

\$29.95

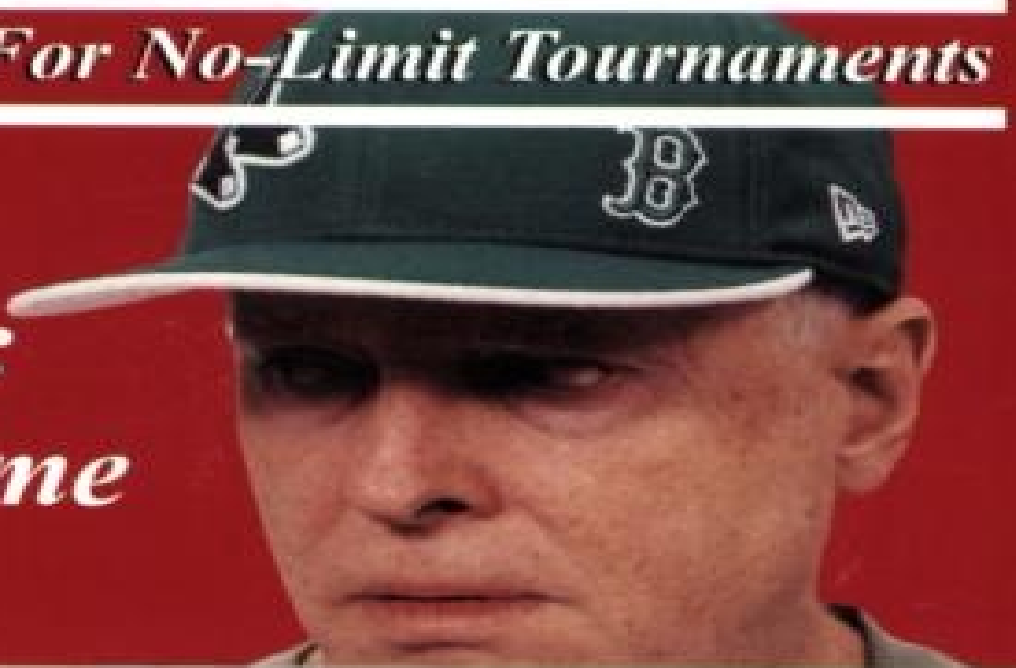
Dan Harrington

Bill Robertie

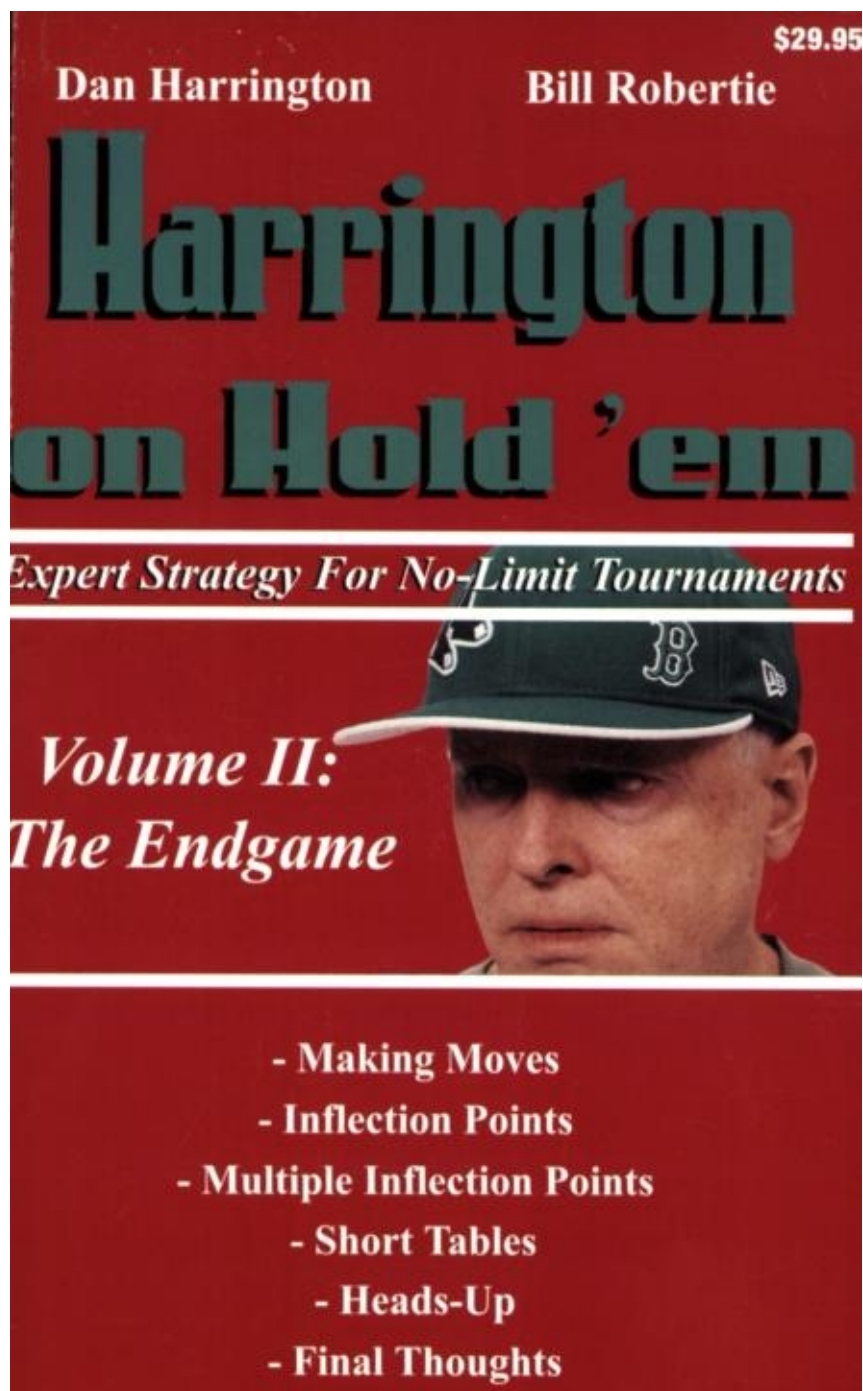
Harrington on Hold 'em

Expert Strategy For No-Limit Tournaments

*Volume II:
The Endgame*



- Making Moves
- Inflection Points
- Multiple Inflection Points
- Short Tables
- Heads-Up
- Final Thoughts



Other Books From Two Plus Two Publishing

Gambling For a Living by David Sklansky and Mason Malmuth is the ultimate book for anyone interested in making a living at the gaming tables. The book includes chapters on horse racing, slot and poker machines, blackjack, poker, sports betting, and casino tournaments. It is designed to show anyone new to this field how to be successful and what it takes to become a professional gambler.

Hold 'em Poker for Advanced Players by David Sklansky and Mason Malmuth is the definitive work on this very complicated game. Some of the ideas discussed include play on the first two cards, semi-bluffing, the free card, inducing bluffs, being beaten on the river, staying with a draw, playing when a pair flops, playing trash hands, fourth street play, playing in loose games, and playing shorthanded.

Seven-Card Stud for Advanced Players by David Sklansky, Mason Malmuth, and Ray Zee is the definitive work on this extremely complex game. Some of the ideas discussed include the cards that are out, ante stealing, playing big pairs, reraising the possible bigger pair, playing little and medium pairs, playing three flushes, playing three straights, playing weak hands, fourth street, pairing your door card on fourth street, fifth street, sixth street, seventh street, defending against the possible ante steal, playing against a paired door card, continuing with a draw, scare card strategy, buying the free card on fourth street, playing in loose games, and playing shorthanded.

High-Low-Split Poker, Seven-Card Stud and Omaha Eight-or-Better for Advanced Players by Ray Zee is the third book in the "For Advanced Players" series. Some of the ideas discussed in the seven-card stud eight-or-better section include starting hands, disguising your hand, when an ace raises, fourth street, fifth street, sixth street, seventh street, position, bluffing, staying to the end, and scare cards. Some of the ideas discussed in the Omaha eight-or-better section include general concepts, position, low hands, high hands, your starting hand, play on the flop, multi-way versus shorthanded play, scare cards, getting counterfeited, and your playing style.

Tournament Poker for Advanced Players by David Sklansky is the definitive text on tournament strategies which only a small number of players have mastered. Some of the ideas discussed include the effect of going broke, The Gap Concept, how chips change value, adjusting strategy because the stakes rise, all-in strategy, the last table, making deals, and The "System."

