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POKER FUNDAMENTALS GUIDE



MASTERCLASS

THE RULES OF POKER

Text courtesy of Pokerstars.com

TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER

Driven by the popularity of televised poker, Texas Hold'em (more commonly, "Hold'em") has become the world's most popular poker game, both in live casinos and online. We'll go into more detail below, but here are the key points you need to know:

- Every player is dealt two cards, for their eyes only
- The dealer spreads five cards—three at once, then another, then another—which can be used by all players to make their best possible five-card hand
- Before and after each card(s) is revealed, players take turns to bet. To stay in the hand and see the next card, all players must have put the same amount of chips in the pot as one another
- The best poker hand wins the pot (See "Hand Ranks")

It's a simple game to learn, yet it has the potential to be played with a seemingly infinite variety of strategies, tactics, and nuance.

THE RULES OF TEXAS HOLD'EM

Before you begin playing Hold'em, you'll want to learn the rules. In Hold'em, each player is dealt two private cards (known as "hole cards") that belong to them alone. Five community cards are dealt faceup, to form the "board." All players in the game use these shared community cards in conjunction with their own hole cards to each make their best possible five-card poker hand. In Hold'em, a player may use any combination of the seven cards available to make the best possible five-card poker hand, using zero, one, or two of their private hole cards.

The four major variations of Hold'em are distinguished from one another by their betting limits:

- **Limit Texas Hold'em:** There is a predetermined betting limit on each round of betting.
- **No Limit Texas Hold'em:** A player can bet any amount, up to all of their chips.
- **Pot Limit Texas Hold'em:** A player can bet any amount, up to the size of the pot.
- **Mixed Texas Hold'em:** The game switches between rounds of Limit Texas Hold'em and No Limit Texas Hold'em.

THE BLINDS

In Hold'em, a marker called "the button" or "the dealer button" indicates which player is the nominal dealer for the current game. Before the game begins, the player immediately clockwise from the button posts the "small blind," the first forced bet. The player immediately clockwise from the small blind posts the "big blind," which is typically twice the size of the small blind, but the blinds can vary depending on the stakes and betting structure being played.

In Limit games, the big blind is the same as the small bet, and the small blind is typically half the size of the big blind but may be larger depending on the stakes. For example, in a \$2/\$4 Limit game, the small blind is \$1 and the big blind is \$2. In a \$15/\$30 Limit game, the small blind is \$10 and the big blind is \$15.

In Pot Limit and No Limit games, the games are referred to by the size of their blinds (for example, a \$1/\$2 Hold'em game has a small blind of \$1 and a big blind of \$2). Depending on the exact structure of the game, each player may also be required to post an "ante" (another type of forced bet, usually smaller than either blind, posted by all players at the table) into the pot.

Now, each player receives his or her two hole cards. Betting action proceeds clockwise around the table, starting with the player “under the gun” (immediately clockwise from the big blind).

PLAYER BETTING OPTIONS

In Hold'em, as with other forms of poker, the available actions are “fold,” “check,” “bet,” “call,” or “raise.” Exactly which options are available depends on the action taken by the previous players. If nobody has yet made a bet, then a player may either check (decline to bet but keep their cards) or bet. If a player has bet, then subsequent players can fold, call, or raise. To call is to match the amount the previous player has bet. To raise is to not only match the previous bet, but to also increase it.

PREFLOP

After seeing his or her hole cards, each player now has the option to play his or her hand by calling or raising the big blind. The action begins to the left of the big blind, which is considered a “live” bet on this round. That player has the option to fold, call, or raise. For example, if the big blind was \$2, it would cost \$2 to call, or at least \$4 to raise. Action then proceeds clockwise around the table.

Note: The betting structure varies with different variations of the game. Explanations of the betting action in Limit Hold'em, No Limit Hold'em, and Pot Limit Hold'em can be found below.

Betting continues on each betting round until all active players (who have not folded) have placed equal bets in the pot.

