Exploiting Regulars

at 10-25NL



Crushing 10-25NL Holdem Tables

exploitativepoker.co.uk

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Free Lesson

Exploiting Regulars at 10-25NL

Introduction

Welcome to the free lesson in Exploitative Poker. This book is for player, who have been playing 10 – 25 NL cash games and have been struggling to develop their skills.

This book is about exploiting regulars. I assume that the reader knows the basics of poker. For example, I assume in this book that you know what a HUD is and you are familiar with the different positions at the poker table. If not, you should read our beginner blogposts and eBooks before reading this book.

This book doesn't deal with playing against extremely weak players, such as NITs, showdown monkeys and maniacs. Instead, it deals with the regulars who you will frequently play against.

So, let's get started.



Who are the Regulars at 10-25NL?

The majority of the "regulars" at 10-25NL are what I call "TAGfish". You do see all the other types of players including super-tight NITs, TAGS and various forms of fish.

TAGFISH: BASICS

TAGfish have been referred to by other names in the poker literature. For example, some players call them "Harrington bots". The reason that they are called TAGfish is because their pre-flop HUD statistics resemble that of a TAG. In addition, many of these types of players believe that they are TAGs. They are sometimes called "Harrington bots" because they use many tactics (eg c-betting, stealing the blinds) recommended in Dan Harrington's series of poker books. However, the TAGfish uses these strategies mechanically.

TAGfish are NITs at heart. These players are as tight as NITs on the turn and river. This isn't a criticism of them. Most people start their poker careers as NITs. They then, progress to learning to become TAGs. The TAGfish, is somewhere between the NIT and the TAG. Although this player is more aggressive that NIT, he really only understands exploitative poker at a superficial level.

Many players get stuck in this phase. They tend to stay at 10-25NL. If they go any higher, they struggle.

The TAGfish has read poker books. As such, he will rarely open limp. Furthermore, he will attempt to steal the blinds. If he raised pre-flop, he will c-bet on the flop. In fact, some of these guys c-bet on the flop, around 80% of the time or more.

He might 3-bet from the big blind occasionally. He will have read about that.

However, it is important to understand that this is pretty much the limit of his aggression.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TAGFISH AND TAGS

The TAGfish is the transition phase between NIT and TAG. Many players get stuck at the TAGfish level.

Many players get confused between the TAGfish and a TAG because they often have very similar pre-flop statistics. At 10-25NL, you might regard this player-type as a TAG.

So, how can you tell the difference? You have to observe these players. You can get some information from your HUD. A TAGfish will typically have a high flop c-bet% and attempt to steal%, together with a high fold to 3-bet%, fold to flop 2-bet% and fold to flop float%. A TAG will have similar statistics. However, they will not be as extreme.

TAGfish do not tend to Bluff Multiple Players Pre-flop

The most obvious difference between a TAGfish and a TAG, is that TAGs will 3bet bluff, bluff squeeze, isolate limpers and re-steal from the blinds a lot more.

If you see a player regularly make these moves as a bluff and you are not sure from his statistics whether he is a TAG or a TAGfish, this player is probably a TAG. In addition, the more frequently that a player makes such moves, the more likely it is that this player is a TAG.

Bluffs against multiple players are usually only present in the TAG arsenal. For example, the TAGfish might raise to isolate one limper. However, he won't try this as a bluff against more than one limper. He might occasionally 3-bet light against a stealer. However, he will almost never make the squeeze play as a bluff. Therefore, if you see a player make big bluffs and/or bluff multiple players, he will almost definitely be a TAG.

TAGfish fear playing post-flop

These players have more fear when the pot is bigger. This is especially the case in 3-bet pots. They want to be close to 100% sure that they have the best hand when they put significant money into the pot.

Their fear makes them exploitable in 2 ways. Firstly, fear makes them very easy to bluff. Secondly, when they don't show fear in a big pot, you know that they have a big hand.

This also explains why their hand ranges are largely confined to pocket pairs and AK/AQ, although they might play other hands when stealing or calling in the big blind.





TAGfish are most comfortable with pocket pairs

The reason for this is that post-flop decisions are easy when they have a pocket pair. When they hit their set, they are close to 100% sure that they are winning the hand. They can fold when they miss their set and bet, call or raise when they hit their set.

COMMENT

The TAGfish is the regular at 10-25NL. Don't make the mistake of thinking that they are the regular at higher stakes. As you go higher in stakes, you will find better players. **In the next chapters, I will use the term "regular" and "TAGfish" to mean the same thing.**

There are 3 important points concerning a TAGfish.

