Detailed Briefing Document: Profitable Bluffing Strategies in Poker

This briefing document summarizes key insights from "The Players You NEED to Bluff (Most People Get It Backwards)," focusing on identifying the most profitable opponents to bluff in poker. The core argument challenges conventional wisdom, suggesting that players often misidentify optimal bluffing targets.

I. Bluffing Loose vs. Tight Players

**Conventional Wisdom vs. Reality:** Most poker players intuitively believe that tight players are easier to bluff because they play fewer hands and are perceived as more risk-averse. However, the source argues this is "dead wrong" and that "almost everybody thinks about bluffing completely backwards." The more profitable player to bluff is actually the **loose player**.

**Key Concepts and Findings:**

* **Loose Player (Lucani Example):**
* **Pre-flop Range:** A loose player like Lucani calls 3-bets with a wider range, including "gapped suited connected cards" and "partials of these offsuit broadways," making his range "a couple pips wider than optimal."
* **River Range Strength:** Because Lucani's initial range is wide, his range on the river is comparatively weaker. "41% of his range on this river is going to be top pair plus."
* **Equilibrium Folding:** In equilibrium, a loose player is expected to fold weaker hands. Lucani is "never supposed to fold an over pair," and is "supposed to call about 75% of the time" with top pair. Crucially, if he folds top pair "more than 25% of the time or starts folding second pair more than 60% of the time that our bluffs are going to print."
* **Bluffing Profitability:** Against Lucani, even with a bricked King-high flush draw, jamming the river as a bluff is highly profitable. Assuming he never folds overpairs, calls top pair 75% of the time, and weak pairs 20% of the time, the bluff "absolutely print[s]," yielding "nearly $61." This is because "we just don't need to get him to fold that many strong hands to have a profitable bluff."
* **Tight Player (Nitty Nedward Example):**
* **Pre-flop Range:** Nitty Nedward's range after calling a 3-bet is "much tighter," including "only the best suited aces" and folding "garbage suited aces" and "garbage suited connectors."
* **River Range Strength:** Due to his tight pre-flop play, Nitty Nedward arrives at the river with a significantly stronger range. "55% of Niti Edward's range on this river is going to be top pair plus," compared to Lucani's 41%.
* **Equilibrium Folding:** Because his range is so strong, Nitty Nedward is "supposed to make bigger folds" in equilibrium. He is "supposed to fold over pairs 20% of the time" and "top pair nearly 57% of the time."
* **Bluffing Profitability:** Bluffing Nitty Nedward in the same scenario results in a loss of "nearly $61." The source states, "I don't feel good about bluffing a guy when he's supposed to fold top pair 60% of the time in equilibrium." Against a tight player, you "are counting on him folding top pair and some over pairs in order to have a profitable bluff," which is less likely in practice than getting a loose player to fold weaker holdings.

**Conclusion on Loose vs. Tight:** "It seems a little counterintuitive at first but the more profitable player to bluff on this river is actually going to be the loose player rather than the tight player because a loose player gets there with such a weak range we just don't need to get him to fold that many strong hands to have a profitable bluff."

II. Bluffing Aggressive vs. Passive Players

The analysis extends to bluffing aggressive versus passive players, again finding a counterintuitive result.

**Key Concepts and Findings (Aggro Agnes vs. Passive Pascal):**

* **Aggressive Player (Aggro Agnes):**
* **Pre-flop Aggression:** Aggro Agnes has an "aggressive" 4-betting range, including suited broadways and specific aces like A5 suited.
* **Post-flop Aggression:** She plays aggressively on the flop (raising sets 80% of the time, top pair 25%, big combo draws 80%) and turn (raising flushes 80%, sets 20%, blocker bluffs 20%).
* **River Range Strength:** Due to her consistent aggression and 4-betting, Aggro Agnes's river range is relatively weak, with "only 11% of his range [being] over pairs plus." She has "zero combos of over pairs here getting to the river."
* **Bluffing Profitability:** Jamming 2x pot on the river against Aggro Agnes is highly profitable, winning "nearly $105." This is because "his range is so weak he's probably going to be undercalling relative to equilibrium." The player can bluff "almost all the time" with non-flush hands.
* **Passive Player (Passive Pascal):**
* **Pre-flop Passivity:** Passive Pascal has a "reasonable range" but is "not as aggressive with his for bets," lacking hands like ace queen suited, jacks, tens, and A5 suited.
* **Post-flop Passivity:** He plays more passively on the flop (sets raise 40%, top pair 12.5%) and turn (flushes raise 40%, sets 10%, blocker bluffs 10%).
* **River Range Strength:** Because of his passivity, Passive Pascal's range on the river is much stronger, containing more hands that check back. "33% of his range is going to be over pairs plus and 22% of his range is going to be sets and flushes." He has significantly more combos of flushes, sets, and overpairs than Aggro Agnes.
* **Bluffing Profitability:** Against Passive Pascal, the same bluff results in losing "$53." The source notes, "we're just rarely rarely jamming on this river and when we are it is going to be for value." This is because "Passive Pascal's range is so strong he's probably going to be overalling relative to equilibrium."

**Conclusion on Aggressive vs. Passive:** "Once again we can see kind of counterintuitive going to be more profitable to bluff the aggressive player than the passive player."

III. Bluffing as the Pre-flop Caller (Against Aggressive vs. Passive Opponents)

The document further examines bluffing when the player is the pre-flop caller, reinforcing the previous findings.

**Key Concepts and Findings (Aggro Agnes vs. Passive Pascal as 3-bettor):**

* **Aggressive 3-bettor (Aggro Agnes):**
* **3-bet Range:** Aggro Agnes has a "wide three bet range on the button."
* **Turn Double Barrel Range:** When double barreling the turn, her betting range includes a high percentage of overpairs (100%), top pairs (95%), draws (90%), and even "air" (70-75%).
* **Turn Bluffing Profitability (Check-raise Jam):** Check-raise jamming the turn as a bluff against Aggro Agnes is highly profitable, printing "nearly $21." This is because "his range is so wide and relatively weak." The player can check-raise bluff "nearly 33% of the time," turning many weak hands into profitable bluffs.
* **Passive 3-bettor (Passive Pascal):**
* **3-bet Range:** Passive Pascal's 3-bet range is "a little bit tighter" than Aggro Agnes.
* **Turn Double Barrel Range:** When double barreling, he bets overpairs (100%), but is more selective with top pairs (75%, checking back weaker ones), draws (50%), and especially "air" (25%). His range that bets on the turn is "63% top pair plus," making it much stronger than Aggro Agnes's.
* **Turn Bluffing Profitability (Check-raise Jam):** Check-raise jamming the turn as a bluff against Passive Pascal results in losing "$164." The player is "just never jamming as a bluff because Passive Pascal's range is just too strong." In equilibrium, Passive Pascal is supposed to fold overpairs (15%) and top pairs (43%) in this spot, but in live play, he's assumed to "underfold relative to equilibrium."

**Overall Conclusion:** The source consistently argues for bluffing players whose ranges are wider and consequently weaker, even if they appear aggressive. These players, by virtue of their wider ranges, will arrive at later streets with more marginal holdings, making them more susceptible to well-timed bluffs. Conversely, tight or passive players, who narrow their ranges significantly, will typically have stronger hands on later streets, making bluffs against them less profitable and more reliant on them folding strong hands that they are less likely to fold in practice. The advice is to "learn what players to bluff all the time [and] what players that we should probably just not be bluffing all that much."