THE FLOP

Now, three cards are dealt faceup on the board. This is known as “the flop.” In Hold'em, the three cards on the flop are community cards, available to all players still in the hand. Betting on the flop begins with the active player immediately clockwise from the button. The betting options are similar to preflop, however if nobody has previously bet, players may opt to check, passing the action to the next active player clockwise.

THE TURN

When the betting action is completed for the flop round, the “turn” is dealt faceup on the board. The turn is the fourth community card in Hold'em (and is sometimes also called “Fourth Street”). Another round of betting ensues, beginning with the active player immediately clockwise from the button.

THE RIVER

When betting action is completed for the turn round, the “river” or “Fifth Street” is dealt faceup on the board. The river is the fifth and final community card in a Hold'em game. Betting again begins with the active player immediately clockwise from the button, and the same betting rules apply as they do for the flop and turn, as explained above.

THE SHOWDOWN

If there is more than one remaining player when the final betting round is complete, the last person to bet or raise shows their cards, unless there was no bet on the final round, in which case the player immediately clockwise from the button shows their cards first. The player with the best five-card poker hand wins the pot. In the event of identical hands, the pot will be equally divided among the players with the best hands. Hold'em rules state that all suits are equal.

After the pot is awarded, a new hand of Hold'em is ready to be played. The button now moves clockwise to the next player, blinds and antes are once again posted, and new hands are dealt to each player.

LIMIT, NO LIMIT, POT LIMIT, AND MIXED TEXAS HOLD'EM

Hold'em rules remain the same for Limit, No Limit, and Pot Limit poker games, with a few exceptions:

LIMIT TEXAS HOLD'EM

- Betting in Limit Hold'em is in predetermined, structured amounts. Preflop and on the flop, all bets and raises are of the same amount as the big blind. On the turn and the river, the size of all bets and raises doubles. In Limit Hold'em, up to four bets are allowed per player during each betting round. This includes a (1) bet, (2) raise, (3) reraise, and (4) cap (final raise).

NOTES ON THE SPECIFIC RULES OF NO LIMIT TEXAS HOLD'EM BETTING

The minimum bet in No Limit Hold'em is the same as the size of the big blind, but players can always bet as much more as they want, up to all of their chips.

Minimum raise: In No Limit Hold'em, the raise amount must be at least as much as the previous bet or raise in the same round. As an example, if the first player to act bets \$5, then the second player must raise a minimum of \$5 (total bet of \$10).

Maximum raise: The size of your stack (your chips on the table).

In No Limit Hold'em, there is no "cap" on the number of raises allowed.

POT LIMIT TEXAS HOLD'EM

The minimum bet in Pot Limit Hold'em is the same as the size of the big blind, but players can always bet up to the size of the pot.

Minimum raise: The raise amount must be at least as much as the previous bet or raise in the same round. As an example, if the first player to act bets \$5, then the second player must raise a minimum of \$5 (total bet of \$10).

Maximum raise: The size of the pot, which is defined as the total of the active pot, plus all bets on the table, plus the amount the active player must first call before raising.

Example: If the size of the pot is \$100, and there is no previous action on a particular betting round, a player may bet a maximum of \$100. After that bet, the action moves to the next player clockwise. That player can either fold, call \$100, or raise any amount between the minimum (\$100 more) and the maximum. The maximum bet in this case is \$400—the raiser would first call \$100, bringing the pot size to \$300, and then raise \$300 more, making a total bet of \$400.

In Pot Limit Hold'em, there is no "cap" on the number of raises allowed.

MIXED TEXAS HOLD'EM

In Mixed Hold'em, the game switches between rounds of Limit Hold'em and No Limit Hold'em. The blinds are typically increased when the game switches from No Limit to Limit, to ensure some consistency in the average pot size in each game. The betting rules on each round follow the rules for that game, as described above.

TRADITIONAL HIGH POKER HAND RANKS

Text courtesy of Pokerstars.com

STRAIGHT FLUSH: Five cards in numerical order, all of the same suits.



In the event of a tie: Highest rank at the top of the sequence wins.

The best possible straight flush is known as a royal flush, which consists of the ace, king, queen, jack, and ten of a suit. A royal flush is an unbeatable hand.

