

Advanced Texas Hold'em

A Detailed Guide

For No Limit and Limit Hold'em Poker

Strategies

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POKER SCHOOL ONLINE

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Bad Beats and How They Affect You

Let us switch gears from all the technical math stuff and move to some psychology. If you have ever taken a bad beat then you know it is hard to see your game or the table the same way. The Poker Gods were unkind, ran all over your 75% favorite, and you have to see it as just another hand.

Some things that come up in your mind are:

1. Taking it personally. You will get back at that person; you will get all your money back, and all of his. This is a terrible way to play poker. It will ultimately hurt your chances of making any money. You will stop looking at how your opponents are playing or the flow of the table. For example, you will stop noticing when your opponents change gears from loose to tight or passive to aggressive. You may even miss when players leave the table and new players enter the game. This is important because a few different players can change the whole table dynamic very quickly.

2. Thinking, perhaps I am not a very good poker player. I have coached players who fall into this syndrome and I have thought this way for a short period. You have to realize that the cards will not always go your way. There are ups and down when you play poker and if you are a good player your bankroll will increase in increments, not all at once. Your bankroll will go down because of bad beats, short bad streaks or even long durations of

having the second best hand. This does not mean you are a bad poker player; it is just poker. Try to remember this; remember when you were doing well and always had the best hand at the showdown. Use this time to study the game and increase your skill instead of beating yourself up. Feeling bad about your game is really just a waste of time if it takes away from the time you could be spending learning more about being a good player.

3. Changing your game style to a tight/weak game for fear of another bad beat. This is another way to feel bad about yourself because you will always be losing. You can break out of a slump if you take some swings at the pot when you have an advantage.

4. Changing your game style to a loose/aggressive to make up for the lost money or have the "any two cards can win" mentality. This is called "steaming" and is a sure fire way to lose the rest of your bankroll. The cards have no memory and they do not owe you a few big wins to make up for your losses. Good players will notice that you are steaming and happily step up to the plate with better hands pre-flop. You become a target when you steam.

5. Slowing the process of rebuilding your bankroll. When you are far ahead after the flop, you over-bet the pot shutting everyone else out so you do not get full value for your good hands. This happens when you are afraid someone will draw out on you and do not let the pot build to a decent amount. Essentially, you want the victory but are not being patient enough for the fruit to grow on the vine.

For the beginner player, having one or more bad beats inflicted upon you in any few sessions can lead to any of the above feelings. You must remember that bad beats are a part of the game and the probabilities always even out. If you have a solid game, and the bad beat was not because of making bad decisions, then you have to stick with your game. The cards will turn around; you cannot make them change. When the cards do change into your favor then your confidence will return with a few good wins. You actually want opponents to call and try to make the long shots because they are not playing at a profitable level of probability. The better the player the worse the bad beats because the better players are in the pot with the best hands.

However, sometimes you take three or four bad beats, which really cuts, into your bankroll, and the cards do not cooperate. You get a run of cards below the median of Q7 for what seems like forever. When you do get two good starting cards, the flop is always the opposite of what you need, a different suite, or always giving you Gut-Shot draws. When you compound this on top of bad beats, the session becomes frustrating. Patience is the only strategy to ride through the storm; knowledge that you will not get your money back until the storm passes. Therefore, here are some pointers besides patience that can help your bad run from the poker gods.

Take this time to study up on poker. Read a new book, get a different perspective, look for and find the leaks in your game.

Stop playing for the day and do something else. The poker tables will be there tomorrow.

I often see beginner and some experienced players have an inadequate bankroll. You may not be on tilt or really hitting a bad run of cards, you just do not have the correct funds to handle the swings in No Limit now. This in Turn will create the same process of having a bad run of cards. Your table funds can take huge swings of 25% to 50% in one or two hands. If you are worried about losing more of that buy in then you will be playing less than optimally.

Get up and walk away from the table. Do something else for a little while. Change tables when you come back so you are with new players who do not know your bad beat story. They will not target you or realize you have changed your game. This may also help you get back into your own game by saying this table has no memory. You will not be with the same player you may have built up some vendetta against for inflicting the bad beat. You will start with a fresh buy in so you will be less inclined to want to make up your funds, the remainder of what was left of your bad beat buy in is not there, so is your renewed buying power.

Play some smaller stake tables, play some low buy-in tournaments, get your confidence back with less risk involved. Poker is 50% how you feel. The rest is being able to use your cards and poker knowledge with the stable vision of a competitor.

I call being afraid of more bad beats Post Traumatic Poker Disorder or PTPD. I have had it. I have done all of the things mentioned above. There was a time when I would actually flinch if I had a made hand and two or three people were trying to draw out on me. I would over or under bet the

pot too much expecting everyone to draw out on me all of the time. My game was not optimal and it took me much longer to build my bank back up and start making a steady profit again. Eventually, I remembered how I played winning poker and everything was in balance again.

Since I read about poker during my slump, I was an even better poker player than before the slump, with more versatility than before. I had more insight into the game than ever before.

Bad beats are part of the game of poker, it is gambling and you never know what can happen. Continue to play on the correct side of probability and everything will even out in your favor. Do not let it bother you in the long run.

