

STUDY SESSION 2

Aggression

The Aggression Spectrum

- The spectrum spans from extremely passive on one end to extremely aggressive on the other end.
- All successful poker players fall toward the aggressive side of the spectrum.
- The type of game can dictate a player's aggression level.
- The type of table can dictate a player's aggression level.
- Successful players make adjustments in their aggression based on all factors at play (ie "One Size Doesn't Fit All").
- You will also have a natural tendency on the aggression spectrum.
- If you are naturally a passive player you will need to fight your natural tendency and play a more aggressive style to be successful most of the time.

Types of Aggression

- In addition to a spectrum of aggression, there are different types of aggression known as Tight Aggressive (TAG) and Loose Aggressive (LAG).
- You will have a natural tendency toward tight or loose play.
- Both tight and loose play have merits.
- You will occasionally need to play against your natural tendencies due to factors in the game to be successful.

The Tight Aggressive Style (TAG)

- A style of play dictated by primarily playing premium hands aggressively.
- The TAG will play looser in position.
- The TAG will use his/her image to pull off well-timed bluffs.
- The TAG will sometimes find himself/herself in difficult situations playing out of position.
- The TAG plays better against passive players than the LAG.
- The TAG style is well suited to cash games.
- A strict TAG style doesn't work well in today's tournament environment.

The Loose Aggressive Style (LAG)

- A style dictated by playing a wide range of hands from any position with aggressive tendencies.
- The LAG will be involved in a lot of pots.
- The LAG will bluff a lot.
- The LAG will use his/her image to get maximum value when they have the goods.
- The LAG will often play big pots with less than premium hands.
- The LAG will often crash and burn early from tournaments.
- The LAG style requires good reading abilities (board textures, betting patterns, etc.)
- The LAG style is well suited to tournament play, especially the early stages when stacks are deep.
- Good LAGs can do well in cash games but it is a volatile style with huge jumps in profits and losses.

The Middle Ground

- Most successful players “shift gears”, especially in tournaments, to take advantage of the dynamics of their table, the stage of the tournament, and other factors.
- Most successful players change styles as a way of creating deception and keeping their opponents guessing.
- The LAG style works well in the early stages of a tournament.
- The TAG style works well in the middle stages of a tournament.
- Styles become irrelevant at 20 Big Blinds or less (ie math-dictated play)
- Your natural style works best when the effective stacks are 25 Big Blinds or more.

Choosing a Style

- Your natural tendencies will lead you to a predominant style of play.
- If you are passive, you need to become more aggressive or you will not be successful in the long-term.
- Whether you are loose or tight, you need to learn how to play against your natural tendencies in order to be successful.
- Both TAG and LAG styles can be winning formulas.
- Learn the strengths and weaknesses of both styles and use them to your advantage.