FOUR OF A KIND: Four cards of the same rank, and one side card or “kicker.”



In the event of a tie: Highest four of a kind wins. In community card games where players have the same four of a kind, the highest fifth side card (“kicker”) wins.

FULL HOUSE: Three cards of the same rank, and two cards of a different, matching rank.



In the event of a tie: Highest three matching cards wins the pot. In community card games where players have the same three matching cards, the highest value of the two matching cards wins.

FLUSH: Five cards of the same suit.



In the event of a tie: The player holding the highest-ranked card wins. If necessary, the second-highest, third-highest, fourth-highest, and fifth-highest cards can be used to break the tie. If all five cards are the same ranks, the pot is split. The suit itself is never used to break a tie in poker.

STRAIGHT: Five cards in sequence.



In the event of a tie: Highest-ranking card at the top of the sequence wins.

Note: The ace may be used at the top or bottom of the sequence, and is the only card that can act in this manner. A, K, Q, J, T is the highest (ace-high) straight; 5, 4, 3, 2, A is the lowest (five high) straight.

THREE OF A KIND: Three cards of the same rank, and two unrelated side cards.



In the event of a tie: Highest-ranking three of a kind wins. In community card games where players have the same three of a kind, the highest side card or, if necessary, the second-highest side card wins.

TWO PAIR: Two cards of a matching rank, another two cards of a different matching rank, and one side card.



In the event of a tie: Highest pair wins. If players have the same highest pair, highest second pair wins. If both players have two identical pairs, highest side card wins.

ONE PAIR: Two cards of a matching rank, and three unrelated side cards.



In the event of a tie: Highest pair wins. If players have the same pair, the highest side card wins, and if necessary, the second-highest and third-highest side card can be used to break the tie.

HIGH CARD: Any hand that does not qualify under a category listed above.










In the event of a tie: Highest card wins, and if necessary, the second-highest, third-highest, fourth-highest, and smallest card can be used to break the tie.

OVERVIEW OF POKER MATH

Text courtesy of Pokerstars.com

OVERVIEW: POKER MATH

Poker is a game that demands several skills to be used at once, and the best players also use some basic mathematics to help them make the correct decisions. It is not necessary to have a really complex mathematical mind to play poker—so don't be discouraged—but there are a few elements to the game that all players should learn.

We have already seen how the relative strength of a poker hand can increase or decrease as flop, turn, and river are dealt. For example,   is a big favorite against   preflop, but becomes a huge underdog if the flop comes   .

If you have a hand that is probably behind, but has the potential to improve to a winner, you need to decide whether it is worth continuing with it through the various streets, and how much you are prepared to pay to do so.

This article explains the calculations required to make the right decision about “drawing hands,” i.e., hands that will need to connect with later community cards to win.

The first step is to identify the cards that will improve your hand (known as “outs”). Once you have managed that, you can move on to calculating how they might help you.

CALCULATING OUTS

“Outs” are the cards left in the deck that improve your hand and will help you win the pot at showdown. The best way to demonstrate what we mean by outs is to look at a few common examples:

Example with a flush draw:






You are holding   and the flop is   .










If another heart appears on the turn or river, you make a flush, and unless another player has a full house or better, you will win the hand. (The board isn't paired, so none of our

opponents can have a full house yet.) There are 13 cards of each suit in the deck. You hold two of them, and another two are on the board. Four of the 13 hearts have therefore already been dealt, meaning that there are still nine hearts left in the deck.



This means you have nine cards that can improve your hand to a probable winner. You have nine outs.



Example with a straight draw:

You have   and the flop is   . Now any ace or nine will complete your straight. There are four aces and four nines in the deck, so you have eight outs.

If one card is missing to complete a straight, you have four outs. For example, if your hole cards were   and the flop was   , your outs would be    .






Example with a straight draw and overcards:

You have   and the board is   .

One of the four queens in the deck will make you a straight. If your opponent has a middle pocket pair, e.g.,  , then you have additional outs, as any king or any jack would give you a higher pair.

