

# Hand 8

## Plugging the Gap



### INTRODUCTION

Early days again. We were in Birmingham and the blinds were £1-£2, a £100 game.

I held J♣-10♣ in seat 5. Robert, first after the blinds, raised to £5. Number 4 called. Thus there was £13 in the pot.

### THE PLAY

**Question 1:** Should I: (a) pass (b) call (c) raise £5 (d) raise £18?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I called, as did seat 6. Roy then raised the pot £28 from seat 8. Seat 9 called and everyone else passed until it reached Robert, who called with £300 remaining in front of him. Seat 4 now folded and the pot stood at £117.

**Question 2:** Should I: (a) pass (b) call (c) raise £28 (c) raise £145?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I called and seat 6 passed. The pot stood at £145.

**Flop:** A♣-10♦-5♣. I held J♣-10♣. Robert bet the full £145 and the pot was now £290.

**Question 3:** Should I: (a) pass (b) call (c) raise £100 (d) raise £435?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I called, Roy raised £500, seat 9 passed and Robert called £155 all-in. The main pot stood at £890 and Roy had created a side pot of £345.

**Hypothetical Question 4:** If it was all-in for £500, should I: (a) pass (b) call?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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In reality, Roy had £2000 left.

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**Question 5:** Should I: (a) pass (b) call (c) raise £500 (d) raise £1700?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Hypothetical Question 6:** What if I have read it all wrong, and in fact Roy has K♣-Q♣ and Robert a pair of nines? Approximately what percentage of the side pot would I then win: (a) 40% (b) 45% (c) 50% (d) 55% (e) 60%?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) <input type="checkbox"/>	(e) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I called. Well, wouldn't you with only about three month's experience?

**Turn:** A♣-10♦-5♣-6♣. I held J♣-10♣. The pot stood at £1735 and Roy had £2000 left.

**Question 7:** Should I: (a) check (b) bet £500 (c) bet £1700?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I bet £1600. I knew this was a little less than the pot, but I often do this. It spreads seeds of doubt in player's minds. What if I held 10♥-10♣? Then I might be trying to push out trip aces (if this is what Roy has).

**Hypothetical Question 8:** Taking over Roy's hand. (You have to forget that you know precisely what I held!) I can reveal that he held A♠-A♥. He faced a £1600 bet for a pot of £3335. Should he: (a) pass (b) call (c) raise £400 all-in?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	(c) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** Roy called.

**River:** A♣-10♦-5♣-6♣-6♥. I held J♣-10♣. The pot stood at £4935.

**Question 9:** Should I: (a) check (b) bet £400? Remember you must forget that you know about Roy's actual hand!

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
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**Action:** I checked and he bet £400. The pot was £5335.

**Question 10:** Should I: (a) pass (b) call £400?

(a) <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) <input type="checkbox"/>	Points: .....
		<b>Total:</b> .....

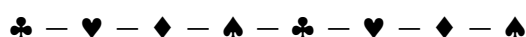
**Action:** I called and of course he won with A-A for aces full. Robert showed us his own ace, so I was quite right; Roy had only eight wins with nine cards accounted for. Thus he was (43-8)/8 or nearly 9/2 against filling up.

## How Good is Your Pot-Limit Hold'Em?

As Roy was scooping in the money, he said, 'I would have been disappointed not to have won that pot.' Well, so indeed was I.

### SCORECHART

- 100** Wow, that's good.
- 85-100** I scored 92, while David made 87 and Danny 86. Well, they didn't have the advantage of playing the hand or writing the quiz!
- 70-84** Perhaps you lost concentration at some point?
- 50-69** A hand you could play too loosely or too tight or both.
- 30-49** To win money at poker, you need to make more than 50% of the correct decisions.
- 15-29** Better luck next time.
- 3-14** The next hand is much simpler.



### ANSWERS AND ANALYSIS

**Holding:** J♣-10♣.

**Answer 1:** (a) 7 (b) 10 (c) 0 (d) 0.

Mine is a marginal hand and I was in middle position. Most people will take on this hand for such a small sum.

**Answer 2:** (a) 10 (b) 8 (c) -2 (d) -5.

I have been whip-lashed. That is, first raised from my right and then from my left. My hand is now purely a drawing one and I am out of position. I certainly do not have huge implied odds. However, I was getting 4/1 for my money, so my call is based virtually entirely on actual pot odds.

