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# 20 RULES FOR PLAYING FLUSH DRAWS

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IN 2018

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RYAN FEE

You are about to read  
some of the secrets  
**Ryan Fee and I**  
**(Doug Polk)** have  
used to separate us  
from your average  
poker player.



DOUG POLK

We, like many players, used to **aimlessly bet the flop every time we had a flush draw** without much of a plan for the turn and river and with little consideration for the impact it had on the rest of our range.  
(Sound familiar...?)

After spending years refining and optimizing our games we have deduced a methodology to playing flush draws that is balanced, sneaky, and let's us fight for pots where other players aren't even looking.

By following these rules you will  
**make more money in two ways:**

- 1 More often, you will make **better hands fold when bluffing, worse hands call when value betting, and put in the minimum when we are behind.**
- 2 Most players are still behind the curve and play most of, if not all of their flush draws the same on the flop. You will make chips by **having bluffs and value bets in spots your opponents do not expect** and are not prepared for.



## RULE #1

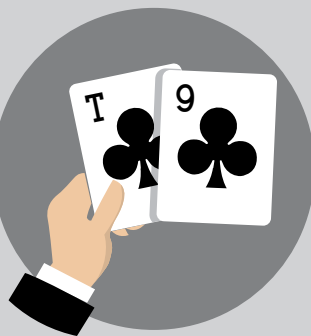
Ask yourself

**“If my hand wasn’t a flush draw, how would I play it?”**

Chances are you should play the flush draw the same way.

**Example:**

If you  
would  
normally  
check



on



you should also check



## RULE #2

**Check the nut flush draw most of the time**, except in instances where it is a very strong hand and you are borderline value-betting.

**Example:**

Almost  
always  
check



on



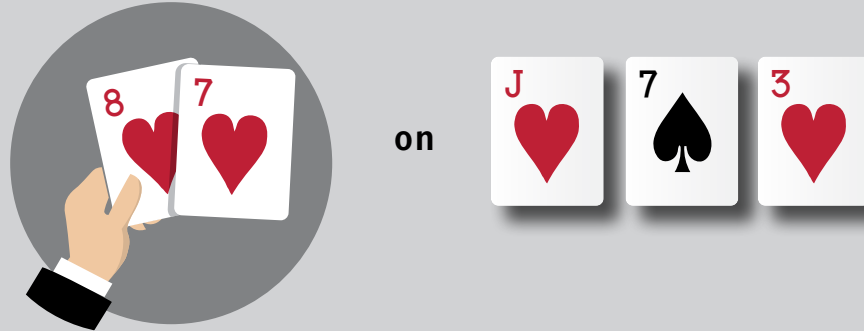
but consider betting



## RULE #3

**Middle Pair with a Flush Draw** is almost always a hand to check and/or call the flop with.

Example:

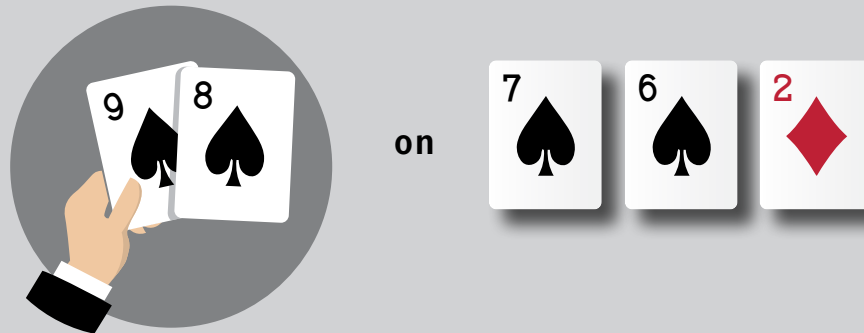


## RULE #4

Flush Draws that also have Straight Draws and/or Overcards can be played as flop check/raises.

**This play denies your opponent's ability to relentlessly bet when checked to.**

Example:



## RULE #5

It can be correct to bet top pair with a medium kicker and a flush draw even though it's a hand we'd often check without a flush draw.

Betting the flop allows us get three streets of value when we improve to a flush.

Example:



would be a reasonable hand to check on



but



could be a good hand to bet.

## RULE #6

It's usually best to check/call when Out of Position with the nut flush draw.