In this case, the number of your outs would increase to 10 (four queens, three kings, and three jacks).

Example with a set against a flush draw:

If you hold   and hit a set on a board showing   , you have a pretty strong hand. But it is not definitely a winner and could already be behind if any of your opponents has two spades in his or her hand.

However, you still have the chance here of improving your hand even further. There are seven cards that could make you a full house or better (a seven, three remaining twos, and

three remaining jacks), or the turn and river could be the same rank, which would also give you a full house.

Example with a straight and a flush draw:

You hold and the board is .

You have both an open-ended straight draw and a flush draw. This means you have nine outs to make the flush and eight outs to make the straight. At the same time, you have to consider that two cards are counted twice (in this case the and the) , which have to be subtracted. Therefore you have a total of 15 outs here.

HIDDEN OUTS

Although the term “out” typically refers to a card that improves your hand, there are also sometimes “hidden outs,” which help you because they reduce the value of your opponent’s hand.

Example of hidden outs:

You hold and your opponent has . The board is . Not only would the three kings and the three aces give you a higher two pair than your opponent, but any six or five would help as well.

This is because with a five or six, the board contains two pairs that are both higher than your opponent’s pocket threes, meaning that the fifth card, the kicker, would decide the outcome of the hand. Your ace is the best possible kicker.

In this instance, you have 12 outs, six of which are hidden.

DISCOUNTED OUTS

Advanced players don’t only calculate their own outs when on a draw. They also ask themselves what hand their opponent has, and whether one of the cards they hope to appear might also give the other player an even better hand.

Cards like these are known as “discounted outs.”

The straight draw example again:

You have and the flop is . You have calculated eight outs so far (four aces and four nines).

But how will your outs change if one of your opponents has two hearts, e.g., , and is therefore drawing to a flush?

In this example, two of your outs, i.e., and , would give your opponent a better hand—even if you hit your straight.

This means you have to discount both cards from your outs. You would now only have six outs, which significantly reduces your chances of winning the hand.

In general you should take a pessimistic approach when it comes to discounting outs, as it is better to discount one out too many than one too few!

POT ODDS AND EXPECTED VALUE

In cash games, you simply have to determine whether a call is “correct” in a mathematical sense. This means determining whether you would make money or lose money if you made the same decision in the same situation an infinite number of times. You compare what you would expect to win with what it will cost you to stay involved in a pot.

When your expected value is positive, you should stay in the hand.

This may sound complicated, but it need not necessarily be so. Calculating your expected value is a two-stage process, involving calculating your “pot odds,” explained below, and then comparing that figure with the odds you have of hitting one of your outs.

POT ODDS

Pot odds are defined as the ratio between the size of the pot and the bet facing you. For example, if there is \$4 in the pot and your opponent bets \$1, you are being asked to pay one-fifth of the pot in order to have a chance of winning it.

A call of \$1 to win \$5 represents pot odds of 5:1.

If you are asked to pay \$1 to win \$10, you have odds of 10:1. If you need to find \$3 to win \$9, you have 3:1 and so on.

(Note: The size of the pot refers to the chips that are already in the pot, as well as all the bets made in the current betting round.)

Once you have determined the pot odds, you need to determine the odds of hitting your draw.

ODDS OF HITTING YOUR DRAW

The chart below shows a list of the most common draws you face in Texas Hold'em and the approximate chance you have of hitting them.

The first column (Outs) shows the number of outs you have; the second column (Odds Flop to Turn) shows the chance of hitting the draw on the next card; the next column (Odds Flop to River) shows the odds of hitting on the turn or river, i.e., on either of the next two cards.

