

This is where one gap between real situations and this one becomes noticeable – bluffing with a king and checking back a 6 are both logical parts of a river strategy given the general shape of the scenario, but the ranges will almost never be so tightly defined that Player A should turn trips into a bluff. However, the use of blockers to modify equilibrium strategy and find exploitable gaps is an extremely important concept, and it is easier to illustrate quantitatively with a slightly contrived example.

## The River Decision Process

The remainder of this chapter covers the six-step River Decision Process step-by-step, along with some examples to illustrate it in action. The examples are six analyzed hands that will be unveiled step by step, illustrating each step while building to a complete analysis of each hand.

As we move through the steps the method of presentation will move from very general to very specific, in the following sense. **Step 1: Analyze the Texture** and **Step 2: Analyze the Action** will be discussed and then executed in the examples without any assumption about player reads or specific starting hands/postflop hand values and while maintaining a neutral eye (not placing ourselves in the shoes of a specific player). They will include generic discussion of range-weighting but not read-specific range-weighting. **Step 3: Analyze the Ranges** will introduce player reads while still preserving range versus range analysis and the neutral eye. Practice studying hands with the neutral eye is valuable because it makes it easier to read our own perceived range.

**Step 4: Narrow the Focus (What Hands Matter?)** will assign us a role as a player in the hand with a specific holding. We will determine where our hand lies in the hand value hierarchy and ask which parts of an opponent's range are most crucial in determining our best action. **Step 5: Reevaluate the Opponent** will train our focus on the aspects of our opponent read that give us the most information about his river play, including his river tendencies and how his flop and turn tendencies determine his range composition. **Step 6: Choose Bet Sizing/Evaluate Opponent Bet Sizing** will conclude the process by reviewing what factors should influence our bet sizing and bet sizing reads.

### Step 1: Analyze the Texture

When we analyzed flop texture, most of the focus was on describing the current state of the board in terms of the distribution of future boards to which it would lead. When we analyzed turn texture, the goal was both to view the current texture both as a path forward to the river texture and as the result of a flop texture and a turn card. There were often key differences between identical turn boards based on the {flop texture + turn card} path that created them (Qd9d6s3h versus Qd6h3s9d, for example). But there were also still key lessons that applied regardless of the flop-turn path, such as the differences between Static and Dynamic turns in terms of both equity relationships and available river contingencies.

When we analyze river texture, we do not look forward at all. Without any draw possibilities it is very simple to describe current texture, and most of our energy should be spent reviewing the hand to find out how we got where we are. To properly determine and weight ranges requires understanding what value different hands had at earlier points in the hand. There once were many possible paths the hand could take and many hands that would be strong on some river textures, decent on others, and weak on others. The actual turn and river cards fix the specific role each hand has in the final hand value hierarchy. We must search back through the progression of hand values to reveal the nature of the ranges in play, and this begins by studying the texture path.

With three streets of data to sort through, we no longer have the luxury of being able to use the texture classes from Chapters 10 and 11. If we extend the flop-turn texture shift model from Chapter 11 to cover three streets the list of possibilities would be far too long to be practical. By simplifying that model to account only for which type of hand was the nuts on each street, we can create a manageable list of possibilities. Table 12.3a does the simple job of presenting the frequency with which each type of hand is the nuts on the flop, turn and river. Tables 12.3b-12.3c do the more complex