



HUTCHISON POINT COUNT SYSTEM FOR OMAHA HIGH-LOW POKER

The following is slightly modified from an article of mine that appeared in the December, 1997 issue of the *Canadian Poker Monthly*. I want to acknowledge with appreciation the contributions of Nolan Dalla, Dave Scharf, and others to this effort to quantify starting hands in Omaha Hi-Lo Poker (Eight or Better).

ASSUMPTIONS: A ten-handed game at the lower levels with a mix of good and poor players.

OBJECTIVE: To identify those hands that have at least a 50% above chance expectation of winning. That is, while any random hand should win about 10% of the pots in a ten-handed game, the hands identified as "playable" by this system have at least a 15% probability of winning.

METHOD: In any split pot game the best hands are those that have a chance to win both high and low. Most of the hands without this potential should be discarded. However, there are a few hands that are profitable even though they have no potential to win low.

The first step in evaluating your hand is to see if it is one of these **HIGH-ONLY** hands. To qualify, all four of your cards must be Ten or above AND include (1) two pair, or (2) a pair and two suited cards, or (3) two double suits. Eliminate any high hand containing three of the same rank. If your hand does not qualify as a **HIGH** hand, then...

The next step is to see if your hand can be played as a **LOW** or **TWO-WAY** hand. This determination is made by adding the number of points obtained in these four simple steps:

FIRST, look at your two lowest cards and award points as follows:

A-2 equals 20 pts.	A-3 equals 17 pts.	A-4 equals 13 pts.
A-5 equals 10 pts.	2-3 equals 15 pts.	2-4 equals 12 pts.
3-4 equals 11 pts.	4-5 equals 8 pts.	Anything else = no pts.

SECOND, look at your two remaining cards ("kickers") and award points as follows:

3 equals 9 pts.	4 equals 6 pts.	5 equals 4 pts.
Jack, Queen, or King equals 2 pts.	6 or Ten equals 1 point	

Do not award any "kicker" pts. for a card that duplicates a card used in step one and if the kicker is paired it is counted only once under this step.

THIRD, if you have any pairs, add points as follows:

Aces equal 8 pts.	Kings equal 6 pts.	Queens equal 5 pts.	Jacks equal 2 pts.	Tens equal one point
Fours equal one point	Threes equal one point	Deuces equal 3 pts.		

and play immediately. ~~You will~~ receive a sign up bonus of from \$100 to \$600 if you decide to
Deduct half of the points awarded under this step if your hand contains three cards of the same rank.

FOURTH, if you hold two suited cards and the highest of them is

an Ace, add 4 pts. a King, add 3 pts. a Queen or Jack, add 2 pts. an 8, 9, or Ten, one pt.

Deduct half of the points awarded under this step if your hand contains three cards of the same suit and award no points if all of the cards are of the same suit.

EACH HAND WILL EARN A TOTAL FROM 0 TO 45 POINTS. PLAY THOSE HANDS WITH 20 POINTS OR MORE AND CONSIDER RAISING WITH 30 POINTS OR MORE.

EXAMPLES FOR CLARIFICATION

You are dealt AS, 3S, 5H, KD. Since not all four cards are above Ten, the hand is evaluated as a low or two-way hand by following the four steps outlined above. Step one awards 17 pts. for the A-3, step two grants six pts. for the 5 and K "kickers," step three does not apply, and step four gives four pts. for the two suited cards (spades) headed by the Ace. The total equals 27 pts. making this a playable hand.

You are dealt AS, AC, 2S, 3C. The hand does not qualify for high. Step one awards 20 pts. for the A-2, step two gives nine pts. for the 3 "kicker," step three grants eight pts. for the pair of Aces, and step four means that each double-suited combination headed by an Ace is worth four pts. each or a total of eight pts. for the two combinations. The grand total for this hand is 45 points. Incidentally, this is the most powerful hand in high-low Omaha.

You are dealt AS, TS, AC, QD. This hand qualifies for high because it satisfies the condition that 1) all four cards are Ten or above, and 2) two of the cards are paired and two are of the same suit.

You are dealt AS, TS, KD, QD. This hand qualifies for high because 1) all four cards are Ten or above, and 2) it contains two double suits.

NOTES

A very high correlation (but not a one-to-one correspondence) exists between a hand's point count and its winning percentage. Thus, a hand that earns 25 pts. is quite likely to have a higher win percentage than a hand with 24 pts. and it is almost certain to have a higher percentage than a hand with 23 or fewer pts.

It should be noted that initial card selection, while crucial to success, is not the only skill necessary to maximize Omaha profits. These other skills, however, do not lend themselves to easy quantification and are beyond the scope of this simple mathematical approach. Recall, too, the basic assumption that this system is being used at the lower limits. I hope that these limitations will not detract from the main purpose of this approach which is to provide a simple aid to the beginner.

This system has been devised by Edward Hutchison who invites your comments and opinions.

NOTE: Paul Merkt has devised a poker odds calculator which automatically calculates the point totals based upon this system. You can check it out at www.PokerWeapon.com