1. If this player enters the pot, his hole cards will usually be pocket pairs or AK/AQ.

2. The exceptions to this are if your opponent is in a steal position or in the big blind.
3. This type of player will almost always c-bet on the flop when he is the pre-flop raiser and the pot is heads-up.

Therefore, when he c-bets, his range will not be narrowed down. However, this player is timid and is unlikely to play back at you even when he thinks that you are bluffing.

The 10-25NL Regular's Biggest Leak



At 10-25NL, regulars tend to play their hand and not the player. In similarity to the super-tight NIT, **these regulars are obsessed with pocket pairs**. They try and get small pocket pairs in pre-flop from any position, including early position. When they are in the big blind, they will call steals with any pocket pair.

This is probably their most exploitable leak. For a small pocket pair to win a big hand, the regular needs the following 2 things to happen:

- He needs to flop a set
- He needs his opponent to hit a hand that is strong enough to put a lot of money into the pot

The Maths

The odds of flopping a set are about 8.5-1, which is a probability of 10.5%.

The Problem with Calling with a Pocket Pair in the Blinds

Let's assume that the TAGfish is in the big blind and calls a 3BB raise from a button stealer. This means that he has contributed 2BB to see the flop.

Over 100 hands, he will not flop a set 89.5% of the time. If we assume that he will just fold to a c-bet, he will lose (2 x 89.5) 179BB when he doesn't flop a set over 100 hands.

This means that the 10.5% of the time that he does hit a set, he needs to win an average of around 17BB/hand just to break even. This is calculated by dividing the amount of money that the regular loses, when he doesn't hit his set by the number of hands out of a 100 that do hit a set (ie 179/10.5).

A button stealer will seldom have a hand strong enough to put this kind of money into the pot.

The Problem with Sneaking into the Pot with a Pocket Pair from Early Position

How about, when a TAGfish tries to sneak a pocket pair in from early position. When the regular tries to get a pocket pair in from early position, he will get 3-bet by any strong hands. He might also get 3-bet bluffed pre-flop. Let's say that the TAGfish gets 3-bet to

10BB. This means that he will lose 895BB (89.5 x 10) over 100 hands when he calls the 3-bet and doesn't hit his set.

This means that when the TAGfish hits his set, he will have to win an average of 85BB/hand (895/10.5). If his opponent is bluffing, he won't stack off. Even if his opponent hits top pair top kicker, he is unlikely to stack off.

With 100BB starting stacks, it is almost impossible mathematically to win an average of 85BB when you hit your set.

Now, you could say that the regular could fold to every 3-bet. However, you are now back to the Problem #1. In this case, the regular is paying more than the 2BB that he was paying in the big blind example. In addition, the amount he needs to win per hand will increase because of the amount he is folding. Let's say that he raises first in pre-flop for 3BB. If he has to fold 50% of the time to a 3-bet, the average he is paying to get his pocket pair to see a flop is 6BB. He will have to win an average of 51BB when he hits his set just to break even.

The Problem with Playing Pocket Pairs without the Lead and Out of Position

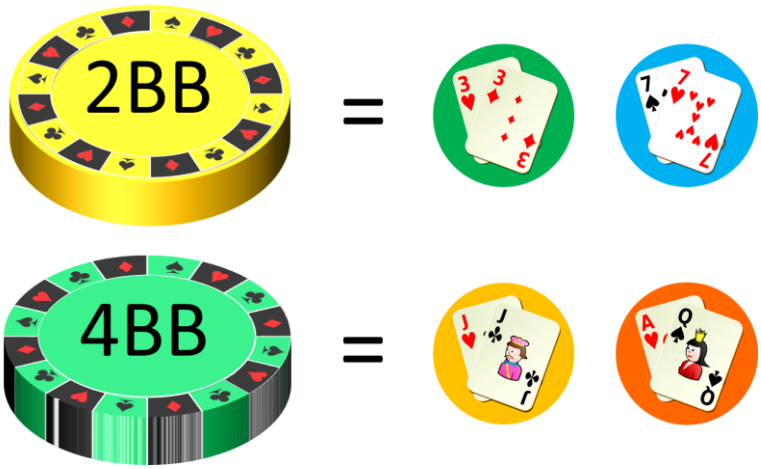
You should notice that in both of the above examples, the regular does not have the lead and is out of position. This makes it even more difficult for the regular to get value when he hits his set.

When the lead switches from one player to another, it is very obvious. It is obvious because the regular at 10-25NL does not have big bluffs in his range. If he takes the lead in a big pot, his hand is face up.