One thought to say to yourself if you are a good poker player is that if all you lost was profit from previous games then essentially you lost someone else's money. Those people who call your good hands without the proper odds are where you got the money from in the first place, and it will return the same way.

Another thought to keep in mind is that if that person called you with long shot odds then he/she is probably a bad player. Just grin and realize that they will give you many opportunities to win your money back in the long run.

Winners and Losers

I have the software Poker Tracker. It keeps records on my play and all of my opponents play when I load the hand histories you can get from most poker websites. The reason I mention this is that three out of every five players are long-term money losers. So 20% of the players are long-term winners, 20% are marginal winners, 40% are marginal losers and 20% are major money losers. There are more losing online poker players than winning poker players. There is enough money out there for a player to earn a nice income. Money always flows from bad players to good players over the long run. There are some things that you can do to assure that you will eventually be in the winning 20% (if you are not now) eventually.

1. Always study poker theory and thought. Reading one or even three books is just not good enough. There are many different styles of poker. Finding your own style means incorporating different strategies to fit the changing situations. I would honestly say you should read a new poker book right after you have finished one or reread the book you just finished. Consider it studying for a college degree and your major is poker. Someone who gets a degree reads at least three dozen books in their field of interest.
2. Get a poker coach or a mentor that you can discuss certain situations. Someone with experience will have insight that you have not even considered. Getting these nuggets of wisdom from a coach instead of through the hard knocks of experience can save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars. I have a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology. I read at least 50 books on the subject of Psychology before entering a graduate

program. I was not able to perform effective therapy with a client until I was under the instruction of a supervisor. The supervisor cut through all the peripheral noise of information and led me in the right direction for my skill: what to look for, how to capitalize on it and how to deepen the situation. If someone could do that for you in regards to playing poker, then the investment will pay off a thousand fold.

3. Know yourself. This applies to all parts of your life and to playing poker. Know your game, what your strengths and weaknesses are. This way you can avoid the situations that lose you money and allow you to maximize the situation where you win money. I know one player who only plays big Pocket Pairs and he plays them well. Sometimes he will flop something with a free look while in the big blind but his profit comes with big Wired Pairs. He knows how to play them and he is a long-term winner. By understanding your game, you can start to fill the leaks and slowly improve your play one strategy at a time.

4. By knowing yourself you also know when you have played well and when you have played poorly. This is important so you do not go on tilt or become overly aggressive because you feel invincible. I remember that one of my losing streaks was not all because the cards were falling against me. My intentions had changed; I wanted to win more money and started to force my game: this Turned into a bad streak for a few weeks. I stopped playing poker for a week and re-evaluated my game, not the technical part but what was going on inside my own head. I realized that I was not happy with what the poker Gods were offering me each session, that I wanted more but that

that desire had me making the wrong decisions. When I returned to playing poker, I played my old solid game and returned to a consistent winning style.

5. Know the players you are playing against. Constantly take notes during the game for future reference. I find that you should know if a player is tight or loose, aggressive or passive. Those are basic. You should put different things into each of those categories, such as “Raises x amount pre-flop with “type of cards and position”. Alternatively, “Opponent does not raise with A Qos in early position.” Alternatively, “Always checks the flop when he gets a set with no two Flush on the board.” These simple observations WILL be the difference between a winning session and a losing session over time. After taking these notes on hundreds of people, it will also be easier for you to notice never before seen players and categorize them faster.

6. Always respect position. I think this is a very misunderstood concept, especially with small stakes players. Whenever you are about to raise or call a raise, determine how many people are behind you and what type of player has position on you. Even if you flop a favorable hand, if your position is poor your hand will be handicapped so much you will not be paid off as well.

If you hold a good hand in early position, you will not know if you are betting into the nuts so you cannot bet the proper amount. Top Pair with top kicker is good but someone may have flopped a set or 2-Pair. You cannot bet with confidence that your hand is best or has the ability to be best from early position. If someone plays back at you, you could be falling into a trap because a third player may have been slow playing the monster and would

re-raise the re-raise you just called. The more people involved in the hand after you the less of a chance your hand will pay off. These small leaks are another factor in being a long time winner or loser.

7. Pick a table that seems beatable. I play at the same online poker site every day. I know the “regulars” which means I also recognize when there are new players at a table. Just because a person is a regular does not make them good, so I also know which players among the regulars are the sharks. I choose the table with no more than five regulars and no more than three sharks. If I join a table then that would make four sharks cutting up maybe two to three fish. It is beatable, but playing at a table that has only one or two other sharks and only one or two regulars are infinitely easier. Then the school of weaker players is easier to isolate and outplay. Table selection is one of the most important skills you can have before plying your actual playing skills.

Look around at all the table and get an idea of the player’s skill level, what the chip sizes are and what category the table falls under. Is it loose, tight, aggressive, or passive? You may play well under different table conditions so you want to pick one that highlights your strengths. I like a table that has two to three loose aggressive players or a table that is full of passive players.

The passive players let you draw out by giving free cards too often and better hands easily trap the aggressive players.

It has been suggested that a player should eventually know how to beat any type of table, including pre-flop aggressive, passive, loose, and tight, etc.

But, know what type of a table you are in the mood for or what types of

tables you are best at. Is it the table with a high flop percentage but then a large showdown pot? This might mean that the flop betting and on is very heavy so you would have to be good at analyzing a flop. It could also mean that there are loose players that take their hands too far after the flop.

