



FLAWLESS POKER GUIDE SERIES

6-Max No-Limit Hold'em Cash Game Study Guide

100bb deep, online micro/low stakes: a reference for study and review

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Flawless Poker · 6-Max No-Limit Hold'em Cash Game Study Guide · October 2026 edition. Study material for use away from the table; charts and ranges are approximate guidelines, not solver output.



Study material, not a live aid. This guide is for study **away from the table**. It is not meant for real-time use while you play. Poker sites restrict outside assistance during hands. Read it before and after sessions.

All charts and numbers are approximate, general guidelines. They are simplified baselines, not exact solver outputs. Adjust them to your opponents, the rake, and stack depths. Check the age and legal requirements where you live, and only play with money you can afford to lose.

1. How cash games differ from tournaments

Topic	Cash game	Tournament
Chip value	Chips are real money, so value is linear : +\$10 is worth exactly as much as -\$10 costs	Non-linear because of the payout structure (ICM)
ICM / survival	No ICM . Any +EV play is a good play, even a big flip	Busting has a cost, so marginal spots are often folded
Stacks	Usually 100bb . Top up or rebuy whenever you like	Stacks get shallower as blinds rise
Blinds	Fixed. No antes at most online 6-max games	Rise on a timer, antes added
Leaving	You can leave at any time	You play until you bust or win
Main skill	Deep postflop play, value betting, exploiting regular players and recreational players	Push/fold, ICM, and adapting to stack depth

Practical consequences: Postflop play matters far more than in tournaments. Keep your stack at the full buy-in (auto top-up) so you can win the most from big stacks. Measure your results in **bb/100** (big blinds won per 100 hands) over large samples, not session by session.

2. Positions (6-max)

Order of action preflop: **UTG → HJ (hijack) → CO (cutoff) → BTN (button) → SB → BB**.

Postflop, the SB acts first and the BTN acts last.

- **UTG:** Five players act after you, so open your tightest range.
- **HJ:** Slightly wider than UTG.
- **CO:** Open wide. Only the BTN and blinds are left to act, and you will often have position postflop.
- **BTN:** Your most profitable seat. You are guaranteed position postflop, so open your widest range.
- **SB:** You will be out of position (OOP) against the BB. This is the seat where everyone loses money; keep the losses small.
- **BB:** You have already paid 1bb, so you get a good price to defend. You still lose money here in the long run. That is normal.

3. Raise-first-in (RFI) opening ranges

Open sizes: **2.5bb** from UTG-BTN (2–2.5bb on the BTN is fine). Open **3bb** from the SB, or use raise-or-fold as a simple strategy. Add **+1bb per limper** when you isolate (iso-raise) limpers.

Position	~% of hands	Approximate range (baseline)
UTG	~15–17%	22+, A2s+, KTs+ (K9s), QTs+, JTs, T9s, 98s/87s (some), ATo+, KJo+, QJo
HJ	~19–21%	22+, A2s+, K8s+, Q9s+, J9s+, T8s+, 97s+, 87s, 76s, 65s, A9o+, KTo+, QTo+, JTo



Position	~% of hands	Approximate range (baseline)
CO	~27–30%	22+, A2s+, K5s+, Q8s+, J8s+, T7s+, 96s+, 86s+, 75s+, 64s+, 54s, A7o+ (A5o), K9o+, Q9o+, J9o+, T9o
BTN	~42–48%	22+, any suited ace, K2s+, Q4s+, J6s+, T6s+, 95s+, 85s+, 74s+, 63s+, 53s+, 43s, A2o+, K8o+ (K5o), Q9o+, J8o+, T8o+, 98o, 87o
SB (vs BB)	~40–45% raise	Similar to a slightly tighter BTN range. Raise-or-fold is simplest. Limping is an advanced option

Against a tight BB or tough blinds, tighten the BTN and CO. Against loose, passive blinds who fold too much, widen. Against blinds who 3-bet a lot, cut your weakest offsuit hands.