The regular needs to get 3 streets of value to make his set pay. When you are out of position, any time that you check, you risk your opponent checking back. Therefore, when the regular hits his set, he will often take the lead by donk betting or check-raising. If you know that the regular's starting hand range includes a lot of pocket pairs, you should know that you are facing a set. Therefore, you should fold (unless you have a better hand).

The Problem with Raising First in With Different Bet Sizes

I see a lot of regulars at 10-25NL raising 2 or 2.5BB pre-flop with low and medium pocket pairs and 4BB with AA-JJ and AK-AQ. The reason that they bet so small with pocket pairs is that they want to get into the pot cheaply. Then, when they hit their hand, they will start trying to get the money in.



They would prefer to limp, but they know that they will get raised if they limp. The other reason that they raise small first in is because they want to be able to call a 3-bet. They don't want to be 3-bet. But if they are 3-bet, they want to be able to call. People often 3-bet relative to the stake or the pre-flop raiser. For example, a 2BB raise might get 3bet to 7BB, whereas a 3BB raise might get 3-bet to 10BB or more.

When a player makes his pocket pairs so face up, he is just asking to get 3-bet and (if he calls) c-bet.

COMMENT

The strategy, that these regulars use, did work years ago when there were a lot of fish around. The TAGfish strategy works well against fish and super-tight NITs. So, it does still work on certain tables. You can play your small pocket pairs at a table full of passive fish and super-tight NITs. The NITs won't attack you for using this strategy, while the fish will pay you when you hit your set. In addition, you can often bluff the NITs and win the pot even when your pocket pair fails to hit a set.

However, the pocket pair strategy fails, when there are players sitting at the table, who know how to attack this strategy.

The mistake that TAGfish are making is, using an exploitative strategy that is designed to crush fish, when they are playing against TAGs and LAGs.

We all play on loose-passive tables from time to time. It is important not to write off the NIT and TAGfish strategies. They do have a place in poker.

Pre-flop: Raising

Most books start with starting hands. However, I will leave starting hands until later. The reason is that we want a clear idea of what we are attempting to achieve before deciding which hands to play.



Let's first look at some of the strategies that you might want to use.

RAISING A LIMPER

Regulars do not usually limp with low and medium pocket pairs. However, if you see one that does, you can play the hand as you would against a NIT.

That is, when you are in late position, you can isolate. If he calls and checks on the flop, you can c-bet.

If you are considering raising a regular limper, you need to be sure that the he does limp with low and medium pocket pairs. There are some regulars who only limp with

AA and KK when they are in early position. When this type of player limps, he plans to re-raise if a player raises them. You don't want to be attempting to isolate this type of player.

Stealing the Blinds

You can attempt to steal the blinds against a regular. In general, he will only play back with strong hands. His calling range will consist of broadways and pocket pairs.

His 3-betting range might consist of AK/AQ and, in some cases, pocket pairs. There is a lot of variation in the 3-betting range between regulars. At the tight end of the scale, they will only 3-bet with AA-JJ and AK-AQ. At the looser end of the scale, this player will be 3-betting with medium pocket pairs and possibly a couple more broadway combinations.

If this player just calls your attempted steal and checks on the flop, you should generally c-bet. As I mentioned, a lot of these types of players will call against a steal with pocket pairs. Most of these should fold to a c-bet. It gets tricky when your opponent 3-bets your steal attempt. You should just fold to a 3-bet against a player who is at the tight end of the scale. This is because he is likely to have a premium hand.

Comment

I want to emphasise that, at 10-25NL, you should usually fold non-premium hands to 3-bets.

If you think that you are being pushed around by someone 3-betting your raises, **your first step should be to tighten up your raising range**. This way, you will have a greater percentage of hands that you can 4-bet with.

Your second step should be to 4-bet with premium hands or to 4-bet bluff. If you 4-bet bluff and you are called, you will have to let the hand go (unless you hit the flop of course).

It happens. However, if your opponent is calling your 4-bets light, he will also call when you have a premium hand. Therefore, you can just play tight and wait for a premium hand.

Pre-flop: 3-Betting

When you just call on the flop against a super-tight NIT, you get a read by his betting action on the flop. If he likes his hand, he will c-bet. If he misses the board, he will check the lead away.



You don't get this read against a regular. This is because a regular will almost always c-bet in a heads-up pot. This is why the lead is so important against these players. The first person to bet puts the other guy to a decision.

