

SmartPokerStudy.com Leak Plugging PDF

Leak 1: Playing OOP with Marginal Hands [\(Podcast #25\)](#)

Description: Choosing to play weak ranges out of position leads to marginal spots where your chances of making profits are greatly reduced.

1. Bad Choices Pre-flop

- Not having **Card Advantage** – If your hand is strong enough, it doesn't matter if you're IP or OOP, you're going to enter the pot. The first step to correcting this leak is looking at your hand selections preflop. Create opening ranges by position that have a strong chance of being better than your opponent's opening ranges.
- Not having a **Skill Advantage** – You need to consider the skill advantage you have over the players you're likely to see the flop with. If you're obviously out matched, you're better off switching tables or just fold all marginal spots.
- Not having **Positional Advantage** – it is significantly easier to play IP. There's a reason why the BTN is the most valuable spot on the table. It's like in real estate they say location, location, location. Well, in poker you should be saying, position, position, position.
 - i. Never limp, always raise if you're entering the pot.
 - ii. Raise to isolate limpers who are already in the pot.
 - iii. If necessary, raise bigger in EP's.
 - iv. Tighten your blind calling ranges.

2. Bad Choices Post-flop

- We want him to fold now, either better hands or weaker hands or draws
 - Is he likely to fold? (how do we know this? Flop honest, high fold to donk bet or fold to flop bet, we know he's a fit/fold player, low won when saw flop stat, we take notes that indicate he's likely to fold to flop aggression).
 - If yes, then
 - We donk lead to get him to fold; We c/r to show great strength to get him to fold. This is really good if we know he cbets very frequently; Bet more to elicit folds
 - If no, then
 - There's no reason to bet. Let's try to pot control and try to get to the river with not much more invested
- We want him to call with worse and give us value
 - Is he likely to call with worse? (how do we know this? Station, very loose-passive player, only raises w/strong hands, capable of calling down w/BP or an underpair)
 - We need to bet to get value; Bet more for extra value (but this does bloat the pot and put more \$ at risk); Bet less to make it more likely he'll continue
- We want to keep the pot small and get to the river cheaply b/c we've got showdown value
 - Is he likely to remain passive on the f/t/r? (how do we know this? Flop bet, donk bet, c/r are all low; AFq is low (this is a % of non-checking actions post-flop that were aggressive. It's calculated as (# of bets + raises) / (total # of folds+calls+bets+raises) so it shows how aggressive he is. Anything over 40% is pretty darn aggressive.

Practice & Study:

- FOCUS Sessions
- Hand History Reviews#26 Plug Your Leaks #2: Dealing w/3bets

Leak 2: Dealing with 3bets (Podcast #26)

Description: We open wide ranges, but fold too often to opponent's 3bets and don't fight back enough by calling, 4betting for value or 4bet bluffing.

Have a plan – answer these 4 questions

1. What are you opening?

- Create ranges by position: EP, CO, BTN and the Blinds. Think logically through this range creation and they should widen as your position gets later.

2. How often should you defend?

- I think that optimal Fold to 3bet should be around 60%, preferably in the high 50%.
- This means that we're fighting back around 40% of the time, and this needs to include calling and 4betting.

3. What should you defend with and how to defend?

- Call: 30% or 88 hands
- 4bet: 10% or 30 hands
 - Example for value in the CO: AA, KK, QQ, AKs (almost 75% for value)
 - Example of 4bet bluffs in the CO: A5s, A4s (when 4bet bluffing I recommend having an Ace blocker so he'll be less likely to come back at you with an Ace of his own)

4. What opp stats can help you to adjust your ranges based on the opponent?

- 3bet – the more frequently he 3bets, the more likely it's a bluff, and the more often your 4bet bluffs will get through.
- Fold to 4bet – this number often correlates to the player's 3bet % and seeing it helps to confirm how likely a 4bet bluff will work.
- Cbet & Fold to Cbet (street honesty) – this is good to know before you decide to defend.

Practice & Study

FOCUS Sessions – take your newly created 3bet defense ranges and practice with them. Drop down in stakes if you're uncomfortable with any 4bet bluffing opportunities. When you do this, make a game tape of each session and make sure you're speaking your thought process as you play so you can hear yourself when you review the tapes. Were you just button clicking without using well thought out strategy?

HH Reviews: Filter for Reraise Opportunity 4bet (facing a 3bet). This will show you all instances where you had the opportunity to 4bet, not just when you were the original opener. This is good b/c the more studying you do of your opp's 3bets the better (plus you'll be studying your opp's reactions to 3bets), so it doesn't have to be just hands you're involved in. The more you can get out of studying 3bet pots the better off you'll be. Coming in with cold 4bets can be a super tough thing for some opp's to deal with, and this is your opportunity to study how feasible these plays might be.

