concealing different color chips in one's hand.

Highball--Poker in which the highest hand wins.

High-Low--A game in which the highest and lowest hands split the pot.

High Spade in Hole--Seven-card stud in which the hand with the high spade in the hole divides the pot with the high hand.

Hilo Pocalo--Five-card stud in which the up cards can be refused and passed to the player on the left (Take It or Leave It).

Hit--A draw or catch that improves one's hand.

Hokum--A stud variation providing an option to receive cards face-up or face-down.

Hold 'em (Hold Me Darling)-- A seven-card game with two face-down cards for each player and five

face-up cards for everyone's use (Tennessee Hold Me, Texas Hold 'em).

Hold Out--To cheat by concealing a card or cards for future use.

Hold Out Device--A mechanical device used by cheaters to hold out a card or cards (See Bug, Lizard, Spider).

Hole Cards--Cards dealt face-down in stud.

Hole-Card Stud--Five-card stud in which betting starts on the first hole card.

Hollywood--Fifteen-card Cincinnati with five in each hand and ten table cards.

Holy City--A big hand, usually with aces and picture cards.

Honest Readers--The normal marks or irregularities on any deck of cards.

Honor Card--A ten or higher value card.

Hook--A jack.

Hot Deck--A deck from which good hands are being dealt.

Hot Hands--A run of high-value hands.

Hot Pot--A special pot, usually played for higher stakes (Pistol Stud).

Hot Streak--A run of good "luck" or winning hands (Spinner).

House--A person or organization running a poker game for profit.

House Cut--The amount cut from pots for the house, club, or casino.

House Game--A poker game in which admission is charged or the pots are cut for the host's profit. Considered illegal in most states.

House Rules--Rules, especially betting, agreed upon by the players.

Hoyles--Any accepted rules for card games.

Humps--See Belly Strippers.

Hurricane--Two-card poker.

- I -

Ice--A cold deck.

Ideal Edge Odds--The theoretical maximum edge odds, which are impossible to achieve.

Idle Card--A card that adds no value to a hand.

"If"--See Gambler's Last Charge.

Ignorant End of a Straight-- The lowest end of a straight, especially in Hold 'em.

Immortal--(1) The best possible hand. (2) A certain winner.

Improve--To draw cards that improve one's hand.

In--To remain in the pot.

In Action--The time when a player is involved in playing his hand.

In a Row (Line)--A sequence or a straight.

Index--(1) The number or letter printed on the corners of cards. (2) The marks a cheater puts on the edge of cards.

Indirect Bet--An opponent betting or raising for a player sandbagging a strong hand.

Inside Straight--A broken sequence of four cards, such as three, five, six, seven.

Insurance--A side bet to ensure winning some money in a large pot.

Intentional Flashing--Purposely flashing or showing one's closed cards to an opponent.

In the Hole--Cards dealt face-down in stud poker.

In the Middle--The position of the players calling bets between two raising players (Middle Man).

Investment Odds--The estimated returns on betting investments.

Iron Duke--An unbeatable hand (Ironclad Hand).

- J -

Jack and Back--Jackpot poker that reverts to low-ball if no one opens (Jack and Reverse, Jacks Back, Jackson).

Jackpots--See Jacks to Open.

Jacks to Open--Draw poker in which jacks or better are required to open (Jackpots).

Jack Up--To raise.

Jam--A hand in which several players are raising each other.

Jinx--A curse of bad luck.

Jog--An unevenly stacked deck used by a cheater to mark where his partner should cut the deck (Step).

John, Jake, J-Boy--A jack.

Joker--The 53rd card added to a deck (See Bug).

Joker Poker--Poker played with the joker as wild.

Jonah--An unlucky player.

- K -

Kankakee--Seven-card stud with the joker as wild.

K-Boy--A king.

Key Card--An important card needed to complete a hand.

Key Player--A player with important influence over the game.

Kibitzer--A commenting spectator.

Kicker--An extra card held with a pair, trips, or four of a kind during the draw or twist.

Kick-it--To bump or raise the pot.

Killing It--Taking the final raise allowed.

Kilter--A five-card hand starting with the ace and alternating values to the nine.

King without the Mustache-- The king of hearts as wild.

Kitty--Money cut from pots.

Knave--A jack.

Knock--To check or pass by rapping the table.

Knock Poker--Draw poker with rummy drawing.

Ku Klux Klan--Three kings.

- L -

Laddie--A fellow poker player.

Lady--A queen.

Lalapolooze--A freak hand allowed to win only once a night.

Lame Brain Pete--Same as Cincinnati, except the lowest exposed card and all cards like it are wild.

Lame Brains--See Cincinnati.

Las Vegas Riffle--A faster, more concealed method of riffling cards. At times used for cheating.

Lay Down--The revealing of hands after the last bet.

Lay Odds--To offer a larger bet against a smaller bet.

Lead--To make the first bet.

Leader--The player who is betting first.

Lid--The top card or the card of a single-card draw.

Light--Money separated from a pot to signify the amount owed by a player.

Limit--The maximum bet or raise allowed.

Limit Stakes--Poker with maximum bets and raises established by the house rules.

Limp In--The calling of a bet.

Little Blind--The first and smallest blind bet.

Little Bobtail--A three-card straight flush.

Little Cat--Five unpaired cards from the eight to the three.

Little Dog--Five unpaired cards from the seven to the two.

Little Squeeze--Five-card high-low stud with a twist.

Little Tiger--See Little Cat.

Little Virginia--Six-card stud with one's low hole card as wild.

Live Blind--A blind bettor with an option to raise.

Live Card--A card that has not been dealt or exposed.

Live Hand--A hand with a good chance to improve.

Lizard--A hold-out device that works up and down a cheater's sleeve.

Lock--A hand that cannot lose.

Long Studs--Stud poker with more than five cards dealt to each player.

Look--To call.

Looking Down One's Throat--Having an unbeatable hand against an opponent.

Lowball--Poker in which the lowest hand wins, and five, four, three, two, ace is the perfect low.

Low Hole--A stud game in which one's lowest hole card and all matching cards are wild.

Low Poker--Poker in which the lowest hand wins, and seven, five, four, three, two is the perfect low.

Luck--An illusion of winning or losing beyond statistical reality.

Luck Out--To outdraw and beat a good hand.

Luminous Readers--Cards marked by cheaters with a special ink so the markings can be seen through special lenses or glasses (See Pink Eye).

- M -

Ma Ferguson--Five-card stud with the low card on board and all like cards as wild.

Main Pot--The first pot apart from side pots.

Major Hand--A straight or better.

