**Part 3 Bad Players**

**Winning in Wild Games**

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.

**Technique 1 Buy in short.**

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 1 Peeling Light on the Flop and Getting Sticky at Showdown**

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