Reasons for Betting



When to Bet, Why to Bet and How to Use Bets to Your Advantage

Artimus Paint

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Reasons for Betting

Value Bets and Bluffs

There are several reasons for betting. The most obvious ones are for:

- Value or to get worse hands to call
- Bluffs or to get better hands to fold

You can also bet for information, protection and to prevent your opponent from bluffing.

Information Bets

Passive players generally don't see the difference between an information bet and a bet that is purely for value. Even if they do, they tend not to do anything about it. It takes an aggressive player to exploit an information bet.

An information bet is an exploitable play but, against a passive player, it is unlikely to be exploited.

This is one of the main themes in this book.

When an exploitable play is not getting exploited, you can enjoy all the benefits of this play without experiencing the disadvantages.

As such, we need to keep an open mind about some plays that we have been taught not to do.

Unless you have the absolute nuts, you do not know if you are betting for value. For example, if you have top pair with an average kicker, you don't know if you are way ahead or way behind. This is where betting for information comes in. This will be explained in more detail in later sections.

As I have mentioned, there are aggressive players who will raise an information bet because he sees this type of bet as weakness. Against such players, you can use this bet size when you have a strong hand to get him to barrel.

Protection Bets

You can also bet to "protect" your hand from future board cards. For example, you may want to protect your hand against an opponent who is drawing to a better hand. If your

opponent doesn't have the draw, it may still be correct to bet because, if the draw hits, the action will slow down.

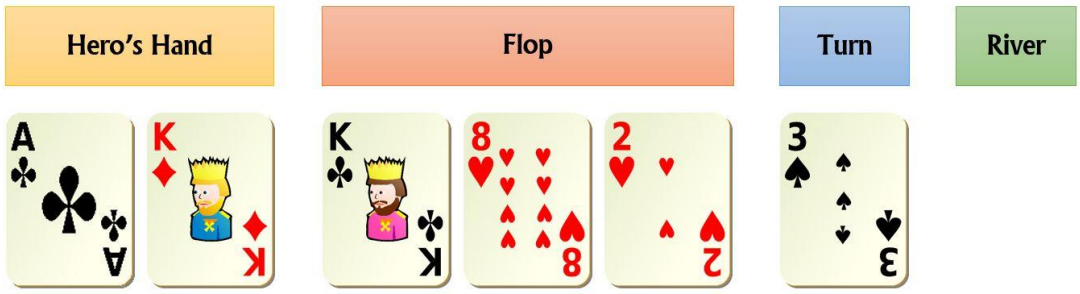
You may have heard that you should protect your hand from the draw**. This is frequently not true.** You will see why in later modules.

Betting to Avoid Getting Bluffed

There are occasions where you can bet to prevent your opponent from bluffing. Typically, you do this in a way ahead way behind situation. In this context, you don't want to check because you don't want to be faced with a bet size that you don't want to call. As such, you bet and you choose the bet size. A typical example is when you are in position against a single player and your opponent checks to you on the turn. If you bet something on the turn, it can discourage your opponent from bluffing on the river.

A bet often serves more than one purpose.

Hand Example 1 There is often more than one reason for betting



In Hand Example 1, hero (cut-off) raised pre-flop and was called by a calling station (button). Only 2 players see the flop. Hero bet ¾ of the pot on the flop and the calling station called. Hero bet ½ pot on the turn.

Question: What is the reason for betting?

Answer: There are multiple reasons for this bet.

Your average poker guru will say that this bet is for value. However, this oversimplified analysis leads you into a murky understanding of your situation.

When a calling station calls a ¾ pot bet on the flop, you can exclude total air hands from his range. Other than that, his range is still wide open. If you exclude tied hands, villain can have any of the following 3 types of hands:

- Made hands that beat hero (eg 2 pair, sets, possibly a straight)
- Made hands that hero beats (eg top pair weak kicker, pair below top pair, middle pair)
- Draws

Let's look at hero's reason for betting against each part of villain's range.

Made hands that beat hero: In the previous chapter, I explained that passive players only raise with hands that are 2 pair or better. On a board, with a flush draw on it, a ½ pot turn bet will definitely get raised by a made hand that is stronger than top pair top

kicker. Passive players do sometimes raise on the flop with their draws. However, they seldom do this on the turn. This is because on the turn, there is only one card to come. Therefore, if hero's bet is raised, he should assume that his opponent has a hand that is 2 pair or better. Therefore, against villain's range of hands that beat hero, his turn bet gains information.

Made hands that hero beats: If villain calls with made hands that hero beats, hero will be getting value. However, he will also be getting information. If villain doesn't raise, hero can assume that he doesn't have a hand that is stronger than top pair top kicker.

Draws: Against draws, hero is getting value. Again, if villain just calls, hero is getting information that his hand is ahead of villain's made hand range.

Let's say villain calls hero's bet and the river card is the 9 of diamonds.



This card doesn't complete the draw. Now, villain's range will consist mainly of made hands that hero beats. The only hands that are likely to beat hero are hands that spiked a second pair or a set on the river. So, hero can target his river bet size to get calls from

hands that he beats. This is a value bet. However, it is also an information bet. If villain raises, hero should assume that he spiked something on the river and hero can fold.

I will discuss bet sizes in later modules. However, for now, it is important to recognise that:

- An individual bet is often made for more than one reason
- When planning a betting line, you should examine how your line does against each part of villain's range

You will see in later modules that, it can sometimes be correct to sacrifice some value against one part of your opponent's range in order to obtain extra information.

An information bet can be used if you are not playing against an aggressive player or a player who is actively trying to read your betting actions.

You will hear some players say that a protection bet is really for value. This is true if your opponent is definitely on a draw. Nevertheless, as a lot of poker players are familiar with the term "protection", I will sometimes use this term to mean getting value from draws.

I will assume that you know what a value bet is and what a bluff is.

Comment

It is always important to be aware of what you are trying to achieve with your bet. In the later modules, I go through various hands explain the thought process behind each bet.

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