8. Remember that swings in your bankroll are part of the game. You will not win every night and you will not win every week. Do not get disappointed by losing streaks. I have experienced long winning streaks only to have them end for weeks at a time. Every hand I played was second best regardless of the strength. I could have a Full House and someone would have drawn to a Straight Flush. I would have a Flush and someone would have Quads. It seems like someone is doing TO you. It makes you forget the times YOU were the one that was unbeatable, showing down every hand with an even better hand. Ride it out, play tighter and wait for the swing to be in your corner more often.

The trick to swings is to play a solid game all of the time. Win more on your up swings than you lose on your downswings. Protect your bankroll on those downswings and push your bankroll when you are on an upswing.

I hope some of these thoughts about poker will help you make better decisions before you join a table and while you are at the table. If you are like me, the real value of playing poker is in the amount of money you make and the feeling of leaving a session with a larger bankroll. At least that is what keeps me studying and working harder to become a better player.

Bluffing and Betting

Bluffing is an art form in high stakes games. You just do not decide you are going to bluff a hand on the River or the Turn. The better players can read bluffs like this. The higher you go into the poker hierarchy the harder it is bluff. That is the accepted wisdom. Bluffing is a skill that is difficult to master.

Bluffing is something you plan on doing at the beginning of a hand, so you adjust your play from the go. Bluffing on the final card or the Turn and final card is not the way to go. Good players will realize something is wrong with the betting patterns and most will take advantage of this. Proper bluffing technique is an attitude you apply as you start the hand. In your mind, you say, “If I miss this flop, I will attempt to steal the pot”.

Now this may sound easy, but it is not as easy as it sounds. Most players do not have the ability to realize when this type of bluffing can be utilized. Obviously, just because you say you will bluff the pot, does not mean you will always succeed. Realizing or learning when the opportunity is right will help you succeed at bluffing.

People do not realize how important bluffing is at the higher stakes. The number one prerequisite to become a great bluffer is to become a great value bettor. This can also sound easy but is not. Great bluffers and great value bettors are also great readers of hands.

Value betting is what makes great bluffers. Having people, call with sub par hands means the person is dictating the betting. Eventually people get tired of calling with second Pair or bottom Pair, or even Ace high. This is why the best players are also the best bluffers and the best hand readers. This is why betting is preferred to calling. This also shows why position plays such a great part in the play.

Bluffing is not as important an issue in smaller limit games, because there are too many people in the pot and there is almost a zero chance a bluff will succeed. Smaller stakes games are more of a made hand showdown game. In games like this, you tend to adapt a style that eliminates bluffing. You adopt a style of betting on the come, with proper value. Seldom does an opportunity in low limit present itself for a pot to be bluffed, but the opportunities do arise and those sensing or knowing this can take full advantage. Players do not mind losing \$25 or even \$50 to take a shot at a large pot because these are not significant dollar amounts.

Simple examples of obvious bluffing can be found in many of the pot limit and no limit tournaments online. When flops such as 3h Jh Qs hit the board with several players in the pot and a person from an opening position leads out for a small percentage of the pot, this is a possible if not probable indication of a weak hand. Many times in these online tournaments, you will notice four or five way action. There may be five people in the pot for \$20, making the pot \$100. All of a sudden, the person in front leads out with a \$20 bet. What kind of bet is this? You should get into the habit of asking yourself, "What kind of a hand would you have to hold to make a bet like

this?" Does it make sense in regards to the types of cards on the board and the type of player making the bet?

We have gone down in the rank a little ways, actually a long ways to show you an illustration of a bluff. When a player bets \$20 like this, most of the players will call, unless one makes a play at the pot. Assuming most players just call you can also assume most players are also weak. Obviously, the possibility is present that some player is slow playing, but the possibility is also that this player is giving away a cheap card. No, you do not have to have position in this hand as you can steal from the front or the back. You just call and see what the next card brings. A card that would not seem to help anything could be a very advantageous card. Have you ever seen a player come out betting 20 again, getting several callers again? This is a great opportunity to make a move on the pot, whether you are in the front, where you check and now raised, or the back where you now raise. You do not even have to raise that much, a pot size bet should do the trick. Even if you are called, it is odds-on the person is on the come, thus you will know the safe cards that will allow you to follow through on your bluff. Just follow through and do not chicken out.

Watch how many times players make bets like this in these online tournaments. Truthfully speaking, these bets do not exist. They are just pointless for if you are sitting with anything why give any indication? Moreover, if you have anything and wish to protect it, you would obviously bet the pot. Now betting the pot in a position like this really does not give much away. It is easy to be on the come here, and just as easy to have a set. The hard thing or shall we say the stupid thing is to be stone bluffing the pot

from the front position. This situation will seldom if ever occur, so you might as well forget the possibility.

However, many people having a pair, without much experience playing this game attempt a maneuver to slow down the action and get a cheap card. This maneuver is doomed to fail if anyone in the game can play at all. This is one of the most obvious bluffs in these smaller limit tournaments and games.

