

16 CONTRARIAN STRATEGIES TO CRUSH LIVE PLO

AT LOW & MID STAKES GAMES



Mixed Game Poker Strategy



VARIANCE NOT REQUIRED



“Shh...don't tell,
but Pot Limit
Omaha may be
the most
lucrative game
in the casino.”

Most Pot-Limit Omaha (PLO) players assume they must follow the “standard” high variance plays of jamming their aces, sets, and wraps to force coin flips as small favorites. These same players complain about their bad luck when they lose a big flip and go on wild monkey-tilt.

**BUT THERE'S NO REASON YOU
HAVE TO PLAY THE WAY
OTHERS WANT YOU TO.**

There are some unpopular ways to exploit your opponent's tendencies, keep variance down, and make consistent profits.

If you reject the popular the approach, you may get...

**CRITICIZED, CHASTISED, AND
OSTRACIZED...**

...but who cares when you are dragging in the pots!

WHY THESE STRATEGIES WORK

These strategies are exploitative, meaning better players “could” theoretically take advantage of you. But in live, low-limit PLO (and sometimes the higher limits too), there are just so many inexperienced players with a misguided approach to the game that you simply don’t need to balance your play.

You can focus on extracting value from big hands and minimizing the amount you lose in marginal spots.

In live PLO, it’s easy to extract value because...



✓ **Pots grow much faster in PLO than No Limit**, even when playing at the same blinds, like 2-5 PLO versus 2-5 NL. This makes the game play bigger and puts many players out of their comfort zone where they make mistakes. It also means there’s more money to be made!

✓ **Aces are easy to spot in PLO** and players have a hard time letting them go.

✓ **Players overvalue holdings** that are good in No Limit, but mediocre in Omaha: specifically, non-nut flushes, middle and bottom set, and the under-full.

✓ **Players raise and bloat pots from out of position.** Position is THE MOST important thing in PLO. These players look down and see KKxx and make a big raise from the blinds. They are surprised when they get re-raised by aces or get 5 callers and need to hit their set to win.

16 CONTRARIAN STRATEGIES TO CRUSH LIVE PLO

AT LOW & MID STAKES GAMES

GAME SELECTION

- 1. Look for weak-passive games with lots of limping.** DON'T look for loose-aggressive games that the reg's seem to think are "good". Contrary to public opinion, loose games mean more variance and you'll waste a lot more chips calling raises hoping to hit your hand. When you miss you either give up or take risky lines without much equity.

Why not look for a game where everyone limps and you can see lots of cheap flops? Build pots AFTER you see that you are ahead on the flop.

- 2. Find no-limit tournaments and look for "good" NL players that recently busted** and might be looking to get even. These players typically have misguided confidence, overvalue hands, and bluff and bloat pots with little equity. Some of the world's best no-limit players are terrible at PLO and just don't realize it.

PRE-FLOP

- 3. Never open-raise limpers when you're out of position, even with aces.** PLO is won by playing hands in position. At lower limits, a big leak is to build pots out of position when it's harder to realize your equity. Aces (a single pair hand), will invariably get several callers and you are rarely far ahead unless you hit a set or nut flush.

4. **Never open-raise with the intent to take down the pot pre-flop.** PLO players are so loose that you will seldom, if ever succeed. Play a tight open-raising strategy and only raise when you want to build a pot with premium hands in position.
5. **Do not raise with one pair in your hand** except aces in certain situations (see next section). One pair hands are ok for set mining but it's hard to hit most flops hard. And unlike No Limit, you want to restrict your continuation bet bluffs to hands where you have decent equity, which is frequently not the case with a pair in your hand if you don't hit a set.
6. **Don't call raises with non-premium, Broadway hands** like unsuited and single suited 3 card Broadway hands with a dangler (examples: A♠Q♠10♥4♦ or K♠Q♥J♣7♦) unless you are likely to be heads up. In live games it's very difficult to get heads up and these hands do not play well against the shared cards people call raises with. They look pretty but you will be burning money calling with these hands too often.