OUTS	ODDS FLOP TO TURN	ODDS FLOP TO RIVER	EXAMPLE
1	45:1	22:1	Smaller set vs. Higher set
2	22:1	11:1	Higher pocket pair vs. Smaller set
3	15:1	7:1	One overcard
4	11:1	5:1	Gutshot straight draw
5	8:1	4:1	Middle pair vs. Higher pair
6	7:1	3:1	Two overcards
7	6:1	2,5:1	Gutshot straight draw plus overcard
8	5:1	2:1	Open-ended straight draw
9	4:1	2:1	Flush draw
10	4:1	1,6:1	Gutshot plus two overcards
11	3:1	1,4:1	—
12	3:1	1,2:1	Gutshot and flush draw
13	2,5:1	1,1:1	—
14	2,4:1	1:1	Straight draw plus two overcards
15	2:1	1:1	Flush draw plus two overcards

Comparing ratios to determine expected value:

After you have found the two ratios, you must compare them against each other—the odds of you winning the hand (based on your outs) compared with the pot odds offered on your call.

If the pot odds are higher than your odds of winning, you should call (or raise, in exceptional circumstances). If your pot odds are lower than your chances of winning, you should fold.

Here are a couple of solid examples:

Example with the nut flush draw:

You have the nut flush draw (nine outs) on the flop and the pot is \$4. Your opponent bets \$1. There is now \$5 in the pot (\$4 + \$1), and it is \$1 to call. The pot odds are therefore 5:1.

According to the chart, your odds are 4:1 to hit your flush draw. The pot odds are higher. You should therefore call.

You can see why this call is correct by looking at the long-term picture. If you make this call four times, mathematics says that you will hit your draw once. That means you will win \$5 for every \$4 (4 * \$1) you invest. That is good business.

Example of pot odds with a straight draw:

You have a gutshot straight draw (four outs) on the flop and there is \$25 in the pot. Your opponent bets \$5. There is now \$30 in the pot (\$25 + \$5), and it is \$5 to call. Your pot odds are therefore 6:1.

However, according to the table the odds of winning the hand are 11:1. You don't have the right pot odds to call here and should therefore fold.

Again, a glance at the long-term picture reveals why this is so. In this instance, you would need to play ten times in order to win \$30. But those ten calls would cost you \$50 (\$5 * 10), and so this is not profitable.

How to play against an all in:

If an opponent moves all in on the flop, you can make the same calculations as described above, but this time look at the Odds Flop to River column. If your opponent is all in, you have the advantage that no further bets are possible.

If you call, you therefore get to see not only the turn, but also the river without having to risk more chips.

Example of odds with a straight draw against an all in:

You have an open-ended straight draw (eight outs) on the flop. There is \$50 in the pot and your opponent moves all in for \$25. You therefore have pot odds of 75 to 25 (\$50 plus the \$25), and it's \$25 to call.

When simplified, the pot odds are 3:1, and if you call you get to see both the turn and the river. According to the column Odds Flop to River in the odds table, the odds of winning the hand are 2:1, and because the pot odds are higher, you should make the call.

CONCLUSION

Calculating odds and outs can seem difficult and time-consuming, especially if you are a beginner. But this process is critical to make the right decisions. If you continually play draws without getting the right odds, you will lose money in the long run.

There will always be players who don't care about odds and call too often. These players will occasionally get lucky and win a pot, but mostly they will lose and pay for it.

On the other hand, you might be folding draws in situations where the odds are favorable. If you use the strategies in this article consistently, you can avoid mistakes and gain an edge over your opponents.

