

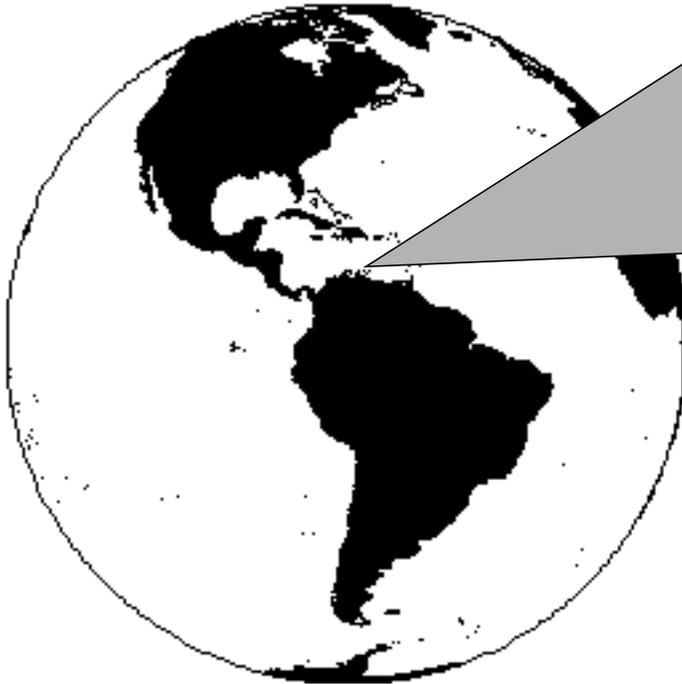
Double issue!

*News on BLACKJACK
and other good bets!*

21 NEWS

VOLUME 1
NUMBER 2
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991
PRICE FREE!*
*via e-mail

Blackjack in Aruba



Crystal Casino
Alhambra Casino
Aruba Palm Beach Casino
Concorde Casino
Hyatt Casino
Golden Tulip Holiday Casino
Americana Casino
Holiday Inn Casino

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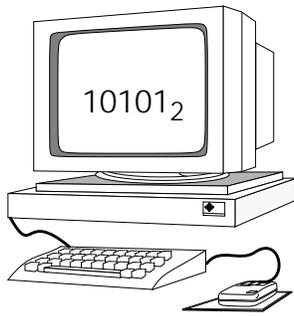
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21 NEWS



21 NEWS is by and for a computer networked group of blackjack players. This publication is composed of direct submissions as well as edited excerpts from articles posted on computer bulletin boards or news groups. It is published on a monthly basis, except for occasional double issues.

21 NEWS is a nonprofit service. Contributions of articles and assistance are welcomed and will be of benefit to all.

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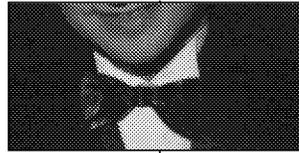
Editor and publisher: Michael Hall

Contributors: See attributions (in many cases computer addresses are used to protect the identity of an author.)

Mike's Philosophy

Michael Hall

Finally, the second issue of **21 NEWS** is here! In the future, I hope to get issues out in a more timely manner. At the time I'm



writing this, it's already late in February, and I had hoped to get issues out around the first of each month. Even with this being a double issue, it should have been published within a few days of February first.

Of course, what do you expect for the price you're paying? I had considered taking **21 NEWS** commercial, but, argh, there are just so many obstacles, and I won't have the time or capital to overcome these obstacles within the foreseeable future. The big advantage of the current nonprofit format is that there are no legal hassles with redistributing articles originally posted on computer news groups. Nobody has to get paid, and nobody expects to get paid. Some members of this computer "society" have questioned the utility of regurgitating this material; however, many others raved about the premiere issue of **21 NEWS**.

What I like about this magazine is the different viewpoints it gives on the casino conditions, proper strategy, and other such things. The conditions information is organized in a logical, sorted manner, rather than the jumble that we experience on the computer news groups. I take it with me whenever I go to a casino city as a reference guide to the casino conditions. It also serves as a convenient way to preserve some of the better articles for reading and rereading at later dates. Plus it's prettier than looking at fixed spaced ASCII computer text.

