Poker Out of Position: The Ultimate Strategy Guide

Quiz

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

1. What is the overarching goal of the "out of position" poker strategy described in the guide?
2. When playing out of position, why is the strategy to check the entire flop range (sets, top pair, draws, air)?
3. Describe two common mistakes live poker players make when in position against an out-of-position check.
4. How does the recommended check-raise sizing in this strategy differ from standard check-raise sizes, and why is this difference emphasized?
5. When the in-position opponent stabs a small bet on the flop, how does the out-of-position player's raising strategy change compared to a big stab?
6. After a check-raise on the flop, what is the general approach to playing the turn with "low equity bluffs" (draws with less than eight outs)?
7. Under what specific conditions should an out-of-position player with "high equity draws" *not* continue barreling on the turn after a flop check-raise?
8. Explain the concept of "SPR" (Stack-to-Pot Ratio) in the context of playing turns with high equity bluffs, and how it influences the decision to play a two-street vs. three-street game.
9. When playing value hands on the turn after a flop check-raise, what is the general principle for choosing bet sizing based on the hand's vulnerability?
10. If the flop goes check-check, and the turn is a blank, why does the guide recommend checking the turn again, and what is the expected response from the opponent's range?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The overarching goal of the "out of position" poker strategy is to maximize profit by intentionally putting opponents in situations where they are most likely to make significant mistakes. This concept is the fundamental principle guiding all strategic decisions within this approach.
2. Checking the entire flop range when out of position is strategic because live poker players in position tend to make more mistakes against a check than against a bet. This approach encourages opponents to stab with a wider, weaker range, providing opportunities for the out-of-position player to exploit those errors.
3. Two common mistakes made by in-position players are: first, they frequently stab too much for protection with marginal or weak hands, and second, they often telegraph their hand strength through their bet sizing, betting big with strong hands and small with weak ones. They also fail to protect their check-back range.
4. The recommended check-raise sizing is "ridiculously huge," ranging from 6 to 10 times the opponent's bet, which deviates significantly from the standard 3-4x. This is because opponents play worse against these large sizes, often calling strong hands and draws inelasticly, when mathematically they should fold more often.
5. When the in-position opponent stabs a small bet on the flop, the out-of-position player's raising strategy expands. They will still raise their very best hands, but now also include good hands (like Pocket Kings/Queens) and raise *all* of their draws, as the opponent's range is perceived to be weaker and more susceptible to folds.
6. With "low equity bluffs" (draws with less than eight outs) on the turn after a flop check-raise, the general approach is to give up. After calling a large check-raise, the opponent's range is stronger, and the out-of-position player has less fold equity and insufficient raw equity to profitably continue barreling.
7. An out-of-position player with "high equity draws" should *not* continue barreling on the turn if the turn card pairs the board or brings in a one-liner to a straight. These cards make the opponent's hands stronger or less vulnerable, making it harder to generate fold equity or realize their own equity.
8. SPR (Stack-to-Pot Ratio) helps determine if it's a two-street or three-street game. If the SPR is less than two after the flop check-raise, the guide suggests jamming the turn to maximize fold equity in a two-street game. If the SPR is higher (e.g., deeper stacks), a smaller turn bet can set up a larger, scarier overbet bluff on the river, aiming for a three-street game.
9. When playing value hands on the turn after a flop check-raise, the general principle for bet sizing is to go big if the hand needs protection and is vulnerable, aiming to get all the money in before bad cards appear. Conversely, if the hand is "invulnerable," the player should go small to encourage weaker hands and draws to call and not fold.
10. If the flop goes check-check and the turn is a blank, the guide recommends checking again. This is based on the expectation that opponents who check back the flop often have showdown value hands (e.g., weak pairs) or complete air, and will frequently stab the turn with both parts of this range, providing opportunities for the out-of-position player to raise or call.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the fundamental premise of the "out of position" poker strategy. How does it leverage common mistakes of live poker players to generate profit, and what specific psychological or strategic tendencies of opponents does it exploit?
2. Compare and contrast the out-of-position player's response to a "big stab" versus a "small stab" on the flop. Discuss the rationale behind the differences in raising ranges and calling ranges in each scenario, and how these adjustments exploit the perceived strength of the opponent's betting range.
3. Elaborate on the strategic reasoning behind using "ridiculously huge check-raise sizes." Provide examples from the text that illustrate why these sizes are effective against typical live poker players, even when equilibrium analysis suggests different outcomes.
4. Discuss the decision-making process for playing high-equity bluffs on the turn after a flop check-raise. How do factors like board texture (paired boards, one-liners), Stack-to-Pot Ratio (SPR), and the goal of maximizing fold equity influence whether to barrel, jam, or set up a three-street bluff?
5. Explain the strategy for playing value hands on the turn, distinguishing between vulnerable and invulnerable hands. Provide specific examples from the text to illustrate how vulnerability dictates bet sizing, and how this contributes to maximizing value or protection in different scenarios.

