



Blind Defense

- Now that we've talked about stealing the blinds, let's turn our attention to blind defense strategy.
- Remember, we expect to lose money in the blinds, meaning playing from the blinds is **-EV**.
- If we folded 100% of the time in the SB and BB, our win rate would be:
 - **SB**: -50bb/100
 - **BB**: -100bb/100
- Our goal with blind defense is to minimize our losses.
- Yes, you'll win hands here and there from the blinds. Sometimes you'll win a massive pot.
- But in the bigger scheme of things, you'll lose money from the blinds over the long haul.



Theoretical vs. Practical Blind Defense

- Theoretically, you should be defending your blinds with a relatively wide range of hands; however, in reality, especially for beginning and struggling players, you should be defending a fairly conservative range.
- Even though I don't recommend a theoretical blind defense strategy, I want you to understand why people say we should be defending the blinds with a relatively wide range of hands.
- Because the blinds are forced to put their *blind* bets in the middle of the pot before the hand starts, they've already invested money into the pot.
- Accordingly, they have a vested interest in calling pre-flop raises.
- More importantly, it costs them less to call – giving them a better pot odds price to call a pre-flop raise than someone not in the blinds.



Pot Odds = Required Equity to Call a Bet

- Let's take a look at the pot odds the blinds are being offered if they call a blind steal attempt from the CO or BTN:

Steal Size	SB Pot Odds	BB Pot Odds When SB Calls	BB Pot Odds When SB Folds
2bb	30.00%	16.67%	22.22%
2.5bb	33.33%	20.00%	27.27%
3bb	35.71%	22.22%	30.77%

- If we're being offered, for example, 33% pot odds, theoretically we only need 33% or greater equity to call that bet.
- This is an important concept when facing a steal attempt from the blinds, where our opponents are opening a wide range of hands.
- Looking at the table above, the blinds are always being offered an amazing pot odds price to call a steal attempt.
- When BTN open-raises a 43.29% range of hands, even a 100% blind defense range has greater than 35.71% equity.
- So, in theory, you have enough equity to defend with a 100% range, but there are several issues with this.



Issues with Theoretical Blind Defense

- The first issue is positional disadvantage.
 - Regardless if you're defending from the SB or the BB, playing perfectly versus an opponent who has a positional advantage on you is nearly impossible.
 - It's much harder to realize our equity out of position, so all hands tend to under-realize their equity when we're at a positional disadvantage
- Secondly, defending from the SB is much more treacherous than defending from the BB.
 - SB has to worry about how BB will react to a call or 3-bet because SB isn't closing the action.
 - If SB calls a CO or BTN steal attempt, BB can 3-bet as a squeeze.
 - Furthermore, if SB 3-bet bluffs frequently, a competent player in the BB can attempt to re-steal the blinds with a 4-bet.
 - Lastly, if SB calls and so does BB, SB is now forced to play out of position versus two opponents rather than one – making defending from the SB even tougher.



Issues with Theoretical Blind Defense

- Because of these disadvantages, I recommend a much more conservative blind defense strategy, especially when defending from the SB.
- The ranges I recommend will have an equity edge versus a BTN late position open-raise in a heads-up situation.
- While we theoretically don't need an equity edge, it's much easier to play hands out of position when our defending range has an equity edge versus our opponent's open-raising range.



