



# Dogfighting Tactics for Tournament Poker

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**T**he oldest manual for aerial combat is the *Dicta Boelcke*. It was written by the first German ace of World War I, Oswald Boelcke, who also trained the famous Red Baron. Many pilots believe Boelcke's tactics remain relevant today, not to mention their effectiveness in tournament poker. Here are six of the original principles:

**Try to secure the upper hand before attacking, and keep the sun behind you.**

Begin to create your table image early, and gather intelligence about your adversaries right from the start. Accumulate chips/ammunition through some "small pot" play before launching a major

attack. Use all of these resources to gain the advantage, and don't let them see you coming.

**Always continue with an attack you have begun.**

Exhibiting weakness by backing off from an assault will only encourage opponents to strike back. Show that you are willing to press your attacks by betting pre-flop, post-flop, on the turn, and on the river. These do not all need to be large bursts of fire to show you are committed once you engage the enemy. A bet that is half the size of the pot will do. Even though this strategy may not win the immediate hand, it will probably pay off later. Not many players want to bluff or take on someone who they know will not back off

and cost them a lot of chips.

**Only fire at close range, and then only when the opponent is properly in your sights.**

Pick your moments and be clear about your plan. Firing haphazardly into a squadron of planes is a good way to bleed off chips without any payoff. Zero in on your specific target and get him squarely in your crosshairs.

**You should always keep your eye on your opponent, and never be deceived by ruses.**

Don't relax or become overconfident just because of some initial success. Diligently observe, gather information, and be alert to any changes at the table. Never underestimate your adversaries, or assume you know where they are located... or where they might suddenly appear.

**In any type of attack, it is essential to assail your opponent from behind.**

Utilize positional advantage. Keep your opponent on the run by retaining the lead in the hand. Direct assaults will be more efficient in

the long run than by being overly clever and creative.

**If your opponent dives on you, do not try to get around his attack, but fly to meet it.**

Either commit to the fight or fold. If you decide to fight, counterattack your adversary. Turning to face the assault could force the attacker onto the defensive.

Dogfighting tactics involve staying alert and acting decisively, mixed with an element of surprise. These same approaches relate directly to

tournament poker play. The weak and non-committal don't fare well, but the bold prevail and become "aces."

*Michael Rome can be found at his poker philosophy website: [www.romepoker.net](http://www.romepoker.net)*

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