

by Johan Storakers

What is the biggest mistake that you've noticed amateurs make?

Victoria J.

Tulsa, Okla.

JOHAN STORAKERS - Swedish pro Johan Storakers has won more than \$1.5 million and is listed fourth on Sweden's list of all-time money winners. He is currently playing the circuit in the United States. Playing competitively since 2000, Storakers won the MasterClassics of Poker in 2003 and two years later made two World Poker Tour final tables. CNS Photo. Playing too many hands with no kicker is always a problem. To play hands that need to improve from the start is always tough. The chance of hitting two pair or better is less than 19-to-1. To make such a call you have to be up against really bad players who won't be able to fold and are inclined to call when the pot is big. To answer your question, the starting hands are the key: Play tight and seldom bluff.

If you are at a tight table and pick up a big hand, do you slow-play it or do you bet knowing everyone might fold?

George

London

Unfortunately, in many cases all you can do is hope for action. Make a standard raise and hope to get reraised. Slow-playing is always a calculated risk where you have to take into consideration the possibility that you might get called and then have to give up the pot just because you let the other player in too cheap.

Should I be logging my play?

Bonnie

Boise, Idaho

It is an ambitious and good thing to do. I did it myself for several years. It's a good way of knowing how you are really doing. Out of the players saying they are about even, I am guessing that only about 10 percent really are even - the rest are losing. In the long run being honest with oneself is always a winning concept. Be humble to yourself (and in this case to your game of poker) and you will grow. If you make your mind up despite the results, you are in over your head. Everybody makes mistakes. In poker there are no such things as right and wrong. Poker is a changeable game.

Should I be calling, folding or raising with a hand like K-Q suited in middle position?

Carl S.,

New York

Well, there is no categorical answer to that. If I don't have any historical facts to back me up, I automatically would like to raise, but that depends on your table image and what you want to achieve. If you can't handle a reraise you might as well throw it away. Raising with K-Q is kind of a semi-bluff.

Say I call a raise with A-Q offsuit in early position, get a couple of callers and an ace flops. Should I bet it or check it?

Sheldon,

Chicago

Are you willing to go all the way with A-Q? That is the question. If you just call, you don't know anything about the hand of the initial raiser. Now you have concealed your own hand, so that you could get the pot big without giving your opponent the possibility of knowing you have such a strong hand. You could either decide to bet out to get the pot here and now or conceal your hand even more and get a bigger pot on the turn.

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Adept at both online and live tournament poker, globe-trotting Swedish pro Johan Storakers is a threat to win any event he enters. With 50 cashes for more than \$1.5 million, Johan is just getting started. He is listed fourth on Sweden's all-time money list and is currently playing the circuit in the United States as well. Known for not being afraid to gamble if he has a chance to knock a player out, Johan is also a serious Internet player who represents UltimateBet.com, sometimes competing under the screen name Nytorget, an area of Stockholm. Playing competitively since 2000, Johan won the MasterClassics of Poker in 2003 and

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Poker Pro's Corner: Word to amateurs - play tight and seldom bluff by Johan Storakers