3-BET OR CALL

I tried Poker Snowie out a few years ago. The software usually recommended 3-betting and seldom recommended just calling behind a pre-flop raiser. Although Poker Snowie is game theory optimal (GTO) software, the idea of 3-betting and seldom calling, works well in exploitative poker.

So, if a regular raises pre-flop and you wish to play, you should usually 3-bet him, especially when you are in position.

If his raise came from early position, you need to know whether his early position raises include medium and low pocket pairs. If he tightens up his hand range in early position to exclude the low and medium pocket pairs, you shouldn't get involved in the pot without a premium hand.

If your opponent does play medium and low pocket pairs from early position, you can 3-bet from late position.

Generally, you should follow this up with a c-bet on the flop. Your opponent will usually fold any pair that is below top pair. He might call one bet with the pair that is just below top pai,r but he will fold the rest of his pairs. He will also fold AK and AQ if he has missed the flop.

If you are entering the pot after a raiser, you need a reason not to 3-bet.

Reasons for 3-Betting

To stop players yet to act from getting involved in the pot

When you have a choice between 3-betting or calling, your decision should be based on 2 main criteria. Firstly, if you need stop loose players who are yet to act from entering the pot, you should always 3-bet. If the players behind you are tight, you have a choice of whether to 3-bet or call.

To Get Immediate Folds

3-betting has the advantage of getting immediate folds. However, a more important reason for 3-betting is that **you want to take the lead against a player who automatically c-bets**. When you have the lead, your opponent will usually check to the raiser.

In Order to Gain the Lead in the Hand

The issue is also whether or not you think you will be bluffing post-flop. Theoretically, you can play a lot of hands against a regular. This is because what matters is whether or not your opponent hits his hand. If you have a weak starting hand, you will be planning to bluff post-flop.

As explained in the introduction of this chapter, gaining the lead is important if you think you will often be bluffing.

To Get Better Odds on Your c-Bet

Your bluff gets better odds on the flop in a 3-bet pot. In a 3-bet pot, you only need to bet ½ of the pot to get the folds that you want.

If you just call pre-flop, villain will c-bet around ¾ of the pot into a single-raised pot. You might be able to take this pot down by floating the flop and betting the turn if villain checks. However, you are getting better pot odds post-flop with the ½ pot c-bet into a 3-bet pot. If you only bet ½ of the pot into a 3-bet pot, you only have to win the pot ⅓ of the time. When you float, you have to call a ¾ pot bet. You, then have to bet on the turn if villain checks. Although villain will usually fold when you bet on the turn, he won't always fold. There will be a few occasions when he has a big hand and is waiting to check-raise you. When you call preflop and call a c-bet, there is also the disadvantage that villain gets to see the turn card. By contrast, **when you c-bet into a 3-bet pot, villain has to make a decision before seeing the turn card.**

Reasons for Calling and NOT 3-Betting

1. **If you have a strong starting hand and you think your opponent's hand is weak, you might sometimes want to just call pre-flop.**

For example, let's say you have AA in the big blind and you are against a button steal.

The button isn't likely to have a strong hand.

The main disadvantage of 3-betting is that your opponent might fold pre-flop.



However, **if you just call and let him have the lead, you will get a c-bet from him on the flop**.

For these reasons, **if your opponent raises first in from a steal position, you can just call in the big blind with a strong hand**.

If you do 3-bet this type of player with a premium hand, you shouldn't make your 3-bet too big. You want pocket pairs and AQ to call your bet. If your 3-bet is too big, he may fold these.

2. You can also consider just calling with a strong hand to

- **Encourage a persistent squeezer, who is yet to act, to 3-bet**
- **Encourage a showdown monkey, who is yet to act, to get involved in the pot**

In the example below, hero thinks that the cut-off raise may be a steal. Therefore, if he 3-bet raises, the cut-off will probably fold. If the BB is a squeeze monkey, this is a good spot for hero to just call.



This is a classic squeeze position that any squeeze monkey will go for. The BB will figure that the cut-off may be stealing. In addition, since the button didn't 3-bet, the BB will suspect that the button has a weak hand, such as a pocket pair or a suited connector.

If you are the BB in this situation, you should consider squeezing yourself. Both the cutoff and the button will usually be weak in this situation.

If the BB (in the above hand) is a calling station or a showdown monkey, this is also a good spot to just flat call with a strong hand on the button. You don't want everyone to fold when you have AA.

