

## FOLD EQUITY TOOLKIT

### HOW TO TURN PRESSURE INTO PROFIT IN POKER

Author: Terry Wood-[POKERRAILBIRD.COM](http://POKERRAILBIRD.COM)

Email: [terrywood@pokerrailbird.com](mailto:terrywood@pokerrailbird.com)



## *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

<b>SECTION I:</b> Core Concepts	Page 3
<b>SECTION II:</b> The Buff Decision Matrix	Page 5
<b>SECTION III:</b> Fold Equity Math	Page 7
<b>SECTION IV:</b> Practice Hand Scenario	Page 9
<b>SECTION V:</b> Resources & Next Steps	Page 11

## **Fold Equity Toolkit**

### **Section I: Core Concepts**

---

#### **What Is Fold Equity?**

**Fold equity** is the value you gain when there's a chance your opponent will fold to your bet or raise. It turns non-showdown hands into profitable plays — not because you win at showdown, but because you *make them fold*.

When you bluff, you're relying on fold equity.

But not every bluff has fold equity — and not every player can be bluffed.

---

#### **When You *Do* Have Fold Equity:**

- ✓ Your opponent is capable of folding
  - ✓ The board favors your perceived range (not theirs)
  - ✓ You're in position or have betting initiative
  - ✓ Stack sizes are large enough to apply real pressure
  - ✓ Your table image is tight, competent, or unpredictable
  - ✓ The pot size is big enough that folding saves your opponent real money
- 

#### **When You *Don't* Have Fold Equity:**

- ✗ Your opponent is a calling station
  - ✗ The board hits their range squarely (e.g., draw-heavy boards vs loose players)
  - ✗ You're short-stacked and can't threaten future bets
  - ✗ Your image is wild, reckless, or tilted
  - ✗ You've shown down too many bluffs recently
-

**Key Insight:**

**Bluffs fail not because bluffing is wrong — but because fold equity didn't exist.**

Great players know how to recognize fold equity.

Poor players bet and *hope*.

## Section II: The Bluff Decision Matrix

### ***Should You Bluff Here?***

Bluffing isn't about courage — it's about timing, pressure, and fold equity.

Before you bluff, run through this checklist. If you can't check at least **three or four boxes**, don't bluff. You're likely lighting chips on fire.

---

#### **Fold Equity Checklist:**

- **Is this player type likely to fold in general?** (e.g., TAGs, Nits—not LAGs or stations)
  - **Has this opponent shown fold discipline today?** (Have they folded to pressure or chased everything?)
  - **Have they recently lost a hand or shown tilt signs?** (Frustration lowers fold equity)
  - Do you have blockers to strong hands?
  - Does the board favor *your* perceived range more than theirs?
  - **How well does the board connect with how they've been playing?** (e.g., have they been chasing draws or playing suited connectors?)
  - Are they out of position?
  - Do you have some equity if called? (Backdoor draws, overcards, etc.)
  - Is the pot big enough for your bet to apply real pressure?
  - Do **you** have enough chips behind to threaten follow-up aggression? (SPR matters)
  - Is **your opponent** deep enough to fold — or are they too short-stacked?
  - Has your opponent already committed a **large portion of their stack**, making them pot-committed or emotionally tied to the hand?
-

### ***Fold Equity by Opponent Type***

<b>Opponent Type</b>	<b>How Often They Fold Recommended Bluff Frequency</b>	
<b>Nit</b>	Very Often	High
<b>Tight-Aggressive (TAG)</b>	Often	Moderate
<b>Loose-Aggressive (LAG)</b>	Rare	Low
<b>Calling Station</b>	Almost Never	Never

---

### ***Key Insight:***

#### **Bluffs don't work unless fold equity exists.**

Great players know when pressure creates value.

Weak players bluff because they “feel” it's time.

Bluffing into the wrong opponent, on the wrong board, with the wrong stack depth...

...isn't strategy — it's a donation.

## Section III: Fold Equity Math

### ***Turn Pressure Into Profit — With Numbers That Work***

You don't need a calculator at the table.

But you do need to understand the basic math behind fold equity — and how it transforms marginal hands into profitable bluffs.

---

### The Fold Equity Formula

**Fold Equity = (% chance opponent folds) × (current pot size)**

This gives you the *expected value* of your opponent folding.

If that value is greater than your bet size, your bluff is mathematically profitable — even if you lose every time they call.

---

### Quick Example (Fully Explained):

- Pot size = **\$100**
  - You bet = **\$75**
  - If your opponent folds, you win the pot: **\$100**
  - If they call and you're bluffing with zero equity, you lose **\$75**
- 

### Break-Even Bluff Frequency Formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Break-even \%} &= \text{Risk} / (\text{Risk} + \text{Reward}) \\ &= \$75 / (\$75 + \$100) \\ &= \$75 / \$175 \\ &= \mathbf{0.428} \text{ or } \mathbf{42.8\%} \end{aligned}$$


---

### Interpretation:

Your bluff must succeed **at least 42.8%** of the time to break even.