Major-League Game--The largest-stake game of several poker games.

Make Good--To pay money owed to the pot.

Make the Pack--To shuffle and prepare the cards for dealing.

Marked Cards--Cards with inconspicuous markings that enable cheaters to read them from the back side.

Marker--(1) See Buck. (2) A promissory note.

Matching Card--A card of the same value or suit as another card.

Match It--Five-card stud with one's hole card becoming wild if matched by an up card.

Match the Pot--To put in the pot an amount equal to that already there.

Mate--A card that matches or pairs another card.

Maximum-Win Approach--A playing strategy that directs all effort toward winning maximum money.

Mechanic--A dishonest dealer who cheats by manipulating the cards.

Mechanic's Grip--A special way to hold a deck for dishonest dealing.

Meet a Bet--To call the full bet.

Mexican Stud--Five-card stud in which cards are dealt down, and the player has an option to choose his hole card.

Mickey Mouse--A worthless hand.

Middle Dealer--A cheater who can deal cards from the middle of the deck.

Middle Man--See In the Middle.

Milker--A tight player.

Milking the Cards--See Fuzzing.

Milking the Game--The slow draining of money from the game by tight playing.

Minnie--The perfect low hand.

Minor-League Game--A smaller-stake game.

Misdeal--A faulty deal resulting in a redeal.

Misére--The English name for low.

Miss--The failure to draw a helpful card.

Mistigris--A wild joker.

Money Flow--The direction, amount, and pattern that money passes among players in a game. Measures the money that can be won or lost per unit of time.

Monkey Flush--A three-card flush.

Monte--A three-card poker game.

Moon--(1) To win both halves of a split-pot game. [2] To declare for both high and low.

Moon Hand--A hand of good high and low value.

Mortgage--Seven-card stud requiring a player to win twice before winning the pot.

Mouth Bet--A bet not backed by money.

Murder--A two-card or a six-card high-low game with several twists.

Mystical Attitude--An irrational, unreasoned attitude.

- N -

Nailing (Blistering, Indexing, Jagging, Pegging, Punctuating, Pricking)--A cheater's technique to mark cards with his fingernail or a device.

Natural--A hand without wild cards.

Neocheater--A player who wins by Neocheating.

Neocheating--Simple, invisible, highly effective cheating techniques.

New-Breed Player--An Advanced-Concept player in public or casino poker.

New Guinea Stud--Seven-card stud starting with four down cards, followed by turning up or rolling any two cards.

New York Stud--Five-card stud in which a four flush beats a pair.

Nickel-Dime--A small-stake game.

Nigger Bet--An unusual bet such as a $9 bet instead of the normal $10 bet.

Nigger Mike--Six-card draw with a bet on each dealt card.

Nits and Lice--(1) Two pair or a full house of deuces and threes (Mites and Lice). (2) Deuces and threes as wild cards.

No Limit--The allowing of any size bet or raise (Sky's the Limit).

Northern Flight--Seven-card stud with all hearts wild, unless a spade is in the hand.

Nucleus Players--The dependable, regular players.

Nursing--Fondling cards.

Nut--The winnings needed to survive as a professional.

Nuts--A hand that is a certain winner.

- O -

Objective Attitude--A rational attitude based on reality.

Odds--The chances of getting various hands or cards.

Odds Against--The number of failures per success.

Odds For--The number of attempts per success.

Odds On--Odds at less than even money.

Offensive Bet--A bet designed to build the pot.

Office Hours--A straight from a five to a nine, or from a four to an eight.

Omaha--Seven-card stud with two hole cards in one's hand and five table cards that are rolled up one at a time.

One-End or One-Way Straight--A four-card straight open only on one end, such as jack, queen, king, ace.

One-Eye Jacks--The jack of hearts and jack of spades as wild cards.

One Eyes--Picture cards with profiles showing only one eye (Jack of Hearts, Jack of Spades, and the King of Diamonds).

On the Come--To bet before one has made a good hand.

On Tilt--Playing very poorly or wildly, usually after losing badly or winning big.

Open--The first bet of the first round.

Open at Both Ends or Open End--A four-card sequence that can be made a straight by two different value cards.

Open Blind--(1) To open without looking at one's cards. (2) A forced open.

Open Blind and Straddle--A forced opening bet followed by a forced raise.

Open Cards--Face-up cards in stud (Up Cards).

Opener--The player who opens the pot.

Openers--A hand with which the betting can be started.

Open Game--A game in which anyone can play.

Open Pair--An exposed pair in stud.

Open Poker--Stud poker.

Open Seat--A chair available for another player.

Option--Five-card, high-low stud with a twist.

Option Card--(1) A card that may be either kept or exchanged (Twist). (2) A stud card that may be either kept in the hole or exposed.

Original Hand--The cards dealt to a player before the draw.

Outs--A poor hand that can win on the draw.

Overcall--The calling of a big bet after others have called.

Overcard--A card that is higher than any card showing.

Overcards--Cards that rank higher than a pair.

Overhand Shuffle--A shuffle made by sliding cards from the top of the deck into the other hand.

Overhand Stack--An overhand shuffling technique for stacking cards.

- P -

Pace--See Betting Pace, Game Pace, and Hand Pace.

Pack--The deck of cards.

Packet--A portion of the pack.

Pa Ferguson--Five-card stud with high card on board and all cards like it as wild.

Paint--A face card in a lowball hand.

Pair--Two cards of the same value.

Palmed Card--A card concealed for future use by a cheater.

Pan or Panguingue--A form of rummy played in some Nevada casinos and California poker clubs.

Paperwork--Markings added to cards by cheaters.

Partners--Collusion cheaters.

Pass--To check or drop out instead of betting.

Pass and Out--A game in which checking is not allowed on the first round.

Passed Pot--When no one opens the pot.

Pass-Out--To fold when a bet or a fold is required.

Pass the Deal--To relinquish one's turn to deal.

Pass the Trash (Garbage)--A high-low stud game involving the exchanging of cards among players.

Pasteboard--A card.

Pat Hand--A hand in which the player keeps all his cards without drawing or twisting new cards.

Patience Poker--See Crosscards.

Peeker or Peeper--(l) One who looks at an active player's hand (2) A cheater who peeks at cards yet to be dealt.

Peek Poker--Seven-card stud.

Peep and Turn--See Mexican Stud.

Pelter (Bracket)--A five-card hand containing a two, five, nine, and one card either a three or a four, and the other card either a six, seven or eight (Skeet).

Penalties--See Bonus.

Penny Ante--A very low-stake game.

Penultimate Card--The next to the last card in the deck.