Harrington on Hold 'em: Expert Strategy for No Limit Tournaments; Volume 1: Strategic Play by Dan Harrington and Bill Robertie is the first release from the 1995 World Poker Champion. The emphasis of this book are the early stages of a tournament. Topics include the game of no-limit hold 'em, playing styles, starting requirements, reading the table, betting before the flop, and betting on the later streets.

Getting Started in Hold 'em by Ed Miller is the best first book on hold 'em. It prepares a new student perfectly for more advanced texts. Covering the rules of the game, limit, no limit, and tournament hold 'em, it teaches all the fundamental concepts necessary to start winning right away.

Small Stakes Hold 'em; Winning Big With Expert Play by Ed Miller, David Sklansky, and Mason Malmuth teaches you to win the maximum in today's small stakes games. It covers theoretical topics such as implied odds and pot equity as well as strategic concepts such as protecting your hand, waiting for the turn, going for overcalls, and betting marginal hands for value. If your opponents play too many hands and go too far with them, this book is for you.

The Theory of Poker by David Sklansky discusses theories and concepts applicable to nearly every variation of the game. The book includes chapters on deception, the bluff, raising, slowplaying, position, psychology, heads-up play, game theory, and implied odds. In many ways, this is the best book ever written on poker.

Hold 'em Poker by David Sklansky is must reading for anyone planning to play anyplace that hold 'em is offered. Covers the importance of position, the first two cards, the key "flops," how to read hands, and general strategy. This was the first accurate book on hold 'em and has now been updated for today's double blind structure.

Getting The Best of It by David Sklansky contains six sections discussing probability, poker, blackjack, other casino games, sports betting, and general gambling concepts. This book contains some of the most sophisticated gambling ideas that have ever been put into print.

Harrington on Hold 'em

Expert Strategy for No-Limit Tournaments; Volume II: The Endgame

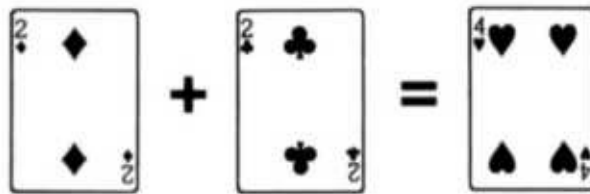
By

DAN HARRINGTON

1995 World Champion

BILL ROBERTIE

A product of Two Plus Two Publishing



FIRST EDITION

FIRST PRINTING

JUNE 2005

Printing and Binding
Creel Printers, Inc.
Las Vegas, Nevada

Printed in the United States of America

**Harrington on Hold 'em:
Expert Strategy for No-Limit
Tournaments; Volume II: The Endgame
COPYRIGHT © 2005 Two Plus Two
Publishing LLC**

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without the express permission in writing from the publisher.

For information contact: **Two Plus Two Publishing LLC
32 Commerce Center Drive
Suite H-89
Henderson, NV 89014**

ISBN: 1-880685-35-3

The Man: To the true gambler, money is never an end in itself, but simply a tool; as language is to thought.

From The Cincinnati Kid (1965)

Table of Contents

About Dan Harrington	v
About Bill Robertie	vii
Introduction	1
Organization	1
Thanks to the Forums and Others	2
Part Eight: Making Moves	5
Introduction	6
Bluffing	7
Bluffing Pre-Flop	8
The Continuation Bet	9
Defending Against the Continuation Bet	13
Probe Bets	20
The Squeeze Play	22
The No-Limit Semi-Bluff	26
Back-Alley Mugging	29
The Dark Tunnel Bluff	31
Slow-Playing	34
Slow-Playing Before the Flop	35
After the Flop: General Considerations	36
After the Flop: Candidate Hands	37
After the Flop: The Check-Raise and The Check-Call	40
Massaging the Pot	46
The Check-Raise Bluff	47