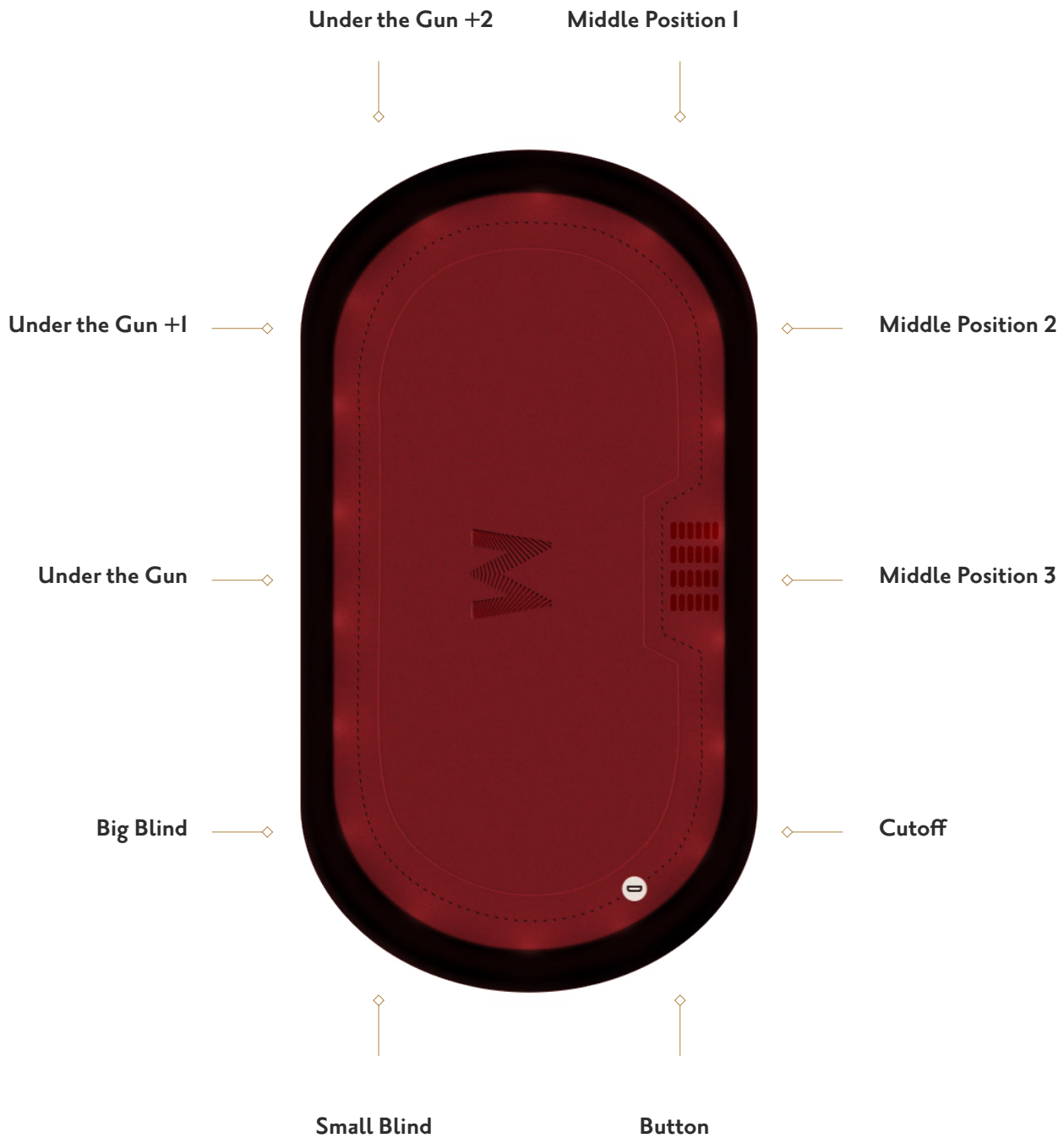
Avoiding results-oriented thinking:

Even if you have made a correct calculation of your expected value, the fact remains that you will often make a correct call yet still lose the pot. We have factored into the calculation that, for example, you will not hit a flush draw on three out of four occasions.

But you must remember that the key determining factor in these calculations is whether or not you are getting good value on your call in the long term. Cash games are essentially endless, and you can rebuy if you lose your chips. We are therefore looking at the decision in the abstract and determining whether this would be a profitable play if you made it time and time again.

It is a mistake in cash game poker to base your decisions only on the results of one particular hand—or even one particular session. Sometimes you might make a good call and lose; sometimes you will make a bad call and win. But don't allow the specific result to alter your decision-making. You should base it in mathematics.

TABLE POSITION



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BALANCED RANGE (N.): An unexploitable range that includes both strong hands and weak hands with potential. Even if your opponents know what your range is, they won't be able to exploit it if it's perfectly balanced.

BARREL (N.): A bet on a postflop street.

