**Part 1 Tight Players**

**Introduction**

It is very hard to beat tight players (TPs), both nits and TAGS, using ABC poker since it is designed to exploit players that habitually put too much money in with relatively marginal to weak hands.

*If you insist on playing an ABC strategy against TPs, then indeed it will be very difficult to win.*

However, TPs deviate significantly from optimal no-limit strategy, and this makes them thoroughly exploitable.

**Trait 1 Refusing to Felt Without the Nuts**

**Overview**

Refusing to battle on the felt with having the nuts is the quintessential definition of a nit. These uber-TPs will rarely put their entire stacks at risk without a nutted hand.

For example, on the river there’s a three flush with no pair. What typical plays will a nit make?

* Shove all-in or significantly over-bet with the nut flush.
* With a smaller flush, make a smaller bet or check it down.
* Call an all-in shove with a fairly strong but non-nut flush and possibly with a weak flush.
* Lay down two-pair or a set without much internal debate.

What wrong with this playing style?

* Generally, there will be way too much folding against very aggressive players. Specifically, these players tend to fold too much of their hand range to good-sized barrels on the turn.
* It fails to extract reasonable value for many strong but non-nutted hands.

Scenario In a $2-$5 game with $1,000 stacks all around

You open to $20 → a player behind calls → a nit in the BB calls

The flop comes Q♥T♦4♦

BB checks → you bet $40 → player behind folds → BB calls

Take a breath and pause to think about the evidence so far. You only have one opponent that you’ve pegged as a nit to consider.

* Your open raise was called by the BB, this takes AA and KK out of his range. What about AK? Nits are very conscious about being OOP after the flop, so what strong range can they have to call the open raise but not 3-bet with? Author’s opinion follows:
  + - QQ – TT, 44
    - AQs, ATs, KQs, QJs, A♦X♦, K♦J♦, J♦9♦, 9♦8♦ – 6♦5♦
    - AQo, KQo
* How would I assess BB’s range in similar and/or different ways than the author’s view?

From the BB’s perspective, QQ, TT, and 44 are monster hands. A♦Q♦ is very strong followed by AQs, AQo. KQs and KQo are also very strong with K♦Q♦ being strong but not as strong as A♦Q♦. A♦X♦ and K♦J♦ are all very strong draws but betting and bet sizing may tip off this part of the range. QJs and JJ are dicey if the Q on the flop is causing some consternation with the light peel on the turn indicating a 9 being preferred over K on the turn giving a backdoor straight. J♦9♦ is good with 9♦8♦ value being adjusted based on the turn. 8♦7♦ and 6♦5♦ are junky.

The turn is 4♠ → Q♥T♦4♦4♠

♣♦♥♠

**Adjustment Summary**

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

**Who Exhibits This Trait**

**The Bottom Line**

**Trait 2 Limp-Folding Preflop**

**Overview**

**Adjustment Summary**

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

**Who Exhibits This Trait**

**The Bottom Line**

**Trait 3 Tight Player Bet-Sizing Tells**

**Overview**

**Adjustment Summary**

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

**Who Exhibits This Trait**

**The Bottom Line**

**Trait 4 Bet-Folding**

**Overview**

**Adjustment Summary**

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

**Who Exhibits This Trait**

**The Bottom Line**

**Trait 5 Pot-Controlling**

**Overview**

**Adjustment Summary**

**Pitfalls to Avoid**

**Who Exhibits This Trait**

**The Bottom Line**

**Tight Player Review and Exercises**

**Exercise #1**

**Exercise #2**

**Exercise #3**

Wild games are some of the most profitable poker games out there. The principles behind exploiting wild games are simple.

Wait until you have a hand that is more likely to win than your opponents’ hand and stick your money in.

This is easier said than done. You have two major obstacles to implementing this:

1. Identifying a good situation
2. Fear

When you find yourself in a wild game, **you are going to be gambling**. There is absolutely no way around it because you can’t reliably “move people off hands”.

What do wild games look like:

* Money frequently goes in preflop and on the flop when the result of the hand is necessarily in doubt.
* Huge pots are built by three or four players all “coming along for the ride”.
* You’ll be gambling for stacks and as a result have serious swings.
* If you’re getting 3:1 pot odds (remember crazy games are often for entire stacks) then 25% equity is break-even. So, if you’re getting it in with 35% equity then you’ll have a 10% edge. If you’re getting 2:1 pot odds, then 33% equity is break-even. So, if you’re getting it in with 50% equity then you’ll have a 17% edge. These sort of an edge is massive in the long run. Illustrate how massive.

