

# Inside POKER

By Steve Rosenbloom  
Published November 20, 2005

Hard Poker Truth: If you chase flush draws and straight draws in no-limit hold 'em, you can lose a lot of your stack.

Hard Poker Corollary: You can also win some big pots.

Especially if you have isolated yourself against an opponent who is a calling station and likely will pay you off. It also helps if you have established the kind of loose aggressive image that Layne Flack has. He gets a lot of action from opponents because he gives so much action. Players always think he's bluffing at a pot, and many times he is, but even perpetual bluffers catch a hand.

In an early level at the 2005 U.S. Poker Championship in Atlantic City, Flack drew 9-10 offsuit in late position. He limped behind several other players.

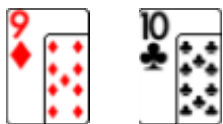
"Anytime you make a straight with 10-J, it's the nut straight," Flack said. "If you can make a straight with 9-10, it's probably the big straight."

The flop came 6-7-Q rainbow. A couple of the early limpers checked. A player in middle position bet \$100. Flack called with a gutshot, meaning he needed an 8 to complete his straight.

The turn came a blank. Flack's opponent bet \$100, which did not indicate much strength because it only matched the bet on the flop when the pot was smaller. Flack raised \$100 to see how good his opponent thought his hand was. His opponent called.

The river came an 8. Flack hit his straight. Now, the object of the exercise was to determine how much money he could make on it.

Layne Flack



The Flop



The Turn



The River



His opponent checked. Flack bet \$2,000, an extreme overbet that smelled like a bluff. His opponent called, then mucked his cards when Flack showed his hand.

The first key to the hand was that Flack saw a calling station had entered the pot. Because of that, and because Flack could get in--and stay in--cheaply, he chose to play a modest holding such as 9-10.

"I was playing against a guy who would pay me off," Flack said. "That's one of the reasons I played the hand. I played with him before. When there's value in someone paying you off big, then there's value in playing more moderate hands.

"K-Y-O--know your opponent."

The second key to the hand was Flack's raise on the turn. Understand, he still had only a gutshot straight draw and was only about an 11-1 shot to hit the 8 he needed. But by raising his opponent's smallish bet compared to the size of the pot, Flack was able to gain vital information.

"I wanted to see how strong he was and how much I could make off him on the river if I got there, or if I was able to bluff on the river or not," Flack said. "If he had reraised me (on the turn), I'd have thrown it away. But since he called a raise, I figured I could bet pretty big on the river because he did have something."