The Post-Oak Bluff	49
BSB Play	51
Smallball Versus Longball	52
Blending Moves and Styles	57
The Conservative Style and Bluffing	57
The Conservative Style and Slow-Playing	59
The Super-Aggressive Style and Bluffing	60
The Super-Aggressive Style and Slow-Playing ...	61
The Hidden Linkage Between Bluffing and Slow-Playing	61
The Problems	63
Part Nine: Inflection Points	121
Introduction	122
The Problem of Inflection Points	124
The Strong Force and the Weak Force: Magriel's M and Harrington's Q	125
The Zone System	129
More About M	132
Yellow Zone Strategy	133
Orange Zone Strategy	137
Red Zone Strategy	140
Red Zone Strategy in Action	142
Some Other Examples of Inflection Point Play	156
Playing Styles in the Endgame	158
Beware the Great Overthink	160
Structured Hand Analysis (SHAL)	162
The Problems	173

Part Ten: Multiple Inflection Points	221
Introduction	222
Assessing Position	223
Isolation Play	228
Calculating Pot Odds in All-In Situations	234
The Problems	239
Part Eleven: Short Tables	275
Introduction	276
Effective M: Adjusting for Short Tables	277
The Tactics of Short-Table Play	280
Slow-Playing Before the Flop	280
Slow-Playing After the Flop	281
The Cooperation Play	285
Flyswatting: The 10-to-I Rule	287
When in Doubt, Let the Pot Odds Decide	290
Controlling Pot Odds	293
Blending Strategy, Stack Size, and the Prize Fund ...	296
Win the Hand or Play for the Prize Money'?	302
Managing Bet Sizes: Carrots and Sticks	303
Tracking the Big Stack	305
The Problems	306
Part Twelve: Heads-Up	363
Introduction	364
Hand Rankings in Heads-Up Play	365
Pre-Flop Heads-Up Play	369

One: Any Pair Is a Big Hand	369
Two: Almost All Hands Are Battles of Unpaired Cards	371
Three: Domination Isn't as Bad as You Think ...	372
Four: You Will Mostly Have the Pot Odds You Need to Play	372
Position and Bet Sizes in Heads-Up Play	374
High-M Confrontations Versus Low-M Confrontations	376
Basic Pre-Flop Betting Strategy	376
You are the Small Blind/Button	377
You are the Big Blind	378
Some Sample Heads-Up Sessions	380
Heads-Up Session No. 1: Ivey Versus D'Agostino	381
Pre-Flop Strategy When First to Act: Ivey vs D'Agostino	407
Heads-Up Session No. 2: You the Reader	408
Part Thirteen: Final Thoughts	419
Introduction	420
Multi-Qualifier Satellite Tournaments	421
Making Deals	427
Putting It All Together	430
Conclusion	443
Index	445

About Dan Harrington

Dan Harrington began playing poker professionally in 1982. On the circuit he is known as "Action Dan," an ironic reference to his solid but effective style. He has won several major no-limit hold 'em tournaments, including the European Poker Championships (1995), the \$2,500 No-Limit Hold 'em event at the 1995 World Series of Poker, and the Four Queens No-Limit Hold 'em Championship (1996).

Dan began his serious games-playing with chess, where he quickly became a master and one of the strongest players in the New England area. In 1972 he won the Massachusetts Chess Championship, ahead of most of the top players in the area. In 1976 he started playing backgammon, a game which he also quickly mastered. He was soon one of the top money players in the Boston area, and in 1981 he won the World Cup of backgammon in Washington D.C., ahead of a field that included most of the world's top players.

He first played in the \$10,000 No-Limit Hold 'em Championship Event of the World Series of Poker in 1987. He has played in the championship a total of 13 times and has reached the final table in four of those tournaments, an amazing record. Besides winning the World Championship in 1995, he finished sixth in 1987, third in 2003, and fourth in 2004. He is widely recognized as one of the greatest and most respected no-limit hold 'em players, as well as a feared opponent in limit hold 'em side games. He lives in Santa Monica where he is a partner in Anchor Loans, a real estate business.

About Bill Robertie

Bill Robertie has spent his life playing and writing about chess, backgammon, and now poker. He began playing chess as a boy, inspired by Bobby Fischer's feats on the international chess scene. While attending Harvard as an undergraduate, he became a chess master and helped the Harvard chess team win several intercollegiate titles. After graduation he won a number of chess tournaments, including the United States Championship at speed chess in 1970. He also established a reputation at blindfold chess, giving exhibitions on as many as eight boards simultaneously.

