Starting Hand Win Rates

Often it is correct to raise in Texas Hold'em pre-flop to cut down on the number of opponents. With 2 players seeing the flop against your pocket aces you still have a high win % but when 3 people stay to see the flop you have a bit more than 60% win rate. Is that what you want? To put money in with 63% shot. No, you would like to stay in the 70% range if you are going to invest your money.

Other situations allow you to call a small raise or limp in on the button with drawing hands because the pot odds and expected value is mathematically correct according to probability. Some of the major factors besides the your cards/math in determining when to raise and when to limp is who is in the pot already/who is to act after you and what position you are in. Reading players is in another article which is available free at my website; Total Poker Pro.

Why the First 2 Cards are Important.

Essentially this should help you see that any 2 cards can win, BUT, the better cards will win on the flop more often. To flop a good hand is hard enough, if you do flop one, you want it to be strong. I have flopped a two pair of 5 2 in the blinds only to get hit by some one who has 2 pair of face cards or hit trips. It is real hard to lay it down on the flop and you usually want to protect that small 2 pair with a big bet. It was a flop of 2 5 Q with 2 suited cards and someone also paired their Q, you are holding a troubled hand my poker reader. That person eventually got a 2nd card for 2 pair and their 2 pair was better than mine. Onto the numbers:

A pocket pair flopping:

4 of a Kind .245 % - Full House .980 % - 3 of a Kind 10.77 % - 2 Pair 16.16 %
1 Pair 71.84 %

Suited Connector AKs

Straight Flush .005 % - 4 of a Kind .010 % - Full House .092 % - Flush .837 %
Straight .321 % - 3 of a Kind 1.57 % - 2 Pair 4.04 % - 1 Pair 40.40 %

So these are 2 types of the most common starting hands a person will play. You see that flopping a pair will happen the most, especially if you already hold that wired pair. What

do you want that pair to be, a pair of 5's or holding AQs having one of those pair up? Having that strong kicker is so important and this is one of the 2 reasons. Because you are trying to flop at least top pair and if you flop 2 pair then you have a real strong 2 pair. The numbers change according to what your high cards are.

Poker sites will form networks and share players. You could be sitting at a table logged on at 7 Sultans and be playing against someone at Royal Vegas Poker. They are identical and have the same promotions.
Royal Vegas (not shown) is the flagship site of the Prima Network because the famous poker writer Lou Krieger promotes and consults.
Excellent customer service and quick cash outs. Cash loyalty awards prize pool of $37,000 every month.

Hand	occurs	Hand	occurs
High card	17.41%	Straight	4.62%
One Pair	43.83%	Flush	3.03%
Two Pair	23.50%	Full House	2.60%
Trips	4.83%	Quads	0.17%

The most common hands that win are 2 pair 31% of the time then a pair at 27% and 3 of a kind at 12%. The straight, flush and full house all win about 9% of the time. So this is the real reason strong starting hands are essential, if you are going to win on a pair or 2 pair they have to be high cards. They need to have that good kicker if you have just one pair at a showdown. If you have that better kicker then you will win more times than the average

loose player. In tight and most typical games the kicker is more important, against a loose player it is essential.

Finally, why starting with a strong hand is essential is that most important axiom of poker. It is not about winning pots, it is about winning money. I would rather keep throwing hands away pre-flop and on the flop for an hour or two and then get that killer hand that wins me an opponents bankroll then win a series of small pots. If you are just winning a lot of small pots then you are probably seeing too many flops and those small pots eventually all get put back into the pot when you call to see the flops.

The accepted flop percentage for a player to see at a full table is between 15% and 25% depending on table dynamics and the player's individual players. I vary my play throughout a session so I play tight at the beginning to see who is doing what and how I can take advantage of it. Later, I will loosen up, take advantage of my tight image and try to steal a few pots until I get called on it. After that your opponent will not know what type of a hand you have. This works best if you had been stealing some pots and then someone calls you on it but you actually have a hand to show them down with. It is an excellent meta-strategy. After that big showdown most players will be weary about challenging you and you may be able to steal pots again, but your opponents will also have better than average hands if they play back.

Starting Hand Values

Starting Hand	Occurs	Wins	Splits	Notes
AA	0.45%	31%	0.49%	Dealt 220/1 16/1 another PP
KK	0.45%	26.02%	0.61%	Odds of being dealt AA or KK 110/1
QQ	0.45%	22.03%	0.76%	Holding QQ and no A or K by river; 5 to 1
AKs	0.30%	20.19%	1.88%	AK heads up vs. QQ, 2/1 that A or K by river

These are the 4 most powerful hands and usually deserve a raise of 3 to 4 times the big blind, if there are limpers then add their bet plus the raise. Sklansky calls them group 1 hands in "hold'em for Advanced Players and Carson calls them Dominating hands in "The Complete Book of Hold'em". Both of these books are a must read for any serious poker player.