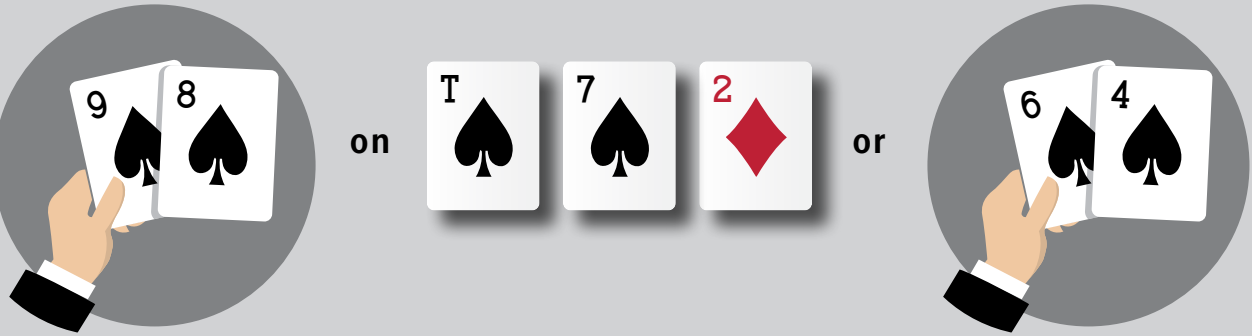


## RULE #7

On the flop, if we raise a flush draw we want it to be one of two things:

- A big draw (flush draw + straight draw and/or overcards)
- A very weak draw that will have trouble on the turn after a flop call

Example:

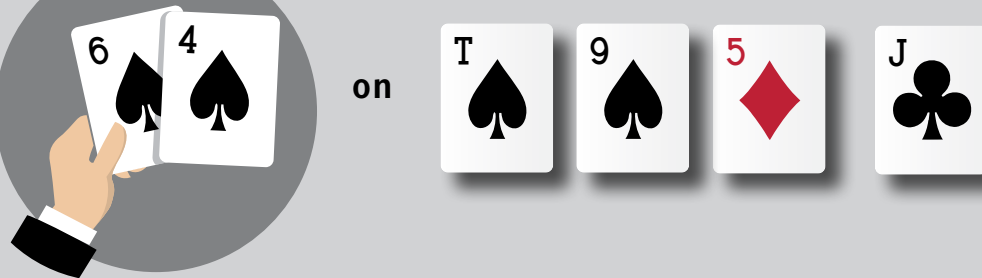


## RULE #8

The second half of the advice from **RULE #7** can also be applied to the turn.

If we decide to use a flush draw as a turn check/raise,  
we will pick the weakest one(s).

Example:



## RULE #9

Let's say we call a raise preflop in the Big Blind.

The  
flop is



and it checks  
through.

The  
turn is



Here is how we should play our flush draw hands:

**BET**

**CHECK / RAISE**

**CHECK / CALL**

AA	AKs	AQs	AJs	ATs	A9s	A8s	A7s	A6s	A5s	A4s	A3s	A2s
AKo	KK	KQs	KJs	KTs	K9s	K8s	K7s	K6s	K5s	K4s	K3s	K2s
AQo	KQo	QQ	QJs	QTs	Q9s	Q8s	Q7s	Q6s	Q5s	Q4s	Q3s	Q2s
AJo	KJo	QJo	JJ	JTs	J9s	J8s	J7s	J6s	J5s	J4s	J3s	J2s
ATo	KTo	QTo	JTo	TT	T9s	T8s	T7s	T6s	T5s	T4s	T3s	T2s
A9o	K9o	Q9o	J9o	T9o	99	98s	97s	96s	95s	94s	93s	92s
A8o	K8o	Q8o	J8o	T8o	96o	88	87s	86s	85s	84s	83s	82s
A7o	K7o	Q7o	J7o	T7o	97o	87o	77	76s	75s	74s	73s	72s
A6o	K6o	Q6o	J6o	T6o	96o	86o	76o	66	65s	64s	63s	62s
A5o	K5o	Q5o	J5o	T5o	95o	85o	75o	65o	55	54s	53s	52s
A4o	K4o	Q4o	J4o	T4o	94o	84o	74o	64o	54o	44	43s	42s
A3o	K3o	Q3o	J3o	T3o	93o	83o	73o	63o	53o	43o	33	32s
A2o	K2o	Q2o	J2o	T2o	92o	82o	72o	62o	52o	42o	32o	22



## RULE #10

When Out of Position against a flop check back, we (generally) want to:

- Probe the turn with our weakest flush draws
- Check/call flush draws with a bit of showdown value
- Check/raise flush draws in the middle.

Keep in mind not all situations will have a flush draw in each range.