PLO HACK TO PLUG YOUR PRE-FLOP LEAKS

During one session, track every time you make a marginal pre-flop call. Keep a running tally of the amounts (on your phone or in your head) when you end up folding these weaker holdings on the flop.

At the end of the night, look at your tally. This is the amount you could have saved. Often times, you'll find it's the difference between a winning or losing session.

Next time out, remember this amount and consider tightening up your starting hand requirements.



- 7. In position, occasionally 3-bet with low, suited run downs or double-paired hands** like A♠3♠4♠5♠ or 9♣9♥6♣6♦. If an ace falls you can represent top set or if you hit the flop hard people will have a hard time putting you on a hand and call you down light.

ACES

- 8. Mainly call to set mine with most of your aces.** Only raise if you are fairly certain it will get you heads up or if you have premium aces in position. And yes, if you wind up with a third of your stack in pre-flop, you likely have the odds to stack-off on the flop. However, what many don't realize (or won't share) is that a big chunk of their losses come from losing huge "coin-flip" pots that they bloated with aces.
- 9. Call other people who are marked with aces when you are in position.** Players so rarely limp-raise or 3-bet (and they never ever 4-bet) without aces that it has become one of the few poker situations where you can confidently guess an exact holding preflop. As mentioned earlier, it's hard for aces to improve unless they catch a set or a nut flush. So if neither of these boards are present and you hit 2 pair or better it's easy to extract a street or two of value in a big pot. And beware of being on the opposite side of this equation when you have aces.

POST-FLOP

- 10. Give up your 1 and 2 pair hands against a single flop bet in a multi-way pot.** You may be giving up a small amount of equity and it can be painful, but in the long run these hands will end up losing much more than they make.
- 11. Don't do the bare ace bluff.** Too often in low stakes people won't fold their flushes and bluffing into these calling stations is a big leak. The flip side of this is you can bet heavy with the ace high flush and get paid often by lower flushes. Don't slowplay, just keep betting big!

- 12. Sometimes just call with sets on dry flops** and play thinking poker on the turn and river. Most people are afraid to play the turn and the river and jam their sets early. These players are surprised when other players don't jam their sets and will pay you off. This also gives you the opportunity to minimize your losses if the board gets ugly and you suspect you've fallen behind.
- 13. Only "run it twice" if you are on a draw and not the favorite.** If you play live, you've undoubtedly heard people say "I always run it twice". But don't do anything predictable just to make others happy. If you are a favorite go ahead and run it once. And if you're not the favorite and have a draw, then run it twice with the hopes to win at least one board and get your money back and reduce your variance.
- 14. On wet boards when you have the straight but no redraw, just call your opponent's bet** with both the nut straight (no redraw) and your full range of sets, flush draws, and bluffs that have some equity. For example, J♥10♥9♣ where your opponent likely has KQ. If a boat or flush comes in and the initial raiser checks, you can often make a large bet and take the pot because you appear to have a wide range and are likely on the draw. If you did have the same straight as your opponent, this provides the dual benefit of pot control (in case you are facing redraws and don't have one yourself) and you can win a pot outright that you would have had to chop. Caveat: if your flopped nut straight has a redraw, then jam on the flop hoping to get a freeroll.
- 15. Bet out flop, but pot control the turn with ace high boats with weak kickers** (A345 on AA3 board) **or low boats with two different cards** (6543 on 665 board). The reason is that you will get callers on both boards that can easily improve to beat you on the turn and you won't know if you are beat. For example, your opponent could have AKT8 on first board and 9876 on second board. In both cases they have 9 outs to crush you. If the turn checks, you can bet half-pot on the river to extract value from hands you beat and the you can fold to further aggression.
- 16. Memorize the different wrap types in advance** so you can quickly count your outs. Most players assume all wraps are created equal and jam the flop without knowing if they are really a favorite.