Poker Sizing Strategies: A Study Guide

I. Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the "poker disease" the source material describes, and why is it problematic for players?
2. Explain the concept of an "8X check-raise" as discussed in the source. Why is it effective against recreational players, particularly on the flop?
3. When should a player consider using a 1/3 pot-sized river bet as a bluff, especially against a "sticky" opponent?
4. Why might a smaller 1/3 pot-sized river bet be advantageous for value betting, even if it seems counterintuitive to equilibrium play?
5. What is a "10% pot-size C-bet on an Ace-high board in a 4-bet pot"? When is this strategy recommended?
6. How does the concept of "fold equity" relate to using large bluff sizes, particularly when an opponent is "capped"?
7. What is the primary reason the source advocates for an "overbet or check strategy" on Ace-high static boards when you are the pre-flop raiser?
8. According to the source, what does it mean for an opponent to be "capped," and why is this state advantageous for the player applying pressure?
9. When bluffing with a hand like King Jack suited on an Ace-high board in a 4-bet pot, why is a small C-bet size beneficial?
10. The source uses the analogy of squirrels on a seesaw to describe equilibrium. What is the core message this analogy conveys about exploiting opponents?

II. Answer Key

1. The "poker disease" is the belief that "that size isn't a thing," meaning that specific bet sizes don't matter or shouldn't be used. This belief is problematic because it prevents players from understanding and exploiting unconventional sizing strategies that can generate significant EV (Expected Value) against opponents who make mistakes.
2. An "8X check-raise" refers to raising an opponent's bet by approximately eight times the original bet size. It's effective against recreational players on the flop because they are inelastic (unwilling to fold) on the flop and tend to make calling mistakes, over-calling with top pair, flush draws, and straight draws due to unfamiliarity with such large sizes.
3. A 1/3 pot-sized river bet as a bluff is advisable against a "sticky" opponent when you have a weak hand, like seven-high, and believe the opponent will not fold their one-pair hands (like Queen-X) to a large jam. This small size can induce folds from weaker hands like high-card flush draws while avoiding over-bluffing strong value hands.
4. A smaller 1/3 pot-sized river bet for value is advantageous in live poker because opponents rarely check-raise the river as a bluff in three-bet pots. This allows the player to extract value from a wider range of the opponent's weaker calling hands (like King-Queen, Queen-Jack) that would fold to a larger bet, exploiting their tendency not to bluff-raise the river.
5. A "10% pot-size C-bet on an Ace-high board in a 4-bet pot" is a very small continuation bet. This strategy is recommended when you have a strong hand like Pocket Aces on a dry, static board, as it forces opponents to call with weaker hands like Kings, Queens, Jacks, or Tens, maximizing value from hands that are drawing dead or nearly so.
6. Fold equity is the probability that an opponent will fold to your bet. When an opponent is "capped" (their range is limited, generally to weaker hands), and you are deep-stacked, you have more fold equity. This allows you to use larger bluff sizes with less actual equity in your hand because the increased fold equity compensates for the lack of raw hand strength.
7. The source advocates for an "overbet or check strategy" on Ace-high static boards as the pre-flop raiser because these boards are very dry, and opponents are unlikely to raise off their strong hands if you bet small. Overbetting maximizes value against their Ace-X and 9-X holdings that won't fold, while checking back allows you to gather information and apply pressure later when their range becomes clearer and more capped.
8. An opponent is "capped" when their range of possible hands is limited, typically meaning they don't have very strong hands (e.g., they would have raised pre-flop or on an earlier street with their strong holdings). This state is advantageous because it means the opponent is less likely to have hands that can call large bets, increasing your fold equity and making large bluffs more profitable.
9. When bluffing with a hand like King Jack suited on an Ace-high board in a 4-bet pot, a small C-bet size is beneficial because it allows your opponent to continue with weaker pairs like Pocket Queens or Pocket Tens on the flop. This sets up a situation where you can then get those hands to fold on later streets (the turn or river) by applying more pressure.
10. The seesaw analogy illustrates that poker equilibrium is a delicate balance. If one side (the opponent) consistently deviates from equilibrium by making predictable mistakes (e.g., not raising often enough, or calling too much), the player can exploit this imbalance to their advantage, making more money than they would in a perfectly balanced game.

III. Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the concept of "inelasticity" in poker, as described in the source. Discuss how recreational players' inelasticity at different streets (pre-flop, flop, turn, river) influences the choice of bet sizing for both value and bluffing, providing specific examples from the text.
2. Compare and contrast the application of small (e.g., 1/3 pot or 10% pot) and large (e.g., 8X or 1.5X overbet) bet sizes in different poker scenarios. Discuss the strategic rationale behind using each type of sizing for both value and bluffing, referencing at least three distinct examples from the provided text.
3. The source emphasizes exploiting opponents' tendencies rather than strictly adhering to equilibrium play in live poker. Explain why deviations from "solver-approved" strategies can be highly profitable against recreational players, focusing on the specific mistakes these players commonly make that allow for exploitation.
4. Discuss the critical role of "being deep" and an "opponent being capped" in executing large bluffs, as highlighted in the source. Explain how these two conditions create opportunities for increased fold equity and allow players to run "big boy airball Bluffs." Provide a detailed example from the text to support your explanation.
5. Evaluate the strategic importance of information gathering through "checking your range" against recreational players. How does this passive play on earlier streets enable more effective aggressive plays on later streets, particularly when combined with an understanding of opponent tendencies like check-raising?

IV. Glossary of Key Terms

* **8X Check-Raise:** A check-raise that is approximately eight times the size of the opponent's initial bet. Used to exploit recreational players' inelasticity and calling mistakes on the flop.
* **Ace-High Board:** A community card board where the highest card is an Ace. Often considered "dry" or "static" if other cards are low and unconnected.
* **C-bet (Continuation Bet):** A bet made on the flop by the player who made the last aggressive action on the pre-flop street (usually the pre-flop raiser).
* **Capped Range:** An opponent's range of hands that is limited and generally does not include the strongest possible hands. This occurs when an opponent would have taken a more aggressive action (like raising) with their strong hands, but chose to call or check instead.
* **Cut-off (CO):** A poker table position located to the right of the button.
* **Deep-Stacked (Deep):** A situation where players have a large number of chips relative to the blinds, allowing for larger bets and more complex post-flop play. Often expressed in Big Blinds (BB).
* **Equilibrium (in Poker):** A theoretical state in poker where no player can improve their Expected Value (EV) by unilaterally changing their strategy, assuming all other players are also playing optimally. Also referred to as Game Theory Optimal (GTO).
* **EV (Expected Value):** The average amount of money a specific action is expected to win or lose over the long run. Positive EV actions are profitable.
* **Fold Equity:** The portion of a bet's profitability that comes from the opponent folding their hand, rather than from the equity of your hand when called.
* **Four-Bet Pot:** A pot where there have been four betting actions pre-flop (e.g., an open, a 3-bet, and a 4-bet).
* **Flush Draw:** A hand that needs one more card of the same suit to complete a flush (five cards of the same suit).
* **GTO (Game Theory Optimal):** See Equilibrium.
* **Gutshot (Gutshot Straight Draw):** A straight draw that requires one specific card in the middle of a sequence to complete the straight (e.g., holding 5-6-8-9 needs a 7).
* **Hijack (HJ):** A poker table position located to the right of the cut-off.
* **Inelastic:** In poker, refers to an opponent's tendency to call bets frequently, even large ones, indicating a low willingness to fold.
* **Linear Range:** A range of hands in poker that is weighted towards the strongest holdings, typically including all strong value hands and some strong bluffs.
* **Overbet:** A bet that is larger than the size of the current pot (e.g., a 1.5X overbet is 1.5 times the pot size).
* **Pre-flop Raiser (PFR):** The player who made the last raise before the flop.
* **Rainbow Board:** A flop (or later street) where all three (or more) community cards are of different suits, meaning no flush draw is possible.
* **Range (of Hands):** The full spectrum of possible hands an opponent might hold in a given situation.
* **Recreational Player (Fish):** A less experienced or skilled poker player, often characterized by predictable tendencies and exploitable mistakes.
* **Single-Raised Pot:** A pot where there was only one raise before the flop.
* **Solver:** Software that calculates Game Theory Optimal (GTO) strategies for poker, often used by professional players to analyze spots.
* **SPR (Stack-to-Pot Ratio):** The ratio of a player's remaining effective stack size to the current pot size. A high SPR indicates a deep stack relative to the pot.
* **Stab:** To make a bet, often a relatively small one, after an opponent has checked.
* **Static Board:** A board where future cards are unlikely to significantly change the relative strengths of hands or create many new draws.
* **Sticky Opponent:** An opponent who tends to call frequently and is reluctant to fold, even to large bets or multiple bets.
* **Three-Bet Pot:** A pot where there have been three betting actions pre-flop (e.g., an open, and then a 3-bet).
* **Value Betting/Value:** Betting with a strong hand that you expect to be called by weaker hands, thereby maximizing your winnings.