One reason they are so powerful is that a lot of times they can win without needing any improvement on the flop. You know you can control the field and continue to dominate the betting if the flop does not look scary.

For example, you hold AA (you are a 4 to 1 favorite over any other hand when played to the river) with a flop of 2, 7 and 9 all different suites (rainbow). This flop holds little possibility for another player. There are no obvious straight draws or flush draws. The only hands you must be careful of are two pair or someone hitting their pocket pair to make a set. Pocket 2,s, 7's and 9's, some crazy freak playing 10/8 or some other combination that got him a straight draw. So depending on how many people are in the

pot, bet an amount that destroys the opponent's pot odds for drawing to a straight or just bet enough to feel out the field. A pot sized to half the size of the pot will usually work.

Let's look at some advanced thoughts and probabilities;

If someone has an open ended straight draw they have 8 cards that complete their hand. On the Turn and seeing 2 cards/facing 2 bets, they have 31.5% of hitting their hand. If you bet the pot you are giving the player 2 to 1 odds. So the pot has $20 and you bet $20 your opponent needs to call $20 to win $40 on the turn. They are not getting the correct pot odds to call on 4th street (only hits 1 out of more than 5 times) or even both streets (worse than 3 to 1 odds).

Say you bet ½ of the pot on the Turn. Once again the pot is $20 and you bet $10. Now your opponent has to call $10 to make $30. He is getting the correct odds to draw both cards but he has to look at the pot odds in terms of calling for 2 cards if he does not hit on 4th street. On the turn your opponent will be facing another bet and he has worse odds when facing a draw of only one card.

On the turn your pair of Ace's is favored over the straight draw 63.131 % to 36.869 % (according to Poker Stove)

This type of decision comes with experience. If there is a large field of people then the chances that the flop would hit someone's hand to make a better hand than yours is higher but unlikely. If there are only one or two people seeing the flop you have to think they have pocket pairs or suited connector over-cards. Either way, your pocket pair of aces looks really good and you want people to chase. Your AA will win almost 2 out of 3 times. Anyone chasing is just giving money away.

76s/65s – 23%   89s – 22.6%   54s – 21.6%   JTs – 21.7%
          JJ – 19.5%   TT – 19.92%   QJs – 19.71%

So you will win approximately 1 out of 5 times. A raise of 3 times the big blind is wrong according to pot odds but perhaps not expected value (EV) if you hit.

Another reason these hands are so powerful is the percentage that an over-card with appear that can beat your hand.

Ace	00% that a higher card will appear by the river
King	17% that an Ace will appear by the river
Queen	32% that an Ace or King will appear by the river

So if you hold KK, there is only a 17% chance that an ace will appear to ruin your hand. Add this to the thought that perhaps no one has an ace in his or her hand. Usually if someone called your raise pre-flop you should expect them to have an ace but this may not always be the case. The less people in the pot the more likely no one has an ace. If they did not pair their ace on the flop then they are chasing a long shot and you need to ruin their pot odds.

One event that should slow you down, besides someone re-raising you indicating 2 pair or a set is when the board pairs on the flop. The more opponents seeing the flop the more likely someone hit trips. This is another reason to not let people draw against you when you hold a big pocket pair pre-flop, don't slow play a big PP with the intent of making money because more people are in the pot.

AKs are a whole different monster than the 3 wired pairs. It *could* win just by being the most powerful ace because of the king kicker. Usually it needs some help on the draw. Since it is suited it can win by a flush but this only increases its win potential 3%, it is a connector so it can win as a straight and it can win as an over-pair if an ace or king hits.

If a king hits you can feel safe that you have top pair with the best kicker. Same type of thinking if an ace is drawn, you have the best kicker to beat anyone else's ace. Someone could chase the two pair so if an ace or king flops you want to be aggressive. Some flops can get tricky with AK though.

If the flop comes K 10 5 or A Q 7 you may have been outdrawn. Why? Because K 10 and especially A Q are hands that people will call big opening raises with (K 10 being a loose call). Someone may have flopped 2 pair. If there was a raise before your raise and they called your raise then you should consider that person having the A Q or a wire pair. You need to be careful and feel out the board with a bet. If someone raise's back into you then it is decision time. Some things to consider are, that someone is drawing to a straight instead of having a made hand and betting that the flop missed others and they are trying to win the pot right there, or that someone has a K Q and thinks their K kicker is best.

Once again, MOST times you still have the better of the flop and should continue to believe that thought unless someone gets very aggressive. Then you have to ask yourself; does this player usually play very loose. If he is a tight player then you are beat, but if this person is loose and chases most of the time, take his money betting top pair with a worse kicker.