COMMENT

You can get more money when you use such strategies. However, there is some risk involved because the pre-flop action may not go as you have planned. For example, you may get more than one extra caller. Even if you get the one extra caller that you planned for, you have to be careful post-flop. You must accept that your AA is just a pair in a multiway pot. Therefore, if you find that your passive opponents are acting aggressively post-flop, you need to be able to fold this hand.

Starting Hand Range for 3-Betting

3-BETTING IN LATE POSITION

In this section, I am talking about 3-betting mainly in late position. That is, when you are in the cut-off or the button. If you are playing in other positions, you can play ABC or GTO.



However, once you feel confident about playing late position, you can extend some of these strategies to other positions.

ADJUSTING

Theoretically, you can play **any 2 cards** against regulars. However, **I don't recommend that you do this.** You should only consider hands that you will not feel too

embarrassed to show down. You also don't want to appear like an overly aggressive LAG.

When you turn up with total trash hands, your opponent might try to play back at you. That isn't a bad thing, if you are able to adjust. If an opponent's timing is bad, when he tries to play back, you might end up stacking him. For example, if you get dealt AA or KK and your opponent has a worse premium hand (eg AK or QQ), you might stack him.

Another problem with playing trash hands is that other observant players, who are still to act, might attack your 3-bets by 4-betting light.

Therefore, when you have turned over a trash hand, you have to **adjust** by tightening up your 3-betting range.

Bluff Frequency

A lot of your money will come from bluffs against regulars. When you hit top pair and your opponent is happy to put money into the pot, you are likely to be behind. This is because, in similarity to the super-tight NIT, the types of hands, that regulars tend to play, either hit a set or top pair with a good kicker. The exceptions are when your opponent raised pre-flop from a steal position or when he called in the big blind.

You don't want the frequency of your 3-bets to be too high. Before I explain the starting hand chart, you need to understand that you should not 3-bet all of the hands in the chart all of the time. You need to be aware of your 3-betting frequency. If you use the guidelines that I

give you, your 3-bet frequency will be high enough for players to know that there are bluffs in your range.

It's up to you to figure out how much 3-betting is too often. The tighter your opponent, the more you should 3-bet. The more likely that your opponent will play back at you at some point, the less frequently you should 3-bet. You can get such information from your HUD or by observation.

STARTING HAND CHART

AA	AKs	AQs	AJs	ATs	A9s	A8s	A7s	A6s	A5s	A4s	A3s	A2s
AKo	KK	KQs	KJs	KTs	K9s	K8s	K7s	K6s	K5s	K4s	K3s	K2s
AQo	KQo	QQ	QJs	QTs	Q9s	Q8s	Q7s	Q6s	Q5s	Q4s	Q3s	Q2s
AJo	KJo	QJo	JJ	JTs	J9s	J8s	J7s	J6s	J5s	J4s	J3s	J2s
ATo	KTo	QTo	JTo	TT	T9s	T8s	T7s	T6s	T5s	T4s	T3s	T2s
A9o	K9o	Q9o	J9o	T9o	99	98s	97s	96s	95s	94s	93s	92s
A8o	K8o	Q8o	J8o	T8o	98o	88	87s	86s	85s	84s	83s	82s
A7o	K7o	Q7o	J7o	T7o	97o	87o	77	76s	75s	74s	73s	72s
A6o	K6o	Q6o	J6o	T6o	96o	86o	76o	66	65s	64s	63s	62s
A5o	K5o	Q5o	J5o	T5o	95o	85o	75o	65o	55	54s	53s	52s
A4o	K4o	Q4o	J4o	T4o	94o	84o	74o	64o	54o	44	43s	42s
A3o	K3o	Q3o	J3o	T3o	93o	83o	73o	63o	53o	43o	33	32s
A2o	K2o	Q2o	J2o	T2o	92o	82o	72o	62o	52o	42o	32o	22

In the starting hand chart, the hands with the pink background are hands that you might 3-bet with anyway. These are not considered bluff hands.

The hands with the green background are bluff hands. These include the following 4 categories of hand:

- Suited connectors and 1 gappers
- Unsuited connectors and 1 gappers
- Suited A5-A2
- Pocket pairs above 5

Why would I choose these hands for bluffs? You want your bluff starting hands to have potential equity, when you are called. The idea is that you will have the following 3 ways to win a hand:

- You 3-bet pre-flop and your opponent folds
- You c-bet post-flop and your opponent folds
- You both hit strong hands, but your hand is better

Taking the 3rd point on the list, it is difficult to have equity when your opponent is going for hands that make up top pair top kicker and sets.