What are the odds of my hitting the flop and then my hand standing up? I would not know how to go about making that calculation. Many people make the mistake of thinking that all you have to do is run hands through a computer and look at the percentages at the end of the pot. This is completely fallacious. Often you would win by a backdoor outdraw. For instance, in this hand it may come K-3-2 on the flop. I would not consider calling, but when the hand concludes K-3-2-Q-9 I have made the nut straight and am now 'Lord of all I see'.

**Flop:** A♣-10♦-5♣.

**Answer 3:** (a) -1 (b) 10 (c) 0 (d) 5.

I was so inexperienced at the time that I think this was the first time I had ever met this particular constellation. It is variation of 'Morton's fork'. Either

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I am beating Robert or have the best draw. Passing would be stupid and raising is not a good idea, since there are two players to act after me.

**Answer 4:** (a) 0 (b) 10.

I would have adequate odds for my money.

**Answer 5:** (a) 10 (b) 4 (c) 0 (d) 3.

I have been whip-lashed for the second time in the same hand. Can I still be in a 'Morton's fork' situation? I think not. Roy made the second raise before the flop, and has done the same again when he could be certain that Robert would call (since Robert would not be stupid enough to bet £145 and then pass for another £155). Roy must have a made hand.

I can win £1235 for my £500. However, if the turn brings a blank then I am going to have to face another bet.

**Answer 6:** (a) 5 (b) 10 (c) 6 (d) 4 (e) 0.

That is the way it is. I am an underdog, even if I have the best made hand.

Okay, so I do not have adequate pot odds to call. What about if I hit my flush on the turn? Surely I can bet and win a substantial sum? I must have adequate implied odds here? That is true, but Roy will only call, if at all, with a set of aces and then I can still be outdrawn. No, it is a clear pass.

**Turn:** A♣-10♦-5♣-6♣.

**Answer 7:** (a) 4 (b) 3 (c) 10.

I have hit my hand. I could try a check in the hope of a bet from a losing hand, but the only hand that might try such a bet is A-A and it is quite likely that Roy will call anyway if that is his holding. Roy is going to pass any hand other than pocket aces or the dreaded K♣-Q♣.

**Answer 8:** (a) 10 (b) 0 (c) 4.



### **WARNING: Complex maths follows**

Trip aces are very nice, but they are almost certainly losing here, unless you can bring yourself to believe that I was playing 10♥-10♣ in such a sophisticated manner. There are at most ten cards left with which you can improve. You can see your two cards and the four belonging to the turn. This leaves 46 unseen. The odds against your making the hand is  $(46-10)/10$ , which makes it roughly 7/2 against your winning. In fact, it is quite likely that Robert has an ace in his hand, which would make it 4/1 against.

If you do call, will you really have the bottle to pass on the river for just £400 in a pot of £5335? Of course not! Thus you may as well raise all-in.

Once Roy calls, my implied odds have worked out. At this point I am winning £1235 plus £1600 for my risk of calling Roy's £500 raise on the flop. We can

### How Good is Your Pot-Limit Hold'Em?

also add in the £400 that Roy is going to call on the river, which comes to £3235 for £500. This comes to around 13/2 – and I was only 4/1 against making the flush on the turn! But as you will see, this is too simplistic.

**River:** A♣-10♦-5♣-6♣-6♥.

Where did my beloved implied odds go? Just because I have been outdrawn does not mean that I have played incorrectly.

My profit is £3235, but my hand only stands up 80% of the time. Profit £2588.

I am risking a further £2000 and 20% of the time I lose. Loss £400.

Thus my total expected profit is £2188 for a cost of £500, which is just slightly better than my 4/1 odds for hitting the flush. However, there are some imponderables here. Robert could have had K♣-Q♣, when I am drawing dead to the main pot. Roy could (and should) pass if he is staring at a possible flush on the turn.

**Answer 9:** (a) 10 (b) 4.

It is conceivable that I am winning. If so, he is unlikely to call £400, but he might try to bluff it.

**Answer 10:** (a) 2 (b) 10.

This is for so little money in such a big pot that you must make a crying call. There is a hand later in the book where I passed for even less money, but the situation was different.