The higher skilled bluffing will occur in a different manner. A player may sense weakness from a limper or several limpors and raise a pot size bet, knowing he is attempting to steal the pot if he misses the flop. Now bluffing is not for everyone. Many players can attempt a bluff but the real bluffers will follow through. Many times players will attempt bluffs and other players will sense this is a bluff, thus raising a bluffer and taking away his thunder. A better card reader will realize this attempt has been made and will have the nerve or the confidence in his ability to realize this. He will follow through and proceed to re-raise or go all in, with nothing but his gut feeling telling him he is making the correct play.

Have any of you given much thought when a sizable bet is made pre-flop and you hold A A? Is it correct to go all in at this time? If you are guaranteed a call, this is always acceptable. If you will not get a call then why raise? Allow the K K to have the lead and bluff the money off, thinking he is betting the best hand. Players are always far more eager to bet their chips off than to call.

The main mistake made by players who bluff in pot limit and no limit games is the amount they bet. Use this as a normal guideline for bluffing. If the blinds are \$25-\$50 and you opened for \$150 and received a call. If you miss and intend to bluff, follow through with a bet about equal to the pot. Also, use this as a guide for betting when you do flop a big hand. The main train of thought for betting and bluffing is thinking like the player who is facing you. If he bets, think of what you would do with what type of hand, and adjust to the play. Consider how other players see you in this pot. Think of what your image is in the other players mind.

If a pot has been checked around to you on both the Flop and Turn, throw out a pot sized bet to claim the money. It is hard for opponents to call that bet with a mediocre hand, they will think that you slow played a great hand on the Flop or completed a draw on the Turn. Do not wait until the River if you checked the Flop.

Building a Bankroll Online

The term bankroll may be one of the most important words in a poker player's vocabulary. You must have one to play poker just as you need a boat to travel on water (unless you swim very well).

Most sites offer a first time deposit bonus. In addition, this is the key to building a bankroll. By depositing money at a site, you get the deposit bonus, an investment that pays off better than any bank interest rate. Play a good game of poker and you can leave the site, money in hand to deposit into another site, and then get that initial bonus.

That is the key though, you need to play tight poker, play only the best hands and don't go chasing hands that can flush your bank (two card runner straights, or the two outer wired pair on the river with a pot bet in front of you). It is like playing a tournament, play the hands that will win you the money without risking too much of your money, and after a certain amount of hands (each site has different requirements) you can cash out the bonus free and clear.

One of the best ways to get the required amount of hands to keep your deposit bonus is to play limit poker. This will eliminate the decision to match opponents all in bet. You may know that person is bluffing, but you are trying to build a bankroll. Sure, winning a huge pot would build your bankroll, but think about this.

Most professional poker players suggest having at least 300 times the amount of the big blind as your bankroll. I suggest at least 200 to 400 times the big blind. Because, if you have a bad string of hands (which is inevitable in poker), you will have a large swing in your cash flow toward the negative side. When this happens, you do not want to change your poker style (unless that is the reason you are losing). Let me repeat that.

If you are playing your best poker, the odds are always in your favor, and your opponent catches that lucky river card or a runner-runner to make the nut straight then just chalk the problem up to the poker Gods evening things out. You do not have to change your game, but you need the bankroll to get past the string of bad beats. If your bankroll is getting small, then you may start playing differently, like you have to make up that money (looser) or to tight to protect your small amount of money. These are the worst things that can happen, changing your poker style to meet a bankroll problem.

Build the bank at five to six different sites, slowly, and build it into \$500 to \$1,000. Then you can start playing some real poker. With an adequate bankroll, you can start playing the \$2/\$4, \$5/\$10 or \$10/\$20 no limit tables.

There is nothing more frustrating than to have the total nut hand with someone betting into you with all his or her money as a total bluff and you can only double up \$50 because you do not have an adequate bankroll.

\$1/\$2 no limit game you should have at least \$200 and even better \$800-\$1200 bankroll. \$2/\$4 no limit game you should have at least \$400 and probably \$1200-\$1600 bankroll. \$5/\$10 no limit game will really put swings into you roll. You should only play these games after getting some

experience because of the amount of tough players. However, sometimes there are players who just want to bully you around, and you can slow play the nuts for a big win. Your bankroll should look rather large for this game, with the bare minimum of \$2000 and ideally \$6000.

So say you start at Royal Vegas Poker and get the free \$10 along with the deposit bonus. You can build that to \$200. Therefore, you leave with \$400 dollars because you won a few nice pots playing the limit table over the past month clearing the bonus. That is not bad for a \$100 dollar investment. Meet the requirements, pull your money and then make another deposit into, Absolute Poker where they will match 35%. \$400 times 35% equals another \$140 added to the bankroll. After another two or three poker rooms, you will have an adequate bankroll to play the no limit tables. Of course, this is also assuming you do not win something at the tables. Players who do this are called "bankroll whores" and many players do it. If you keep accounts on all of the sites listed below you will be clearing reload bonus offers every month and earning extra money on top of your excellent poker play.

Here is information about seven of the top ten Online Poker Rooms according to player traffic, tournaments, bonus offers and the most important factor, safety of your money. These are the most established poker rooms on the net.

You should have an account with each one of these poker rooms to take advantage of the frequent reload offers and special tournaments. In any given month, one or more of these rooms will have reload bonus offers.