There are 3 main ways to beat a set. These are:

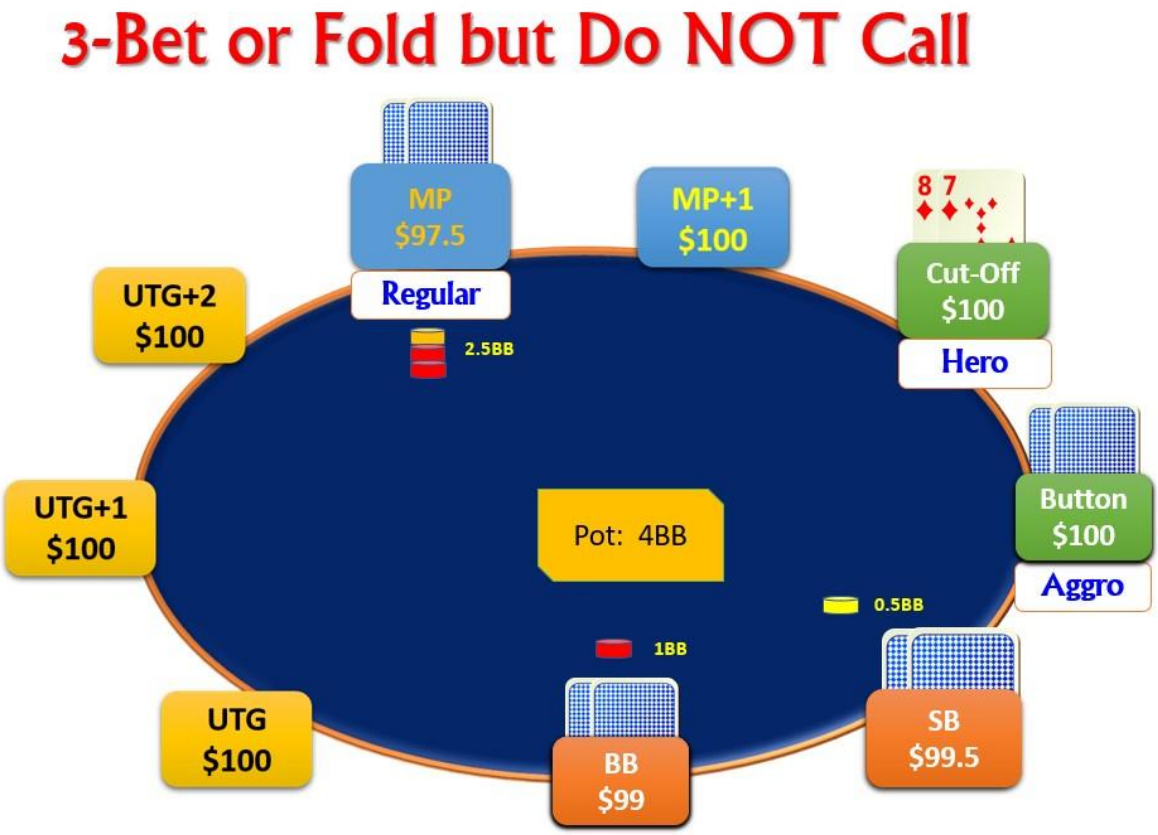
- Hit a higher set
- Hit a flush
- Hit a straight

It is unlikely that your opponent will hit a set and you will hit a better hand on the flop turn or river. However, the times that you do, you are likely to get your opponent's stack.

You might not get the whole of your opponent's stack with a flush. However, he is unlikely to be able to fold a set to a higher set or a straight.

COMMENT

Don't follow the guidelines in this chapter without thinking. Take the example below.



Let's say that you are Hero in the cut-off and you are thinking about 3-betting MP as a bluff. You have noticed that the regular has 2 bet sizes pre-flop. He bets 3BB or more with hands that are AQ or better and 2.5BB with pocket pairs and suited connectors. You have position on MP and your hand is the type of hand that would be in my 3-bet bluff range. This is certainly a situation that you could consider 3-betting.

However, if the button is a good aggressive player, you might want to reconsider. A good player will recognize that you might be 3-betting light. Why am I sure that a good player will suspect that your 3-bet is a bluff? Because this is a strategy that he uses himself. If you 3-bet and he has any kind of hand, he will think about 4-betting.

Also, notice that I say "Do NOT Call". This is because a call will invite a squeeze from one of the players yet to act. If any of these players see MP's bet as weak, they will definitely see your call as weak. So, your call is setting up a perfect squeeze situation.