This magazine is what you make it. It's for y'all and by y'all. Therefore, please keep up the good work on the computer networks, as well as the direct submissions to **21 NEWS**.

One way we can make this magazine serve us even better is for us all to have a more organized approach to taking notes on casino conditions. For example, many

of the blackjack reports in this issue fail to mention the penetration (percent of cards dealt.) This may be because some reporters are

not card counters. Whatever the reason, we could all benefit from more thorough reporting.

Towards this end, I present the following checklist for blackjack conditions:

CONDITIONS CHECKLIST

"Essential":

- Number of decks
- Rule variations from norm
- Penetration
- Betting minimums/maximums

"Optional":

- Number of tables in use or total
- Face up or face down
- Peeking or no peeking
- Shuffle
- Presence of notches on shoes

On page 12, you'll find a table summarizing the conditions at Atlantic City casinos. If we all pull together and give the information on the above checklist, then **21 NEWS** can include tables summarizing the conditions at *all* the casinos.

To me, the best thing about Snyder's magazine **Blackjack Forum** is the tables summarizing the blackjack conditions. However, **Blackjack Forum** is published only 4 times a year, making the information in it often obsolete.

Of course, there's no substitute for the colorful prose relating personal experiences. Tables give a good overview, but the details are invaluable.

One final note. As you may know, I'm now writing for **Blackjack Confidential** magazine, which is put out by Eddie Olsen. Eddie has given me the status of "contributing editor" with my column entitled "21 Bits." I will also occasionally write feature articles. ♠

Strange Gambling in the Midwest

loch:

Over xmas break I happened upon an indian reservation gambling joint called "Little Six". I had heard they offered Blackjack but what I found was a game called "BingoJack". BingoJack... what the hell is this? Well it's played like Blackjack in that there are Blackjack like tables and it's every individual out to beat the "dealer." The difference is that there are no cards, just those numbered ping-pong balls (1 through 75) in a glass enclosure with a blow-dryer to stir them up a bit. The game goes like this:

1.) Players place their bets at the 8 tables surrounding the ping-pong blower thing.

2.) The ping-pong operator then starts drawing balls for the players. All the players get the same "hand" but each one decides whether to take an additional ball. The object is to get 121 or as close as possible.

3.) Once all the players have stood or busted the "dealer" starts drawing balls for the house. The house must hit 85 and must stand on 86 or above. The house busts if it's hand is 122 or higher.

4.) The payoff is even money for the player even if the player "hits" to 121. However (and this is going to sound really strange),

5.) the payoff is two to one if you beat the house AND get a bingo on one of the 3 bingo cards that are in front of your playing spot. These are regular bingo cards except there are 9 free spaces instead of the usual one in the center spot. The 9 free spaces are arranged so that you need only get 2 spots in a line or diagonal to win. Depending on your card it may be impossible to bingo on the "O" line as the 2 numbers may total > 121.

6.) Also, player position plays no role in the game since each individual player is asked whether they want to hit or stand for every draw. That is, if Fred, Joe and I are at the table and we have the following "cards" 42,12,30 for a total of 84, we are all asked simultaneously whether we want to hit or stand. It doesn't matter who sits where. If I stand and Joe and

Fred hit and get a 70 they bust as well as everyone who didn't stand. For those players who stood on 84 the house then begins to draw balls according to the rules above.

7.) The balls are all replaced at the start of a new game and the house always draws the first ball. This is equivalent to the dealers up card. So the players can use the information about the house's first ball for any strategy variations.

Sounds like a bizarre game, one for which there could be a way to beat it if the creator was just goofing around. ♠

A One Casino Town

piercy:

When driving up to Mammoth for a couple of days of skiing over New Year's, I noticed on the map how close Nevada was, and wondered if it could be worth having a casino in that area. The skiing was so poor on New Year's Eve, that we decided to do something else on New Year's Day. That's when someone mentioned that there was gambling in a town about 90 miles away called Hawthorne, Nev.

