Poker Strategy Briefing: Exploiting Opponent Tendencies in 3-Bet Pots Out of Position

This briefing document summarizes key strategies and insights for playing 3-bet pots out of position, primarily focusing on exploiting common mistakes made by opponents. The central theme revolves around a "check-range" strategy on the flop to induce errors and maximize value or fold equity.

I. The Core "Check-Range" Strategy on the Flop (Out of Position)

The primary recommendation for playing 3-bet pots out of position (OOP) after your opponent calls your 3-bet is to **check your entire range on the flop**. This seemingly counter-intuitive strategy is presented as "a strategy so simple you won't believe how effective it is and how easily it exploits the Tendencies of the players you play against every day."

**Why Check Your Entire Range?**

* **Opponent Mistakes vs. Check:** The core argument is that opponents make "way more mistakes versus a check than versus a bet here." The three biggest mistakes identified are:

1. **Over-stabbing:** Opponents bet too frequently, especially with weaker hands.
2. **Telegraphing Hand Strength with Sizing:** Opponents often use distinct bet sizes to indicate hand strength (small for weak, large for strong).
3. **Failure to Protect Check-Back Range:** When opponents check back, their range becomes capped and vulnerable.

* **Solver vs. Reality:** The source highlights a significant discrepancy between solver-recommended play and actual human tendencies.
* **Solver's View on Betting Entire Range:** If you C-bet your entire range, the solver expects opponents to play reasonably, raising with strong hands (Ace Queen, Pocket Fours) and mostly calling. While some specific raises (Pocket Threes, Deuces) are unlikely in real life, it's generally a "pretty reasonable strategy that is not that far away from how most people play."
* **Solver's View on Checking Entire Range:** The solver suggests that if you check your entire range, your opponent is "supposed to be checking back nearly 85% of the time," even with strong hands like Ace Queen suited (30% check-back) and Ace King (90-97% check-back). They also primarily use a large size when they do bet.
* **Reality vs. Solver (Checking):** In reality, when you check, "the acex just gets stabbed a lot more ace4 gets bet almost always Ace Queen gets bet almost always Ace King gets bet almost always and the ace X probably just gets bet more than half the time with a flush draw out there." This "over-stabbing" is a major exploit.

II. Responding to Opponent Flop Stabs (Check-Raise Strategy)

The response to an opponent's flop stab depends heavily on their chosen bet size, which serves as a "sizing tell."

**A. Opponent Stabs Small (Wet and Dynamic Boards):**

When the opponent uses a small bet size on a wet and dynamic board, it indicates "they are just putting too many of their weak and marginal hands in the small size." This is a prime opportunity for aggression.

* **Strategy: Aggressive Check-Raising.** "I'm going to be doing a lot of raising when they choose a small size."
* **Hands to Check-Raise:"Complay for Stacks" Hands:** Very strong hands that want to get all the money in (e.g., Pocket Nines on a Jack Nine Deuce board).
* **Thick Value Hands:** Strong made hands (e.g., Pocket Kings, Pocket Aces, Ace Jack).
* **Draws:** High equity draws, especially those without showdown value (e.g., King High flush draw, Queen High straight draw).
* **Hands to Call:Thin Value Hands:** Hands that are good but not premium (e.g., Jack Ten suited, Pocket Tens).
* **Showdown Value Hands (with some equity):** Hands like Ace King or Ace Queen can call, as they often have showdown value against the weaker portion of the opponent's small-stab range.
* **Hands to Fold:** "Complete air" (e.g., Seven Six of Diamonds, Ace Four of Hearts).
* **Check-Raise Sizing:** "I would still be check raising relatively large here targeting their hands that are going to be in elastic their Ace High flush draws their open and straight draws their Jack X." The goal is to set up a "two-street game" where you can get all the money in by the turn, negating positional disadvantage. For example, check-raising to a size that leaves an SPR (Stack-to-Pot Ratio) of less than one on the turn.
* **Exception (Static/Dry Boards):** On "super static and dry" boards (e.g., Ace Seven Deuce), a smaller check-raise might be considered for a "three-street game," as there's less worry about bad turn/river cards.

**B. Opponent Stabs Big (Wet and Dynamic Boards):**

When the opponent uses a large bet size, "they just have way too many strong hands in their range." This requires a more selective approach.