BARRELING FREQUENCY (N.): The frequency at which you bet the turn and follow up on the river.

BLOCKING BET (N.): A small bet designed to stop your opponent from making a large bet that is difficult to call.

BOARD TEXTURE (N.): The characteristics of the flop—whether wet, with many draws and nutted hands possible, or dry, without draws and no hand better than a set possible.

BRICK (N.): A turn or river card that is expected to have no impact on the outcome of the hand.

CALL (V.): To match an opponent's bet.

CAPPED RANGE (N.): A range that doesn't include many of the strongest hands possible.

CHECK (V.): To defer your right to bet for the moment.

CHECKED AROUND (ADJ.): When all players check on a postflop street.





CHECKING RANGE (N.): The range of hands with which a player checks.

CHECK-RAISE (V.): To check postflop and then raise a bet from another player.

COIN FLIP (N.): When two hands are all in together preflop with similar equity. For example, a pocket pair against two overcards.

COLD-CALL (V.): To call a single preflop raise.

COLD-CALLING RANGE (N.): The range of hands with which you call a single preflop raise.

COMBINATION (N.): A specific set of hole cards. Note that suit is important here.   is not a combination.   is.

CONNECT WITH THE BOARD (V.): How well your hand hit a particular board. This is measurable in terms of equity.

CONTINUATION BET (N.): A bet made by the player who made the last bet or raise. This term is often abbreviated “c-bet.”

CONTINUING RANGE (N.): The range of hands with which you call or raise a bet from another player.

DEUCES (N.): A pair of twos.

DOUBLE UP (V.): When you go all in and win enough chips to double your stack.

DRAW (N. AND V.): The hand you're trying to make. For example, if you are dealt a two and a three, and the flop includes a four and a five—you're drawing a straight.

DRY BOARD (N.): When the table's shared cards do not present many opportunities for drawing hands. For example, a “rainbow” flop with three different suits, which does not open up the possibility of a flush draw.

EDGE (N.): When you have more equity than your opponent.

FIRE A BARREL (V.): To bet.

FIRE MULTIPLE BARRELS (V.): To bet on multiple streets.

FIRE THREE BARRELS (V.): Making a bet on the flop, turn, and river.

FLOP (N.): The first three shared cards that are dealt.

FOLD EQUITY (N.): The equity you gain when your opponent folds. The more frequently your opponent will fold, the more fold equity you have in proportion to the pot size.

GAME THEORY OPTIMAL (GTO) POKER (N.):

A defensive playing strategy that aims to make you unexploitable to your opponents.

GET RUN OVER (V.): To be aggressively pushed out of many pots.



GUTSHOT DRAW (N.): When you have four out of the five cards needed for a particular draw, but are missing one.

HAND RANGE (N.): All the hands a player has in a specific situation. This changes as the hand progresses.

HEADS-UP POT (N.): A pot with two players.

HERO CALL (N.): When a player has a relatively weak hand but suspects that their opponent is bluffing, so they decide to call that opponent's bet on the final round of betting.

HIGH-EQUITY DRAW (N.): A draw that has many outs.

HOLE CARDS (N.): The two cards you're dealt. These are also described with the term "pocket." For example, if your hole cards are  , you have "pocket aces."

INITIATIVE (N.): The player who made the last bet or raise is said to have the initiative.

IN POSITION (ADJ.): When you act after your opponent.

LAG (N.): Loose aggressive player. They play a wide range of hands in an effective manner.

LEAD INTO (V.): In a heads-up pot, to make the first bet on a postflop street. Implies that your bet is directed at an opponent.

LEAD OUT (V.): To make the first bet on a postflop street.

LEAK (N.): A habit that loses you money.

LIMP IN (V.): To enter the pot before the flop by simply matching the big blind's bet, rather than raising.

LOOSE PLAYER (N.): A player who plays a wide range preflop.

LOOSE RANGE (N.): A range of hands containing many combinations. Used interchangeably with "wide range."

LOW-CARD WET BOARD (N.): Boards with many possible draws, but ones that don't involve high cards, such as   ,   , and   .