Glossary of Key Terms

* **Out of Position (OOP):** In poker, a player is "out of position" when they are the first to act on a given street (flop, turn, river). This often puts them at a disadvantage as they have to make decisions without knowing what their opponents behind them will do.
* **In Position (IP):** In poker, a player is "in position" when they are the last to act on a given street. This gives them a significant advantage as they get to see how all other players act before making their own decision.
* **Flop:** The second round of betting in Texas Hold'em and Omaha, occurring after the first three community cards (the "flop") are dealt.
* **Turn:** The third round of betting in Texas Hold'em and Omaha, occurring after the fourth community card (the "turn") is dealt.
* **River:** The fourth and final round of betting in Texas Hold'em and Omaha, occurring after the fifth and final community card (the "river") is dealt.
* **Set:** Three of a kind in poker, typically formed when a player holds a pocket pair and one of the community cards matches their pair (e.g., holding 7-7 and the flop includes a 7).
* **Top Pair:** When a player's hole card combines with the highest-ranking community card on the board to form a pair.
* **Draw:** An incomplete hand that needs one or more specific cards to improve to a stronger hand, such as a flush draw (needing one more card of the same suit) or a straight draw (needing one more card to complete a sequence).
* **Combo Draw:** A hand that has both a flush draw and a straight draw simultaneously, offering multiple ways to improve.
* **Air:** A hand with no made value and little to no equity, often holding only high cards or nothing.
* **Stab:** To make a bet, often a relatively small or speculative one, after an opponent has checked, typically to gain information or pick up the pot.
* **Check-raise:** A play where a player first checks, then raises after an opponent bets. This is often used to build a pot, protect a strong hand, or bluff.
* **Bet Sizing:** The amount of chips a player chooses to bet. Bet sizing often conveys information about hand strength, intentionally or unintentionally.
* **Telegraph:** To unintentionally reveal information about one's hand strength or intentions through betting patterns, timing tells, or other actions.
* **Check-back Range:** The range of hands an in-position player checks behind on a given street. The text suggests live players often do not check back strong hands, making their check-back range weaker.
* **Bluff:** A bet made with a weak hand to induce opponents with stronger hands to fold.
* **Fold Equity:** The portion of the pot a player wins when their opponent folds to their bet, even if the player doesn't have the best hand.
* **Showdown Value:** The likelihood that a hand will win at showdown without further improvement. Hands with showdown value are often those that are "made" but not necessarily strong (e.g., weak pairs).
* **Low Equity Bluffs:** Bluffs with hands that have a low probability of improving (e.g., gutshot straight draws or hands with less than 8 outs).
* **High Equity Bluffs:** Bluffs with hands that have a high probability of improving (e.g., flush draws, open-ended straight draws, or hands with 8 or more outs).
* **Barrel Off:** To continue betting on successive streets (flop, turn, river) after an initial bet, often as a bluff or with a strong hand.
* **Stack-to-Pot Ratio (SPR):** The ratio of the effective stack size (the smallest stack involved in the hand) to the current pot size. SPR is crucial for planning multi-street plays.
* **Jam:** To bet all-in, putting all remaining chips into the pot.
* **Overbet:** A bet that is larger than the current pot size. Often used to maximize value or exert significant fold pressure.
* **Vulnerable Hand:** A strong hand that is susceptible to being outdrawn by an opponent's draws or weaker made hands if more cards are dealt (e.g., top pair on a wet board).
* **Invulnerable Hand:** A strong hand that is highly unlikely to be outdrawn, or where the opponent has very few "outs" (e.g., a flopped set on a dry board, or a nut flush).
* **Donk Bet (or Lead Out):** To bet into a pre-flop raiser or the aggressor from the previous street, often when out of position. The guide recommends "donking" when hitting a draw on the river in certain exploitative spots.
* **Exploitative Play:** A strategy that deviates from theoretically optimal play (GTO) to take advantage of specific tendencies or mistakes observed in opponents.
* **Thin Value Bet:** A bet made with a hand that is likely only slightly better than the opponent's calling range, but still profitable.
* **Triple Barrel Bluff:** Bluffing on the flop, turn, and river, typically with a hand that has little or no showdown value.