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Professional No-Limit Hold 'em: Volume I

Matt Flynn, Sunny Mehta, Ed Miller
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#365154 in Books Flynn, Matt/ Mehta, Sunny/ Miller, Ed 2007-07-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1
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Matt Flynn, Sunny Mehta, Ed Miller : Professional No-Limit Hold 'em: Volume I before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Professional No-Limit Hold 'em: Volume I:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A great book for someone with a background in pokerBy Nate DennisProfessional No Limit Hold Em is absolutely worth the price of admission. If you are coming from a back

ground in limit or tournament play this book will show you what things to think about throughout a hand. It was very enlightening to think through hands I've played in the past in light of the information that I've learned in this book. It should be noted that this book reads easier than, say, a Sklansky book. This is not to say that the information is "easy" or that the book is simple. Just that it reads more conversationally and less like a text book.

Who this book is for: anyone with a basic understanding of the mechanics of the game, anyone with a background in limit hold'em, anyone with a background in tournament NLHE, anyone who has played NLHE in cash games but wants to improve. Who this is not for: anyone with no understanding of game mechanics, anyone who needs a solid grounding in the basics of NLHE.

The book doesn't open with "this is a small/big blind" or "this hand beats that hand". (I'm not bashing books that open with that, they are needed.) If you don't know what hands beat what or what a blind is, or standard "poker speak" you'll need to start elsewhere. This isn't going to tell you "raise AKo in mid position" it's going to teach you how to evaluate the many conditions of the game at that moment to determine the best course of action for each hand. For example: in a series of example hands they advocate folding AQ and then one or two hands later they have "you" raise with 8-10. "It depends" is the recurring answer for "what do I do...." And the recurring theme of the book is "plan your hand". If you want to learn how to approach the game from the appropriate perspective, this is the book for you. If you want a cookbook that will tell you when to raise with j-10s, you'll want to look elsewhere.

88 of 92 people found the following review helpful. Superb title for no-limit cash game players

By Paul Benjamin

I review poker books for Card Player magazine, and here's the piece I submitted about this excellent new book from Two Plus Two (in its November 7 issue):

A lot of amateur players seem to believe that no-limit hold'em is a game dominated by feel and aggression instead of mathematical rigor and brutal rationality, but this powerful new book dispels that notion in no uncertain terms. "It's not the one gut-wrenching decision for all the chips that counts most," the authors write. "It's the thousands of small strategic decisions that the pros get right and the amateurs don't." Don't misunderstand. Feel and aggression are critical to success in no-limit hold'em. But the most consistent winners use analytical skill to complement their decision making, and in no-limit hold'em, the math is a lot more difficult than it is in the limit game. In limit, you're playing for one or two or three more bets; in no-limit, your entire stack may be on the line in every hand. And that makes the analytical aspects of no-limit hold'em a lot more complicated. No surprise, then, that the book includes a lengthy discussion of stack sizes, which "are critical to most no-limit decisions." Stack size effectively determines your risk/reward possibilities, and that idea prompts a long and very valuable analysis of "commitment." "Am I committed?" is the first question you should ask yourself on every street," write Flynn, Mehta, and Miller. If you understand the concepts in this book, you'll know how to answer that crucial question. But here's the real challenge: You have to make the all-in decision before you play a large pot. You must know if you're at the "commitment threshold" and how you're going to respond if you're facing an all-in bet. Those are the situations that can build--or destroy--your bankroll, and you have to be prepared for them.

The book is primarily about the analytical (i.e., mathematical) aspects of no-limit hold'em, but Flynn et al. do a good job of illuminating topics like hand reading. It's not mystical (unless your name is Kenny Tran), but it's not purely rational or logical either. In particular, the book points out the folly of putting someone on a specific hand instead of range of hands. And that leads directly into the meatiest concept of the book, "the REM Process": "Range, Equity, Maximize." Range, of course, refers to the spectrum of hands your opponents could have (we all know players who only raise with AA or KK, but most raisers have a much wider range of potential hands). Observation of showdowns will help you assign a range to a specific player, and of course you'll add physical tells and intangibles (is someone on tilt? stuck big-time? flush with chips?) to your analysis. Equity is the value of your hand compared to the range of hands your opponent has (Harrington fans will recognize this concept in his "Structured Hand Analysis" in Harrington on Hold'em, Volume II). Only a savant could perform these calculations at the table, but you'll learn some shortcuts to getting there. Finally, maximize "means choosing the action or series of actions that makes you the most money in the long run." What's the optimum size of a value bet (which of course depends on the size of the pot and the size of the stacks behind)? Of a bluff? If this makes no-limit hold'em sound complex, well, that's the reality. Get used to it or get used to going broke. The mantra of this book is "Plan your hands." But you can't plan effectively if you don't understand REM, if you don't understand the concept of relative stack sizes and the stack-to-pot ratio, if you don't understand when you've reached the commitment threshold. And that's why you need Professional No-Limit Hold'em--and the tenacity to learn what it has to offer.

Check out my other poker reviews at web.mac.com/tbpeters.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Plan-the-hand

By J. Koelman

A book that highlights the message "plan-the-hand" for NL play. Sounds simple. In reality it often isn't. The authors take you through the planning process and give advice that is very helpful, not just in theory but also in the heat of the battle. Key advice is, prior to making a pre-flop bet, to decide on which flops you do want to commit your stack and on which flops you don't, and to estimate for your starting hand the percentages of both types of flops. Subsequently bet/raise pre-flop such that you realize the right stack-to-pot ratio on the flop for the purpose of your planned post-flop play. The authors give practical advice for various classes of starting hands/flop combinations what is the optimal stack-to-pot ratio. Some of the analysis leads to pre-flop betting that - prior to reading the book - I would have classified as over-betting. However, the analysis in the book is sound, and it definitely helps keeping a robust rational approach to the game.

No-limit hold em was once only a tournament game. Cash games were rarely spread in conventional poker rooms, let alone the Internet. All of that changed when the game exploded on television. No-limit cash games started sprouting up at casinos of all types. No-limit hold em is now the most popular form of poker. Tournaments pushed it to the forefront, and a great deal of money can also be won here despite that fact, many players feel frustrated with their results. They win some money, only to lose it all on one botched hand. This book teaches you how to play and think like a professional. It shows how to size your bets, manage the pot, manipulate your opponents, know when to go all-in, and avoid the big mistake. Do you understand critical no-limit concepts like The REM Process, The Commitment Threshold, and Stack-To-Pot Ratios? If not, this is the book for you.