Percentage--(1) The house cut. (2) Probabilities expressed as percentages.

Perdue--Cards turned down.

Perfect Low--An unbeatable lowball hand, such as ace, two, three, four, five; or ace, two, three, four, six, or two, three, four, five, seven depending on the game.

Philosopher--A cardsharp.

Pick Up Checks--To allow a player to bet or raise the limit for every check made before his play.

Picture Card--A jack, queen, or king.

Pigeon--(1) An easy player or a sucker. (2) A valuable card for a hand.

Pig in the Poke--See Wild Widow.

Pile--A player's money.

Pinch--Five dollars.

Pineapple Hold 'em--A hold 'em variation involving three hole cards and discarding one.

Pink Eye (Red Eye)--A pink-tinted contact lens worn by a cheater to identify marked cards or luminous readers. (See Luminous Readers)

Pips--The spots or marks on the face of a card.

Piranha--An aggressive bettor.

Pistol Stud--See Hole-Card Stud.

Place and Show Tickets Split Pot with Twist Your Neighbor--A game in which cards are drawn from hands of other players and the pot is split between the second and third best hands.

Place Tickets--(1) The second best hand. (2) Draw poker in which the second best hand wins.

Play--To call or stay in

Play Back--To declare a false stake in table stakes.

Played Card--A card dealt to a hand.

Poch--The best pair, three of a kind, or four of a kind.

Pochen--A German card game from which the name poker was partly derived.

Point--The value of a card.

Poker--A money-management game that uses cards for manipulation and deception for winning.

Poker Diamond--A diagram that measures the idealness of a game.

Poker Dice--Cubical dice, each with a nine, ten, jack, queen, king, and ace on its six faces.

Poker Face--A face not showing any emotion or change in expression.

Poker Rules--A loose, flexible framework of traditions for playing poker.

Poker Solitaire--See Crosscards.

Pone--The player on the dealer's right.

Pool--A pot.

Poque--(1) A French card game from which the name of poker was partly derived. (2) A French betting expression.

Position--The relative situation of a player to the other players (Fundamental Position, Seat Position, Technical Position).

Pot--The area in which antes, bets, and raises are placed.

Pothooks--Nines.

Pot Limit--Poker stakes in which the maximum permitted bet is the size of the pot.

Pot-Limit Dig--Pot-Limit poker with no table-stake restrictions.

Poverty Poker--A game in which a player can lose only a predetermined amount, after which he can play with the winners' money.

Powerhouse--A very strong hand.

Premium--See Bonus.

Primero--An old, betting card game of Spanish origin.

Private Poker--Poker played without money being cut for the house or for the host's profit.

Proctor and Gamble--A game with four cards in each hand and three rolled table cards with the last card and all like it as wild.

Progression of Bets--The increase in betting limits for each round of betting.

Progressive Poker--A game in which the ante, bets, and opener requirements increase after a passed pot.

Public Poker--Poker played in gambling casinos or in public card clubs in which the pots are cut for profit.

Pull Through--A false shuffling technique used by cheaters.

Punching--Marking cards with pinpricks.

Punters--Those who gamble against the banker.

Puppy Feet--Clubs.

Puppy Foot--The ace of clubs.

Push--Passing unwanted cards to players on one's left.

Put Up--To pay money owed to the pot.

- Q -

Quadruplets--Four of a kind.

Qualifier--The minimum value hand allowed to win the pot.

Quart--A four-card straight flush.

Quint--A straight flush.

Quint Major--A royal straight flush.

Quitting Time--An agreed-upon time to end a poker game (Curfew).

Quorum--The minimum number of players needed to start a poker game.

- R -

Rabbit--A weak player.

Rabbit Hunting--Looking through the undealt deck of cards.

Rags--Worthless cards.

Raise--To increase the bet.

Raise Blind--(1) To raise without looking at one's cards. (2) A forced raise.

Rake-Off--Money taken from the pot by the house or casino (Rake).

Rangdoodles--A game in which the betting limit is increased after a very good hand such as four of a kind.

Rank--The relative value of hands.

Rat Holer--A player who pockets his money or winnings during the game.

Razz--(1) Seven-card lowball stud. (2) Draw poker in which the winner of the previous pot bets last (Gardena Razz).

Readable Pattern--A behavior pattern that reveals the value of a player's hand.

Readers--Marked cards.

Redeal--A new deal after a misdeal.

Redskin--A face card.

Rembrandt--Any game in which all face cards are wild.

Reraise--A raise after having been raised.

Rest Farm--An expression for the whereabouts of a player driven from a game because of heavy losses.

Restraddle--The third blind bet that is twice as much as the straddle or the second blind bet.

Restricted Pot--A rule requiring a minimum-value hand to win the pot (Qualifier).

Ribbon Clerk--(1) A player unwilling to play poker at higher stakes or at a faster pace. (2) A small-time gambler.

Rickey de Laet--A form of Mexican Stud in which the player's hole cards and all like them are wild for him.

Ride Along--To remain in a hand because no bets are made.

Ride the Pot--To go light.

Riffle--To flip with the thumb through the edge of a deck.

Riffle Cull--A technique for arranging cards in preparation for stacking the deck.

Riffle Shuffle--To shuffle by riffling the cards together.

Riffle Stack--A technique for stacking the deck.

Right to Bet--A rule allowing every player the right to bet or raise at least once per round regardless of the number of raises during that round.

Ring Game--A full game.

Ring In--Slipping an unfair or stacked deck into play.

Robin Hood Cheater--One who cheats for someone else without benefiting himself.

Roll or Rolled Card (Rolling, Rolling Up)--A face-down table card or cards turned up one at a time, usually with a round of betting after each exposure.

Rolled Up--The first three cards being three of a kind.

Roll Your Own Baseball--Same as baseball, except one of three original hole cards is turned up, and the low hole card and all like it are wild.

Roodles--A round of play at increased stakes (Wangdoodle).

Rotation--Movement in the direction of the deal ... clockwise.

Rough--The highest lowball hand of a given value, such as seven, six, five, four, three.

Round of Betting--The action sequence in which each player is allowed to check, open, bet, raise, or drop.

Round of Play--The action sequence in which every player deals a poker hand.

Round the World--The same as Cincinnati, except four cards are dealt to each player and four cards are dealt to the widow.

Rounding--See Dent.

Routine--A straight flush.

Rover--One unable to play because the game is full.

Royal--The best possible lowball hand.

Royal Flush--A straight flush to the ace.

Royals--See Eagles.

Royalties--See Bonus.

Rub the Spots Off--To excessively shuffle the cards.