In 1976 he switched from chess to backgammon, becoming one of the top players in the world. His major titles include the World Championship in Monte Carlo in 1983 and 1987, the Black & White Championship in Boston in 1979, the Las Vegas tournaments in 1980 and 2001, the Bahamas Pro-Am in 1993, and the Istanbul World Open in 1994.

He has written several well-regarded backgammon books, the most noted of which are *Advanced Backgammon* (1991), a two-volume collection of 400 problems, and *Modern Backgammon* (2002), a new look at the underlying theory of the game. He has also written a set of three books for the beginning player: *Backgammon for Winners* (1994), *Backgammon .1br Serious Planers* (1995), and *501 Essential Backgammon Problems* (1997).

From 1991 to 1998 he edited the magazine *Inside Backgammon* with Kent Goulding. He owns a publishing company, the Gammon Press (www.thegammonpress.com), and lives in Arlington, Massachusetts with his wife Patrice.

Introduction

In Volume I of Harrington on Hold 'em, I explained some of the basic (and not-so-basic) concepts you needed to be a successful no-limit hold 'em player. We saw how to evaluate a hand in the context of all the information available at the table, how to take into account the different playing styles you might encounter in your opponents, how to analyze hands and evaluate pot odds, and how to play before and after the flop, as well on later streets.

My emphasis in Volume I was playing in the early stages of tournaments, when most of the following conditions apply:

1. The tables are mostly full, with 9 or 10 players.
2. The stacks are large relative to the blinds.
3. The stacks sizes are roughly the same.
4. The money is still far off in the distance.

In this book, I'm going to show you what happens when we reach the ending stage of a tournament, and some (or all) of these conditions break down. Be warned: Ending play is very different from early play, and I'll introduce many ideas that you've never seen explained in a poker book before. But as in Volume I, I'll introduce them slowly and carefully, with plenty of hand examples along the way.

To be consistent with Volume I, the parts of the book will be numbered starting where Volume I left off.

Organization

Part Eight, "Making Moves," is really the last chapter of Volume I, but space considerations forced us to move it here to Volume II. In contrast to the discussions in Volume I, which were mostly concerned with betting for value, here I'll discuss bets that don't reflect the true value of your hand. We'll look at bluffs, delayed bluffs, check-raises, and the various forms of slowplaying. Most important, I'll show you the preconditions required to give your moves a high percentage of success.

Part Nine, "Inflection Points," is probably the most important chapter of the two volumes. Here I'll show you how to play when the blinds become a larger and larger portion of your stack size. I'll introduce the M and Q ratios, as well as my "Zone" concept, and show you how different types of hands become more or less playable as you move from zone to zone.

Part Ten covers the play at tables where stack sizes and inflection points are wildly different, so that each player is operating under a different agenda. Once again, you have to consider how the table appears to each possible opponent before making your moves.

Part Eleven, "Short Tables," shows you how to play when the table size shrinks to six, five, four, or even just three players. Starting hand and playing requirements change dramatically at these tables, and of course inflection points play a major role as well.

Part Twelve, "Heads-Up," shows you what to do when only one other player remains with you. This phase of the tournament doesn't usually last very long, so you have to be alert and decisive to squeeze out an edge.

Part Thirteen is our miscellaneous catch-all chapter, where I'll talk about some loose ends that didn't really fit anywhere else, like making deals and playing in tournaments with multiple qualifiers, as well as some final insights on the psychology of the game.

Thanks to the Forums and Others

The Two Plus Two Online Forums (www.twoplustwo.com) are an excellent source of poker discussions and commentary. We'd like to thank all the contributors who submitted comments and suggestions following the release of Volume I. All were appreciated, and we used some of the ideas to improve the layout of Volume 11.

In addition, I want to thank David Sklansky and Mason Malmuth for their comments throughout this manuscript, and Ed Miller for his help in creating the index.

Part Eight

Making Moves

Making Moves

Introduction

In Volume I focus for the most part was on "value bets," bets that more or less accurately reflected the true strength of your hand. When you play poker, however, you can't simply bet when you have a hand and throw your cards away otherwise. If you do, even the most perceptually challenged opponents will eventually figure you out. Instead, you'll have to mix in some moves with your value bets, pretending to be strong when you have nothing, and pretending to be weak when you really have a hand.