Despite the volatility, you can have such a large edge, that in the long run your bankroll will never be at-risk. There are two critical issues here → first, picking spots where you’ll have the best of it and second, understanding the basics of bankroll management. The first issue involves always improving your poker skills. The second issue requires analytically quantifying risk given game-based and bankroll parameters.

So, you’re afraid. Don’t be. You game to the poker table to gamble, right? These wild scenarios offer some of the best gambling you’ll find anywhere. However, you’ll need some techniques to increase your comfort level and to learn to appreciate what wild games have to offer.

Buying in short in wild games is sub-optimal, but it does serve to dampen the volatility you’ll experience. Most people experience fear when they play no-limit hold’em. But you must overcome the fear. **You can’t play no-limit in fear and succeed long term**.

**Technique 2 Bring a bigger session bankroll.**

You can combine bankroll with Technique 1 to manage and absorb volatility. For example, in a wild $2-$5 game, bring $3,000 and buy-in for $200 at a time. The feeling of peeling off a few bills from a seemingly inexhaustible wad of cash can easily reduce the perceived value of the money in your head which in turn can reduce fear. Make sure that when you’re doing all of this that you really do have an edge otherwise you’ll exhaust you’re bankroll completely!

**Technique 3 Watch all the hands.**

There’s nothing that diffuses fear better than knowledge. Watch every single showdown. Look at the hands that get shown down and watch the players who lose and don’t show. Look at their reactions and try to figure out what they had. You’ll quickly realize that players often have lots of beatable junk at showdown.

**Technique 3 Watch all the hands. *(continued)***

In wild games, players show some really wacky hands. Many wild players hang in there for big bucks with essentially dead hands. Watch how often money goes in with hands that have virtually no shot. It’s often enough, that as long as you make sure every time your money goes in that you have something sensible, you will win over the long term. And if things turn out badly, it’s not so bad since you bought in short.

**Good Spot 1 Light preflop reraisers.**

What sort of hands should you be entering these huge, bloated three- and four-way pots with?

For a baseline “wild” range use → **22+, A2s+, KTs+, 65s+, QTs, AJo+, KQo (17%)**.

When a lot of money goes in preflop, you’re looking for a preflop equity edge. Big pairs play really, really well. Suitedness is extremely important. AK is not overrated.

Run a five million-hand simulation to calculate your win-rate in a four-way hand where you hold each of the hole cards listed below – this is your “battle” range. In each simulation randomly draw hole cards from the baseline “wild” range for the three other “wild” players.

1. AA, KK, JJ, QQ, TT
2. 99, 88, 77, 66, 55
3. AKs, AQs, AJs, ATs
4. AKo, AQo, AJo
5. KQs, KJs, KTs
6. QJs, QTs
7. JTs, T9s, 98s
8. JTo

Use the equity calculated for each hand above to compute your ending bankroll after 1,000 hands if you start with a bankroll of $200,000 and peel off $200 buy-in per hand.

The 1,000 hand bankroll simulations above are not practical since you’ll be drawing from your battle range. Deepen the analysis by modifying the bankroll simulation as follows:

* Randomly draw the other three opponents’ hole cards first before drawing your hole cards.
* Compute three separate simulations to compute your average equity across the top one-third, top two-thirds, and full battle range.
* Compute the cost of waging this campaign by assuming 3 orbits per hour with $15 blind (SB and BB) per orbit at $5 rake.

To take it even further, compute your edge elasticity. What if you’re not actually in a wild game as defined by the baseline wild range but find yourself in some sort of “uber-wild” game. If you play with a static battle range regardless of the degree of “wildness”, then how does the stickiness of your battle range impact your after-cost win-rate? To understand this better realize that your cost function is directly proportional to the width of your battle range. If you widen your battle range, you will naturally play more hands per orbit and if this increased frequency is subsidized by super-wild inferior wild ranges, then you’ll be spreading a substantial fixed cost across more money-making opportunities.

**Trait 2 Absolutely Refusing to Fold an Overpair**