

Poker Tip #7

Jan. 20, 2013

Tip Subject: **Playing Suited Cards**

Daniel Negreneau: “Suited cards are better than non-suited, but not by as much as you might think.”

Situation: You are dealt two suited cards in the hole.

Question: How often will you make a flush, if you stay through the river, or all 5 board cards?

Answer: Approx 5.5 % of the time.

Or, 1 out of 18 times = you will hit the flush.
Or, 17 out of 18 times = you will miss the flush.

Also – 4%: A “Suited_hand” is only 4% better than a non-suited hand.
Or, an A8 “Suited” hand is only 4% better than an A8 non-suited.

Conclusion: All the chips you win when you hit a flush on the 1 of 18 tries, will not come anywhere close to covering all the chips you lose on the other 17 of 18 tries that you miss the flush.

Phil Gordon: Everybody knows how valuable being “suited” is, Right?
Actually, no. Having two hole cards of the same suit turns out to be a far smaller advantage than most inexperienced players believe. Many new players overestimate the chances of making a flush when they are suited.
Some of the celebrities on Celebrity Poker Showdown, when posed this question, stated that their chances of making a flush by the river when starting suited were “About 20%...or 1-in-5.”
When in reality its 5.5%...or 1-in-18.

Suggestion: When you get your two hole cards, if you wouldn’t play them if they were non-suited, don’t play them just because they are suited.

Bill Burton: One of the biggest mistakes that I see inexperienced players make in Texas Hold’em is playing two suited cards from any position. These players are placing too much value on the cards just because they are the same suit.
A player who would not play a Q-3 off-suit will suddenly play it just because the cards are the same suit. They think they will make a flush more often that they actually will.

Ken Warren: "Weak suited cards is the type of hand a lot of inexperienced players like to play, and it is a hand that you should encourage your opponents to play. It is a big loser.
If you are a good player, this is the type of hand that the weaker players will be holding when you beat them. Your job is to smile, drag the pot and say 'Sorry about that'."

Burning Through Chips:

There is a future Poker Tip that discusses "Burning Through Chips."
But for now, just a short comment.

If you choose to play "Weak" suited cards (say Q3) with the hopes of getting a flush, you will waste many of your chips. Or, Burn Through Them.

You will get 2 suited cards every 3.25 hands you are dealt, the great majority of which are "Weak" hands that should not be played.

So: At a 10 player table you will get suited cards 3 times every orbit of the deal.

If you Limp-In each of those 3 times, and you do it orbit after orbit, imagine how many chips you will "Burn-Through."

And: When you remember that you will hit a flush only 1-out-of-18 times you try it, it just doesn't make sense to play them....simply because they are suited.

Misperception: You might say..."I don't believe you hit a flush only 1-of-18 tries. I see players hitting flushes quite often when they have started with two suited cards in the hole."

What you must remember is that every player will get two suited cards in the hole every 3.25 deals.

That means that, at a 10 player table, 3 players have suited cards in the hole on every hand dealt to the players at the table.

Therefore, when there are 3 players playing suited cards, the odds of a flush become 3-of-18....or 1-of-6.
But as an individual, your odds remain 1-of-18.