Starting Hand	Occurs	Wins	Splits	Notes
JJ	0.45%	19.09%	0.92%	45% chance of over card after flop
AQ	0.30%	18.66%	2.17%	Is essentially a drawing hands
KQs	0.30%	18.08%	2.09%	Is powerful if no one is holding an Ace
AJs	0.30%	17.47%	2.46%	Another drawing hand with a weak kicker
KJs	0.30%	17.05%	2.36%	Just call a moderate reraise
TT	0.45%	16.83%	1.12%	57% chance of an over card after flop
AKos	0.91%	16.67%	1.97%	See what the flop brings with many limpers

Sklansky has an excellent section in his Advanced Hold'em poker book that categorizes all the starting hand into hand groups. JJ is considered a group 1 hand and in his opinion should be treated like the previous pages starting hands but this book mainly deals with large stakes limit poker. I believe that it should be treated with much more care so I put it into this group.

According to Carson in the Complete Book of Hold'em Poker JJ, AQs and TT are dominating hands that can a person can open with under the gun and even call a raise with in middle position.

KQs, AJs, KJs, and AK are hands that can be dominated. Any hand from the previous web page can easily beat these hands if the flop does not fit your hand perfectly. Going on over-card draws when there are rags on the board and a big bet to your right is very risky and usually means the blinds hit or someone already has a wired pair.

AQs is considered dominating if not against the hands from the first table. Consider the following numbers when AQs is up against a more powerful hand.

A-A: 82 percent vs. A-Q suited, 86 percent vs. A-Q off suit
K-K: 68 percent vs. A-Q suited, 72 percent vs. A-Q offsuit
Q-Q: 66 percent vs. A-Q suited, 70 percent vs. A-Q offsuit
A-K suited: 71 percent vs. A-Q suited, 75 percent vs. A-Q offsuit
A-K offsuit: 70 percent vs. A-Q suited, 74 percent vs. A-Q offsuit

You are always in need of a miracle draw against these hands. That is the problem with most of these starting hands. They are good to open with in many positions and even throw in a raise to try and narrow the field in later positions. You have plenty of equity if, for instance, you try to steal the blinds with a raise and they call you or even re-raise you. Just be careful after the flop. If nothing came close to hitting your cards, depending on how many players stayed in the pot, you should not continue calling large bets with an over card draw.

JJ or TT (and 99) are excellent shorthanded hands. Most people will raise and even re-raise with the large over-card suited connectors. If the flop throws out rags or even just one over-card your hand can still be very strong since the flop defines over 70% of what the end results are going to be. If you bet the pot or half the pot then anyone calling with just an over-pair is calling against the odds. If you decided to limp in because there were callers ahead of you and too many people behind you, you are really looking to flop a set.

JJ vs. AQs with a flop of K86 rainbow is a 71.616 % to 28.384 % favorite.

AK off-suit or big slick is a dangerous starting hand but one I see many people put far more equity into with their pre-flop betting. It usually needs help in the draw. If you have AK suited you have the extra help of getting a flush draw (3% increase) but AK unsuited can get you in trouble. AK unsuited against a wired pair is a coin flip with the wired pair already having an edge. Don't bet the farm on AK pre-flop but feel very comfortable if an Ace or King falls on the flop. You will always have the best kicker and might have beat a smaller pocket pair. You once again want to isolate one player and two at the most. If you

know your raise will not knock people out then you will essentially be betting for value with a raise.

Here are some other considerations to look at before throwing your money around. All examples are for a ten player table;

If you hold KK the chances someone has AA are 19.5 to 1.

If you hold QQ the chances someone holds AA or KK are 9.5 to 1.

If you hold AKos the chances someone holds AA or KK are 19.7 to 1.

If you hold JJ the chances someone holds AA, KK, QQ are 6.2 to 1.

If you hold TT the chances someone has a better pocket pair are 4.5 to 1.

If you hold AQos the chances someone has a better pocket pair are 4.4 to 1.

If you hold 99 the chances someone has a better pocket pair are 3.5 to 1.

If you hold KQos the chances someone has a TT and above are 2.7 to 1

Look at the next chapter to see the win expectations for each hand compared to how many players are involved. Most pocket pairs increase in value when they are up against less players. All big cards increase in value but with pocket pairs from tens and above a raise is considered good. Then again nothing is set in stone when you consider a poker game. You must know your opponents and this is one of the x-factors.

The list that follows helps you understand the winning percentage for the major starting hands according to the number of players seeing the flop.

(SH= Starting Hand) (HW = Hands Won %) (HS = Hands Split %)
1-6 = number of opponents seeing the flop and % your hand will stand up at showdown.