Run--A sequence or a straight.

Run One--An attempt to bluff.

Runt--A hand of mixed suits and no pairs.

Run Up a Hand--To stack a deck during the day, often by culling discards.

Rush--A winning streak.

- S -

Sandbag--(1) To check and then raise the opener. (2) To check or hold back raising to get more money in the pot (Check Raising).

Sanding--A system of marking cards by sanding the edges or ends of cards.

Sawbuck--Ten dollars.

Say--The turn of a player to declare what to do.

Scarne Cut--To cut by pulling cards from the center of the deck and placing them on top of the deck.

Schenck's Rules--First known rules of poker printed in England in 1872.

Schoolboy Draw--An unsound draw.

Scooping--See Shoot the Moon.

Screwy Louie--Similar to Anaconda, except discards are passed to the player on one's left.

Seat Position--The position of a player relative to the other players.

Seat Shot--A bet or raise made from an advantageous seat position.

Second--The second card from the top of the deck being dealt.

Second Best--The best losing hand.

Second Deal--To deal the second card from the top of the deck when cheating.

See--To call in the final round of betting.

Seed--An ace.

Selling a Hand--A strategy to get opponents to call.

Sequence--Cards of consecutive value as in a straight (e.g., four, five, six, seven, eight).

Sequential Declaration--The last bettor or raiser being required to declare his hand in high-low poker.

Session--The period in which a poker game is held.

Set--Three or four of a kind.

Seven-Card Flip--Seven-card stud in which the first four cards are dealt down and then the player turns any two up.

Seven-Card Pete--Seven-card stud with all sevens as wild ... or one's low-hole card (or one's last card) and all like it as wild.

Seven-Card Stud or Seven-Toed Pete--Stud poker played with three hole cards and four exposed cards.

Sevens Rule--A rule in low-ball in which anyone with seven low or better must bet or forfeit further profits from the pot.

Seven-Toed Pete--Seven-card stud.

Sharp, Sharper, or Sharker-- A cheater (Cardsharp).

Sharp Top--An ace.

Shifting Sands--The same as Mexican stud except one's hole card and all matching cards are wild.

Shill--A house man or woman who actively plays in the game for the house, club, or casino.

Shiner--A tiny mirror or any reflecting device used by a cheater to see unexposed cards.

Shoe--A device from which cards are dealt.

Shoot the Moon--To declare both high and low in an attempt to win both halves of a high-low pot

(Moon, Scooping, Swinging).

Short--Insufficient money or cards (Shy).

Short Call--To call part of a bet in table stakes with all the money one has on the table.

Short Pair--A pair lower than openers, such as a pair of tens in jackpots.

Short Stud--Five-card stud.

Shotgun--Draw poker with extra rounds of betting that start after the third card is dealt.

Shove Them Along--Five-card stud in which each player has the choice to keep his first up card dealt to him or to pass it to the player on his left (Take It or Leave It).

Show--To expose one's cards.

Show Cards--The exposed cards in stud.

Showdown--(1) The showing of cards at the end of a hand. (2) An open hand played for a predetermined amount.

Show Tickets--(1) The third best hand. (2) Draw poker in which the third best hand wins.

Shuffle--To mix the cards prior to dealing.

Shy--See Short.

Side Arms--The second pair of two pair.

Side Bet--Any bet made outside the pot.

Side Cards--Cards that do not influence the value rank of a hand.

Side Money or Side Pot--The amount set aside from the main pot in table stakes.

Side Strippers--Cards tapered along the Sides for cheating.

Sight--To call for a show of hands after tapping out.

Signals--The system that collusion cheaters use to secretly exchange information about their cards and

instructions about betting and raising.

Silent Partner--An innocent player used by a cheater as an unwitting partner.

Simultaneous Declaration-- High-low poker in which everyone declares his hand at the same time.

Sixty-six--Six-card stud with sixes wild.

Skeet--See Pelter.

Skeet Flush--A skeet in one suit.

Skin--A dollar.

Skin Game--A game having two or more collusion cheaters.

Skinning the Hand--A cheater's technique to get rid of extra cards.

Skip Straight or Skipper--See Alternate Straight.

Skoon--A dollar.

Sky's the Limit--A game in which no maximum is placed on any bets or raises.

Slicked-Aced Deck--A deck with chemically treated slippery aces that allows a cheater to locate the aces from within a deck.

Slow Play--Passively allowing opponents to bet while holding a strong hand.

Smooth--The lowest lowball hand of a given value, such as seven, four, three, two, ace, for a seven low.

Smooth Call--Making a call with a raising hand.

Snarker--A player who wins a pot and then ridicules the loser.

Snatch Game--A casino or house game in which pots are excessively cut or raked, often covertly.

Snow--To fake or bluff.

Snowing Cards--See Fuzzing.

Sorts--A deck of cards made up of irregular or imperfect cards sorted from many normal decks of cards.

Southern Cross--A variation of Cincinnati with nine up cards arranged in a cross.

Spider--A hold-out device attached to the cheater's coat or vest.

Spike--(1) An ace. (2) A pair in lowball.

Spinner--A winning streak (Hot Streak).

Spit Card--A card turned up that is used in every player's hand.

Spit in the Ocean--A draw game in which an exposed card and all matching cards are wild.

Split Openers--To break up the hand required to open.

Split Pair--A pair in stud with one card in the hole and the other exposed.

Split Pot--A pot equally divided between two winners.

Spot--An ace.

Spot Card--Any card from the deuce to the tell.

Spots--The printed marks on the face side of a card.

Spread--(1) A hand. (2) An illegal exchange of cards between two collusion cheaters.

Squared Deck--An evenly stacked deck ready for cutting or dealing.

Squeeze--To look at cards by slowly spreading them apart (Sweat).

Squeeze Bet or Raise--To bet or raise against another strong hand in order to extract more money from a third player holding a weaker hand.

Squeezed Player--A caller who is being bet into and raised by players on both sides of him (Whipsaw).

Squeezers--Cards with suit and value indicators printed at the corners.

Stack--(1) A pile of chips. (2) To cheat by prearranging cards to be dealt.

Stacked Deck--A deck with prearranged cards for a dishonest deal.

Stake--The money with which a player enters a game.

Stand--To decline a draw.

Stand Pat--To play the original hand without drawing.

Stand-off--A tie.

Stay--To remain in the hand by calling the bet or raise.

Stenographers--Four queens.

Step--See Jog.

Still Pack--The deck not in play when two decks are used.

Stinger--A sequence.

Stock--(1) The cards remaining in the deck after dealing. (2) The stacked portion of a deck.