Post-flop Strategy in 3-Bet Pots

When Your 3-Bet Goes Wrong



If you follow my advice, you will be in position and have the lead. Occasionally, your 3-bet will go wrong, and someone will cold call your 3-bet. For example, you might be in the cut-off and 3-bet the hi-jack. If any of the players, that are left to act, cold call your 3-bet, you should be careful. They are likely to have a strong hand. It's probably safer to just give up on the hand if you miss the flop.

When Your 3-Bet is Called

Villain Donk Bets

If your 3-bet is called, your opponent will usually check to you. If he donk bets instead, he has a hand. If the donk bet is on the large side, your opponent has a strong hand. In this situation, you should fold if you have missed the flop. If you have a draw, you have to figure out whether you have the odds to call.

Villain Checks on the Flop

In general, when villain checks to you, you should c-bet ½ pot. The exception is if you have an open-ended straight draw. You don't want to be raised off this draw.

An open-ended straight draw gives you a chance of stacking your opponent when he hits a set. This is because straight draws aren't obvious to opponents. This especially the case in a 3-bet pot. For example, on an A86 flop, your opponent won't expect you to have 3-bet pre-flop with 97.

In this case, you should take the free card on flop. If villain bets on the turn and your draw hasn't completed, you can call. Therefore, you will have got to see the turn and river card for one bet.

Keeping with straight draws, if villain checks the turn, he will have checked twice. You should take a ½ pot stab at the pot. If your opponent has a range of AK, AQ and all pocket pairs, you should get over 33% folds here. He would have bet on the turn with

sets, top pair, and overpairs to the board. Therefore, he will either have missed overcards or a pocket pair below top pair. This means it is unlikely that you will get raised on the turn. Even if he calls, you still have 8 outs.

This may be obvious but don't draw on paired boards. Your opponent could slow-play a full house and therefore, you could be drawing dead. On a paired board, you should just take one stab at the pot on the flop.

SET VERSUS SET

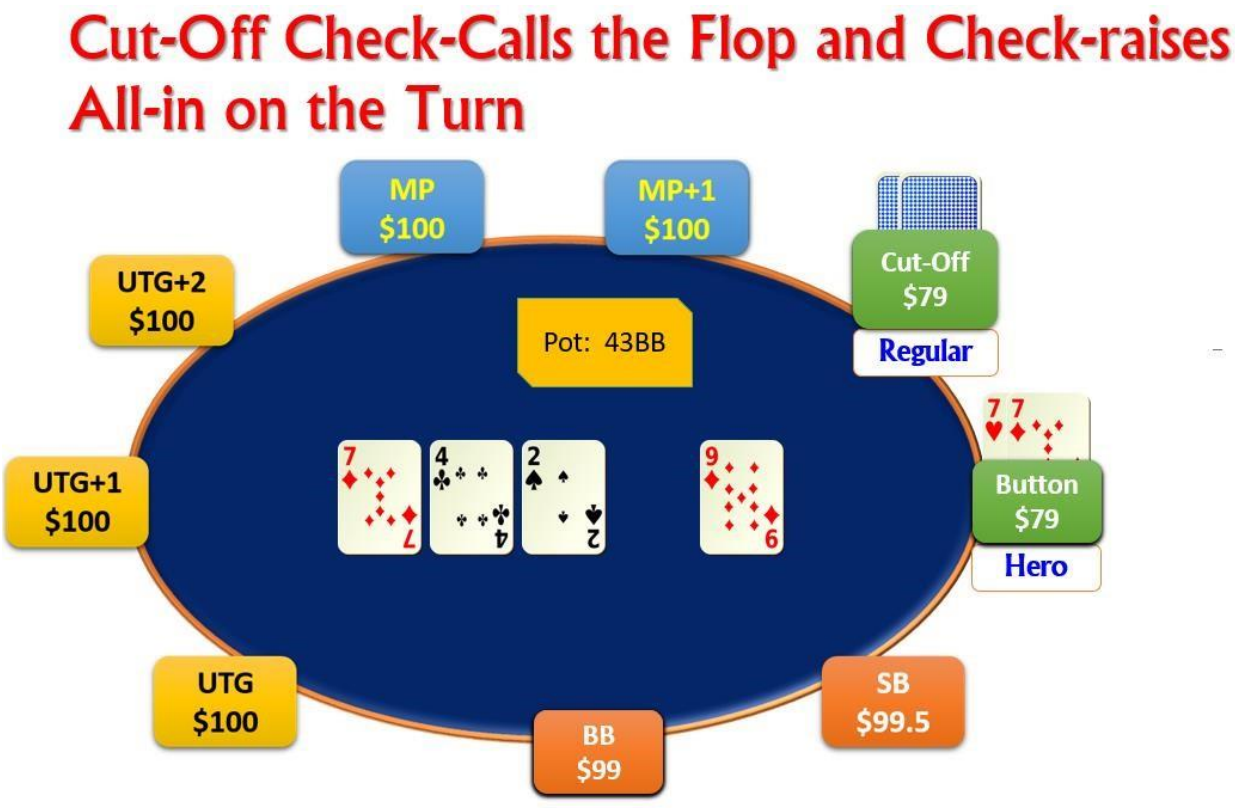
If you hit your set and your opponent seems keen to get all the money in, he has a set as well.

