# Chapter 8: Advanced Board Texture

The project of this chapter is to continue the work begun in Chapter 2 and fully analyze flop texture. The texture categories defined in Chapter 2 were based on the suitedness, connectedness, and rank character of flops, with emphasis on the types and number of possible straight draws and the mixture of high, middle, and low cards. The goal now is to turn that raw information into an understanding of the play dynamic on different board textures. We begin by revisiting the overall flop texture summary chart (Table 2.3 in Chapter 2), which organizes flops first by connectedness and subdivides within each connectedness category based on rank character. Table 8.1 displays the unpaired, no straight section of that chart – Categories 0-0 through 0-6. We will essentially tackle Table 8.1 twice, once to discuss rainbow versions and once to discuss suited versions. Boards where a straight is possible (Categories 1-0 through 3-1) also display a range of drawiness possibilities. For various reasons they require their own section, which immediately follows the straight-free boards. Monotone and paired flops are each unique, with a play dynamic that is mostly independent of secondary characteristics, and each has its own section following the unpaired flops.

As discussed in Chapter 2, within the unpaired flops there are two key classifications – **wetness** and **heaviness**. These two aspects define a **two-axis system** for analyzing board texture. Wetness, or drawiness, is the degree to which a board makes draws to straights and flushes possible; heaviness is the degree to which a board interacts with the hands in people's preflop ranges. Wetness is mostly a function of the connectedness and suitedness of a board and heaviness is mostly a function of its rank character. Generally, poker players conflate and combine these aspects, calling a board "wet" when it exhibits one and/or both characteristics and "dry" when it exhibits neither or when the one it does have is less important than the one it does not. Although it is a bit more complex, a two-axis system does a better job of describing exactly how board texture should impact our post-flop strategy. Therefore, following the introduction of a few major general concepts we will use a weighted preflop range and the combinatorics from Chapters 2 and 3 to condense Table 8.1 into twelve categories, four for the wetness axis (dry, medium-dry, medium-wet, and wet) and three for the heaviness axis (heavy, average, and light)

## General Concepts

Reading Table 8.1 along the top from left to right, we see the progression from dryness to wetness among ace-high boards, moving from AK6 to AQ8 to AT8. There is a wide disparity between AK6r, which has no semi-bluffing hands and AT8s, a board full of draws with various amounts of equity, where every bluff is a semi-bluff because it is barely possible to have no equity. As we move from top to bottom we see the progression from heaviness to lightness, moving within each connectedness category from ace-high to king-high to queen high to further down. AQ9 and J82 have the same connectedness characteristics – the exact same number and type of straight draw possibilities - but they play differently for several reasons. Lower, lighter boards come with two key characteristics that differentiate them from higher boards with the same connectedness.

One, in most preflop ranges, the ratio of unpaired to paired hands is significantly higher among low and middle cards than among broadway cards[1]. That is, people play KK** more than 55** and K*** more than 5***, but the difference is much greater with the paired hands. In fact, surprisingly, the 35% vpip weighted range used to simulate typical opponent tendencies in this chapter has T and J as the second and third most popular unpaired cards. One cause is the fact that many more KK** and QQ** combinations are in people's ranges, such that low-middle cards are the sidecards on a pocket pair more often (i.e. KKT* is more common than KTT*), but even among unpaired hands, the hands with a single J-9 in them are more connected on average and are actually higher weighted overall than unpaired hands with a king. This does not mean that the recommendations say anything as foolish as "T987 > KQJT" or "T742>K742," only that slightly more of the K*** hands are unplayable disconnected trash like K742. The full analysis of these frequencies is presented in the Paired Board section at the end of this chapter, where it gives insight into the likelihood of people having trips on those boards. For now, the point is that although AQ9r and J82r have the exact same basic hand-flop

[1] Particularly with respect to low cards/pairs and KK**-QQ** and K***-Q*** - the reverse is true with respect to A***/AA** and K***-Q***/KK**-QQ** - most QQ+ are highly weighted in ranges, but with unpaired hands the fact that suited aces are much higher weighted than suited kings and queens makes Axx flops more top pair-heavy than Kxx and Qxx flops.