Leak 3: Losing Too Much in the Blinds (Podcast #38)

Description: I would describe this leak as what happens when a player in the blinds defends with very wide and weak ranges, or they 3bet bluff re-steal too often

How to spot this leak

1. Looking at your BB/100 hands win rate - Within every poker tracking software there's a stat for the # of BB's won or lost per 100 hands. If you fold every BB, your win rate for every 100 hands in the BB would be -100BB's/100 hands. If you folded every SB, your win rate would be -50BB's/100 hands. The closer you are to 0, and the further away from these two numbers you are the better your blind play is.
2. Viewing the hands you choose to defend with - Hopefully you've got a range you play from the blinds and you're sticking to it. But if not, look at the last few sessions you played and filter hands played by position. Review the hand strength of all hands played in the SB where you called or re-raised, and in the BB where you put in more money to call or re-raised. Do you spot some questionable hands? By looking at the hands you've chosen to play and the way in which you chose to play them, you'll get a sense of whether you're making mistakes or not.
3. Viewing big losing pots in the blinds - While you've filtered for hands played in the blinds, sort this by the amount of \$ or chips lost in the blinds. Check out the biggest pots from 10bb+. Are there any common characteristics to these hands? Was it specific opp's you were fighting back against, or not giving up post-flop with draws, or paying off TPWK on every street? Look for patterns to figure out where you're paying off your opp's so you can begin to save yourself some valuable bb's and get closer to 0.

Major steps to fixing this leak (I suggest doing these in order to improve your blind play)

1. Know your current BB/100 win rate. This is your benchmark, and now your goal is to simply improve on this number, getting closer to 0. Just being more aware of this number and tracking its decline will give you incentive to improve it.
2. View the blinds as dead money, not your money. Don't get all revenge and feel that you've got to defend the blinds against all who would try to steal it. If the situation isn't good to defend, don't do it.
3. Actively choose who you're playing against when you click call or raise in the blinds. When you're first to act, you can't choose who plays against you. But when there's an open and you decide to call or 3bet, you're doing so out of position and purposefully against this player. Know who you're up against and what their post-flop tendencies are.
4. Create your own calling and 3betting ranges from the blinds before you hit the tables next. And if this is the first time ever making a calling and 3betting range, once created don't vary it at all during your session. Stick with your ranges and assess the hands you played and folded after your session. Are there hands you folded that you would like to have called and should you consider adding these to your ranges. Once you get familiar with these ranges you created, then you can start making on-the-fly adjustments.
 - My own standard calling range in the blinds is any 22-99 (with good implied odds for set mining), all suited broadways and sc down to 98s. I'll also call AQo/AKo. My standard 3betting range is TT+, AQs/AKs. I also have a 3bet bluffing hand or two that I always throw in. Right now it's A6s and A5s.
5. I already mentioned going through and filtering for hands played in the blinds, but it would be a good idea to do this for one hour per day for the upcoming week.
6. Play **FOCUS Sessions** where you are intent on working on your blind game. Test your re-raises and calling ranges, test pre-flop re-steal spots, test your post-flop play when HU and multi-way, and record **game tape** to review later.
 - There are so many different plays you can test when defending your blinds: Light Three-Bet; OOP Floating the Flop; Donk Betting and barrel bluffing; Semi-Bluff w/equity; The Stop and Go; The Squeeze Play; The Check-Raise.

Leak 4: Poker Study Apathy (Podcast #42)

Description: I would describe this leak as not wanting to study and not making the time to study even though the player knows he'll benefit from study.

Why is it that we often find it difficult to study?

Studying brings no immediate gratification. Instant gratification leads to enjoyment in whatever it is we're doing.

Every poker player wants to study and knows the importance of it, but it still isn't getting done. Why is that?

We make time for the things we want to do.

Poker study needs to fall within the category of "Stuff I want to do." How do we get poker study within that category?

The answer is motivation. Find your motivation and to start studying more. Here are some things that might motivate you.

Have the Attitude of "I Want to Win"

To win more, you've got to improve your game. If you have an intense desire to win, you'll be more likely to work hard to increase your winnings.

See the Benefits of Study

Keep in mind all the times that your actual studies resulted in game improvement. You're a better player after you've spent a week tackling any strategy.

Have a List of Weaknesses

Having a list of weaknesses is like a daily to do list and it feels great each time you cross an item it off your list. Make your own list of weaknesses, then see for yourself how good it feels to knock 'em off one at a time.

Study with Others

Accountability is being responsible to commitments made to yourself and others. Get involved in a study group, and hold yourself and others accountable each week to be fully prepared for your study session.

Schedule it Into Your Day

Things that get scheduled get done.

Develop it as a Habit

The biggest thing that's helped me to study is to develop it as a habit. The habit of daily study and be gained by forcing yourself to do it, or by making it a fun challenge.

30 Day Study Challenge

This is geared towards building study as a daily habit. [Download the tracker here.](#)

Choose 6 topics to study, plan out the 30 days, take notes on everything you learn, play Focus Sessions around each topic you're studying, record game tape and try to enjoy the challenge and improving your game.