## RULE #11

When In Position, you should **consider calling most of the flush draws in your range to maximize the advantage of position.**

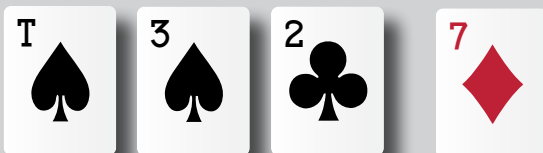
Calling forces your opponents to provide the maximum amount of information about their hand while concealing yours.

If they check turn, you should bet your weakest 50% of flush draws.

Check back the turn with your higher flush draws and turn them into a bluff on the river if you miss.

Example:

The board is



Your opponent checks to you on the turn after raising preflop and c-betting the flop.

Bet hands like



Check hands like



and bluff with them on the brick rivers.



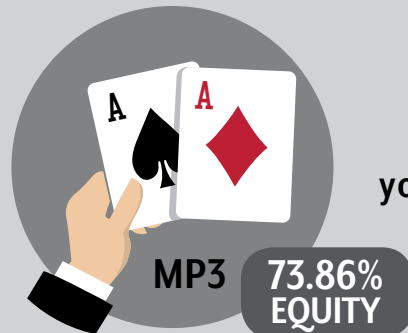


## RULE #12

Just because you don't have the correct pot odds to call doesn't mean you should fold.

### Example:

Let's say your opponent has



and you hold



The board reads:



and your opponent bets full pot, \$100 bet into a \$100 pot on the turn.

You would need 33% equity to call here.

We can see that MP2 doesn't have the 33% equity needed.

This would be a fold if there was no betting on the river.

But because there is still river action to come, we have **implied odds in addition to our pot odds**. It is clear what cards make our hand and we are unlikely to be beat when we improve.

We are also likely to extract value when we improve.

Let's say that when we improve to a flush or a straight we get a \$200 bet in 75% of the time. For the sake of simplicity, let's assume we are always good when that bet goes in. That adds an additional \$150 in value to our call and makes the "implied turn odds" to call 22%.

### OPPONENTS BET

(OPPONENT'S BET + POT +  
IMPLIED BET ON FUTURE STREETS)

\$100

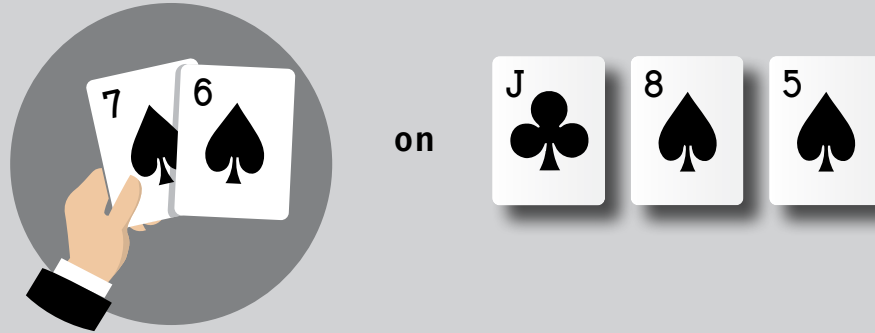
$(\$100 + \$100 + \$100 + \$150) = 22\%$



## RULE #13

When Out of Position in 3-bet pots on the flop, check/raising lower combo draws can be an effective way to discourage opponents from betting when checked to. You can also call and check/raise all-in on the turn.

Example:

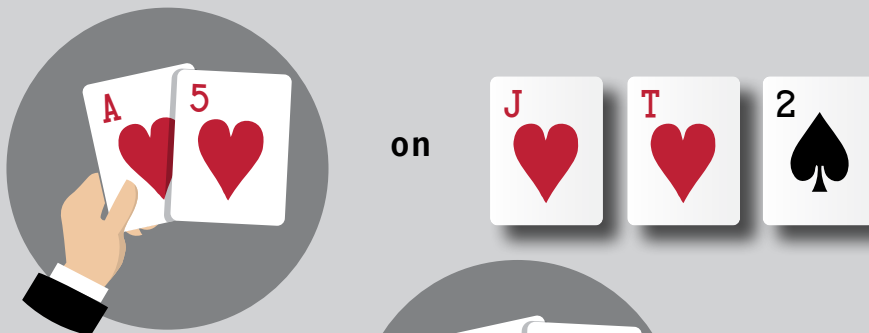


## RULE #14

When you have the nut flush draw in a 3-bet pot, check back the flop unless it is a really big draw. If it is a really big draw, consider a flop C-bet.