The best poker rooms on the web and why

Party Poker Network is the number one online poker site in terms of player traffic and money wagered. The network has many skin sites that share ring game traffic but not tournaments. The two main skin sites are Party Poker and Empire Poker.

One of the oldest and most respected poker site is Paradise Poker. They have excellent player statistics, player notes and tournament promotions. They also offer blackjack.

Prima Poker, Poker Room, Ultimate Bet, Paradise Poker and Pacific Poker all have around the same amount of player traffic and rank three through eight in this category. Depending on the time of day 1500 to 8000 players are wagering at a table in ring game traffic or tournament play. Each room has their advantages and personalities.

Prima is great for the Step Sit n Go Tournaments. Ultimate Bet and Prima have guaranteed tournament payouts between \$1,500 to \$22,000 all day.

Poker Room and Pacific Poker have a great daily tournament with a large guaranteed tournament payout of over \$30,000. All have cheap satellites.

I mention these poker rooms because they are the most established. They are safe and secure. They provide the most benefits for the players in terms of promotions and redeposit bonus offers. They have the most WPT, WSOP and European Poker Tour satellites.

I am signed up at every one of the poker rooms I rate and take advantage of the reload bonus offers. I also play in the satellites (\$5-\$10) to qualify for the larger \$25,000 to \$250,000 tournaments. So I am always jumping from site to site. Finally, the best reason to have multiple accounts is to scout out the easiest tables. 50% of being a winning poker player is to find the easiest tables and the weakest players. It really is that simple.

Ultimate Bet

40% First Time Deposit Bonus up to \$200

Ultimate Bet has frequent reload bonus offers of 25% to 50%

World Poker Tour Satellites - Guaranteed Tournament Payouts



Software

Ultimate Bet has an advanced look and feel.

They are an exciting and innovative leader in the online poker software development area. Has note taking feature for every opponent and comprehensive player statistics (shown on bottom). One click hand history that is compatible with the Poker Tracker software and other hand tracking programs. You can play on more than one table at a time with a feature that allows you to see the tables in two different types of views, in a detailed view or a condensed table (shown below). Your account page has all the information a person would need, including an accounting of where all your money has come from (money won/lost, deposit's), Ultimate Points, time at tables, Tournament Entry Chips won (TEC's are won in freerolls and are entries into \$100 tournaments. You can collect the entry chips and buy into a larger tournament, ex. \$500). The UB lobby is comprehensive and the home page has information and news about the poker world.

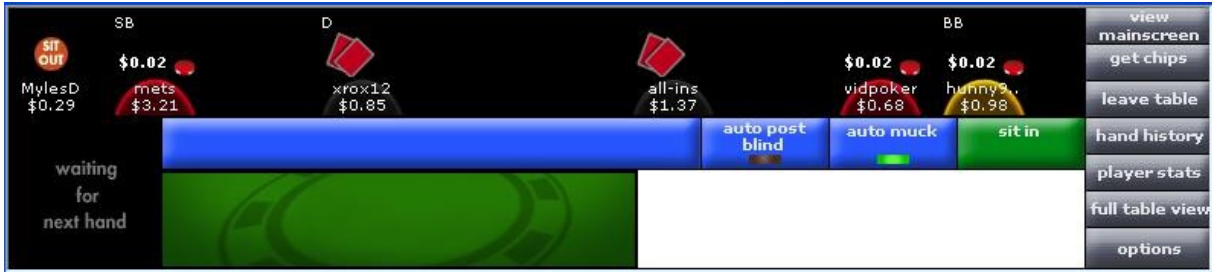
Hands Dealt 1		Hands won 1 (100%)		
Flops seen 1 (100%)		Time played 0:01		
	Pre Flop	Flop	Turn	River
Hands Played	1	1	1	1
Checked	-	-	-	-
Check raised	-	-	-	-
Called	-	-	-	-
Bet	n/a	100%	-	-
Raised	100%	-	-	-
Reraised	-	-	-	-
Folded	-	-	-	-
Won	-	-	-	100%

about your stats reset stats

Game Choice

The Hold'em ring tables always have traffic, 24 hours a day, with a wide variety of stakes, play money, \$.01/.02 to high stakes. There are hourly tournaments, from \$1.00 to \$500 dollar and extensive freerolls (8-10 a day). In any 24-hour period there will be from 500 to 7000 tournament players at Ultimate Bet. If you like tournaments then this is the place for you. Ultimate Bet has anted up and created a large pool of guaranteed tournaments every day. Every day there are guaranteed tournament payouts of \$2000 to \$60,000. Go to the website to see the daily schedule of tournaments. They are also always sponsoring at least one but usually more WPT satellite events. Hold'em, Omaha Hi and Hi-Lo, 7-Card-Stud Hi and Hi-Lo, Crazy Pineapple and Lowball.

Mini Table View for multi tabling, actual size.



Bonus Requirement

To cash out bonus money you need points for raked hands called Ultimate Points. For example, get 1000 points for raked hands (where you just get dealt cards) at \$0.25/\$0.50 tables and up, within any time limit to cash out \$100. Each pot with rake under one dollar gives 0.5 points and a pot with rake over one-dollar gives 1.0 points. Use the Ultimate Points for merchandise or as Tournament fees.