We decided to check it out. It turned out that there was only one casino in town that was still open, the El Capitan (I think). It was definitely a mom-and-pop type operation. It had only three blackjack tables going while we were there, and one craps table and one roulette table that didn't open until 6PM, and a proportional number of slot machines.

The blackjack was double deck, \$2-\$200 limits, and northern Nevada rules (dealer hit soft 17 and double on 10 or 11 only). The shuffle was straight forward, except for a little stripping, and the penetration was about 75%.

The craps was \$1 minimum with only single odds, but my friends won a couple of hundred there as soon as the tables opened, while I lost about \$35 at blackjack. I didn't even look at the roulette table. The most enjoyable part of playing there was the wide screen TV that we could watch the bowl games on from the tables. Also the employees and most of the patrons were very friendly. So, if you're ever in that part of the Sierra Nevadas and are tiring of whatever outdoor activities you're there for, you might

want to take a break with one of our favorite indoor activities.

By the way, I read in the paper the other day that several old Colorado mining towns will be starting up low stakes casinos this year. I'm not sure where they're all located, but one is only 35 miles from Denver. ♠

Penetration

jj:

Penetration is the single most important thing to look for in a blackjack game.

Using a 4:1 betting spread and the Zen count, the single-deck with 60% penetration yields about a 1.3% advantage and the two-deck with 75% penetration yields about a .8% advantage. This is dealer hits soft 17, double any first two cards. If you change to strip rules where the dealer stands of soft 17 for the two-deck game, you get an advantage of about 0.9%.

I have heard that you should get 67% penetration in a two-deck game or 75% penetration with more than two decks to make the game worth playing. 60% sounds about right for single-deck.

There are plenty of single-deck games around with penetration of 70% or more. I even know of a two-deck game with a penetration of 90% to 100%, double any first two cards, double after splitting, dealer hits soft 17. It's usually uncrowded and virtually any betting spread is tolerated. (However the table limit is \$50, minimum \$1.) ♠

Wall Street and Blackjack

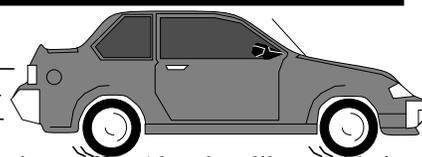
weinstock:

A quote from the January 8 Wall Street Journal (pg. C-1) (rearranged):

"most users of real-time quote equipment engage in day trading, that is, they try to open and close their positions in the [commodities] market within the same trading session....very, very few people are successful at that type of trading, and its extremely stressful. Day traders are similar to professional blackjack players. Both have found terrible ways to spend their lives." ♠

Speed Traps en Route to AC

jacko



For the benefit of anybody visiting Atlantic City from the northern New Jersey/New York/New England areas, I thought I should warn about a few likely speed traps you might have to pass through on the Garden State Parkway to/from Atlantic City.

The sneakiest one, which I have seen set up twice in the early morning hours on weekends when people are going home from the casinos, occurs at approximately milepost 52 on the northbound side. There is about a 5 mile stretch where the road passes across a marsh, and there is no median strip, but a wooden barricade instead. At about mile 52, the roadway hits solid land and the northbound and southbound sides diverge to create the typical wooded median strip. Right where the wooden fence ends, a statie sits with radar clocking the northbounders. About a half mile up the road, his buddies wait and pull over whichever "customers" he identifies. This is just past the exit for US 9 North and just before the piggybank (and state trooper barracks, conveniently...they can pop in

for fresh hot coffee whenever they feel like it.)

Another classic one is southbound just past exit 114 in the express lanes, you come off a huge hill and smokey sits in the median and gets you. I was down to AC on Saturday night and I saw three separate "customers" all pulled over in the express lanes within a mile of the trap site. Always take the local lanes southbound on the parkway.