Stonewall--One who calls to the end with a poor hand.

Stormy Weather--Similar to Spit in the Ocean, except three cards are dealt in the center.

Straddle--(1) A forced or a compulsory raise (Blind Raise). (2) The right to buy the last-bettor position.

Straight--Five cards in sequence, such as three, four, five, six, seven.

Straight Draw--Draw poker not requiring openers.

Straight Flush--Five cards of the same suit in sequence.

Stranger--A new or unfamiliar card in a hand after the draw.

Streak--A run of winning or losing hands.

String Bet--A hesitating bet made in segments to lure giveaway reactions from other players, especially those on one's left--not allowed in most casinos and poker clubs.

Stringer--A straight.

Stripped Deck--A deck used with certain cards purposely removed, such as the deuces.

Stripper Deck--A dishonest deck with slightly wedge-shaped cards (usually one thirty-second of an inch tripped off the card's edge or side) allowing the cheater to pull certain cards from the deck. (See Belly Strippers, Side Strippers, End Strippers, Brief.)

Strip Poker--A game in which the loser of each pot must remove an article of clothing.

Stud Poker--One of the two basic forms of poker (the other is draw) and played with open or exposed cards (up cards) and with one or more concealed hole cards (down cards).

Substitution--An exchange of a card for one from the deck (Twist).

Suck--To call when the proper play is to fold.

Sudden Death--High-low five-card stud.

Suicide King--The king of hearts ... the king with a sword pointed at its head.

Suit--Any of the four sets (clubs, diamonds, hearts, and spades) in a deck of cards.

Super Seven-Card Stud--A game starting with five cards to each player; then after discarding two, the game proceeds as in seven-card stud.

Sweeten--To add more money to a pot such as an extra ante.

Swinging--See Shoot the Moon.

- T -

Table--See Board.

Table Cards--Cards turned face-up on the table for use in everyone's hand, such as used in Cincinnati.

Table Stakes--Stakes in which the betting and raising is limited to the amount of money a player has in

front of him.

Take It or Leave It--See Shove Them Along.

Take Out--The number of chips a player starts with in table stakes.

Take the Lead--To make a bet or raise.

Talon--The remainder of the deck after the deal.

Tap--To bet all one's money in table stakes.

Tap City--A player having gone broke in a game.

Tap Out--To bet and lose all one's cash, forcing one to leave the game.

Tap You--(1) An expression for a player betting an amount equal to all the money his opponent has on the table in table stakes. (2) A raise.

Technical Position--The strategic and psychological advantage of a player relative to the other players.

Telephone Booth--A very loose player (Calling Station).

Tells--Characteristics, habits, or actions of a player that give away his hand or intentions.

Tennessee--Draw poker in which a bet is made after each round of cards is dealt.

Tennessee Hold Me--See Hold 'em.

Tens High--Poker in which no hand higher than a pair of tens can win.

Ten Ten--High-low five-card stud with ten for low and a pair of tens for high as qualifiers. Usually played with two twists.

Texas Hold 'em--See Hold 'em.

Texas Special or Texas Tech--See Double-Barreled Shotgun.

The Diamond--A measurement of the idealness of a poker game for the good player.

Thirty Days or Thirty Miles-- Three tens.

Thirty Three--Six-card stud with threes wild.

Three-Card Monte--A three-card game similar to Bragg.

Three of a Kind--Three cards of the same value (Treys, Triplets, Trips).

Three-Toed Pete--Three-card poker.

Throat Shot--An expression for a player barely losing a big pot.

Throw Off--To discard.

Throw Up a Hand--To fold.

Ticket--A card.

Tie--Two hands of equal value. The pot is usually divided between tied hands that win.

Tierce--A three-card straight flush.

Tiger--A low hand from the two to the seven.

Tight Player--A player who seldom bets unless he has a strong hand.

Time Cut--Money charged each player on a time basis by a casino or poker club. Charge is usually on a 3 minute or an hourly basis (Axe, Collection).

Time Game--Poker game in which players are charged by the house, club, or casino a specified amount each hour or half hour for playing privileges.

Toke--A tip, especially to a dealer in a gambling casino.

Top--To beat an opponent.

Tough Player--A superior poker player.

Trey--A three.

Tricon--Three of a kind.

Trio, Triplets, or Trips--Three of a kind.

Trips Eight--Stud or draw split-pot poker with an eight for low and trips for high as qualifiers. Often played with one or two twists.

Tulsa--See Omaha.

Turn--A player's chance to deal, receive cards, or bet.

Turn Down--To fold.

Turnie-Turnie--See Mexican Stud.

Twenty-Deck Poker--Poker played with twenty cards. All cards lower than tens are removed.

Twin Beds--A high-low game involving five cards in each hand and ten turned up on the table.

Twist--A draw in stud or an extra draw in draw poker.

Twist Your Neighbor--To draw cards from the hands of other players.

Two-Card Poker--Any poker game in which the best two cards win.

Two Pair--Two separate pairs of different values in a hand.

Two Pair Nine--Stud or draw split-pot poker with a nine for low and two pair for high as qualifiers. Often played with one or two twists.

Two-Way Hand--A hand having possibilities of winning both high and low halves of a split-pot game.

- U -

Uncle Doc--Five-card stud with a single spit or table card and all like it as wild.

Undercut--(1) The final down card being the lowest hole card in low-hole stud. (2) A shuffling technique for preparing a stacked deck. Especially useful for preparing two stacked hands simultaneously.

Under the Gun--The position of the first bettor.

Unlimited Poker--Poker in which no limit is placed on bets or raises.

Up--(1) The ace of anteing. (2) The higher of two pair-- e.g., queens and tens is queens up.

Up Cards--The face-up cards in stud (Open Cards).

Up the Creek--A game in which split-whiskered kings are wild.

Utah--See Cincinnati.

- V -

Valet--A jack.

V8 Ford Special--Thirteen-card stud with five cards to each player and eight table cards in a V formation, with one side of the V played for high and the other side played for low.

Vigorish--The amount taken by the house for running a game.

- W -

Walk the Table--The automatic winning of the entire pot with a certain specific card or hand.

Wash--To Shuffle.

Waving--Coiling or crimping cards by a cheater so the wavy card can be spotted in an opponent's hand or in the deck.

Weary Willie--See Elimination.

Wedges--Certain tapered or shaved cards that can be pulled from a deck when needed by the cheater.

Welcher--A player who fails to pay a debt.

Whangedoodle--A round of jackpots played after a big hand such as four of a kind.

Wheel--See Bicycle.

