

When the BB calls rather than raises, we can take KT** combinations out of his range and underweight the biggest turned draws like AQJ*:s*s**. At this stack depth just calling with most of the 12-13 out nut draws (AsQs**, AQJ*, KQJ9) is logical. He may check-raise these hands some but with SPR ~5.6 and the assumption that his opponent is checking behind a lot of the combo hands that the nutty Broadway hands dominate, check-raising makes less sense. As a result his river distribution is similar to his turn distribution, with the K*** + Broadway hands now stronger, any random K*** hands, the low wraps and the few bare nut flush draws being folded.

Step 4: Narrow The Focus (What Hands Matter?)

The next three steps will not take as much space to describe as the first three. The main reason is that they cover how to think about translating the general information in the first three steps into a very specific situation. The concepts involved are straightforward and there is not much generalizing to be done. All we need to do is describe the kind of thinking necessary and then demonstrate it using our examples. The next page or so handles the general concepts and then we return to our examples one last time to demonstrate Steps 4-6 together.

There are two simple goals in narrowing the focus and asking what hands matter. So far we have studied texture, action, and player reads street-by-street to determine two river ranges. We next need to take a specific hand and situate it in the hand value hierarchy. Having done this, we need to think logically about our river options and ask which parts of the opponent's range most determine what we should do.

For example, imagine we have a borderline showdown-value hand OOP and are making a decision between value-betting and inducing a bluff. There are two categories of hands that we do not need to worry about. First, we can ignore hands with which the opponent will call if we bet and bet if we check. Second, we can ignore hands with which the opponent will check if we check and fold if we bet. Regardless of how we attempt to put our bet in, the same result will occur if the opponent holds these hands.⁹

In this case the one set of hands that matter are those that will fold if we bet but bet if we check (primarily bluffing hands but occasionally some thin value hands if our betting range is perceived to be way stronger than our checking range). The second set of important hands is those that will call if we bet and check if we check (bluff-catcher/showdown-value hands). Assuming equal bet sizing, if the bluff-catchers outweigh the bluffing hands, we should bet; if the reverse, we should check.

Step 5: Reevaluate the Opponent

One goal with this step is to review the assumptions we used to weight the opponent's range with the specific purpose of understanding how they affect his river range. For example, we should remember that a tight-passive opponent who has called two streets has a tighter, nuttier range than the average opponent. Similarly, when a loose-passive player has bet the turn, he is much more likely than the average player to have the nuts. Or, when a loose-aggressive player has chosen not to raise the flop or turn, he does not have as many strong draws as an average opponent would.

The key idea is to do one last "gut-check" to remind ourselves how the specific opponent is different from the average opponent we may have seen in a similar situation recently. This step helps us to avoid making bad payoffs, bluffs, or value-bets in situations where a play would be standard against a generic opponent.

⁹ This is not 100% accurate, because of potential bet sizing differences. If there are a lot of better hands that will call a half-pot bet if we bet and make a 3/4th pot bet if we check, then presuming the rest of his range makes value-betting and check-calling both profitable those hands make betting more appealing. The reverse might hold as well, where we have value-betting hands that we will make larger bets with than our opponent will make with his calling hands if we check.