In both directions, once you get south of Toms River (exit 82) all the way down to AC there are numerous cuts through the wooded median where the bears are able to hide. However, they know that we know about these, and they're marked with large no-U-turn signs which warn you to slow down, so the smokeys like to pull over onto the grass alongside the road, preferably under large overhanging tree branches, especially at night. I saw one guy on Saturday night who had driven his police cruiser way up onto a hill overlooking the southbound lanes, he was at least 10' higher than the

passing traffic. Also they like to hide in the picnic areas.

Last year once or twice they had their guys standing guard at the toll booth lanes at mile 54 or so, at least one man per lane, and they would look you over and look into your car for open containers, etc., as you passed through the piggybank. I'm not sure if the motivation was DWI check or making sure the tolls got paid; probably the latter. The guy in front of me got hassled and I had to sit there patiently, "oh, thank you officer for randomly hassling me".

On the Atlantic City Expressway, known to regulars as the Ace, there's a cop turnaround which is just past the casino employees parking lots in the median. Sometimes they're shooting radar there. On US 30 you see them on the open stretch near the HoJo's (I think it's a HoJo's) which is slightly west of the turnoff for Delilah Road (the only overpass for miles when heading west after the drawbridge). These tend to be local cops without instant on, fortunately.

Hope this helps. ♠

Casino Closings

brody, jacko:

In Las Vegas, the MGM Marina has closed down, so has the Landmark, as well as the little Nob Hill across the street from the Mirage. ♠

Trump Bail-Out

hall:

Donald Trump's father, Fred, bought more than \$3 million in chips from Trump Castle on December 17. The money was enough to allow the Donald to make a \$18.4 million payment to bondholders of the casino. (I wonder what the highest chip denomination is, and how many it took to make \$3 million... here's your 3 chips, a million bucks each :-)

Next thing you know, the Donald will be moving back in with his parents. ♠

Trump's New CEO

Henry Stern, Associated Press:

[Short excerpt from an AP story...]

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Donald Trump on Wednesday named his casino attorney, Nicholas L. Ribis, as the chief executive officer of his three Atlantic City casinos and one non-casino hotel.

It was not immediately clear what would become of Ed Tracy, who had held the CEO post. ♠

Wagner Defects to Trump Castle

hall:

Claridge President Roger Wagner has defected to run Trump Castle. Trump Castle President Anthony Calandra was

apparently demoted to some job in the marketing department. Wagner did a great job of running the Claridge, which did okay last year unlike most other Atlantic City casinos.

I predict we'll be seeing some blackjack innovations at Trump Castle under Wagner's direction... perhaps late surrender, but more likely two or four deck games with reasonable minimums and without late surrender. The reason the Claridge can't lower its \$100 minimum on the four deck game is that they are forced to have late surrender at either all the tables or none of the tables, and a four decker with late surrender is a beatable game (by Atlantic City standards), so they make sure it's beatable only by the few counters who can afford \$100 minimums. Of course, the low minimum (\$10) four deck games did not last very long at TropWorld last summer, but there's hope even in the slums of Atlantic City. ♠

So You Wanna Be a Gambler

irwin:

Flipping through the channels tonight, I caught our favorite, John Patrick, on FNN (Financial News Network) hawking his wares. During one of the many plugs for his video tapes, there is a clip of someone *hitting* a pair of Aces against a dealer's Jack. That requires a count of -10, in which case you shouldn't even be at the table. The player received a 5; they didn't show it, but no doubt he stood.

In between plugs, Patrick would wow us, the listening audience, with his gambling knowledge, if not his good math. He used 11 chips to split \$100 into 10 groups of \$10, each chip being \$10.

Sheesh. The show "So You Wanna Be a Gambler" evidently airs at 12:30am on Sunday mornings on FNN.)

Saturday Night Live:

[*This is a skit from a November show, of SNL, which was reshown in March.*]

Stan Duffy's "Gambling to Win"

[Scene: roulette table with dealer and Stan Duffy in a white turtleneck. A cocktail waitress brings in a new drink.]