Example:

Don't bet



Consider betting



## RULE #15

### Four quick tips for 3-bet pots as the preflop raiser:

- 1 Mostly check when you have the nut flush draw
- 2 Sometimes check/raise low boards with big flush draws or combo draws
- 3 Pair and flush draw are mostly check/call type hands
- 4 Low flush draws are great to C-bet and barrel with

## RULE #16

### Three quick tips for flush draws on monotone boards:

- 1 Employ a mixed strategy of both bet and check with the top 3 flush draws.
- 2 Mostly check the 4th through 7th flush draws.
- 3 Mostly bet the worst 3 flush draws.

**Example:**  
On a flop of



• Both bet and check



• Mostly check



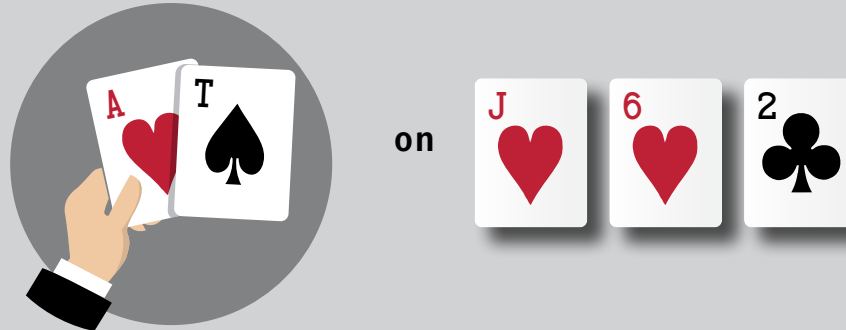
• Mostly bet



## RULE #17

If you were the preflop opener and you have [AX] + backdoor flush draw, for the most part, you should almost always check.

Example:



## RULE #18

Use flush blockers to determine whether or not to barrel off after c-betting the flop.

Example:

Flop is



Both



and



are great hands to bluff with on the flop, but the more effective hand to barrel off will depend on the runout.

When the flush completes on the turn, continue to barrel the [Js 7c], but give it up when the flush misses.

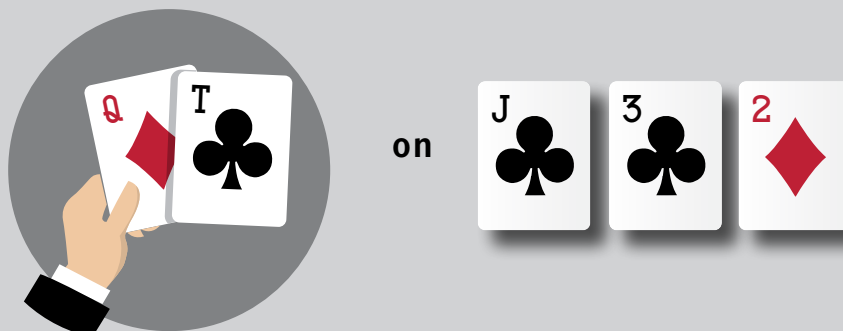
Conversely, when you have [Jd 7d] you will barrel when the flush draw misses and give up when it hits.



## RULE #19

On dry boards, you will often times face small bets or bets from players who are betting many weak hands. You may feel the need to call with weak hands of your own to defend your range. In these instances, select hands with backdoor flush draws that wrap around the “pivot” card.

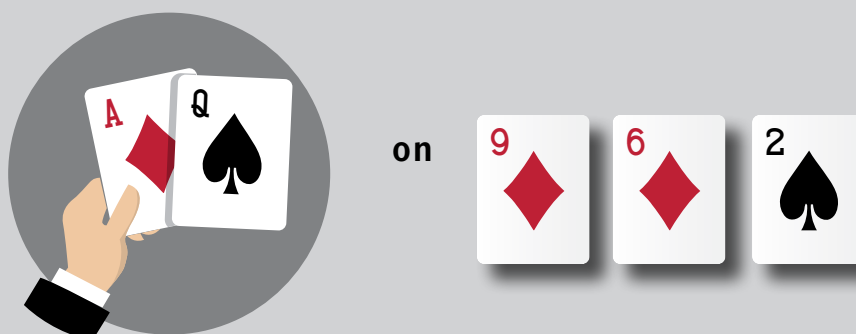
Example:



## RULE #20

In 3-bet pots, use the Ace flush blocker as a flop c-bet and barrel off when the flush gets in.

Example:



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20 NEW FLUSH DRAW RULES  
TO PLAY WITH!**

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