UB is a great site and has so many offers you should have an account set up just for the WPT qualifiers and freerolls.

Prima Network

40% deposit bonus up to \$200

Royal Vegas Poker \$10 free for signing up

Many tournament promotions and cash frequent player rewards every month.

Prima Network is one of the most popular poker rooms on the web.

Royal Vegas Poker is the flagship site of the network and is recommended by Lou Krieger

7 Sultans Poker (shown below) is another popular Prima skin.



Software

The software has gone through minor changes over the past year and runs smoother than before. They have updated the navigation features and other features. Prima has all the

major software features an online poker player could want. Hand histories you can download for tracking software, player notes, ability to play multiple tables at one time, and player statistics. The Random Number Generator was tested by Price-Waterhouse-Cooper. They performed a statistical analysis of over 1 million dealt hands and certified the RNG as being authentic.



Game Choice

Hold'em, limit and no limit are both available in a variety of stakes. There are always full tables 24/7. **They are the only site with 7-stud pot limit and no limit stakes (big bet) as well as the more standard limit games.** Once again, you can always find a full table game. Prima has two very large guaranteed prize pool tournaments; a Sunday \$100,000 guaranteed. There are satellites running for this tournament all week long for \$5. There are daily guaranteed tournament of \$1,500 to \$22,000. In addition, four \$1,000 freerolls run every day and one \$200 freeroll for the night owls.

They run WPT and European satellite tournaments for the land-based brick and mortar major tournaments with inexpensive satellites. Check out the website for current promotions. Sit n go's and MTT's running all day. Prima also carries five card stud tables, Omaha and Omaha hi/lo in all betting forms: limit and big bet.

Party Poker and Empire Poker

20% bonus on first time deposit up to \$100
Frequent reload offers and free offers



Overview

Empire poker is part of the Party Poker Network and is preferred by many online players because of better customer service and tournament structure. Party Poker has larger tournaments but with the larger turnout the competition gets more difficult.

The ring game traffic is shared in the Party Poker network, so you could be playing against someone at Party Poker if you are signed up at Empire Poker. If you sign up at Empire Poker you get all the advantages of playing in the loose-shared ring game traffic and play at tournaments with easier opponents. On any given day, there is \$3,000,000.00 wagered and 30,000 or more players gaming.

The tournament structure at Empire is great, 1000 starting chips with 15 to 20 minute rounds and no antes. I like the longer rounds before blind increases because you are not as rushed to increase chips and therefore needlessly gamble. It is less of a crapshoot and more of a skill game. The Party Poker network does not share tournament traffic so everyone playing is signed up at Empire Poker.

They have multitable Sit n Go's up to 30 players. An evening guaranteed tournament from \$10,000 to \$20,000. Finally, there is an end of month \$200,000 guaranteed tournament at Empire Poker. All of these tournaments have daily satellite qualifiers.

It is a toss up which site to choose. If you have a Party Poker account you are not suppose to have an Empire Poker account and visa a versa. So you have to choose which site you want to play at. Each has their own advantages, larger tournaments (and huge payouts) at Party Poker or smaller but easier tournaments at Empire Poker. If you don't really play tournaments then it does not matter which site you choose. Empire has the better customer service which clinched the decision for me.

Paradise Poker

25% bonus up to \$50

Paradise Poker established 1999



Top 10 Reasons to Play Poker at Paradise

You may be wondering "why should I be playing at this poker site?". We're here to help make that decision a little easier. And if we don't answer your questions or concerns below, please don't hesitate to drop us an [email](#), anytime.

1. Integrity

Paradise Poker is the undisputed and recognized leader in online poker. Our reputation for providing the best action, the best software, the highest levels of support and the safest site is second to none.

Paradise Poker has recently joined forces with Sportingbet plc, a publicly traded company on the London Stock Exchange ([Ticker Symbol: SBT.L](#)), to form the world's largest online betting company. With over two million customers worldwide we are proud to offer further transparency and accountability, as well as more safety and security for our customers.

We are excited to feature our sister site, [Sportsbook.com](#), America's sports betting destination and the largest single sportsbook and casino on the planet.

As well, Paradise Poker is pleased to provide our clients with the added comfort of an independent third party review of our shuffling. We engage the services of a Big Four accounting firm to review our card shuffling. Please read the [Independent Third Party Shuffling Review](#).

2. Action

What kind of action are you looking for? How about non-stop, 24 hour poker action against real people from around the world! Over 7000 players are logged in during peak times. Whatever your game, you're sure to find a table open.

3. **Security**

Paradise Poker considers [security](#) to be our number one priority. From the SSLv3/TLSv1 encryption algorithm to our sophisticated collusion detection methods to our random number generation and card shuffling techniques, we offer the highest levels of security available. Our security methods and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly to keep them the best in the world.

4. **Established**

As the premier online poker room in the world, you have the added security in knowing your funds will be safe, and available to you, whenever you want. Paradise has segregated reserve accounts that hold at minimum 100% of all player balances.

5. **Support**

Our highly knowledgeable [support](#) team is standing by to address any issue that may arise. They can be reached by [email](#) at all times, generally replying within minutes of receiving your query. Rest assured that we will endeavor to address any issue to your satisfaction.