My technique of winning at gambling is about two basic principles: money management and discipline. It's important to set a win goal and a loss limit. And when you reach that win goal, you gotta have the discipline to walk away. You gotta learn how to quit. You gotta always walk away with somethin'.

All right. Now let's say I walked into the casino with a bankroll of \$100, and from that I won \$60, which I actually just did. I'm going to take my original bankroll of \$100, and I'm gonna stick it in my pocket, and I'm gonna leave it alone. I gonna pretend it's not even there, 'cause you always gotta walk away with somethin'. All right, so rule #1: *Never dip into your bankroll.*

Okay, now I'm going to play conservative with my \$60 winnings, and that's how I want you to play. Oh, and another thing... little perk about the casinos... as long as you're gambling, you always get free drinks. [Sips drink.]

All right. I'm going to take 25% of my winnings or \$15 - I'm going to place it on black. There's all different kinds of ways of winnings at roulette.

[Order screen pops up, and announcer speaks... *Stan Duffy's video tape "Roulette: How to Win" has taught thousands of gamblers how to win at roulette. Send \$39.95 to*

Stan Duffy's Casino Survival Kit. Visa or Mastercard accepted.]

Okay, I've been here for a while. I've lost my \$60 winnings, but I'm still playing. Did I dip into my bankroll? Yes, I did... and I'm not proud of it. But remember rule #2: *What the hell, how often do you make it to Vegas?* Am I right?

All right. [Waitress brings another drink.] Oh, thank you very much. Now I'm going to take 50% of my original bankroll, all right, and I'm going to place it on 24 black. Why? Because my mechanic is 24 and an afro-american - I think there's something there. All right. I'm gonna, I'm gonna leave the rest of my bankroll in my pocket, and I'm going to pretend it never existed, 'cause you always gotta walk away with somethin'. Plus, I'm still taking advantage of the free drinks. [Sips drink, while dealer takes chips away.]

Okay. Okay. My number didn't come up, but we're still in the game. Why? Because I still got \$50 left from my original bankroll. [Digs into pocket.] I almost forgot it was in there!

I'm going to take \$40 of it and I'm going to put it on the red. Why? 'Cause I have a hunch. Rule #3: *Always follow your hunch.* Now, you notice that I'm saving \$10. Why? 'Cause you always gotta walk away with somethin'. I'm going to save that \$10 for food, lodging, and transportation. I'm going to put it back in my pocket - it's not even here, okay? It doesn't even exist. Okay. Let's see what happens.

[Order screen pops up and announcer speaks: *Stan Duffy's video tape "Casino Buffets: How to Sneak In" has helped scores of unlucky gamblers return to the tables on a full stomach. Order your tape now.*]

It's 4 o'clock in the morning. I won twenty dollars, but then I got a little excited, a little sloppy, and I lost it - including the \$10 I was saving for food and lodging. But it's okay - I took out a loan of \$150 from a guy named Sal. Interest rates are very high - but it's okay - I know I'm going to win big tonight - it's not even a question. I know what I'm doing. He's gonna get his money back. It's going to be all right. Okay.

[Order screen pops up and announcer speaks: *Stan Duffy's video tape "Hiding and Creating an Alias" has helped hundreds of unlucky gamblers disappear without a trace. Order your tape now.*]

Okay. I lost everything, but I still have a drink, and if I look like I'm still gambling, I can probably still get free drinks. Rule #6: *Look like you're still gambling - get those free drinks.* I'm walking away with somethin'.

[Order screen pops up and announcer speaks: *Stan Duffy's video tape "Alcohol and Gambling: Why you can't quit - not now anyway" Order today.*]

hall:

Guess whom I saw at the Claridge in Atlantic City on a recent Friday night? Yep, *the* professional gambler (or is it *the* professional scam artist) John Patrick! I was just entering the casino, about to check out the shuffles and penetration on the blackjack tables, when a guy right in front of me shouted "Mr. Patrick!" I turned to see where he was running over to, and there I saw John Patrick. He is over 6' tall and has grayish longish hair, kind of a 70's over the ear unkempt hair-style.