Moves break down into two broad categories. Bluffs, where you pretend to have a strong hand when in fact you don't, and slow-plays, where you pretend to have a weak hand when in fact you are strong. Both can be powerful and effective tools. Both techniques can be underused, and both can be overused.

In this chapter I'll look at the various forms these moves can take. I'll show you what conditions provide a favorable situation to make a move, and when moves should be avoided. Remember that while moves can be used to set up your value bets, they can generate a profit on their own if properly employed.

Bluffing

Bluffing is it pretty straightforward idea. You have a weak hand, but you bet anyway, pretending to have a strong one. If your opponent believes you, you take down a pot.

In this section I'll outline some very specific bluffing moves that have a better-than-average chance of success. First, however, let's talk about some general characteristics of all bluffs.

How many players should you bluff? The fewer, the better. One is better than two, and two are better than three. Bluffing more players creates the appearance of a stronger hand, but increases the chance that someone may have a hand that's strong enough to call or raise your bet.

Who to bluff? The ideal opponent is the weak-tight player. He thinks every glass is half-empty and every rising market is a bubble. The only hand he really wants to play to a showdown is the nuts. The weak-tight player looks for an excuse not to play a hand. A big bet by you could be just the encouragement he needs.

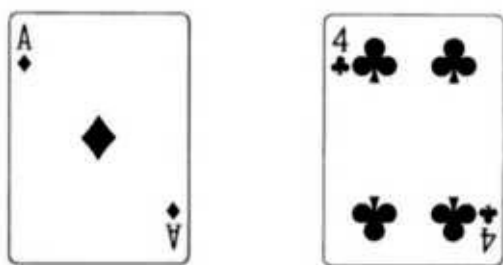
What kind of stack to bluff? Medium-sized stacks are better targets than either small or large stacks. The danger with a small stack is that the player may be getting desperate, and decide that his hand is just good enough for an all-in move. The large stack may feel he's in a comfortable enough position to look you up and see what you're doing. The medium-sized stack is probably more concerned about the danger of shrinking to a small stack than the opportunity of growing to a large stack, and is therefore more likely to fold a moderate hand in the face of apparent strength.

These are all very general guidelines, of course, and you'll encounter many exceptions. Now let's look at some specific types of bluffs.

Bluffing Pre-Flop

I won't say that bluffing before the flop is entirely a beginner's move. There's a place for pre-flop bluffing in poker, especially as the blinds rise relative to the chip stacks. However, beginners certainly get too involved trying to steal the blinds. Usually this occurs because beginners don't yet have the patience to endure the long runs of bad cards that prevent them from making any solid bets, so periodically they'll take a couple of worthless cards and make a move at the pot. (We saw a few examples in the problems in Volume L)

While these random moves can certainly work from time to time, eventually they will become an expensive habit. Keep in mind that the starting hand requirements that I outlined in Part Five of Volume I already include the equity at bluffing. When you raise with something like



on the button, your move has a big bluff component already. You're not rooting for someone to stand up to you; you just want to pick up the pot when the blinds fold. But when someone does call, you still have a hand to play.

By using your starting hand requirements to generate your bluffs, you achieve an additional goal: randomizing your play. The shuffle will ensure that your bluffing hands arrive on a random time schedule, thus making your play harder to read.

The Continuation Bet

Continuation bets, which we discussed briefly in Volume I, are the most basic sort of post-flop bluff. A continuation bet occurs when you took the lead in the betting pre-flop, indicating strength, you missed the flop, and now you are in position to make the first bet after the flop, either because you're first to act or because the players have all checked to you. In this situation, you lead out with a bet. The bet "continues" your pre-flop action, and indicates to the table that you're still strong. Since it's consistent with your previous play, the bet has a reasonably high probability of success unless the flop really hit your opponent.