You have to use your brain here. Don't go thinking, "if he has a higher set, it sucks to be me" or "if he has a set as well, all the money is going in anyway". This type of player does not stack off without a hand that is close to the nuts. Don't go thinking that your opponent could be on a draw. There are not many draw combos in a range of AK, AQ and pocket pairs. It's also unlikely that your opponent would show significant strength in a 3-bet pot with an overpair. He would be most likely to 4-bet AA or KK pre-flop. Even if he didn't, he would slow down with overpairs as soon as you show strength. He will be afraid of sets when he has an overpair.

If your opponent hits his set on the flop, he will usually check-raise. If you have bottom set, you should fold. The worst situation is when you have middle set, when all the cards are low because the money is going in and you have a 50: 50 chance.

The other thing that can happen is that your opponent check-calls on the flop and suddenly wants to get the money in on the turn. You have to look at the turn card. This is likely to be the card that made his hand.

If your opponent has hit a single pair, he would either check-call again or bet and just call if he is raised. If the turn card is an overcard to the board, you most likely will have to fold.



In the hand above, hero c-bet ½ pot on the flop and the cut-off called. If the cut-off seems excited about the 9♦ on the turn, he has a set of 9s. He is unlikely to slow-play a lower set on the flop with potential straight draws on the board.

Even if he isn't concerned that hero has a straight draw, he will be concerned about cards hitting the board that will slow the betting down. If he puts hero on an overpair on the flop, there are a lot of turn cards that could slow the betting down. These would include any card that is higher than hero's supposed overpair and any card that pairs the board.

Hero has to fold. This isn't tight. This is taking a read and trusting it. If you are hero, you should read that:

- Your opponent has a range where most combos are pocket pairs
- Your opponent will only stack off with a set

I used to stack off with sets, even when I suspected my opponent had a higher set. Guess what? I was nearly always right – my opponent almost always did have a higher set.

If you can avoid losing your whole stack when you are losing in a set versus set situation, you will win in the long run. Most players are unable to fold a set, even when it is obvious that they are losing.

When you are playing a player, who makes his hand face up, you must take advantage of this weakness.

COMMENT

When you are playing against a regular at 10-25NL, there is seldom a reason to call a bet pre-flop. The main reasons for calling a pre-flop raise are:

- Trapping (eg with AA, KK) when you think your opponent will fold to a 3-bet
- Trapping (eg with AA, KK) when there is a squeeze monkey, yet to act
- Deliberately letting a fish (who is yet to act) into the pot when you are set-mining

Other than those reasons, you should either 3-bet or fold pre-flop.

Post-flop Strategy in 3-Bet Pots

When you are playing a regular at 10-25NL, there are 2 main points to consider.

Firstly, they are easy to bluff. This is where most of your money should come from.

Secondly, regulars at 10-25NL are not willing to put a lot of money into the pot unless they have a very strong hand. Therefore, you will not get paid well when you do actually have a hand. If you have top pair top kicker, the hands that you beat will be pairs below top pair or worse. A regular is not going to put much money into the pot in this

situation. If you have an overpair and a regular has top pair top kicker, he will pay more money. However, he will not stack off.

It is important to keep regular in the pot when you think you are ahead. The more streets that you play, the more reads that you get. In addition, the more streets that you play, the more chances that a weaker player has to make a mistake.

There are times that you can get a regular to stack off. If you have a higher set than your opponent, he will stack off. Another situation, where a regular will stack off, is when he hits a set and one of your bluff hands happens to hit a flush or a straight. These situations don't happen often but they do happen.

I call the 10-25NL regulars "TAGfish". There are a lot of TAGfish at 25-50NL tables and in low stakes tournaments.

These players may be above break even players at 25NL. Once you can beat these players easily, you will be a regular winner at 25NL.

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