SH	Occurs	HW%	HS%	1	2	3	4	5	6
AA	0.45%	31.00	0.49	.85	.73	.63	.55	.47	.44
KK	0.45%	26.02	0.61	.81	.68	.57	.49	.41	.37
QQ	0.45%	22.03	0.76	.79	.65	.52	.42	.32	.30
AKs	0.30%	20.19	1.88	.67	.48	.40	.35	.29	.26
JJ	0.45%	19.09	0.92	.76	.59	.49	.40	.31	.27
AQs	0.30%	18.66	2.17	.66	.45	.37	.32	.28	.25
KQs	0.30%	18.08	2.09	.60	.46	.36	.32	.26	.24
AJs	0.30%	17.47	2.46	.62	.46	.35	.30	.26	.23
KJs	0.30%	17.05	2.36	.61	.44	.34	.29	.24	.22
TT	0.45%	16.83	1.12	.74	.55	.44	.35	.28	.23
AK	0.91%	16.67	1.97	.64	.46	.37	.31	.26	.23
ATs	0.30%	16.63	2.74	.62	.43	.37	.30	.24	.21
QJs	0.30%	16.58	2.39	.58	.43	.34	.27	.26	.20
KTs	0.30%	16.14	2.62	.58	.43	.32	.30	.24	.20
QTs	0.30%	15.84	2.64	.58	.42	.33	.28	.23	.19
JTs	0.30%	15.78	2.75	.56	.38	.32	.27	.22	.20
99	0.45%	15.29	0.85	.71	.52	.41	.32	.24	.22
AQ	0.91%	14.87	2.25	.62	.45	.34	.29	.24	.20
A9s	0.30%	14.60	2.68	.60	.42	.32	.25	.22	.19
KQ	0.91%	14.43	2.18	.59	.42	.33	.27	.23	.20
88	0.45%	14.16	0.85	.64	.49	.37	.29	.23	.18
K9s	0.30%	14.15	2.47	.56	.39	.30	.25	.21	.20
T9s	0.30%	14.07	2.66	.50	.35	.28	.25	.20	.17
A8s	0.30%	13.89	2.86	.58	.40	.30	.23	.21	.19
Q9s	0.30%	13.82	2.44	.55	.39	.29	.25	.19	.17
J9s	0.30%	13.80	2.49	.55	.38	.27	.23	.19	.17
AJ	0.91%	13.45	2.55	.63	.43	.34	.27	.22	.19
A5s	0.30%	13.43	3.27	.60	.40	.27	.24	.21	.18
77	0.45%	13.36	0.86	.67	.48	.33	.26	.20	.18
A7s	0.30%	13.35	3.01	.55	.39	.31	.24	.21	.19
KJ	0.91%	13.18	2.48	.57	.40	.31	.25	.20	.17
A4s	0.30%	13.17	3.06	.59	.38	.30	.23	.20	.16
A3s	0.30%	13.07	2.86	.57	.39	.29	.22	.18	.17
A6s	0.30%	12.97	3.11	.59	.37	.29	.24	.20	.17
QJ	0.91%	12.89	2.49	.55	.40	.30	.24	.20	.18
66	0.45%	12.77	0.85	.63	.42	.31	.24	.19	.17
K8s	0.30%	12.77	2.60	.57	.37	.29	.24	.20	.17
T8s	0.30%	12.73	2.69	.47	.34	.26	.22	.18	.16
A2s	0.30%	12.69	2.63	.52	.36	.27	.23	.19	.16
98s	0.30%	12.63	2.36	.46	.34	.26	.22	.19	.16
J8s	0.30%	12.47	2.53	.50	.37	.27	.22	.18	.15
AT	0.91%	12.43	2.84	.60	.42	.31	.24	.21	.17
Q8s	0.30%	12.42	2.52	.54	.37	.28	.21	.18	.16
K7s	0.30%	12.23	2.73	.54	.37	.27	.22	.18	.16
KT	0.91%	12.23	2.75	.57	.38	.29	.24	.20	.17
55	0.45%	12.15	0.86	.60	.39	.27	.22	.18	.15
JT	0.91%	12.13	2.83	.54	.37	.28	.22	.20	.15
87s	0.30%	12.02	2.33	.48	.30	.25	.19	.17	.16
QT	0.91%	11.99	2.75	.56	.36	.29	.22	.19	.17
44	0.45%	11.94	0.67	.52	.34	.25	.19	.16	.13
22	0.45%	11.93	0.31	.47	.30	.22	.17	.15	.14
33	0.45%	11.86	0.48	.54	.32	.24	.19	.15	.14

Thinking About Position

A loose game is one with 6+ players regularly seeing the flop with sparse or no pre-flop raising. Essentially you need to be paid off and have at least a 15% chance of winning the hand. That is assuming your cards are not dominated or someone is not limping with a very strong hand. I would actually want cards that have a 15% minimum to 20% more favorable odds (6+ players) chance just to stay tighter than the other players.

A typical game is 3-5 people seeing the flop with 1 out of every 4 hands having a pre-flop raise. You have to consider pre-flop raises cutting into your bottom line. If one out of every four times you are run off your hand be a preflop raise then you should consider only going in with cards that have a 20% minimum (5 players) 33% minimum (3 players) chance of winning at the showdown compared to the number of players limping in.