4. 3-betting and 4-betting

3-bet sizing

Situation	Size
In position (IP), e.g. BTN vs CO	~ 3x the open (about 7.5bb vs a 2.5bb open)
Out of position (OOP), e.g. SB/BB vs BTN	~ 3.5–4x the open (about 10–11bb vs a 2.5bb open)
Over limpers, cold callers, or vs fish	Go bigger (add about 1 open per caller)

3-bet ranges (approximate, vs a single open)

- **Against early position (UTG/HJ opens):** Mostly linear and value-heavy: QQ+, AK, plus some JJ/AQs and a few suited bluffs (A5s–A4s). About 4–6%.
- **Against CO/BTN opens from the blinds or BTN:** About 9–14%. Value: TT+/99+, AQ+, AJs+, KQs. Bluffs: A2s–A5s, K9s–KTs, suited connectors (76s–T9s), and suited broadways such as QJs.
- **SB vs BTN:** Play **3-bet-or-fold**. Flatting from the SB invites a BB squeeze and leaves you OOP. Range is about 12–15%.
- **Polarized vs linear:** IP, or vs players who call 3-bets too much, use a **linear** range (strong hands plus good playable hands). Vs players who fold to 3-bets too much, a **polarized** range (premiums plus blocker bluffs) works well.

4-bets

- Size: ~**2.2–2.5x** the 3-bet IP, and ~**2.5–3x** OOP. About 22–25bb when IP vs a 9bb 3-bet.
- Value: QQ+ and AK (add JJ against aggressive 3-bettors). Bluffs: A5s–A2s and a few hands like KQs/AQo with blockers. At micros, many players' 3-bet ranges are value-heavy, so **cut 4-bet bluffs** against unknown or tight players.
- Facing a 4-bet at 100bb: generally only continue with QQ+/AK (go all-in or call), plus some calls with AQs/JJ/TT IP against aggressive players.

5. Defending against opens

- **Against UTG opens:** Respect them. Call some pairs (set mining), suited broadways, and suited aces; 3-bet QQ+/AK. Fold most offsuit hands like AJo/KQo.
- **Calling vs 3-betting IP:** BTN vs CO is the most common flat-call spot (pairs, suited connectors, broadways). From the CO and HJ, lean toward **3-bet or fold**, since flatting there



invites squeezes.

- **Facing a 3-bet after you open:** Defend about 40–50% IP and fold more OOP. Call with pairs, suited broadways, and suited connectors when you have position. 4-bet for value with QQ+/AK. Fold weak offsuit hands (KJo, AT_o) against tight players.

Blind defense

- **BB vs BTN (2.5bb open):** You need about **27%** equity to call (call 1.5bb; final pot 2.5 + 0.5 SB + 1 + 1.5 = 5.5bb, so $1.5 \div 5.5 \approx 27\%$). Defend about **50–60%** of hands including many suited hands and connected offsuit hands. 3-bet about 12–14%.
- **BB vs UTG:** Defend about 25–30%. Fold weak offsuit hands.
- **BB vs SB (3bb open):** Defend widely (~60%+), and 3-bet more since you are IP.
- **Rake matters.** Rake makes small pots worse, so defend slightly tighter than solver charts at micro stakes, especially offsuit trash.

6. Postflop strategy

SPR (stack-to-pot ratio)

SPR = effective stack ÷ pot on the flop. **Single-raised pot (SRP):** about 2.5bb open + call + blinds ≈ 5.5–6bb pot, with ~97bb behind, so SPR ≈ **16+**. **3-bet pot:** pot ≈ 20bb, stacks ≈ 90bb, so SPR ≈ **4–5**. **4-bet pot:** SPR ≈ 1 or less.

- **Low SPR (<4):** Top pair, good kicker is usually good enough to stack off.
- **High SPR (>10):** One pair is usually a hand for pot control, not a stack-off hand. You need two pair or better (or strong draws) to play a big pot.

C-betting by board texture (as the preflop raiser)

Board	Example	Who has the range advantage?	Strategy
Dry, high-card	K♠7♦2♣, A♥8♣3♦	Preflop raiser	Bet often (~70–90%), small (25–33% pot)
Paired, dry	8♣8♦3♠	Mostly raiser	Bet often, small
Middle connected	9♥8♥6♣, T♠9♦7♣	Caller (especially BB)	Check more. When you bet, use bigger sizes (50–75%) with a polarized range
Monotone	Q♠8♠4♠	Neutral	Bet small at a moderate frequency. Hold the A♠ or K♠ to bluff and protect
Low, wet	6♦5♦4♣	Caller	Check most of your range OOP

- **IP vs OOP:** IP you can c-bet more often. OOP, check more, and protect your checking range with some strong hands.
- **Multiway:** C-bet much less. Bet strong hands and good draws only.

