Which type of player is more profitable to bluff: loose or tight?

Counterintuitively, loose players are generally more profitable to bluff than tight players. While many assume tight players, who play fewer hands, would be easier to push off a pot, loose players tend to reach later stages of a hand with a wider and, consequently, weaker range of hands. This means you don't need them to fold exceptionally strong hands to make your bluff profitable; they're more likely to have weak or mid-strength holdings that they will fold. In contrast, a tight player's range at the river is much stronger, requiring them to fold top pair or even overpairs for a bluff to succeed, which is a less reliable outcome.

Why is a loose player's range at the river considered weaker?

A loose player, like "Loose Lucani" in the examples, will continue with a much wider variety of starting hands, including suited connectors, gapped suited cards, and various offsuit broadways. While this gives them more total hand combinations at the river, a smaller percentage of those combinations will be strong hands (top pair or better). For instance, only 41% of Lucani's river range was top pair or better, compared to a tighter player's 55%. This wider, weaker range means they are more susceptible to bluffs, as they hold fewer hands that can confidently call a large bet.

Is it ever profitable to bluff a tight player?

Bluffing a tight player like "Nitty Nedward" is generally less profitable. Because a tight player's pre-flop range is already condensed to stronger holdings, their range at the river is significantly stronger on a percentage basis (e.g., 55% top pair plus for Nedward vs. 41% for Lucani). For a bluff against a tight player to be profitable, they would need to fold a higher percentage of their strong hands (top pair or even overpairs) than a loose player. While equilibrium models might suggest they *should* fold some strong hands in certain situations, in practice, it's less likely they will, making bluffs riskier and less profitable.

Which type of player is more profitable to bluff: aggressive or passive?

Similar to the loose vs. tight dynamic, aggressive players are more profitable to bluff than passive players. This is because aggressive players, such as "Aggro Agnes," tend to play their strong hands very aggressively early in the hand, often raising or 4-betting pre-flop. This action prunes their range, meaning they arrive at later streets with a comparatively weaker overall range, consisting more of air, draws, or weaker pairs. Passive players, on the other hand, tend to call more often with strong hands, retaining a higher percentage of monsters in their range for later streets.

How does an aggressive player's pre-flop and flop/turn play affect their river range?

Aggressive players, by being more inclined to 4-bet pre-flop with stronger holdings or raise significantly on the flop/turn with sets or strong draws, effectively narrow their range of hands that reach the river. If they play their strong hands so assertively early, fewer of those premium hands will be in their range on the river. This leaves them with a higher proportion of weaker hands like top pair, underpairs, or air by the river, making them more vulnerable to bluffs. For example, Aggro Agnes had only 11% overpairs+ at the river, compared to Passive Pascal's 33%.

Why is it less profitable to bluff a passive player?

Passive players, such as "Passive Pascal," tend to check-call or call more often with their strong hands in early streets. This means that by the river, their range contains a significantly higher percentage of strong value hands (sets, flushes, overpairs). Because their range is so robust, you would need them to fold a much higher percentage of these strong hands for your bluff to be profitable. They are less likely to fold powerful holdings, making bluffs against them less successful and more costly.

Does being the pre-flop caller or aggressor change who is more profitable to bluff?

The principle remains largely the same whether you are the pre-flop aggressor or caller. When you are the pre-flop caller and the opponent is the aggressor, an aggressive opponent's range (like "Aggro Agnes") will still be wider and contain more bluffs and air on later streets compared to a passive opponent ("Passive Pascal"). The aggressive opponent will bet more often with their air and draws, which means by the turn or river, a check-raise bluff can be highly effective because their range is diluted with non-value hands. A passive opponent, in contrast, will have a much stronger betting range, making bluffs against them less appealing.

What is the core takeaway regarding bluffing strategy?

The main theme is that most players think about bluffing "backwards." The most profitable players to bluff are often those who play loosely or aggressively. These players, through their wider or more action-oriented play, end up with comparatively weaker or more diluted ranges on later streets, making them more susceptible to folds when facing large bets. Conversely, tight or passive players tend to arrive at later streets with a higher proportion of strong hands, making bluffs against them less effective because they are less likely to fold their valuable holdings. The key is to understand how a player's tendencies affect the composition of their range at different stages of the hand.