MANIAC (N.): A player who plays too many hands in an overly aggressive fashion, mostly without a plan.

METAGAME (N.): The integration of your playing history with your opponents into your decision-making process.

MIN-RAISE (N.): A raise that is double the previous bet. Preflop this is twice the big blind.

MULTI-WAY POT (N.): A pot with three or more players.

NITTY (ADJ.): A conservative, tight style of play.

THE NUTS (N.): The absolute best hand possible.

NUTTED HAND (N.): A hand that almost always rates to be the best. You can also describe a player holding such a hand as "nuttled."

OPEN LIMP (N.): When the first player enters the pot by choice. This doesn't include the blinds, as those are forced bets. Used interchangeably with "open raise."

OUT OF POSITION (ADJ.): When you act before your opponent.

OUTS (N.): Cards you need to complete your draw.

OVERBET (N.): A bet exceeding the size of the pot.

OVERCARDS (N.): Cards that rank higher than any card on the board.

OVERPAIR (N.): A pair that ranks higher than any possible pair on the board.

PAY OFF (V.): To call a big bet.

PEEL (V.): To call a bet or raise so you can see one more card on the board.

POLARIZED (ADJ.): When a range consists of only strong hands and very weak hands. The more polarized a range, the stronger the value hands and the weaker the bluffs.

RANGE ADVANTAGE (N.): An advantage in which your range of hands compares favorably to another range.

THE RIVER (N.): The fifth shared card.

SET (N.): Three of a kind when the player is holding a pocket pair.

SHOVE (V.): To bet all of your remaining chips.

SHOW DOWN (V.): To physically reveal your cards to your opponents.

SHOWDOWN (N.): The moment after the final round of betting when the last players left in a hand reveal their cards to determine the winner(s).

SLOW PLAY (V.): To refrain from betting or raising in the hope that your opponent will do the betting for you. Also, to give your opponent a chance to make a better hand in order to extract more value.

SMALL BALL (ADJ.): A style of poker that minimizes risk by consciously keeping the pot small unless the player has a strong hand.

SPECULATIVE HAND (N.): Hands such as suited connectors and small pocket pairs. They don't make a good hand very often, but when they do it's likely to be the best hand.

STICKY PLAYER (N.): An opponent who usually doesn't fold marginal hands in the hope of completing their draw.

STRADDLE (N.): A voluntary bet made after the blinds have been posted but before the hole cards are dealt.

STREET (N.): A segment of play. Any card that is dealt or any betting round.

TAG (N.): Tight aggressive player. They play around 20 percent of hands and open raise around 17 percent. This type of player is likely a professional.

THREE-BET (V.): To reraise another player's open raise preflop, or to reraise over the first raise on a postflop street.

TIGHT RANGE (N.): A range of hands containing few combinations.

TILT (N. AND V.): A poor mindset that leads a player to make costly mistakes.

TRAP (V.): To refrain from betting or raising in the hope that your opponent will do the betting for you. Also, to give your opponent a chance to make a better hand in order to extract more value. Can be used interchangeably with "slow play."

TREYS (N.): A pair of threes.

TRIPS (N.): Three of a kind when the board is paired and the player holds one card of the same value.

THE TURN (N.): The fourth shared card.

TURN YOUR HAND FACEUP (V.): When you let other players know almost for certain what you have. You don't literally flip your cards over, but you may as well have done so.

VALUE BET (N.): A bet where you expect to have more equity than your opponent.

VALUE HAND (N.): A hand that you can bet with and expect to be called by worse hands frequently enough to show a profit.

WET BOARD (N.): A coordinated board with multiple draws possible. This term can apply to the board at any stage, regardless of how many cards are down.

WET FLOP (N.): A flop with many possible draws available.

WHALE (N.): A big fish who plays too many hands in a passive manner without any skill. They are always likely to call big bets with weak hands.

WIDE RANGE (N.): A range of hands containing many combinations. Used interchangeably with "loose range."

WINNING PLAYER (N.): Any profitable player.