The guy who talked to him evidently had recently met him and was getting his card or something. He walked away with his wife saying something like "He's really something, huh? Knows his stuff."

I wonder whether late surrender or John Patrick (or a combination of the two) causes the most strategy mistakes by players there at the Claridge? Snyder wrote in an issue of Blackjack Forum that John Patrick flunked his own blackjack quiz on surrender strategy in his own newsletter. Patrick has produced lots of error-filled books and videos.

The Claridge has John Patrick on hand in a hotel suite, in case you ever feel the need to tell him what a shmuck he is. ♠

War and the Casinos

hall:

On January 16, gamblers in Nevada were apparently unphased by the war in gulf. Most of them were not staying glued the televisions in the bars or their rooms, and were instead gambling away as usual.

As the war continued, Nevada casinos started to suffer terribly, with people afraid to fly and gamblers spending more time in front of the tube.

American West airlines offered 1/2 off fares, with no restrictions on travel time. Since their hub is Las Vegas, this meant dirt cheap trips to Las Vegas. The fare for Newark to Las Vegas, direct, was \$150. Several other airlines scrambled to match their fares. However, all the discounts lasted for only three days. I hope you got your tickets... I've got mine! ♠

BLACKJACK IN ARUBA

Michael Hall

18 miles off the coast of Venezuela, Aruba is one of the Netherland Antilles desert islands (though it now has its own government.) Cacti, sand, and lizards are everywhere. During the day, there's plenty of sun in which to get a tan, go for a swim, and snorkel or scuba. In the main town, Oranjestad, there's some good shopping at fairly low prices and no sales tax. During the evening, there is not much to do except hit the casinos.

There are 8 casinos in Aruba, and all except the Alhambra and the Crystal Casino are located in the high rise hotels. The Alhambra casino is located next to the Divi Divi hotel (where I stayed) and the Crystal Casino is located next to the Sonesta hotel in town. The other casinos are located at the Hyatt, the Holiday Inn, the Concorde, the Aruba Palm Beach, the Americana, and the Golden Tulip. Most of the casinos do not open table games before about 7 pm, but they stay open until 3 or 4 am.

All blackjack games are 6 decks. \$5 is the normal minimum (sometimes \$2, \$3, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100), and the normal maximum is \$500. Between 2/3 and 3/4 of the cards are dealt before reshuffling.

The table on the next page summarizes the conditions at each casino. Note that the Golden Tulip's casino has one table with the under/under bet option. The best blackjack conditions were at the Concorde, Crystal Palace, and the Golden Tulip. The Hyatt's worth a look, if they improve their penetration.

The shuffles at most of the casinos are trackable. You can even find a straight-forward full riff shuffle here (unplayed cards placed on top of discards first, pile cut in two, 1/2 or 1/3 deck picks from each, several riffs and strips for each pair of picks.)

The dealers are, for the most part, fairly fast and very error prone - an ideal combination, since you get in many hands per hour and have an elevated win rate. I was overpaid (usually double paid) on a dozen occasions in 21 hours of total playing time. Always place your



**A suspicious-looking character
outside Aruba's Crystal Casino**

next bet as soon as possible; if the dealer busts your spot may get paid even if you have no cards!

Once at the Concorde, I was dealt 3 and 5, and I hit twice to get two 7's for a total of 22. The dealer passed me by without taking my cards and my bet. Of course, I said nothing. The player to my right (who turned out to be a dealer at the Hyatt) said something in Spanish to the dealer, who counted my total out-loud in Spanish and arrived at 21. Whew. The player again argued with the dealer, who again counted out the cards to get 21 once more. A minor miracle. (I had a few words with that player after the round.) The same dealer made mistakes in my favor on three other occasions.

The general atmosphere of the casinos is light and jovial. No pit boss ever caught a mistake made in my favor, even when they were watching. I encountered no heat with my 1-10 spread. Often casinos will have Latin bands playing, with the dealers and bit bosses moving their hips to the beat.

The mix of Spanish and English used at the tables is amusing, but sometimes problematic. One should introduce oneself when presented with a new dealer, just to let them know what language you speak.