A tight game is where there are 1-2 people seeing the flop and there is a pre-flop raise 3 out of every 4 hands. So you want to have cards that have at least a 33% chance of winning at the showdown to break even before considering pre-flop raising. So with 2 players seeing the flop I would feel more comfortable having cards that win 40%+ of the time because you essentially have a 33.3% chance of winning without considering the actual cards.

The numbers after the suggestions are the number of players who see the flop and the % of the time that particular hand will hold up and win.

One more note about this hand chart, if you are in a tight game in middle to late position and there has been 2-3 bets pre-flop before getting to you then ignore the chart and just use the top 10 hands on the chart. Especially if you are a beginner. Some players, including myself, will go in very occasionally with a 5-6 or 6-7 suited if there are 2-3 people in a tight game raising pre-flop. Why? Let's look at a few numbers;

4 people including your self seeing the flop;

	Pre-flop odds
you have - 5c6c	41.704 %
player 1 - AdKh	32.122 %
player 2 - AsQs	19.783 %
player 3 - KsQd	6.392 %

So what is going on here? Do any 2 cards have an equal chance of winning? Well, no, not at all. Since 2 people have an ace, the values of the aces go down, same with the queens and kings. There is no made hand here, they all need help. You have a better shot because as far as you know there are 6 outs to make a pair, all the flush outs and a straight draw on both sides of your connectors. The AK, AQ or KQ does not have that same straight possibility. Of course if an over cards fall on the flop or later then your cards are probably worthless and should typically be thrown away. Even if you flop 2 pair, don't become too brash. Someone may have one pair on the flop, say with a flop of 5,6,Q. You have the best

hand but if a K or A fall on the turn or river then someone else will have a better 2 pair. It has happened to me more than I would like to remember. Finally, if someone has a made hand like AA to 99 you are already in trouble so try to understand who is doing the pre-flop raising. Are they pushing small edges with over-card draws or do they usually only raise with a pair?

If you look at the chart above you will see that wired pairs are very powerful, the higher the pair the better it plays against more players. AA pays off 44% of the time with 6 players. So you are risking 1/7th of the money but getting much better percentage chance to win. Many professional players use the concept of what is called "pair poker" and push that small edge trying to isolate 1 or 2 players. If you look at the wired pair of 99 you see that it wins 71% of the time against one player. That is excellent odds compared to the money in the pot. Even against 2 other players you could possibly (depending on their hands) wagering only 1/3 of the money but getting a 52% chance to win the pot. It is a race against 2 players but the money wagered is in your favor. Once again these are static numbers and do not represent all situations but your job as a poker player is to identify those times when you could have better odds than your opponents.

So "pair poker" is pushing as many hands out of the pot and isolating one player who has a drawing hand. Hopefully they will not have 2 over cards to your pair and make it a 50/50 race.

JJ vs. AKos pre-flop is a 56.8% vs. 43.1% race. (2 over-cards)
99 vs. AKos preflop is a 54.8% vs. 45.1% race. (2 over-cards)
JJ vs. ATos preflop is a 71.2% vs. 28.7% race. (1 over-card)
99 vs. T8os preflop is a 70.2% vs. 28.7% race. (1 over-card)

I like this example from Roy Cooke regarding the wired pair of Jacks.

Jacks, no over cards flop: Wins 20.5% of the time; eight of the other hands win 9.9% of the time.
Jacks, one over card flops: Wins 14% of the time; each of the eight other hands wins 10.75 percent of the time.
Jacks, two over cards flop: Wins 9.6% of the time; each of the eight other hands wins 11.25 percent of the time.
Jacks, three over cards flops: Wins 12.9 percent of the time; each of the other hands wins nearly 11 percent of the time.

This is against 8 other players. If you are against 1 or even 2 players an over-card is not as troublesome. Your opponents could also have the same over-cards. Like AJ and AT. Both of these players have a decreased opportunity to beat your jacks. There are only 2 aces in the deck left, 1 Jack and 2 out of the 3 tens have to hit. It is also interesting that the value of the Jacks go up when 3 over-cards flop. You hold the key card if the 4th over-card to complete the straight comes on the turn or river. The chances that someone holds another Jack are greatly reduced and you would end up splitting the pot if someone did hold a Jack and the straight slid off the deck.