* **Strategy: More Picky Check-Raising.** "I'm only going to use my strongest hands to check raise here."
* **Hands to Check-Raise:"Complay for Stacks" Hands:** (e.g., Pocket Nines, Pocket Jacks, Pocket Deuces).
* **Big Combo Draws:** Hands with significant equity against made hands (e.g., Queen Ten of Spades, Ace Deuce of Spades, King Queen of Spades). The more equity you have, the less fold equity is needed.
* **Hands to Call:Thick Value Hands:** (e.g., Ace Jack, Pocket Queens, Pocket Kings) – these are called, not raised.
* **Thin Value Hands:** (e.g., Ace Nine suited, Jack Ten suited).
* **High Equity Draws (without being combo draws):** (e.g., Ace Queen of Spades, Ace Five of Spades) – called because "we do not expect us to have much fold Equity."
* **Hands to Fold:Low Equity Draws:** (e.g., King Queen of Hearts).
* **Showdown Value Hands (weak/marginal):** (e.g., Pocket Eight, Ace King) – these are now folded, unlike against small stabs.
* **Air.**

**C. Sizing Tells and Board Texture:**

* **Wet and Dynamic Boards (e.g., Jack Nine Deuce with a flush draw):** Live players "are going to size up with their very strong but vulnerable hands sets two pair top pair over pairs Etc because they are terrified of a bad card coming in." This means:
* Small stab on wet boards = License to "check raising a ton with impunity."
* Big stab on wet boards = More caution, expect stronger hands.
* **Static and Dry Boards (e.g., Ace Seven Deuce):** Sizing tells are less reliable. Opponents "could still stab small quite a lot of the time with their sets or two pair." Be "a little bit careful about check raising a ton because they can still have some very strong hands when they choose a small size there."

III. Deviations from the Full Check-Range Strategy

Two primary scenarios warrant deviations from checking your entire flop range:

1. **Passive Opponent ("Passive Patty"):**

* If the opponent "is just going to check back some of the time with top hair or big draws," consider betting yourself with hands that don't benefit as much from a check-raise.
* **Hands to Bet:** "Top pair or over pair hands" are good candidates for a "bet bet bet line" against passive opponents, as "these hands just don't really benefit from a check raise nearly as much."
* **Hands to Still Check (Even vs. Passive):** Hands that strongly benefit from a check-raise (draws, thin value, air, "complay for stacks" like Pocket Nines) should still be checked, as the opponent will likely still stab a good amount.

1. **Shallow Stacks:**

* If effective stacks are "super shallow" (e.g., 410 effective on the flop), the benefit of check-raising is reduced because there aren't as many streets to play.
* **Strategy: More Betting Yourself.** "I would just be doing a lot more betting myself if I had it can play for Stacks hand here."
* **Hands to Bet:** "Over pair or a Jack X Type hand" can also be bet directly to get the money in over two streets.
* **Hands to Check (Still):** Air and some draws can still be checked, as a check-back from the opponent gives a "green light to Bluff very very profitable across turns and rivers."

IV. Playing the Turn (After Flop Check-Check)

A common scenario in the check-range strategy is that the flop goes "check-check." When this happens, you take the betting lead on the turn.

* **Opponent's Capped Range:** When opponents check back the flop, especially on wet and dynamic boards, "they are just going to be very very capped because they over stab these wet Dynamic boards the most." Their range is primarily divided into "Showdown value or air."
* **Turn Betting Strategy (Wet/Dynamic Boards - e.g., Jack Nine Deuce):**
* **Almost Entire Range Bets Large:** "Almost my entire range here on the turn is going to want to be betting large."
* **Reasoning:Air:** The "air portion of their range... is going to fold if we breathe on this pot," so large sizing is irrelevant here.
* **Showdown Value:** Hands like Ace Nine suited, Pocket Tens, Pocket Eights "checked back the Flop to call one streak they're going to call on the turn whether you bet tiny or you bet huge so we may as well bet huge."
* **Goal:** For both value and bluffs, "get them to put in as much money with a showdown value portion of the range as possible."
* **Value Hands:** Bet big on turn to entice call, then "size down on the river to really sculpt the sizing where they are enticed to put in a call."
* **Bluffs:** Bet big on turn to entice call, then "size up to get them to fold on the river."
* **Turn Betting Strategy (Static/Dry Boards - e.g., Ace Nine Deuce):**
* **More Equity Driven:** Sizing becomes more nuanced.
* **Large Bets:** "Complay for Stacks hands," "thick value," and "high Equity draws."
* **Small Bets:** "Thin value," "low equity," and "air."
* **Check:** "Showdown value" hands.

V. Conclusion and Further Learning

The central takeaway is that playing 3-bet pots out of position by checking your entire range on the flop is a highly effective, exploitative strategy against typical live opponents. This approach capitalizes on their tendencies to over-stab, telegraph hand strength, and under-protect their check-back ranges, allowing for aggressive check-raising or profitable turn betting depending on the specific circumstances. Further details on turn and river play after check-raises or check-calls are beyond the scope of this particular video but are available through Hungry Horse Poker's subscription service.