If you estimate your opponent folds more than 42.8%, the bluff is **+EV**.

If they fold less often — the bluff loses money over time.

---

Now let's say you estimate a **40% fold chance**:

**Fold equity = 40% × \$100 = \$40**

But you're risking **\$75** to win **\$40** in fold equity.

→ The bluff is **not profitable** unless you have **additional equity** (like a flush draw, straight draw, or two overcards).

---

 **Rule of Thumb:**

- When bluffing with **zero showdown value**, your fold equity must outweigh your risk
  - The **bigger your bet** relative to the pot, the **more often it needs to work**
  - If you have **some equity** (e.g., a draw), you can afford a lower fold percentage
- 

 ***Important Reminder:***

**Bluffing only works when your opponent folds — not when they “should” fold.**

The math matters, but so does the player.

Know when the numbers line up — and when the human across from you won't.

## Section IV: Practice Hand Scenario

### *Apply What You've Learned – One Hand at a Time*

---

#### The Setup:

You're in a \$2/\$5 cash game with \$700 behind.

Everyone folds to you on the **button**.

You look down at:

**K♠ 9♠**

You raise to **\$20**.

The **big blind** (a tight-aggressive regular with about \$600 behind) calls.

---

#### The Flop:

**A♦ 7♠ 2♣**

Pot: \$42

BB checks.

You consider a **continuation bet of \$30**.

---

#### What Do You Do?

Let's walk through the fold equity thought process.

---

#### Run the Fold Equity Checklist:

- **Is this player type likely to fold?** → TAGs fold more than most
- **Have they shown fold discipline today?** → Yes (tight postflop so far)
- **Have they lost a big hand or tilted recently?** → No
- **Do you have blockers to strong hands?** → Not really (no Ace, no 2 or 7)
- **Does the board favor your perceived range?** → Yes (you raised preflop; Ace favors you)
- **How does this board connect with their likely range?** → Likely missed it (unless holding Ax or a set)
- **Are they out of position?** → Yes

- **Do you have equity if called?** → Backdoor spade draw + two overs
- **Is the pot big enough for a fold to matter?** → Yes (\$42)
- **Do you have chips to pressure future streets?** → Yes (\$670 behind)
- **Is your opponent deep enough to fold?** → Yes (\$580 behind)
- **Have they committed a large % of their stack?** → No (only \$5 preflop)

 **You check 10 out of 12 boxes.**

---

### **Break-Even Math:**

You're betting **\$30** to win **\$42**.

**Break-even % =  $30 / (30 + 42) = 30 / 72 \approx 41.7\%$**

Do you think this player folds **at least 42%** of the time here?

If so — it's a **profitable bluff**.

If not — and you think they'll float with any Ace, or call wide — you may want to check back.

---

### ***Final Thought:***

This is how pros think at the table — not by memorizing charts,  
but by **evaluating the player, the board, the math, and the situation in real time.**

Bluffing isn't reckless. It's calculated risk.

## Section V: Resources & Next Steps

### *You've Learned the What — Now Master the When*





Bluffing without fold equity is a leak.

Bluffing with fold equity is an edge.









Now that you understand the difference, here's where to go next.

---

#### Watch the Fold Equity Video Series:

-  Fold Equity Demystified: Turn Folds Into Profit:  
 <https://youtu.be/1Urly309DDY>
  - Learn the core principles of fold equity and how it turns marginal hands into winners.
  -  Fold Equity Exposed: The No. 1 Mistake Killing Your Bluffs  
 [https://youtu.be/Tgrm\\_E-9lhA](https://youtu.be/Tgrm_E-9lhA)  
Understand the cost of bluffing in the wrong spots — and how to fix it.
- 

#### Dive Deeper With Articles on [PokerRailbird.com](https://www.poker-railbird.com):

-  [Poker Player Styles of Play](#):  [Full Article Here.](#)  
Know who you're up against — and who you can't bluff.
  -  [Pattern Recognition in Live Poker](#):  [Read Now.](#)  
Use betting trends, tendencies, and history to spot fold equity in action.
  -  [Do the Cards Matter in Poker?](#)  [Full Article Here.](#)  
The deeper truth behind card-driven vs. context-driven play.
  -  [The Mindset & Skills of a World-Class Poker Player](#)  [Read Now.](#)  
Learn what separates strong players from strategic thinkers.
- 

#### Want More Toolkits Like This?

Join the [PokerRailbird](#) email list to get:

- Exclusive downloads

- Early access to videos
- Behind-the-scenes livestream invites
- Free strategy guides and worksheets

 [Sign up here](#)

---

 ***Final Thought:***

Fold equity isn't just a concept — it's a mindset.  
When you understand who will fold, when they'll fold, and why...  
You stop gambling — and start playing real poker.