Sizing basics

- **Small bets (25–40%)** for range bets on boards that favor you, and thin value.
- **Big bets (66–100%+)** for a polarized range: strong value plus bluffs, on dynamic boards and turns/rivers.
- **Overbets** when you have the nut advantage and your opponent's range is capped (e.g., they checked back the turn).



Barreling (turn and river)

- **Good turn cards to barrel:** Cards that help your range more than theirs (overcards like A/K when you're the preflop raiser), and cards that give you equity (a gutshot or flush draw on the turn).
- **Bad turn cards:** Cards that connect with the caller's range (low connected cards on a low board).
- **River bluffs:** Choose missed draws with **good blockers** and no showdown value. Check back hands with showdown value.
- Plan the hand early: ask on the flop which turns you will continue betting.

Check-raising

- **Value:** Sets, two pair, and strong top pairs on wet boards.
- **Semi-bluffs:** Flush draws, open-ended straight draws (OESD), and combo draws, which have lots of equity when called.
- **Size:** ~3x the c-bet. Go bigger on wet boards.
- BB vs BTN c-bet is the most common check-raise spot. Low connected boards are where you check-raise most.

Pot control

Medium-strength hands (second pair, weak top pair) want to see a cheap showdown. Check one street (often the turn IP), call down vs bluff-prone players, and avoid building a big pot that only better hands will call.

7. Pot odds, outs, and equity

- **Pot odds:** Required equity = $\text{call} \div (\text{pot after your call})$. Example: Pot 100, opponent bets 50. You call 50 into a final pot of 200, so you need **25%**.
- Common bet sizes: 33% pot → 20%; 50% → 25%; 66% → ~28.5%; 75% → 30%; 100% → 33%; 2x pot → 40%.
- **Rule of 2 and 4:** Outs $\times 2 \approx \%$ for one card; outs $\times 4 \approx \%$ for two cards (flop to river, only if you see both cards without facing another bet).

Draw	Outs	Flop→River (approx)	One card (approx)
Flush draw	9	35%	19%
OESD	8	31.5%	17%
Gutshot	4	16.5%	9%
Flush draw + OESD	15	54%	32%
Two overcards	6	24%	13%
Set → full house or better (flop)	7	33%	15%

- **Implied odds:** Extra money you can win when you hit. They are large at 100bb against players who pay off. Set-mining guideline: about 15-20x the call with effective stacks behind.
- **Reverse implied odds:** Hands that make second-best hands (weak flush draws, dominated top pairs) can lose big when they hit.
- **Bluff break-even:** A bluff of size B into pot P needs to work $B \div (P + B)$ of the time. A half-pot bluff needs 33%, a pot-size bluff 50%.



8. Value betting, bluffing, and blockers

- **Value bet** when worse hands call more than half the time when you are called. At micro stakes, **value bet thinner and bigger**: weak players call too much.
- **Bluff** when your hand can't win at showdown and your line tells a believable story. Against "calling stations", stop bluffing.
- **Balanced ratio (river)**: For a pot-sized bet, about 2 value hands for each bluff (bluffs ~33%). For half-pot, about 3:1 (bluffs ~25%).
- **Blockers**: Holding a card that reduces opponents' strong combos. Example: on a three-heart board, the **A♥** blocks the nut flush, making it a good bluffing card. Holding an A on A-high boards reduces their top-pair combos.
- **Unblockers**: Good bluffs don't block the hands you want to fold (e.g., don't bluff with a hand that blocks their missed draws).

9. Exploiting micro-stakes players

Type	Typical stats (VPIP/PFR)	Tendencies	Adjustment
Fish / calling station	40+/5-10	Calls too much, rarely folds pairs, limps	Value bet thin and big; don't bluff ; iso-raise their limps
Nit	12/10	Plays only strong hands, folds too much	Steal their blinds; fold to their 3-bets and big raises; bluff more on scary boards
TAG regular	22/18	Solid and balanced	Play solid; avoid marginal battles OOP
LAG / maniac	35+/28+	Very aggressive, bluffs a lot	Call down lighter, trap with strong hands, 3-bet for value wider
Passive player who suddenly raises	-	Raises (especially turn/river) usually mean a very strong hand	Fold one pair to big turn/river raises

General micro-stakes adjustments: The population under-bluffs big river bets and raises, calls too much on the flop and folds too much to aggressive play on later streets. Value bet relentlessly, bluff less against people who don't fold, and fold more when facing big river aggression.