Leak 5: Nitty Late Stage MTT Play ([Podcast #47](#))

Description: You tighten up too much when in the money and nearing the final table even though you know you should continue the aggression to pad your stack and set yourself up for the win. You're scared for your tournament life and that's preventing you from stealing or 3betting in spots you know are profitable.

There's a few problems with this situation:

1. Thinking like a loser

- What would Ivey do? He'd consider stack sizes, opponent tendencies and [player types](#), the nittyness of his opponents, who he can attack and who will fight back.
- Fake it 'til you make it and force yourself to find spots to get aggressive
- Don't be scared for your tourney life

2. Not showing aggression and accumulating chips

- Look for important stats to find spots: High Fold to Steal, low 3bet and high Fold to Cbet
- Know the math of how often your steals have to work
- Keep steals relegated to the CO, BTN and SB. In the earlier positions open mainly for value
- Stack sizes are important, so consider who you're targeting with your steals and 3bet restacks based on your stack size. Big stacks target mid-stacks; mid-stacks target other mid-stacks and small stacks; and small stacks target small and mid-stacks.
- Read your opponent's pre-flop calling ranges and assess how their range hits the flop. Cbet when it's more likely that they'll fold and when they likely didn't hit the flop hard.
- When you've got jam monkeys with position on you, be less inclined to steal. If you think your still will likely not work, then you're better off saving those chips for a better spot.
- Be thankful that you made it deep, now get aggro to make it even deeper and take the thing down

3. Not thinking about how to exploit your opp's tendencies and your reads on them

- Opponent notes, history and stats are super important
- Make reads and go with them with the intent of exploiting your opponent's weaknesses
- The Gap Concept is important: you need a better hand to call than you do to shove yourself because when shoving you've got fold equity. When calling you've got zero fold equity.

4. Not studying late stage MTT play

- Know [break-even math](#) and run calculations off the table
- Use Flopzilla to study steal spots
- Use Flopzilla again to work on calling ranges vs different shoving ranges
- Review hand-by-hand all of your deep MTT runs, find your mistakes, and resolve to not repeat them
- Study your push/fold game by reading the article titled ['The Push/Fold Game in Sit N Go's'](#)

What you need to do NOW to start plugging this leak:

Get used to looking at the Fold to Steal stat in both the SB and BB positions. Start practicing stealing from the "right" or susceptible opponents now. This is a skill that will benefit you at all stages of MTT's, not just the late stages. Once you're comfortable with reading these stats and exploiting your opponents with your reads, look further to their Flop Fold to Cbet and Turn Fold to Cbet stats to help you gauge how far you might have to take your post-flop barreling to push them off their hands.

Leak 6: Betting For No Reason **(Podcast #49)**

Description: Betting for no good reason leads to spewing chips and giving our opp's a great win rate. When we do so, we often end up flailing around in the hand, just acting out on each street without considering important factors like future cards, our opponent's playing style, his stats and many other factors that could help us make better decisions.

There are only THREE reasons to bet:

1) Bet For Value

When we have a hand that we believe is better than our opponent's, and we want to bet to earn more of their chips. If you've reasoned through your opponent's range and believe your hand is likely better, then it's time to value bet.

Possible Results from Betting for Value

- We get the value we're looking for or we get to protect our hand from draws
- We gain information on their range and their playing style and tendencies
- Sometimes you get sucked out on, but if you sized your bet profitably, their call was a losing call in the long run

2) Bet For Isolation

Pre-flop you'll sometimes want to isolate one single player and play post-flop with him, so you raise with the intention of getting HU on the flop with this specific player.

Here are some future Expected Value (fEV) reasons for isolating a specific player:

- They call with a super wide and weak range – so you'll likely end up with the best hand and can extract value
- They're a station that calls down and gives max value w/marginal hands
- They're fit of fold and will ditch on any board they don't have a solid piece of

When isolating a player, we're looking for: **Skill Advantage, Positional Advantage and Card Advantage**

Possible Results from Betting for Isolation

- Limiting the field or it doesn't work and you're now multi-way
- Everyone folds and you win the pot or you get raised and have to fold or get max value out of your killer hand

3) Bet as a Bluff

A bluff is when you bet with the intention of getting your opponent to fold a better hand. Pure and simple: Bluff bets don't want calls.

Make bluff bets when the following applies:

- You likely won't win at SD and his actions and range indicates a likely fold
- He's a fit-or-fold player who is prone to fold or the board is scary and your actions can rep a strong hand

Possible Results

- **You bluff, he folds** – great, mission success
- **You bluff, he calls** – now you have to consider what he'll do on the next street
- **You bluff, he raises** – now you have to decide how to continue. Whatever it is, HAVE A REASON FOR IT.

A reason to bet leads to a plan for the hand