Whipsaw--To bet and raise aggressively on both sides of a calling player. (Squeezed Player).

Whiskey Poker--Draw poker with widow cards that can be exchanged from one's hand.

Whore--A queen.

Widow--(1) A card or cards common to all hands (Spit Card). (2) The money cut from pots (Kitty).

Wild Annie--See Double-Barreled Shotgun.

Wild Card--A card changeable to any value or suit desired by its holder.

Wild Game--(1) A game using wild cards. (2) A highly spirited or fast-paced game.

Wild Widow--A card turned up for use as a wild card (with all similar cards being wild) in every player's hand (Spit Card).

Window--The card exposed or flashed at the end of a player's closed hand.

Window Dressing--A card purposely flashed from one's closed hand.

Wing--To have a winning streak.

Wired (Back-to-Back)--A pair, trips, or four of a kind dealt consecutively or back-to-back in a hand ... usually in a stud hand starting with the first card.

Woolworth--A game in which all fives and tens are wild.

World Series of Poker--A Hold 'em tournament with a $10,000 buy-in held every May at Binion's Horseshoe Casino in Las Vegas.

- X -

X Marks the Spot--See Crisscross.

- Y -

You Roll Two--See New Guinea Stud.

- Z -

Z-Game--The lowest-stake game in the house.

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Appendix D
Poker Odds

Appendix D compiles the following card odds:

1. Rank of Hands with Odds
2. Draw Odds
3. Pat-Hand Odds
4. Lowball Odds
5. Hold 'em and Stud Odds
6. Seven-Stud Odds
7. Seven-Stud Catch Odds
8. Two-Pair Odds
9. Wild-Card Odds
10. Comparison of Odds.

Card odds can be calculated and expressed as shown below:

Example of Three-of-a-Kind Odds

Odds For	Deals Per Pat Hand	(52-card deck) **Before the Draw**	Lower Value Hands per Pat Hand	Odds Against
1 in 47	47	(Starting with 5 cards	46	46 to 1

Odds For	Draws per Catch	**After the Draw**	Misses per Catch	Odds Against
1 in 8.7	8.7	(Draw 3 cards to a pair)	7.7	7.7 to 1

Note: All values are rounded at two figures.

To calculate, for example, the number of three-of-a-kind hands possible *on the deal,* simply divide the deals per pat hand (47) into the total number of hands possible with a 52-card deck (2,598,960). That calculation gives a rounded-off answer of 55,300 possible hands of three of a kind on the deal. The precise answer (as shown in odds table #1 is 54,913 possible hands, which is calculated by using exact figures and not rounding off numbers.

But in calculating the card odds for drawing various poker hands (such as tabulated in odds table #2), a special problem arises that makes draw odds reported in all other poker books either inaccurate or imprecise. Furthermore, no practical way exists to give *precise* draw odds for certain hands. As a result, all the odds in this Appendix were defined and then calculated on IBM computers at the University of Delaware. Those calculations provided the only *accurately defined* and *consistently calculated* odds in the literature. While certain *draw* odds are not precise for every situation, all odds provided in this Appendix can be used with confidence since the additional knowledge of the slightly different, precise draw odds would probably never make a meaningful difference for any poker decision.

For those interested in a more detailed explanation of the draw-odds calculations, see the footnote for Poker-Odds Table #2.

1. RANK OF HANDS WITH ODDS

(highest to lowest)

Rank	Hand	Example	Number of Hands Possible
*	Five Aces (with Bug)	AAAAB	1+
*	Five of a Kind	8888W (joker wild)	13+
*	Five of a Kind (with Wild Card)	(deuces wild)	672
*	Skeet Flush	2S 4S 5S 8S 3S	24
1	Royal Straight Flush	10H JH QH KH AH	4
1	Straight Flush	4C 5C 6C 7C 8C	40
2	Four Aces	XAAAA	48
2	Four of a Kind	X7777	624
*	Big Bobtail	X 8D 9D JD QD	144
*	Blaze Full	QQKKK	144
3	Full House	66JJJ	3,744
4	Flush	DDDDD	5,108 (n.s.)
*	Big Tiger (Big Cat)	8 - - - K	4,096 (i.f.)
*	Little Tiger (Little Cat)	3 - - - 8	4,096 (i.f.)
*	Big Dog	9 - - - A	4.096 (i.f.)

*	Little Dog	2- - -7	4,096 (i.f.)
5	Straight	78910J	10,200 (n.f.)
*	Round the Corner Straight	32AKQ	3,060 (n.f.)
*	Skip Straight (Dutch Straight)	579JK	8,120 (n-f.)
*	Kilter	A - - - 9	35,840 (i.f.)
*	Five and Dime	5 - - -10	4,096
*	Skeet (Pelter, Bracket)	2 - 5 - 9	6,144 (i.f.)
6	Three of a Kind	XX10 10 10	54,912
*	Little Bobtail	XX6C 7C 8C	3,120
*	Flash	HDSCB	685,464 +
*	Blaze	PPPPP	792
7	Two Pair	X3399	123,552
*	Four Flush with a Pair	DDD 5D 5	34,320
*	Four Flush	XHHH	111,540
8	Pair	XXX88	1,098,240
9	No Pair (+)	XXXXX	1,302,540
9	Ace High (+)	- - - - A	502,860

9	King High (+)	- - - - K	335,580
9	Queen High (+)	- - - - Q	213,180
9	Jack High (+)	- - - - J	177,500
9	Ten High (+)	- - - - 10	70,360
10	Nine Low (+ +)	- - - - 9	71,860
10	Eight Low (+ +)	- - - - 8	35.840
10	Seven Low (+ +)	- - - - 7	15,360
10	Six Low (+ +)	- - - - 6	5,120
10	Five Low (+ +)	A2345	1,024

Total hands possible with a 52-card deck 2,598,960
[+] Total hands possible with a 53-card deck (with a joker) 2,869,685

Code:
* = Not a normal hand (freak hand)
B = Bug card (joker)
W = Wild card
P = Any picture card
H = Heart
D = Diamond
S = Spade
C = Club
A = Ace
K = King
Q = Queen
J = Jack
X = Any nonpaired side card
- = A specific nonpaired side card
(+) = No straights or flushes, ace is high
(+ +) = Including straights and flushes, ace is low
i.f. = Including flushes,

n.f. = no flushes,
n.s. = no straights

2. DRAW ODDS

Original Hand	Cards Drawn	Final Hand	Approximate* Draws per Catch
Ace	4	Two pair or better	14
Ace-King, same suit	3	Two pair or better	14
Pair	3	Any improvement	4
---	3	Two pair	6
---	3	Trips	9
---	3	Full	100
---	3	Four	380
Two-card flush	3	Flush	100
Pair + kicker	2	Any improvement	4
---	2	Two pair	6
---	2	Trips	13
---	2	Full	125
---	2	Four	1100