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind when making continuation bets:

1. Bet size is important. While you'll need to vary the size of your continuation bets to keep your opponents guessing, the basic continuation bet should be about half the size of the existing pot. That's both large enough to give you a good chance of winning the pot, while small enough to create favorable odds for yourself. A half-pot bet only requires you to win one time in three to break even.
2. The number of opponents is important. The ideal number of opponents when making a continuation bet is one. The more opponents, the smaller the chance of success. I might on occasion try a continuation bet against two opponents, but if I'm facing three or more players, I need to hit the flop to keep playing.
3. The quality of your hand is important. Did you completely miss the flop, or do you have a draw to a good hand? Completely missing the flop is a good indicator for a continuation bet, since it costs you nothing extra to walk away from your hand when your move fails. If, however, you have a draw to a big hand, then a continuation bet could be a big mistake, giving your opponent another chance to chase you out of the pot. This advice particularly applies if you act last in the hand and have already seen your opponent check. Now taking a free card with a drawing hand is likely to be better than making a continuation bet. (Notice that this concept is the opposite of good strategy in limit games.)
4. The texture of the flop is important. A dangerous flop is one with several high cards, which are likely to have hit the holdings of the other players. You don't want to bet into a dangerous flop with nothing, for the obvious reasons. While a weak-tight player will fold, no one else will. Good flops for continuation bets have low cards, or a medium card and a low pair, or three widely separated cards. Flops of three different suits are always a plus as well.

When these criteria aren't in place, a continuation bet becomes a low-equity play that often just takes you off a hand that you'd really like to play. Here's a concrete example:

Example 1. You're at the final table of a major event, in the big blind. Your stack is \$65,000, and the small blind has \$83,000. Other stacks range from \$60,000 to \$180,000. The small blind is an experienced and tenacious player who likes to set traps. The blinds are \$600 and \$1,200, with \$200 antes, and the starting pot is \$3,000.

You pick up



The first four players fold around to the small blind, who puts in \$600 more to call. What do you do?

Answer: King-jack suited is a pretty good hand heads-up, so you might as well find out if the small blind is serious about playing. Put in a raise about the size of the pot. Most of the time, this will end the hand right here.

You raise \$3,600, and the small blind calls. The pot is now \$10,800. The flop is



The small blind checks. Should you now make a continuation bet, and if*so, how much?

Answer: This is not a good spot for a continuation bet. You've missed your hand, but you have some good draws. A queen will almost certainly win for you, while either a king or a jack might also be an out. If you bet and your opponent check-raises, you'll have to throw your hand away, wasting your draws. His check might have indicated weakness, but he's certainly capable of checking a strong hand as well. You have position, so your opponent will have to make the first move on fourth street, giving you a little extra information. Preserve your draws and check. Note that if the flop had missed you completely and you had no draws, a continuation bet would make much more sense.

You check. The pot is still \$10,800. Fourth street is the Qr. Your opponent checks. What do you do?

Answer: You've made your straight but there are now three hearts on board. Your opponent probably doesn't have a flush, but you can't let him draw at a flush for free. A bet of at least half the pot will require him to take 3-to-1 odds on a 4-to-1 flush draw, so that's good enough to push him out if he has a small heart. It's also small enough to allow him to call if he's just made a pair of queens or perhaps two pair.

You bet \$5,000, and the small blind folds.

Players who have moved to no-limit from limit hold 'em will recognize the continuation bet as a variation of a limit move called the lead bet. In limit play you almost always (if you were the preflop aggressor) make a lead bet after the flop, because so often your opponent will just throw his hand away, and the cost of discovering that information is very cheap. But in no-limit the cost is not nearly so cheap; you're making a bet that, when it fails, will cost you half the pot instead of something like one-quarter to one-sixth of the pot.

Defending Against the Continuation Bet

Since continuation bets are a powerful part of no-limit strategy, what can you do when you're on the other side of what may be a continuation bet? What's the best defense?

The first part of a successful defense is knowledge. As you study the table when you're not directly involved in the action, one of the most important things to observe is how players behave when they're in situations where a continuation bet is a possible strategy. How often, after taking the lead pre-flop, do they make bets after the flop? How many of those bets are in the neighborhood of half the pot? (The optimal size for a continuation bet.) Are most of their bets in this range, or do they like pot-sized bets instead? Or do they prefer making little probe bets? (Onequarter to one-third of the pot)

As you're watching, keep one key fact in mind: Most flops miss most hands. If you notice that when a particular player took the lead before the flop, he almost always bets after the flop, you know that a lot of the bets are simply bluffs, since he couldn't have hit his hand that often. (On the other hand, a player who rarely bets after the flop but who makes pot-sized bets when he does bet is just a super-tight player who wants the nuts before he commits his money. Play at him when he doesn't bet and stay away from him when he does.)