Late in my trip, I discovered an odd rule. When explaining the rules, almost all the casino personnel said that a player will only lose the original bet if the dealer has blackjack. (Yet, of all the casinos, only the Hyatt dealers deal themselves hole cards.) However, the truth is that if you bust a split hand (or doubled hand if you're masochistic), and the dealer has blackjack, then you lose the busted hands plus one more. This sounds somewhat horrifying, since the European "dealer's natural takes all" rule costs the basic strategy player 0.11%, but I would estimate that this "dealer's natural takes busts" rule costs less than 0.01%. The reason is that it only affects your play of 8-8; don't split 8's against 10 or ace. You can still split aces against 10 or ace, since you only get one card apiece and thus can't bust them. Never split anything

else against 10 or ace, even if the true count would normally justify such a strategy variation.

Since there are no \$2.50 chips at any of the casinos, odd bet blackjacks are paid off using an "imprisoned" chip. Always bet even amounts, to avoid the imprisoning altogether.

Most of the hotels cater to stupid American tourists, with the Divi Divi being a notable exception. I loved the Divi Divi, but if you are going to Aruba for blackjack, then I would suggest staying at one of the high-rises, because the blackjack at the Divi's Alhambra casino stinks, and it can take a lot of time to catch taxis. The only high-rise hotels that I liked were the Aruba Palm Beach and the Hyatt. The Americana and Holiday Inn were gross in comparison. ♠

Summary of Blackjack Conditions in Aruba

<u>CASINO</u>	<u># TABLES</u>	<u>SHUFFLE POINT</u>	<u>BETTING RANGE</u>	<u>DOUBLE ON</u>	<u>DAS</u>	<u>HIT SOFT 17</u>
Alhambra	12	70%	3,5-300	10,11	Yes	Yes
Americana	8	70%	5-500	any	No	Yes
Concorde	9	78%	2,5-500	any	Yes	Yes
Crystal	6	72%	5-500	any	No	Yes
Golden Tulip	8*	66%	5-500	any	No	Yes
Holiday Inn	7	68%	5-500	any	No	Yes
Hyatt	10	66%	5-500	any	No	No
Palm Beach	4	66%	5-300	any	Yes	Yes

* One of the tables at the Golden Tulip has over/under.

Note: all casinos use six decks, deal face up, and don't peek. Only the Hyatt dealers take hole cards; European no hole card rule is not in effect anywhere, but you may lose busted hands if the dealer has blackjack. All casinos allow up to 3 splits. The number of tables and shuffle point in the above table are approximate.

Other Voices

Michael Hall

Blackjack Confidential

Editor and Publisher: Eddie Olsen
 Price: \$10 (sometimes \$25 or \$50)
 Subscriptions: \$55/six months
 \$99/year, \$190/two years.
 (10 issues/year)

Address:

Blackjack Confidential Publishing
 513 Salsbury Rd.
 Cherry Hill, NJ, 08034

The December 1990 issue has articles on Olsen's TARGET 1990 money management advise, the gambling atmosphere in Laughlin, the Over/Under 13 bet coming to Atlantic City, Merv Griffin's Resorts future offering of 5 Card 21 2-1 payoffs and blackjack 8-5 payoffs, and riverboat gambling in Iowa and Illinois. Each issue has more gambling industry general statistics and news than any other blackjack magazine. 28 full size pages, 11 by 17" folded and stapled magazine style with glossy finish.

Blackjack Forum

Editor and Publisher: Arnold Snyder
 Price: \$7.50
 Subscriptions: \$30/year
 (4 issues/year)

Address:

RGE
 414 Santa Clara Ave.
 Oakland, CA 94610

The December 1990 issue has articles on the effects of realistic shuffles and new decks of cards, a summary of the Eighth International Gambling Conference, an update on the possibilities of beating roulette, blackjack in Japan, blackjack in London, and a review of the book "Card Counting for the Casino Executive". Each issue has more straight facts about casino blackjack conditions than any other blackjack magazine (i.e., statistics on penetration, # tables, rules, # decks, betting limits for just about every casino). 50 half size pages, 8 1/2 by 11" folded in half and stapled magazine style with card-stock cover.