The Top 60 Hands

#	Hole	Occurrences		Hands Won		Hands Split		Cume
1.	AA	1,809,627	0.45%	558,246	31.00%+	8,894	0.49%	0.5%
2.	KK	1,810,836	0.45%	468,381	26.02%+	10,980	0.61%	0.9%
3.	QQ	1,811,727	0.45%	395,997	22.03%+	13,844	0.76%	1.4%
4.	AKs	1,206,177	0.30%	238,934	20.19%+	22,641	1.88%	1.7%
5.	JJ	1,809,430	0.45%	342,172	19.09%+	16,687	0.92%	2.1%
6.	AQs	1,205,654	0.30%	220,049	18.66%+	26,126	2.17%	2.4%
7.	KQs	1,205,169	0.30%	213,327	18.08%+	25,194	2.09%	2.7%
8.	AJs	1,206,836	0.30%	205,651	17.47%+	29,730	2.46%	3.0%
9.	KJs	1,206,417	0.30%	200,865	17.05%+	28,465	2.36%	3.3%
10.	TT	1,810,247	0.45%	301,312	16.83%+	20,213	1.12%	3.8%
11.	AK	3,622,226	0.91%	592,106	16.67%+	71,186	1.97%	4.7%
12.	ATs	1,205,511	0.30%	195,008	16.63%+	33,055	2.74%	5.0%
13.	QJs	1,204,377	0.30%	194,900	16.58%+	28,816	2.39%	5.3%
14.	KTs	1,205,475	0.30%	189,465	16.14%+	31,618	2.62%	5.6%
15.	QTs	1,203,595	0.30%	185,659	15.84%+	31,786	2.64%	5.9%
16.	JTs	1,207,672	0.30%	185,301	15.78%+	33,151	2.75%	6.2%
17.	99	1,811,288	0.45%	274,597	15.29%+	15,319	0.85%	6.6%
18.	AQ	3,622,497	0.91%	526,561	14.87%+	81,492	2.25%	7.5%
19.	A9s	1,205,793	0.30%	171,359	14.60%+	32,307	2.68%	7.8%
20.	KQ	3,621,242	0.91%	511,328	14.43%+	78,799	2.18%	8.7%
#	Hole	Occurrences		Hands Won		Hands Split		Cume
21.	88	1,809,246	0.45%	254,083	14.16%+	15,383	0.85%	9.2%
22.	K9s	1,206,391	0.30%	166,456	14.15%+	29,838	2.47%	9.5%
23.	T9s	1,206,149	0.30%	165,249	14.07%+	32,036	2.66%	9.8%
24.	A8s	1,207,611	0.30%	162,974	13.89%+	34,505	2.86%	10.1%
25.	Q9s	1,206,676	0.30%	162,684	13.82%+	29,452	2.44%	10.4%
26.	J9s	1,205,989	0.30%	162,280	13.80%+	30,074	2.49%	10.7%
27.	AJ	3,621,853	0.91%	474,808	13.45%+	92,438	2.55%	11.6%
28.	A5s	1,205,048	0.30%	156,550	13.43%+	39,359	3.27%	11.9%
29.	77	1,808,799	0.45%	239,528	13.36%+	15,518	0.86%	12.4%
30.	A7s	1,206,564	0.30%	156,275	13.35%+	36,358	3.01%	12.7%
31.	KJ	3,620,254	0.91%	465,172	13.18%+	89,704	2.48%	13.6%
32.	A4s	1,206,322	0.30%	154,015	13.17%+	36,919	3.06%	13.9%
33.	A3s	1,206,009	0.30%	153,087	13.07%+	34,478	2.86%	14.2%
34.	A6s	1,206,130	0.30%	151,530	12.97%+	37,464	3.11%	14.5%
35.	QJ	3,617,625	0.90%	454,744	12.89%+	90,217	2.49%	15.4%
36.	66	1,807,783	0.45%	228,909	12.77%+	15,372	0.85%	15.8%
37	K8s	1,207,972	0.30%	150,243	12.77%+	31,430	2.60%	16.1%
38.	T8s	1,206,130	0.30%	149,383	12.73%+	32,400	2.69%	16.4%
39.	A2s	1,206,200	0.30%	148,984	12.69%+	31,713	2.63%	16.7%
40.	98s	1,207,017	0.30%	148,797	12.63%+	28,532	2.36%	17.0%

#	Hole	Occurrences		Hands Won		Hands Split		Cume
41.	J8s	1,206,263	0.30%	146,552	12.47%+	30,578	2.53%	17.3%
42.	AT	3,619,445	0.90%	437,198	12.43%+	102,891	2.84%	18.2%
43.	Q8s	1,205,182	0.30%	145,929	12.42%+	30,364	2.52%	18.5%
44.	K7s	1,205,809	0.30%	143,461	12.23%+	32,893	2.73%	18.9%
45.	KT	3,617,258	0.90%	430,258	12.23%+	99,416	2.75%	19.8%
46.	55	1,809,670	0.45%	217,922	12.15%+	15,555	0.86%	20.2%
47.	JT	3,622,135	0.91%	426,911	12.13%+	102,628	2.83%	21.1%
48.	87s	1,206,306	0.30%	141,565	12.02%+	28,107	2.33%	21.4%
49.	QT	3,620,279	0.91%	422,273	11.99%+	99,641	2.75%	22.3%
50.	44	1,811,905	0.45%	214,977	11.94%+	12,153	0.67%	22.8%
51.	22	1,812,631	0.45%	215,514	11.93%+	5,678	0.31%	23.2%
52.	33	1,810,875	0.45%	213,782	11.86%+	8,681	0.48%	23.7%
53.	K6s	1,204,659	0.30%	138,641	11.84%+	33,984	2.82%	24.0%
54.	97s	1,204,852	0.30%	138,078	11.74%+	28,436	2.36%	24.3%
55.	K5s	1,205,626	0.30%	135,432	11.57%+	34,607	2.87%	24.6%
56.	76s	1,207,850	0.30%	135,345	11.47%+	27,581	2.28%	24.9%
57.	T7s	1,204,998	0.30%	134,449	11.47%+	32,474	2.69%	25.2%
58.	K4s	1,206,692	0.30%	133,874	11.40%+	32,554	2.70%	25.5%
59.	K2s	1,207,777	0.30%	133,058	11.27%+	27,379	2.27%	25.8%
60.	K3s	1,205,236	0.30%	132,326	11.26%+	29,788	2.47%	26.1%