A tough player will by definition be hard to read after the flop. If he showed strength before the flop, he'll probably be taking the lead 50 to 60 percent of the time after the flop. He can't be filling his hand quite that often, but you're going to have a hard time deciding when he's got a strong hand and when he doesn't. And his bets won't all be around half the pot. There will be some pot-sized bets, some probe-sized bets, and some overbets in the mix as well. Against such a player, you'll need to use your best judgment, but for the most part you're going to need a real hand to continue to play.

One further fact to consider: Continuation bets are a good tactic against a single opponent, or two at the most. If a (competent) opponent led out before the flop and was called by three or four players, and now leads out again after the flop, he's almost certainly got something and he's making a value bet, not a continuation bet. Stay out of the pot unless you too have a good hand.

Now let's consider the interesting cases. Your opponent, who took the lead before the flop, makes a continuation-type bet after the flop. You are his only opponent. From your observations, you know that this player makes continuation bets with some frequency after he misses his hand. How should you proceed? We'll break our analysis down into a few cases.

Case 1: The flop gave you a monster. This is the most pleasant case to analyze, since your options are all good. You've flopped a set, or a straight, or the nut flush. (The non-nut flush is a little different. We'll look at that in a bit.) How do you extract the most money from your great hand?

The standard play is to simply call the continuation bet, hoping that your opponent already has

something and will lead out again on the turn, or that he will catch something on the turn so he will call a bet by you later on. If he does lead out on the turn, you'll win at least that bet, plus possibly much more if he's willing to go to the end with you.

The other play is to raise his continuation bet. If he has nothing, he'll throw his hand away right there. (This looks like a bad result for you, but keep in mind that if he had nothing at this point, you most likely weren't going to make any more money on the hand anyway.) If he has something, either a pair or a draw, he may call this bet; whether you make any more money depends on just how much of a hand he has and what comes on fourth street.

Of the two plays, simply calling is the technically "better" play against most opponents, in the sense that it will win more money, on average, if your opponents aren't watching what you're doing. Since unfortunately they will be watching, you'll need to vary between the two plays on occasion. I'd recommend a mix of two-thirds calls and one-third raises on a random basis, to keep them guessing. Note one important exception, however: If an ace has come on the flop, there will be a better than average chance that your opponent is betting with a pair of aces. In this case, you should simply raise his bet, and be prepared to get all your money in the pot on the flop or the turn.

The case where your monster is a flush that's not the nuts is a little trickier. Let's look at an example.

Example 2. Blinds \$50/\$100. A solid conservative player in middle position puts in \$300. From past observations, his most likely holding is two high cards, but he would bet a high pair the same way. You elect to call on the button with Tr9r. (It's a bit unusual for you, but you're varying your play to keep the table guessing.) The blinds fold. Just the two of you are in the pot, which is now \$750. You each have about \$8,000 remaining. The flop is Qr7r3r. He bets \$400. What should you do?

Answer: You've made a flush, but it's not the nut flush. Should you slow-play and just call? It's an idea, but there are some problems.

You may already be beaten if your opponent raised with ArK♦ or ArJ♦ before the flop. (Ace-small of hearts is pretty unlikely from a solid opponent.) That's unlikely, but must be considered.

Your opponent willingly bet into that board. That fact makes the high-card hands containing a single heart much more likely than the high-card hands without any heart. Now you must confront the possibility that your opponent has a draw to a flush that will not only beat you, but which might win all your chips.

On balance, slow-playing with a call is too dangerous here. I would assume that my opponent held a single heart, and make a bet that they couldn't call if they saw my hand. In this case, suppose my opponent holds AVQ+. Now six hearts are accounted for, and seven remain in the deck, out of 45 unseen cards. My opponent's odds of drawing a heart on the turn are 38-to-7, or about 5.5-to-1. With the pot now containing \$1,150, you should call his bet (making the pot \$1,550) and raise him about \$750 more. Now he'll be getting 3-to-1 odds to call, not enough if he knew that the flush was his only out. If he calls anyway, he's made a mistake, which is what