Pair + ace	2	Aces up	9
---	2	Two pair (lower)	18
Trips	2	Any improvement	10
---	2	Full	16
---	2	Four	24
Three-card straight flush, double open	2	Straight or better	12
---	2	Straight flush	1100
Three-card straight flush, KQJ or 432	2	Straight or better	14
Three-card straight flush, AKQ or 32A	2	Straight or better	21
Three-card straight, double open	2	Straight	24
Three-card flush	2	Flush	25
Two pair	1	Full	12
Trips + kicker	1	Any improvement	12
---	1	Full	l6
---	1	Four	48
Four-card straight, open both ends	1	Straight	6
Four-card straight, inside or one end	1	Straight	12

Four-card flush	1	Flush	5
Four-card straight flush, open both ends	1	Straight or better	3
---	1	Straight flush	24
Four-card straight flush, inside or one end	1	Straight or better	4
---	1	Straight flush	48

* Approximate values rather than precise values must be reported for the following reason: Consider an extreme example--the odds on a four-card draw to an ace. Does one assume a blind draw into a forty-seven-card deck that would give a precise value of 12.8 draws per catch of two pair or better? Or does one assume a draw into a fifty-one-card deck (a deck with one ace missing) that would give a precise value of 15.6 draws per catch of two pair or better? Now a 20 percent difference exists between those two precise values with no basis for selecting one assumption over the other (forty-seven-card deck versus fifty-one-card deck). Furthermore, neither assumption represents the actual situation: The draw is not blind from a forty-seven-card deck, and the draw is not from a fifty-one-card deck. An accurate and precise value is obtained only by defining each of the four discarded cards and then drawing from a forty-seven-card deck. But that would not be practical because a complete table of draw odds to the ace alone would consist of hundreds of thousands of values. All those values do, however, lie somewhere between the values for a blind draw into the forty-seven-card deck and a draw into the fifty-one-card deck. So where necessary, draw odds are calculated at the midway value between the two extreme precise values and then rounded off to a whole number. That is the most practical way to report such draw odds in a consistent and accurately defined manner.

3. PAT-HAND ODDS

A. Various Hands

Hand	Hands Possible	Pat Hands per 200,000 Deals	Deals per Pat Hand	Deals per Pat Hand or Better
Royal straight flush	4	.15	649,740	649,740
Straight flush	36	1.4	72,193	64,974

Four of a kind	624	22	4,165	3,914
Full house	3,744	144	694	590
Flush	5,108	196	509	273
Straight	10,200	392	255	132
Three of a kind	54,912	2,113	47	35
Two pair	123,552	4,754	21	13
One pair	1,098,240	42,257	2.4	2
No pair	1,302,540	50,118	2	1
Total	2,598,960	100,000	---	---

B. High Pairs

Hand	Hands Possible	Pat Hands per 200,000 Deals	Deals per Pat Hand	Deals per Pat Hand or Better
Aces	84,480	3,250	31	9
Kings	84,480	3,250	31	7
Queens	84,480	3,250	31	6
Jacks	84,480	3,250	31	5

C. Draw Hands to Straights and Flushes

(Compiled for the Advanced Concepts of Poker
by Michael J. Caro, a leading authority
on draw poker and poker mathematics.)

Hand	Hands Possible	Pat Hands per 200,000 Deals	Deals per Pat Hand	Deals per Pat Hand or Better
Four-card straight,* any	325,008	12,505	8	---
Four-card straight,* inside	251,136	9,663	10	---
Four-card straight,* outside	73,872	2,842	35	---
Four-card flush*	105,744	4,068	25	---
Four-card straight flush*	5,796	223	448	---
Three-card straight flush*	8,064	310	322	---

* Excludes pat hands and higher-value draws.

4. LOWBALL ODDS

A. Pat Card Odds on the Deal

(52-card deck--no joker*)

Pairless Hands Possible

Highest Card in five cards	Including Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is High

Ace	0	0	502,860
King	508,880	502,860	335,580
Queen	337,920	335,580	213,180
Jack	215,040	213,180	127,500
Ten	129,024	127,500	70,360
Nine	71,680	70,360	34,680
Eight	35,840	34,680	14,280
Seven	15,360	14,280	4,080
Six	5,120	4,080	0
Five	1,024	0	0

B. Draw Odds

(52-card deck--no joker[*])

One-Card Draws per Catch

Highest Card in four cards	Highest Card in five cards	Including Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is High
Ten	Ten	2	2.03	2.45
Nine	Nine	2.4	2.45	3.10

Eight	Eight	3	3.10	4.30
Seven	Seven	4	4.30	7.53
Six	Six	6	7.53	---
Five	Five	12	---	---

Two-Card Draws per Catch

Highest Card in three cards	Highest Card in five cards	Including Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is High
Eight	Eight	7.35	7.59	13.44
Seven	Seven	12.50	13.44	30.75
Six	Six	24.50	30.75	---
Five	Five	73.50	---	---

Three-Card Draws per Catch

Highest Card in two cards	Highest Card in five cards	Including Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is High
Seven	Seven	30.63	31.91	95.15
Six	Six	76.56	95.15	---

| Five | Five | 306.25 | --- | --- |

Four-Card Draws per Catch

Highest Card in one cards	Highest Card in five cards	Including Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is Low	No Straights and Flushes, Ace is High
Seven	Seven	65.08	70.02	244.96
Six	Six	195.24	244.96	---
Five	Five	976.17	---	---

* For a fifty-three-card deck with a joker, the number of pat hands possible increases by a few percent to several hundred percent, depending on the hand.