SB Blind Defense Calling Range

AA	AKs	AQs	AJs	ATs	A9s	A8s	A7s	A6s	A5s	A4s	A3s	A2s
AKo	KK	KQs	KJs	KTs	K9s	K8s	K7s	K6s	K5s	K4s	K3s	K2s
AQo	KQo	QQ	QJs	QTs	Q9s	Q8s	Q7s	Q6s	Q5s	Q4s	Q3s	Q2s
AJo	KJo	QJo	JJ	JTs	J9s	J8s	J7s	J6s	J5s	J4s	J3s	J2s
ATo	KTo	QTo	JTo	TT	T9s	T8s	T7s	T6s	T5s	T4s	T3s	T2s
A9o	K9o	Q9o	J9o	T9o	99	98s	97s	96s	95s	94s	93s	92s
A8o	K8o	Q8o	J8o	T8o	98o	88	87s	86s	85s	84s	83s	82s
A7o	K7o	Q7o	J7o	T7o	97o	87o	77	76s	75s	74s	73s	72s
A6o	K6o	Q6o	J6o	T6o	96o	86o	76o	66	65s	64s	63s	62s
A5o	K5o	Q5o	J5o	T5o	95o	85o	75o	65o	55	54s	53s	52s
A4o	K4o	Q4o	J4o	T4o	94o	84o	74o	64o	54o	44	43s	42s
A3o	K3o	Q3o	J3o	T3o	93o	83o	73o	63o	53o	43o	33	32s
A2o	K2o	Q2o	J2o	T2o	92o	82o	72o	62o	52o	42o	32o	22

Calling Range
 Value 3-Betting Range

BTN Stealing Range	BTN's Equity	SB Equity
43.29%	40.60%	59.40%

- Our SB blind defense range is very conservative with a 59.40% equity edge versus a BTN stealing range.
- We're 3-betting our default value 3-betting range versus a CO or BTN open-raise, which consists of JJ+, AQo+, and AJs.
- If we suspect our opponent is opening a very wide range of 50%+ of hands, we can expand our value 3-betting range even further.
- Our calling range is very conservative and only includes medium pocket pairs and Broadway hands. Because we don't know how BB will react when we call, we should be defending with a narrower range from the SB.



BB Blind Defense Calling Range

AA	AKs	AQs	AJs	ATs	A9s	A8s	A7s	A6s	A5s	A4s	A3s	A2s
AKo	KK	KQs	KJs	KTs	K9s	K8s	K7s	K6s	K5s	K4s	K3s	K2s
AQo	KQo	QQ	QJs	QTs	Q9s	Q8s	Q7s	Q6s	Q5s	Q4s	Q3s	Q2s
AJo	KJo	QJo	JJ	JTs	J9s	J8s	J7s	J6s	J5s	J4s	J3s	J2s
ATo	KTo	QTo	JTo	TT	T9s	T8s	T7s	T6s	T5s	T4s	T3s	T2s
A9o	K9o	Q9o	J9o	T9o	99	98s	97s	96s	95s	94s	93s	92s
A8o	K8o	Q8o	J8o	T8o	98o	88	87s	86s	85s	84s	83s	82s
A7o	K7o	Q7o	J7o	T7o	97o	87o	77	76s	75s	74s	73s	72s
A6o	K6o	Q6o	J6o	T6o	96o	86o	76o	66	65s	64s	63s	62s
A5o	K5o	Q5o	J5o	T5o	95o	85o	75o	65o	55	54s	53s	52s
A4o	K4o	Q4o	J4o	T4o	94o	84o	74o	64o	54o	44	43s	42s
A3o	K3o	Q3o	J3o	T3o	93o	83o	73o	63o	53o	43o	33	32s
A2o	K2o	Q2o	J2o	T2o	92o	82o	72o	62o	52o	42o	32o	22

■ Calling Range ■ Value 3-Betting Range

BTN Stealing Range	BTN's Equity	BB Equity
43.29%	45.79%	54.21%

- On the other hand, our defending range from the BB is much larger than from the SB; however, it still has a 54.21% equity edge.
- While our value 3-betting range will be the same, our calling range is significantly larger.
- Because we're closing the action pre-flop and we're always getting a better pot odds price than the SB, we can defend by calling a much wider range of hands.
- In the BB, our calling range includes not only high equity Broadway and medium pocket pair hands, but also numerous weaker hands.
- Furthermore, hands we would typically 3-bet bluff or fold from the SB, including small pocket pairs, small suited aces, suited connectors, and one-gappers now become calling hands.