Poker Strategy: Playing 3-Bet Pots Out of Position

I. Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. **What is the core strategic recommendation for playing 3-bet pots out of position when you completely miss the flop?** The recommended strategy is to check your entire range on the flop. This exploits opponents' common mistakes, such as over-stabbing, telegraphing hand strength through sizing, and failing to protect their check-back range.
2. **Describe the three biggest mistakes opponents make when you check to them in a 3-bet pot out of position.** The three biggest mistakes are: they over-stab, they telegraph their hand strength with their sizing (small for weak, big for strong), and they do not adequately protect their check-back range.
3. **When an opponent makes a "small stab" on a wet and dynamic flop after you've checked, what is the general raising strategy?** When an opponent makes a small stab on a wet and dynamic flop, the strategy is to raise a lot. This includes hands like 'compel for stacks' hands, thick value hands, combo draws, high equity draws, and low equity draws.
4. **Why is it generally recommended to check-raise large, even against small stabs, on a wet and dynamic board?** It's recommended to check-raise large because even if an opponent has a weak hand, they'll likely fold regardless of the raise size. A larger check-raise targets their inelastic hands (like strong draws or top pair) which will have difficulty folding, maximizing value against the portion of their range that will call.
5. **How does the preferred "two-street game" relate to check-raise sizing on wet and dynamic boards?** On wet and dynamic boards, the preference is to play a two-street game. This means check-raising to a size that allows for an SPR (Stack-to-Pot Ratio) of less than one on the turn, enabling an all-in bet on most turns to negate the positional disadvantage.
6. **Contrast the check-raise strategy against a "small stab" versus a "big stab" on the flop.** Against a small stab, you check-raise a wide range of strong hands and draws. Against a big stab, you check-raise a much narrower range, primarily 'compel for stacks' hands and big combo draws, because the opponent's range is much stronger.
7. **How does the wetness and dynamism of the board influence the interpretation of opponent sizing tells?** On wet and dynamic boards, opponents' sizing tells are more reliable. They tend to size up with strong but vulnerable hands out of fear of bad cards, making small stabs indicative of weaker hands and big stabs indicative of stronger hands.
8. **Under what circumstances might you deviate from checking your entire range on the flop, specifically regarding opponent tendencies?** You might deviate if your opponent is a "passive Patty" who is inclined to check back even with strong hands. In this case, you might be more inclined to bet yourself with hands that don't benefit as much from a check-raise, like top pair or overpair hands.
9. **When playing shallow stacked, why might you deviate from checking your entire range on the flop?** When shallow stacked, the advantage of check-raising (negating positional disadvantage) is diminished. In this scenario, it might be more beneficial to bet yourself with value hands to get the money in over two streets, though checking with air or some draws for profitable bluffing opportunities on later streets can still be viable.
10. **When an opponent checks back the flop (after you've checked), what is the general betting strategy on the turn, especially on wet and dynamic boards?** On wet and dynamic boards, when the opponent checks back the flop, the general strategy is to bet large with almost the entire range on the turn. This is because their range is typically capped, consisting mostly of showdown value or air that will fold. Betting large maximizes value against their calling range.

II. Essay Questions

1. Analyze the strategic rationale behind checking your entire range on the flop in 3-bet pots out of position. Discuss how this strategy exploits common leaks in typical opponents and compare it to betting your entire range.
2. Elaborate on the concept of "sizing tells" on wet and dynamic boards versus static and dry boards. Explain how understanding these tells informs your check-raising and calling decisions against different stab sizes.
3. Discuss the strategic adjustments required when playing this check-range strategy against "passive Patty" opponents or when playing shallow stacked. How do these deviations maintain profitability while adapting to specific game conditions?
4. Compare and contrast the turn betting strategies when an opponent checks back the flop on a "wet and dynamic" board versus a "static and dry" board. Explain the underlying logic for the differences in sizing and range selection.
5. Examine the relationship between stack-to-pot ratio (SPR) and the decision to play a "two-street game" versus a "three-street game" from out of position. How does check-raise sizing on the flop contribute to achieving the desired SPR for future streets?

III. Glossary of Key Terms

* **3-Bet Pot:** A pot where there has been an open-raise, a re-raise (the 3-bet), and the 3-bet is called, creating a larger pot pre-flop.
* **Out of Position (OOP):** When a player acts before their opponent(s) on a given street. In this context, the player who 3-bet is OOP.
* **Flop:** The first three community cards dealt in a poker hand.
* **See-Bet (C-Bet):** A continuation bet made on the flop by the player who made the last aggressive action pre-flop (e.g., the 3-bettor).
* **Check-Raise:** To check when it's your turn to act, and then raise after an opponent makes a bet.
* **Solver:** Software used in poker to compute Game Theory Optimal (GTO) strategies, showing how players should ideally play in various situations.
* **Range:** The set of all possible hands a player could hold in a given situation.
* **Over-Stab:** When an opponent bets too frequently or too aggressively, particularly in a spot where a check might be more balanced or appropriate.
* **Telegraph Hand Strength:** When a player's action (e.g., bet sizing) gives away too much information about the strength of their hand.
* **Protect Check-Back Range:** Ensuring that the hands an opponent checks back (rather than betting) are not exclusively weak, so they don't become easily exploitable.
* **Compel for Stacks Hands:** Very strong hands that are typically aiming to get all the money into the pot quickly (e.g., sets, top two pair).
* **Thick Value Hands:** Strong hands that are still looking for significant value, but might not be as eager to get all the money in as 'compel for stacks' hands (e.g., top pair with a strong kicker, overpairs).
* **Thin Value Hands:** Hands that are marginally ahead of a portion of an opponent's calling range and are seeking a small amount of value (e.g., middle pair, weak top pair).
* **Showdown Value:** A hand that is likely to win if it goes to showdown without any more betting.
* **Air:** A hand with no made hand and no significant draw, typically having little to no showdown value.
* **Combo Draw:** A hand with both a straight draw and a flush draw, giving it high equity.
* **High Equity Draw:** A draw that has a good chance of improving to a strong hand (e.g., open-ended straight draw, flush draw).
* **Low Equity Draw:** A draw that has a lower chance of improving (e.g., gutshot straight draw, backdoor flush draw).
* **Wet/Dynamic Board:** A flop that offers many possibilities for strong hands and draws, where the nuts can easily change on future streets (e.g., J92 with a flush draw).
* **Static/Dry Board:** A flop that offers fewer possibilities for strong hands or draws, where the nuts are less likely to change (e.g., A72 rainbow).
* **Inelastic Hands:** Hands that are unlikely to fold regardless of the bet size, often due to their strong equity or raw strength.
* **SPR (Stack-to-Pot Ratio):** The ratio of a player's effective stack size to the current size of the pot. A low SPR often indicates a desire to get all the money in quickly.
* **Two-Street Game:** A strategy where a player aims to get all the money into the pot over two betting streets (e.g., flop and turn), often due to a low SPR or a desire to avoid a difficult river decision.
* **Three-Street Game:** A strategy where a player aims to get value or bluff over all three betting streets (flop, turn, and river).
* **Passive Patty:** An opponent who tends to play passively, often checking or calling rather than betting or raising aggressively, even with strong hands.
* **Capped Range:** An opponent's range of hands is "capped" when it does not contain the strongest possible hands, often because those hands would have been played differently on a previous street.