

STUDY SESSION 1

Bet Sizing and Pot Management

Pre-Flop Betting-Opening

- Standard opening amounts between 2.5 and 3.5 times the big blind.
- Don't vary your sizing based on your hand strength.
- Either use the same raising amount in each level (most common) or vary your raises based on position (Andy Bloch method).
- Okay to vary your raise size against a specific opponent's big blind but do it every time (again not based on hand strength).
- Open limping is almost always a mistake.

Pre-Flop Betting-3 and 4 Betting

- Definition: Raising an initial raise (3 bet) or subsequent raise (4 bet)
- If your 3 bets are never called, you don't do it enough
- If your 3 bets are always called, you are doing it too much or against the wrong opponents
- Sizing should be roughly 2.5 to 3.5 times the initial bet size for a 3 bet. 4 bets are usually smaller (2-3 times the 3 bet).
- Bet sizing should be determined by the number of players in the pot and your position, not your hand strength. The more opponents, the bigger the 3 bet. If you are going to be out of position post flop against the bettor you are raising, your 3 bet should be on the bigger side.

Calling a Raise Pre-Flop

- Calling a raise is a perfectly acceptable play when the effective stacks are reasonably deep (greater than 40 big blinds). If the stacks are shallower, especially your stack, calling becomes a less optimal play.
- You should occasionally call with very big hands in order to make your play less predictable.
- Calling raises with 20 Big Blind stacks or less is almost always a mistake.
- Calling a 3 bet out of position is a losing play under most circumstances. 4 betting or folding are generally much better options.

Playing the Flop-As the Initial or Final Raiser

- A continuation bet is rarely the wrong play but not always the best play.
- The board texture, the number of opponents, and your perception of your opponent's hand ranges should dictate your decision to continuation bet or not.
- Your continuation bet should be some percentage of the pot less than 100% (ie no over-pot bets under most circumstances)
- Your continuation bet should be more when you perceive your opponent to be drawing to a hand that if it hits will beat you.
- Your hand strength in and of itself shouldn't be a factor except in relation to what you put your opponent on.
- The more opponents, the more likely you should not continuation bet
- If you 3 bet or 4 bet pre-flop, you should almost always continuation bet.

Playing the Flop-As the Initial or Final Raiser (continued)

- If you perceive danger, you shouldn't continuation bet
- The dryer the board texture, the more often you should continuation bet
- If you perceive weakness, you should continuation bet

Playing the Flop-As a Caller

- If you are in the blinds (ie last to act pre-flop, first to act post-flop) play in flow (ie let the initial raiser control the action regardless of your hand strength).
- Before you call a continuation bet you need to have a plan for what you are going to do on the turn and river. No plan, no play.
- Floating against players that do not fold is a mistake since you will not be able to take away the pot on later streets. They will not perceive what you are doing and are only playing based on their hand strength.
- Raising the initial raiser continuation bet can be a powerful play but should be used in the right situations where you feel the opponent is either weak or concerned about the board texture.

Playing the Turn

- The turn is the most crucial street in Hold Em. You should have enough information by the turn to determine your opponent's range and your chances of winning the pot.
- The pot escalates heavily on the turn. Be aware of the concept of Pot Leverage both as a weapon and when it is being used against you.
- If you bet pre-flop and on the flop you need to determine your opponent's range before firing a third bullet.
- Your bet sizing should generally be less than 100% of the pot.
- Being in position gives you the best chance to control the pot size. Use it to your advantage when deciding your optimal action (betting, raising, calling, or checking).

Playing the River

- You have the most information you can by the River. Use it wisely.
- If you are betting, have a reason (betting for value, betting as a blocker, betting as a bluff).
- Don't bluff if it doesn't make sense. Most players don't get to the river with complete air most of the time.
- Read the board carefully and determine if any potential draws hit or anything else that might have improved your opponent's hand.
- Use danger cards as an opportunity to bluff if you perceive weakness from your opponent.
- Consider if your hand has showdown value before betting, especially in position and on a dangerous board where you might get raised off your hand.

Pot Management

- Big hand, big pot. Small hand, small pot.
- Use position to control the pot.
- Reevaluate your hand on every street based on the action. Act accordingly.
- When you don't have the nuts, folding is never the worst play you can make, especially if your opponent is telling you they have something with their betting.
- Mix up your play to confuse your opponents. This will put them on the defensive in future pots and make it more likely you control the action in hands with them.