

## **SAMPLE –Advanced Poker Strategy –Article**

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### **Advanced Poker Strategy – Deciding When to Slow-Play Big Hands**

If you have a big hand like pocket aces or kings, you can opt to slow play it. This is a form of deception in poker where you convince other players that your hand is weak. Because of betting passively, you encourage players who might otherwise fold (if you raise with the strong hand), to stay on in the game and continue adding to the pot. However, it is important that you slow-play big hands only in the right situations. Here are some situations in which you can opt to slow-play the big hands:

The first situation in which you can opt to slow-play the hand is when you have, to your left, an aggressive player who is extremely likely to bet. The second situation is when the game is tight and you are not certain that any of your opponents will call a bet. The third is when the board is highly uncoordinated and you have a hand that is well hidden.

This is best done when you are in the early position. The fourth is when you have the potential to check-raise such that you are raised and another player calls your re-raise. This may also give you the opportunity to ensure that the opponent acts after the round's raises are over. The fifth is on the flop - only when you are certain that on the turn the bet will double and that you can expect your opponents to call a bet.

Here are some situations in which you should avoid slow-play:

#### **Intention is to add money to the pot**

Do not slow-play the big hands if your intention is to add more money to the pot. Instead, build the pot at the outset of the game. This will increase the chances of the opponents calling a large bet later in the game.

#### **Tendency to place continuation bets**

Avoid slow playing the big hands if you have the tendency to place continuation bets using marginal hands. With this table image, if you slow-play the hand, your marginal hands will not be hidden from players. This will enable them to evaluate your hand more efficiently.

#### **Possibility of a scare card**

It is best to not slow-play a big hand, if there is a high probability that a scare card may appear on the turn or river. This can reduce the potential that your hand has in the game. If you catch an exceptionally good hand on the flop, it is possible that the flop is co-ordinated. This is because, a set of three co-ordinated cards can have a minimum of eight cards that match. It can reduce the game play subsequently. The possibility of this happening at the river is almost 15% while at the river is 30%.

### **Co-ordinated board**

Also, avoid slow-playing when the board is co-ordinated, as the likelihood that other players too will have a draw is high. If this happens, they may call your bets early on. However, the players may fold if they do not get the draw. So, if your assessment indicates that this is the situation, it is best to bet rather than slow-play the cards.

### **Aggressive opponents**

If you expect another player to check-raise and subsequently opt to slow play the big hands, you may bring down your expected value. If you are playing against an extremely aggressive opponent at your left, you should ideally bet and give him the opportunity to raise you. It is possible that another player will fold when check-raised and call when there is a re-raise.