10. Rake considerations

- Rake at micro stakes takes a big share of winnings (often several bb/100). Pots without a flop are usually **not raked** ("no flop, no drop").
- **Adjustments**: Open slightly tighter in the SB, defend fewer offsuit hands from the BB, prefer 3-betting over flat-calling, and avoid limped or multiway pots with marginal hands.
- Check your site's current rake structure, rake cap, and rakeback/rewards program in the client before you play. These terms change, so verify them yourself.

II. Bankroll management

Style / goal	Suggested bankroll
Conservative (recommended for new players)	40-50 buy-ins for your stake



Style / goal	Suggested bankroll
Standard	30–40 buy-ins
Aggressive (recreational money, OK to reload)	20 buy-ins

- **Move down** when you drop below your threshold (e.g., at 25–30 buy-ins). Take shots at higher stakes with a set amount (e.g., 3–5 buy-ins) and drop back if they're lost.
- Variance is huge: a 20–30 buy-in downswing is possible even for a winning player. Your bankroll should be money you can afford to lose and separate from living expenses.

12. Table selection

- Look for tables with high **average pot size**, high **players/flop %**, and full seats. Sit to the **left of** loose or bad players (you act after them) and to the right of aggressive regulars.
- Leave tables full of strong regulars when the weak players leave.
- Play a number of tables you can handle well: start with 1–2 tables and add more only if your decisions don't suffer.

13. Tilt control

- **Warning signs:** Playing hands you normally fold, "getting it back," angry bluffs, fatigue, playing longer than planned.
- **Tools:** A stop-loss (e.g., quit after losing 3 buy-ins in a session), set session lengths, take breaks, and analyze big hands after the session, not during.
- Separate **decisions** from **results**. A good call that loses is still a good call.

14. Common leaks at micro stakes

1. Calling too much preflop OOP (especially from the SB and with weak offsuit hands).
2. Limping instead of raising or folding.
3. Overplaying one pair in big pots at high SPR.
4. Bluffing calling stations; not value betting thinly enough.
5. C-betting every flop, including multiway and on boards that favor the caller.
6. Paying off passive players' big turn and river raises.
7. Not 3-betting enough in late position or vs steals.
8. Playing too many tables or playing while tilted.
9. Ignoring position: playing marginal hands OOP.
0. Poor bankroll management, especially taking shots with too much of the bankroll.

15. Post-session review checklist

- [] Write down results, hands played, and length of the session. Track bb/100 over large samples, not single sessions.
- [] Mark and review the **biggest pots** (won and lost) and any spots you were unsure about.
- [] For each hand: What was my plan preflop? Did my bet sizes match my goals? What was my opponent's likely range?
- [] Compare preflop choices with the charts above. Check calls with pot odds.
- [] Note player tendencies (fish, nits, maniacs) for next time.



- [] Rate your mental game from 1-10. Note tilt triggers.
- [] Choose **one leak** to work on next session.
- [] Check bankroll against your move-down threshold.

Quick-reference summary

- Open sizes: 2.5bb (3bb SB), +1bb per limper. RFI $\approx$ UTG 15%, HJ 20%, CO 28%, BTN 45%, SB 40%.
- 3-bet: $\sim 3x$ IP, $\sim 3.5-4x$ OOP. 4-bet: $\sim 2.2-2.5x$ IP, $\sim 2.5-3x$ OOP.
- Required equity = call $\div$ final pot. Bluff needs = bet $\div$ (pot + bet).
- At micros: value bet more, bluff less, fold to big passive-player raises.
- Bankroll: 30-50 buy-ins. Leave when tilted.

Approximate guidelines for study away from the table. Not for real-time use during play.



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ABOUT FLAWLESS POKER

Flawless Poker publishes study guides for online No-Limit Hold'em players: cash games, sit-and-gos and multi-table tournaments. Every guide pairs practical ranges and plans with numbers computed from equity, ICM and simulation models, so you can understand why a play works, not just what to do.

Play responsibly. Real-money poker is for adults only: 18+ (21+ where required by local law). Check that online poker is legal where you live. Play within your means, only with money you can afford to lose, and never chase losses. Set time and deposit limits before you play.

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