6. **Game Choice**

The [selection of games](#) at Paradise Poker is unparalleled. We offer the standards, such as Texas Hold'em, Omaha and Seven Card Stud, plus the High-Low versions

of the latter two games. Paradise also gives you the best Tournament and short handed table action online. And if you're new to these games, give our free play money tables a try.

7. **Promotions**

Paradise offers its players plenty of great promotions, where we give away tons of money. Progressive bad beat jackpots, 10% deposit bonuses and landmark hand number jackpots are just an example of the promotions offered in Paradise.

Check our [promotions page](#) for constant updates.

8. **Connection Stability**

Our game servers run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year virtually disruption free. And in the rare case of a connection problem, we're back up and running in no time. We also make it easy for players to know the status of our server at all times, through our [Network Status Page](#).

9. **Graphics**

Our world class graphic artists have made the Paradise experience second to none on the internet. From the [beautiful lobby montage](#) to the elegant table setting, our players feel like they are actually sitting in our live, online, five star poker paradise.

10. Features

We offer many more [features](#) to make your game playing experience enjoyable. From easy-to-navigate Lobby systems and terrific animation to straight forward betting actions and the ability to play multiple games at the same time.

Absolute Poker

35% bonus on first time deposit up to \$210

Use Bonus Code AP35 for the 35% bonus

Monthly 35% reload bonus offers

Absolute Poker has all the regular online game choices, NL, PL and Limit versions of Texas Hold'em. They have Omaha, 7-Stud with hi/lo choices also. The ring games have some high stakes players but mostly this is a good site for small stakes \$.25 to \$10



The tournament action at Absolute is the best part of this site. They have plenty of action. WSOP and WPT satellite freerolls/MTT's run every day. Tournament Poker Leagues run

every day. Low to Mid sized buy in tournaments run every hour. This is a great site where you can build your poker skills.

For each raked hand (minimum rake of \$0.25) played you will receive 1 point, and you will receive 1 point for each \$1 of tournament buy in fee. At 100 points, Absolute will move \$10 from your Pending Bonus account to your cash account. You earn points for hands that are raked, that collect a minimum of 25 cents.

Pacific Poker

25% bonus on first time deposit up to \$100
Frequent reload bonus offers

Pacific Poker has grown tremendously during 2004 to become the favorite poker room for many Texas Hold'em players looking for very "juicy" high-action tables and frequent promotions. It is incredible how well good hands are paid off at Pacific Poker. This fact alone makes up for the poor software development.

Game Choices

One of the best parts of Pacific Poker are the no limit Hold'em sit n go's. I like the payout structures of the 20 player \$16, \$8, \$2 tournaments. Places 1-5 are paid. They have a tournament every 30 minutes to an hour. They have a great daily tournament. A \$20,000

guaranteed no limit Hold'em multi table tournament every day with \$3 and \$6 satellites.

A weekly \$75,000 tournament.

The no limit and limit Hold'em games are very loose, mostly family pots where other players go way to far with their dominated and dead hands. Flop percentages of 60 and 70 are always available, amazingly. That means your good hands are going to be paid off.

They have limit 7-Stud, Omaha and high/low.

Competition

Now the reason Pacific Poker is such a good site. Because the competition is soft and the loyalty bonus is the best in the industry. I am not the only person who has this opinion. They normally peak around 2500 to 3500 players in tournament and ring games at any 24-hour period. They are associated with a casino/sports book so there are more recreational players than professional sharks wanting to gamble some money.

Poker Room

20% first time deposit bonus up to \$100

Play 1000 raked hands to get \$100 in 40 days – Many reload bonus offers throughout the year. Poker Room is one of the oldest sites in the Online Poker game which translates into integrity and security.

Poker Room is the best choice for Mac and Linux computers. You have the option of playing on downloaded and installed software or using a Java interface that does not require downloaded software to play.



13 daily \$1000 free roll tournaments and two \$500 added money tournaments as well as a \$2500 added money "Lucky Dollar" every Saturday. One unique policy is that players scoring the most points any given day are eligible for cash prizes, ranging up to \$250.

Poker Room offers guaranteed tournaments every night at 10pm ET \$15,000 to \$60,000. They are also pioneering a more Casino style tournament where the blind levels increase every few hours instead of every 12 minutes. They always have some unique promotions going on so check out the site.

Poker Room offers great statistical analysis of your game and an open database of the hands played at the site. There traffic is very concentrated to the Hold'em and tournament section. A large proportion of the games are short-handed tables with 5 or 6 players.

Bonus Points are awarded for every raked hand in which a player participates. The points can be converted into cash (Player Points Payback) or used as buy-ins in free roll tournaments (Player Points Freeroll). Each 100 points is converted to \$1.

You cannot look at the top stakes games for soft competition, where PokerRoom is less of a "fish pond". Still, you can at times find \$5/\$10 no-limit Holdem tables with a view flop percentage of 35-40%. Overall, many full ten-player hold'em games have a view flop percentage in the 40-ies and 50-ies, and some in the 60-ies - so the games are quite soft and the trend is good.

True Poker

30% first time deposit up to \$100

Play 1000 raked hands to get \$100. Your bonus amount is paid out in increments of \$10 for every 100 raked hands. New players get four free sit and go entries.