Starting Hand Chart

I have tried to put together a simple starting hand chart for quick reference with the template being the hands strength based on winning percentage. I separated the games into 3 categories, loose, typical and tight. A loose game is one with 6-10 players regularly seeing the flop with sparse or no pre-flop raising. A typical game is 2-5 people seeing the flop with 1 out of every 4 hands having a pre-flop raise. A tight game is where there are 2-3 people seeing the flop and there is a pre-flop raise 3 out of every 4 hands.

In the notes section unless it is specified then all is assumed. For example, if it says "all positions" then you can play this in any position in any type of game. "All positions (25% early 50% mid tight)" means that in loose and typical games you can play this in all positions. In tight games it specifies when to play in early position and in middle position. Another

example is "Early (loose) Middle (typ) button/blinds (tight)" which means that in loose games you can play this in any position, in typical games from middle to blind position and in tight games you can play this on the button or from the blinds.

Starting hand	Occurs	Hands Won %	Hands Split %	Notes/position play in different games
AA	0.45%	31.00	0.49	All positions any game.
KK	0.45%	26.02	0.61	All positions any game.
QQ	0.45%	22.03	0.76	All positions any game.
AKs	0.30%	20.19	1.88	All positions any game.
JJ	0.45%	19.09	0.92	All positions any game.
AQs	0.30%	18.66	2.17	All positions any game. (75% tight early)
KQS	0.30%	18.08	2.09	Early (loose) Middle-late /blinds (typical/tight)
AJs	0.30%	17.47	2.46	Early (loose) Middle-late /blinds (typical/tight)
KJs	0.30%	17.05	2.36	Early (loose) Middle-late /blinds (typical/tight)
TT	0.45%	16.83	1.12	All positions any game.
AK	0.91%	16.67	1.97	All positions (75% early tight)
ATs	0.30%	16.63	2.74	Early (loose) Middle (50% typical) late/blinds
QJs	0.30%	16.58	2.39	Early (loose) Middle (50% typical) late/blinds
KTs	0.30%	16.14	2.62	Early (loose) Middle (50% typical) late/blinds
QTs	0.30%	15.84	2.64	Early (loose) Middle (50% typical) late/blinds
JTs	0.30%	15.78	2.75	Early (loose) Middle (50% typical) late/blinds
99	0.45%	15.29	0.85	All positions (50% early mid tight)
AQ	0.91%	14.87	2.25	All positions (25% early tight)
A9s	0.30%	14.60	2.68	All positions (25% tight 50% typical early)
KQ	0.91%	14.43	2.18	All positions (10% early 50% mid tight)
88	0.45%	14.16	0.85	All positions (25% early 50% mid tight)
K9s	0.30%	14.15	2.47	Mid (50% loose) Late position and blinds
T9s	0.30%	14.07	2.66	Early (loose) late/blinds (typical)
A8s	0.30%	13.89	2.86	Early (loose 50%) Middle to late/blinds
Q9s	0.30%	13.82	2.44	Mid (50% loose) Late position and blinds (typ)
J9s	0.30%	13.80	2.49	Mid (50% loose) button/blinds (typical)
AJ	0.91%	13.45	2.55	Early (loose) Middle (typ) button/blinds (tight)
A5s	0.30%	13.43	3.27	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
77	0.45%	13.36	0.86	All positions (25% early tight) (tight/typical)
A7s	0.30%	13.35	3.01	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
KJ	0.91%	13.18	2.48	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
A4s	0.30%	13.17	3.06	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
A3s	0.30%	13.07	2.86	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
A6s	0.30%	12.97	3.11	Early (loose 50%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
QJ	0.91%	12.89	2.49	Early (loose 25%) button/blinds (tight/typical)
66	0.45%	12.77	0.85	All pos. (loose) late/blinds (25% tight/typical)
K8s	0.30%	12.77	2.60	Early (loose 25%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
T8s	0.30%	12.73	2.69	Late/blinds (15% tight/typical)
A2s	0.30%	12.69	2.63	Early (loose) button/blinds (15% tight/typ)
98s	0.30%	12.63	2.36	Early (loose 25%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
J8s	0.30%	12.47	2.53	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (10%tight/typ)
AT	0.91%	12.43	2.84	Early (loose 25%) button/blinds (10%tight/typ)
Q8s	0.30%	12.42	2.52	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (10%tight/typ)
K7s	0.30%	12.23	2.73	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
KT	0.91%	12.23	2.75	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
55	0.45%	12.15	0.86	All positions (loose) late/blinds (25% tight/typ)
JT	0.91%	12.13	2.83	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (10%tight/typ)
87s	0.30%	12.02	2.33	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
QT	0.91%	11.99	2.75	Early (loose 15%) button/blinds (15%tight/typ)
44	0.45%	11.94	0.67	Loose only 25% middle, button or blind
22	0.45%	11.93	0.31	Loose only 25% middle, button or blind
33	0.45%	11.86	0.48	Loose only 25% middle, button or blind

