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# The Course: Serious Hold 'Em Strategy For Smart Players

*The*  
COURSE



Serious Hold 'Em Strategy  
*for Smart Players*

ED MILLER

Best-selling author and noted poker authority



## Synopsis

The Course is different from other poker books you may have read. It's written for players who are smart and who know that to succeed, you have to be different. Because in poker, if you play and think like everyone else, you'll also get results just like everyone else. There's a saying in the golf world that you don't worry about the other players. You just play the course. It doesn't matter if you're playing in a big tournament against a hundred other players or against just one. It doesn't matter if you're playing against Tiger Woods or against Woody the Woodpecker. You can't control what they do, so they can only be a distraction. All that matters is the course. And the only thing you can control is how you play it. This is a powerful idea, and it applies just as well in poker. Poker is full of distractions, and most players get hung up worrying about all the wrong things. The things they can't control. The things that ultimately don't matter. The Course: Serious Hold 'Em Strategy For Smart Players, cuts through all the noise. It's a practical and effective, step-by-step guide to winning consistently at no-limit hold 'em. It teaches the game as a series of skills. The first skill is the most important, but also the most fundamental. Each subsequent skill builds upon the last. Master the first few skills, and you can win at the 1-2 or 1-3 level. Master the next few, and you can win at 2-5. And master the final skills, and you can hang at 5-10 among the best players at your local card room. The Course focuses on the most important concepts that determine who wins and moves up and who doesn't. And it ignores the distractions. It doesn't waste your time and attention with ideas that don't apply to the games you play. Unlike many other books, this book is ruthlessly practical. The ideas in The Course transfer directly from the page to the felt. The book starts out by showing you where and how money is available to win. Everything after teaches you how to go get it. Skill by skill, you will learn to win more money and win it faster. The Course meets you where you are. If you're just beginning to get serious about hold 'em, the book starts you with a sound foundational strategy. If you're an experienced player looking to get over the next hump, the book lays bare the challenge and teaches you what you need to do. Unless you're already the boss player at your local card room, The Course is the perfect companion to help take you to where you want to go.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tommy Angelo in Elements of Poker, probably offered the single best piece of advice every written to becoming a good player, always play your  $\hat{A}$  game. He never really defined what an  $\hat{A}$  looks like, other than it was significantly better than your  $\hat{D}$  game. The Course defines the  $\hat{A}$  game for live low stakes no-limit Holdem. If you stick to Ed's guidelines, you will become a winning player. I first encountered Ed over 12 years ago on the 2-plus-2 forums for his famous post,  $\hat{W}$  Why You Are Not Crushing Small Stakes Holdem. Ed had taken the time to write a long post about the skills necessary to beat the game and then took the time to answer questions. Since it was free, his only reward was helping other players get better. Ed went on to become the most prolific authors on small stakes Holdem. While I am sure he likes the money and fame, I think his principle motivations remain the same. A sincere desire to help people become better players. In The Course, Ed distills all the poker knowledge from his previous books and articles into a skill-by-skill framework to becoming proficient at 1-3, 2-5, and beyond. On any of one of these skills, there is more to learn but he provides the essential knowledge. Example, in Pokers 1%, he goes through the math of why calling and then folding too many hands is everyone's biggest leak. In The Course, he tells you this concept, but does not spend too long on the why. To understand the why plan on reading his other books, they are all excellent and worth your while. Ed boils his advice down to advice that is very simply to remember and follow. Example, Don't Pay People Off when they bet big is his second skill for a 1-3 level game.

Ed Miller's been writing poker strategy books for a while now, and he's clearly very successful at marketing, promoting, and publishing new work constantly. But here's the problem: new poker theory isn't coming out at the same pace poker strategy materials are being produced. This goes quadruple for the lower stakes games (\$100NL and below online, or \$2/5 live), where basic theory and a solid fundamental understanding of the game is the key to winning, NOT some magic bullet vague tip like "don't pay off." In fact, I would actually argue that much of the information in this book is even technically inaccurate, which for a beginner might as well read as "burn money." This is coming from a professional mid-stakes no-limit player and former poker video producer. Here's an example from the book, also used in Ed Miller's hand-of-the-week e-mailing list: "It's a \$2-\$5 game in Las Vegas. Your opponent is a typical regular player at the stakes. You're playing \$1,000 stacks. A player opens for \$20 from three off the button. You call in the cutoff with K<sup>TM</sup>|Q<sup>TM</sup>. The blinds fold. There's \$47 in the pot. The flop comes T<sup>TM</sup>9<sup>TM</sup>6<sup>TM</sup>. Your opponent bets \$30. What should you do?"

\*\*\*Raise. This is a dynamic flop that your opponent, an out-of-position pre-flop raiser, should be checking a lot. But if this player is like most at 2-5, there's a good chance he's unaware of these subtleties, or he is aware, but he makes so much money firing barrels he's going to fire away until given a reason not to." So if you're an experienced player, you'll realize that on the flop you have two over, a gutshot, and a backdoor flush draw, which is a lot of equity to see a turn in position with.

Book Review: The Course: Serious Holdem Strategy for Smart Players by Ed Miller 303 pages To be released on 4/28/2015 This is the ninth book written by Ed Miller, concerning Texas Hold<sup>TM</sup>Em poker cash games. Some of the earlier books were written in concert with other authors, but all the recent ones were written solely by Miller, and concern the play of the no limit, cash version of the game. Ed is a very bright, well-educated fellow, very experienced in \$1-2, \$2-5 and \$5-10 no limit games as played in Las Vegas, and across the country. He is a highly respected player, author and teacher. The Course is designed for players at these levels, to enable them to win the games they currently play, and perhaps move up a level successfully. New concepts are presented in an interesting and coherent manner, and many are new ideas that even very experienced players may not have considered before. Ed has a unique ability to see what others don't know or understand, and to lead them to the right questions to ask, and to the right answers. That ability shows up in this book. While many of the concepts are not simple, Ed presents them in an understandable way that makes them easy to absorb and retain, and put into your game. There is

virtually no math to speak of, though the needed math concepts are woven into the material seamlessly. Math-phobics need not fear! An over-riding theme throughout the book is the idea that almost all low-level Hold'em players at these games play far too many hands, a fact which we need to understand and use advantageously. This central idea shows up one way or another in every one of the skills throughout the book. The Course is arranged into three basic sections; one each for \$1-2, \$2-5, and \$5-10 NLHE.

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