Poker World

50% deposit bonus up to \$100 and reload offer

\$100 First Deposit x 5 = 500 raked hands required to be played before the First Deposit Bonus Bucks will be released.

Big Bet Poker (no limit/pot limit)

Big bet poker differs from limit poker for one simple reason; whenever you enter the pot, your whole chip stack is at risk. The larger stacks are always looking to put a smaller stack to the test with an all-in bet. Many professional players say big bet poker is not about your cards as much as the money in front of each player and the type of opponent.

Say you have \$100 seat one
Opponent 1 has \$20 seat two (overmatched)
Opponent 2 has \$50 seat three (loose)
Opponent 3 has \$250 seat four (tight/aggressive)
Opponent 4 has \$75 seat five (loose)
Opponent 5 has \$125 seat six (typical/tight)

Blinds are \$2/\$4

Hands will be different for each player depending on the money they have.

For example;

Seat four is UTG. If he raises three times the big blind (\$12), or one twentieth of his stack, then opponent two is essentially making a decision to go all-in if he calls the bet of three fifths of his stack or 60%. It is no use just calling his \$12, the correct play is to go all-in with a re-raise or fold. If the flop hits player two in any way then he will be going all in with any type of bet. If it misses him player two is already pot committed. If the flop hits opponent four he will bet the extra \$8 to put opponent two to the test. One play and opponent two could be broke. Even if he doubles up, opponent four is still able to dominate player two in any future hand.

Therefore, every player who has a smaller stack has to beware of the larger stack at his or her table. Now I do not have to worry as much about opponent five, four, two, or one because they are less than or equal to my stack. I do

worry about opponent three but am somewhat leery about opponent five and four because they could put a huge dent into my money with one hand.

Here is another example where chip stacks have an affect on the play.

Opponent two has limped in UTG and opponent five calls and I see the flop from the big blind. Now the flop hits my hand with a Flush Draw and Top Pair. I check and opponent two bets \$12 and opponent five calls. If I were against opponent two heads up I would put him all-in trying to test him. He is also an overly aggressive bettor with second -Pair and his bet does not mean a flopped set or even 2-Pair. This person is capable of betting with over cards or second best Flush Draws. However, since opponent five is also involved I have a harder time making that bet because he can re-raise me and put me all-in. I also know he would be calling with a stronger hand, slow playing a Straight or even a set to induce me into the pot. This is another typical situation where stack size and player type is very evident.

This is why good players always try to have the maximum allowable amount of chips in front of them at all times. If you have taken a bad beat, reload after the blinds pass you and you are on the button. Staying at one table and building a good-sized stack over a session is advisable. As the session passes, you will see players come and go, but you will always be able to dominate them if you have built your chip stack.

I always wonder about the players who come to any table with five or ten percent of the buy-in. They are looking for one big score to double up but they are always at a disadvantage. Someone with \$50 can take two double

up hits from a \$10 stack and still have money in front of him. The \$10 stack can only handle one all-in hit, so they have to play perfect poker two to three times before the normal buy-in stack can fear them. A player who has already doubled up from the original buy-in can put that small stack to the test numerous times. Push the smaller stack from a hand by making them fold or risk their whole stack. When you are small stacked there is no decision making mistakes allowed, no bad luck Turns available. That is big bet poker.

You will see players raising the pot or going over the top at the larger stakes of big bet poker. You never really know if that player does or does not have what is represented on the board. All you really know is if you have the best hand or something close to it. The big stacks will make an opponent with a smaller stack have to decide whether to put in a larger percentage of their stack to continue with the hand. This sometimes occurs regardless of the hand the larger stack is holding. This is the meta-game of poker along with optimal bluffing strategy. We will look at the meta-game of poker later in the book.

Therefore, you have to be aware of stack sizes in big bet poker.

In a \$25/\$50 player with \$1,000 bets, \$200 - \$500 - \$50 on three consecutive hands pre-flop. These three distinct situations need to be considered differently. If you each hold \$1,000, you must realize that the \$200 bet is dangerous. A re-raise to define your hand (if you think it is good enough) should be attempted with the thought of folding if they play back at you. Make sure you understand the type of player that is re-raising your re-raise. I

was in a hand when there was a small raise from early position, the player to my right called the raise and I had Pocket Kings so I reraised to find out where I was and because I had position. The first player folded but the player to my immediate right reraised. He had not played a hand for an hour.

My thinking process needed to consider what type of a player this was. Since he was a tight player, he had to have something very good to reraise. Ask yourself, would this player reraise with anything less than pocket Aces?

The \$500 bet is actually saying “on the flop you must be willing to go all-in because you are wagering half of your stack pre-flop” so decide if you want to re-raise all-in before the flop or fold. The \$50 bet is showing weakness and should be dealt with according to how strong your hand is.

This is not all there is to talk about regarding big bet poker but it is a good primer. The main theory is to know who will fold to a big bet and who will not. Most large stakes big bet games do not see the River card very often. They are usually won or lost during the betting rounds because the stacks are so deep and the money much higher. One player attempts to pick up the pot on the flop and everyone either folds or another player decides he has a better hand. He will either just call or re-raise. The next betting round, the Turn, usually decides who has the best hand when someone throws in a pot-sized bet and dares the other player to declare they are going all in or fold.