

## Situation Group 1: Heads-up, Single-Raised (SPR = 9-15)

### *Situation Class 1a: OOP as raiser*

When we are heads-up, out of position as the preflop raiser, there are several factors working together to encourage as high a continuation bet frequency as we can get away with. First, we will usually have a stronger range than our opponent. This is most true when we raise our nutty 15% UTG range and get called by an average (25%-35%) opponent in CO or BN. But given that most people three-bet their premium hands, our MP range will usually also be slightly ahead of a CO/BN calling range. In particular, we should expect to have a smoother and nuttier range of combo hands and backdoor draws.

Second, betting the flop with air is almost always at least on the border of being immediately profitable heads-up. When we are OOP it is often the only effective option to win the pot. Betting with air in this situation functions both as a basic bluff/light semi-bluff and as a bluff-stopping bet. The opponent's risk/reward on a float or bluff-raise is worse than it would be on a single bet if we were to check. Making the bet ourselves is the cheapest way for us to win and also removes his cheapest way to win.

The average fold to c-bet frequency is in the 40%-50% range, which is right where it has to be for a bluff of slightly less than pot to be immediately profitable. Some opponents are (correctly) looser than that against a wide continuation bet range heads-up, especially (correctly) in position. However, there are definitely a lot of opponents who do not bluff-raise<sup>14</sup> or float often enough to stop us from betting profitably with all of our air.

Even on an extremely dynamic board like AJ9s, the frequency with which the medium-strength cold-calling ranges flop {medium+}<sup>15</sup> is in the 35%-40% range. The only way to prevent a continuation bet from being immediately profitable is to continue against it with weaker hands like non-nut flush draws, bare top pair, middle pair + gutshot, etc. Many opponents will float with these hands (and we often should as well in their position). This might be because they are calling stations without a plan or because they are observant players who see us c-bet too much. Either way, the most unsophisticated continuation betting strategy – bet with air, then always give up – is unprofitable against a loose floater.

However, a bet that is not immediately profitable can become profitable when factoring in a reasonable share of the turn pot, either from minor equity like a gutshot or top pair or from profitable double barrel cards. Our preflop range strength means that we do not necessarily have to back off from frequently continuation betting against loose players, only that doing so requires a plan that includes making additional profit on some turn cards when called.

The best weapon to fight back against floaters is an overall strategy of consistently applying pressure over multiple streets. The goal is to make the opponent's risk/reward with marginal floating hands worse. We need to be able to back our continuation bets by frequently double barreling and check-raising the turn, both for value and as a semi-bluff, in the situations where an opponent would have profitable floats against a weaker strategy. The key to doing this is effectively is having UTG and MP ranges heavy in Tier 1 and 2 hands that are both coordinated and nutty (or near-nutty).

For all of these reasons, the default first action in this situation should be to continuation bet. The fact that most pots will begin the same way does not mean there is nothing to talk about, however. The main subjects for the individual flop examples in this Situation Class are:

- What roles will different betting hands play across the range of turn/river contingencies?
- When does it make sense to check?
- How light should we stack off against a raise and when (if ever) does it make sense to just call a raise instead of committing?

These three questions have important relationships to each other. The two potential weaknesses of a high continuation bet frequency are exposure to floats and bluff raises. Against opponents who are adept at both, we are forced to have a checking range that includes some air hands, some medium-strength hands that prefer to see a turn

---

<sup>14</sup> Or semi-bluff light (e.g. raise/folding JhTs9s6h on AhKd6s)

<sup>15</sup> two pair or better, nut 8/9 out draw or non-nut 12/13+ out draw or better, top pair + weak/medium draw or better