5. HOLD 'EM AND STUD ODDS

First Two Cards ---------- (stud and hold 'em)	Deals per Catch
2 aces	221
2 kings, etc.	221
Any pair	17
Any hand with a pair or an ace	5
Ace-king suited	332

Ace-king not suited	111
Any two cards suited	4

First Three Cards (High) ---------- (7 stud & pineapple hold 'em)	Deals per Catch
3 aces	5525
3 kings, etc.	5525
Any trips	425
Three straight flush	86
Three flush	25
2 aces	77
Any pair	6

First Three Cards (Low) ---------- (Razz)	Deals per Catch
A-2-3 (lowest)	345
4 and lower	86
5 and lower	34
6 and lower	17

7 and lower	10
8 and lower	6
9 and lower	4

6. SEVEN-STUD ODDS

Hand	*Hands Possible*	*Approximate Hands per 100,000 Deals*
Straight flush	37,444	28
Four of a kind	224,848	168
Full house	3,473,184	2,590
Flush	4,051,784	3,030
Straight	8,466,876	6,330
Three of a kind	6,374,520	4,760
Two pair	30,834,000	23,050
One pair	56,851,296	42,500
No pair	23,470,608	17,500
Total Hands	133,784,560	

7. SEVEN-STUD CATCH ODDS

Start With	Misses per Catch of a Straight (outside)	Misses per Catch of a Flush	Misses per Catch of a Full House or Fours
FFX	66	31	13
FFXX	106	275	19
FFXXX	--	---	38
FFGG	53	137	4
FFGGX	---	---	7
FFGGXX	---	---	11
FFF	4	4.5	1.5 (11 for fours)
FFFX	8	9	1.7
FFFXX	22	23	2
FFFXXX	---	---	4
FFFF	1.5	1	---
FFFFX	2	2	---
FFFFXX	5	4	---

F or G = a flush, straight (outside) or a paired card.

X = a nonhelping card.

8. TWO-PAIR ODDS

Hand	Hands Possible	Hands Higher	Hands Lower
Aces up	19,008	0	104,544
Kings up	17,424	19,008	87,120
Queens up	15,840	36,432	71,280
Jacks up	14,256	52,272	57,024

--------------------------50%--------------------------

Tens up	12,672	86,528	44,352
Nines up	11,088	79,200	33,264
Eights up	9,504	90,288	23,760
Sevens up	7,920	99,792	15,840
Sixes up	6,336	107,712	9,504
Fives up	4,752	114,048	4,752
Fours up	3,168	118,800	1,582
Threes up	1,584	121,968	0
Total	123,552	---	---

9. WILD-CARD ODDS

Various Hands

Deals to Get on First Five Cards

Hand	No Wild Cards	Joker Wild	Deuces Wild	Deuces Wild, Hands Possible
Five of a kind	--	220,745	3,868*	672
Royal straight flush	649,740	119,570	5,370	484
Straight flush	72,193	14,666	575	4,072
Four of a kind	4,165	920	81*	30,816
Full house	694	438	205	12,672
Flush	509	362	159	13,204
Straight	255	221	38	66,236
Trips	47	21*	8*	355,056
Two pair	21	23	27	95,040
One pair	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,222,048
No pair	2	2.2	3.4	798,660
Total	---	---	---	2,598,960

* With deuces wild, five of a kind is easier to get than a straight flush, four of a kind is much easier to get than a flush or a full house, and three of a kind is easier to get than two pair.

10. COMPARISON OF ODDS
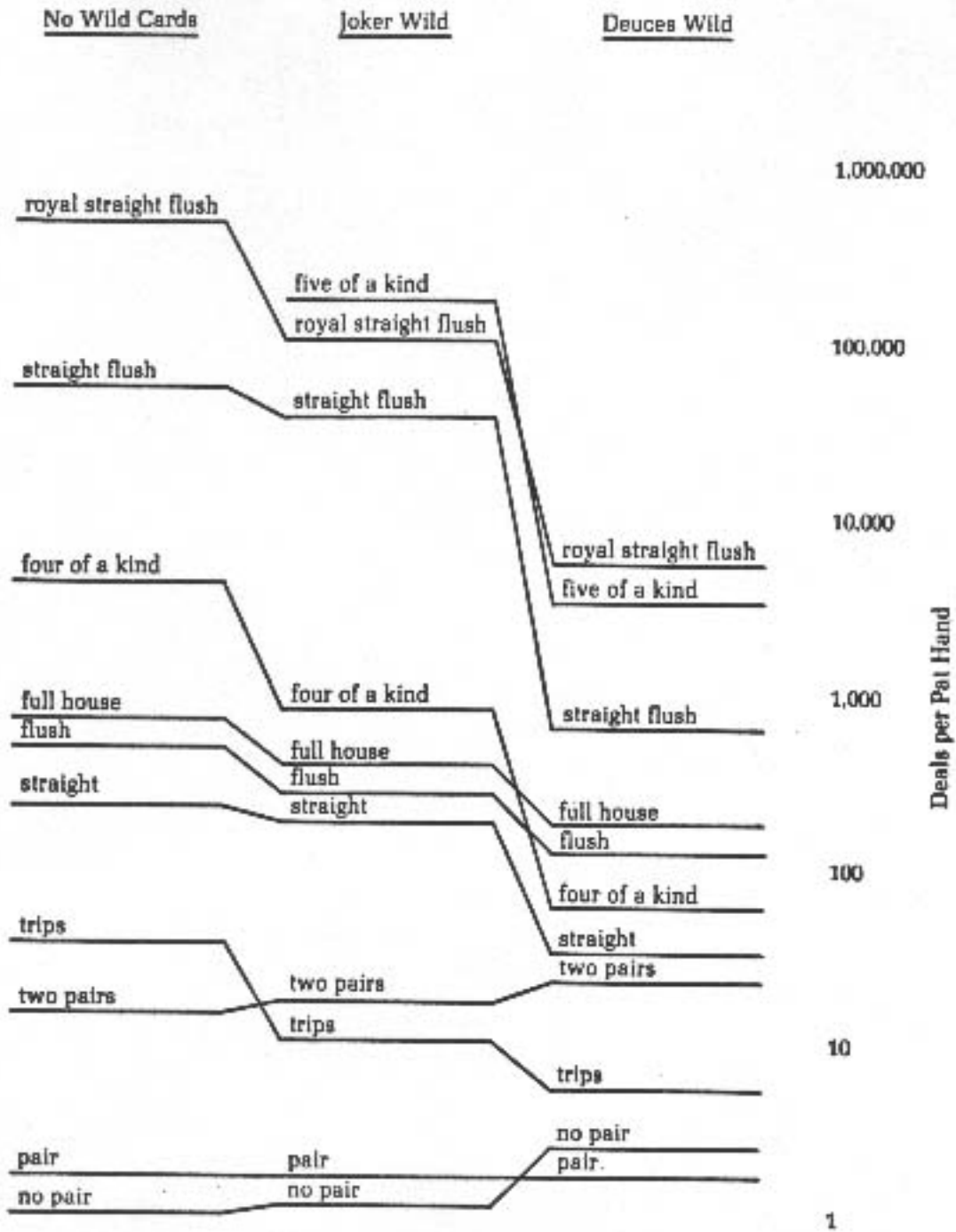
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