Poker School Online – If you are interested in learning more about poker I suggest looking at this website. It is inexpensive; you get poker coaching, poker articles and audio from the best professionals. They have poker leagues with WPT entries as the prizes.

Poker Strategy Videos – Professionals tell you their secrets. It is worth the time to watch the previews on the website.

Ken Warren is a prolific poker writer. I suggest his books for any beginner to intermediate poker players. If you like statistics then pick up his books. He has an experienced insight and lots of probability numbers.

Bob Ciaffone is a master poker player. He has 3 books that are a standard in every poker player's collection. He writes for numerous magazines and organizations. His book on Pot Limit and No Limit Poker is the best on the market for big bet poker.

Dan Harrington has just written a no limit tournament poker book that is the best ever written on the subject. Harrington on Hold'em goes inside the mind of this successful poker player. He explains his thinking for hundreds of different situations. He has a second volume due out next year.

Building a Bankroll

Bankroll, maybe one of the most important words in a poker player's vocabulary. You must have one to play poker just like you need a boat to travel on water (unless you swim very well).

Most sites offer a first time deposit bonus. And 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 (2 card runner straights, or the 2 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 the limit tables, you won't be faced with the task of deciding whether to match an 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. Why? Because if you have a bad string of hands (which is inevitable in poker) and there is a large swing in your cash flow toward the negative side, you won't have 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 2 runner to make the nut straight then just chalk the problem up to the poker Gods evening things out. You don't 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 6-7 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 their money as a total bluff and you can only double up $50 because you don't have an adequate bankroll.

$1/$2 no limit game you should have at least $200 and even better a $400-$800 bankroll. $2/$4 no limit game you should have at least $400 and probably $800-$1600 bankroll. $5/$10 no limit game will really put swings into you roll. You should only play these games after getting some good experience because there are tough players. But, 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 $1000 and ideally $4000.

So say you start at Royal Vegas Poker and get the free $10. You can either try to build that in a few small buy in tournaments or deposit $100 to get a $40 bonus ($200 would give you the $80 bonus). So you leave with $160 dollars, no, lets say you won a few nice pots playing the limit table so you now have $160. Not bad for a $100 dollar investment. Meet the requirements, pull your money and then make another deposit into, say, Absolute Poker where they will match 35%. After another 2 or 3 poker rooms you will have an adequate bankroll to play the no limit tables. Of course this is also assuming you don't win something at the tables. Doing this is called "being a bankroll whore" and many players do it. If you keep accounts on 8-10 sites, then after you build the bonus bankroll, you are set up to take advantage of reload bonus offers.
Keep to the plan of building the bankroll, protect it like a pile of gold. Play the limit tables or a few small buy in tournaments/sit n go's (the tournaments will not count towards your hand requirements but it is a good way to win a large amount of money in

one fell swoop without risking too much of your bankroll at once). Stay tight (play only the top 20 or so opening hands and play the nuts.

Here are some of the requirements for withdrawing your money

Ultimate Bet
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. You get 6 points for every $1 worth of tournament buy-in fee you pay. So a $10/$1 tournament will give you 6 points.

Americas Cardroom
Has one of the most attractive bonus withdraw requirements. Play 200 raked hands (where you see the flop) within any time limit to get $100.

Poker Room
20% bonus up to $100
Get 1000 points for raked hands (where you just get dealt cards) within any time limit to get $100 at a 20% deposit bonus. Where each pot with rake under one dollar give 0.5 points and all rakes over one dollar give 1.0 point.

Absolute Poker
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 buyin fee. At 100 points we 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
All Bonuses may be Cashed Out only after an amount totaling no less than twenty (20) times the Bonus amount received has been wagered (e.g., a $100 dollar Bonus must be wagered in a total amount equaling no less than $2,000).

True Poker
There is a 20% deposit match, up to a maximum of $50. Play 500 raked hands within 40 days to get $50.

Multi Poker (Party Poker Skin)
Standard sign-up bonus at Multi Poker is 20% deposit match bonus up to $100. Play 1500 hands (where you just get dealt cards), within 30 days of deposit to get $150