Blackjack Monthly

Editor: Robert Gates
 Publisher: Richard Canfield & Associates
 Price: \$7
 Subscriptions: \$60/year,
 \$110/two years
 (12 issues per year)

Address:

Richard Canfield & Associates
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Like every issue, the January 1991 issue has mostly casino observations, many of which disagree with my own observations. It is lean on actual statistics such as penetration, number of tables, rules, etc. Instead it uses a "star" system of ratings with text describing anything new at each casino. 10 full size pages, 8 1/2 by 11" stapled in corner.

♠

Basic Strategy for Double Exposure

wilding, markd, and hall

Double exposure is a blackjack variant where the dealer's hole card dealt face up. The first casino to offer it was Vegas World in October of 1979. Today, you can find double exposure at many casinos. In Las Vegas, you'll find it at Lady Luck, Vegas World, Aladdin, Little Caesar's, Marina, Sahara, and Fitzgerald's. In Reno, you'll find it at the Peppermill, Circus Circus, and the Sundowner. Most casinos deal double exposure from 6 deck shoes.

You get to see both the dealer's cards before making your play, but then the dealer wins pushes and blackjacks pay even money (but at most casinos your blackjack wins against a dealer's blackjack instead of pushing.) Many hit soft 17. Lady Luck allows you to double on

any first 2 cards. Most other places allow doubling only on 9,10, or 11. At Fitzgerald's, if you double on ace-8, they force you to count the ace as 1.

Below is the proper doubling and splitting basic strategy as well as the standing and hitting basic strategy, found by our computer analyses. In the doubling and splitting table, "P" stands for split, and "D" stands for double. First see if you should split, then double, then hit or stand. If the dealer has a standing hand, then you should hit until you beat him or bust.

Since blackjacks do not pay 3 to 2, you should not use a counting system that counts aces as negative. Hi-Opt I (3-6 = +1; 10 = -1; 2,A = 0) is an acceptable system, but High-Low (2-6 = +1; 10,A =

-1, 7-9 = 0) is not.

Wong's chapter on double exposure in *Professional Blackjack* remains the acknowledged source on card counting for double exposure. Unfortunately, the strategy adjustments and other figures that Wong provides are for High-Low.

According to Peter Griffin's *Theory of Blackjack*, each Hi-Opt I true count point in double exposure is worth 0.8%, as opposed to the 0.5% in normal blackjack. Thus, card counting is actually more effective in double exposure, and you can potentially make more money. Beware: poor rules or large numbers of decks can negate the advantage of double exposure. Yet, some indian reservations offer double exposure games with positive basic strategy expectations! ♠

Double Exposure Standing and Hitting

Against hard 4 stop on hard 12 or soft 19
Against hard 5 stop on hard 12 or soft 19
Against hard 6 stop on hard 12 or soft 18

Against hard 7 stop on hard 17 or soft 18
Against hard 8 stop on hard 16 or soft 19
Against hard 9 stop on hard 16 or soft 19
Against hard 10 stop on hard 15 or soft 19
Against hard 11 stop on hard 14 or soft 18

Against hard 12 stop on hard 12 or soft 18
Against hard 13 stop on hard 12 or soft 18
Against hard 14 stop on hard 12 or soft 18
Against hard 15 stop on hard 12 or soft 18
Against hard 16 stop on hard 12 or soft 18

Against soft 12 stop on hard 13 or soft 19
Against soft 13 stop on hard 13 or soft 19
Against soft 14 stop on hard 12 or soft 19
Against soft 15 stop on hard 12 or soft 19
Against soft 16 stop on hard 12 or soft 19
Against soft 17 stop on hard 18 or soft 18

"Stop" means hit if and only if your hand total is less than the number listed; stand when your total is equal to or more than the number.

Double Exposure Splitting and Doubling

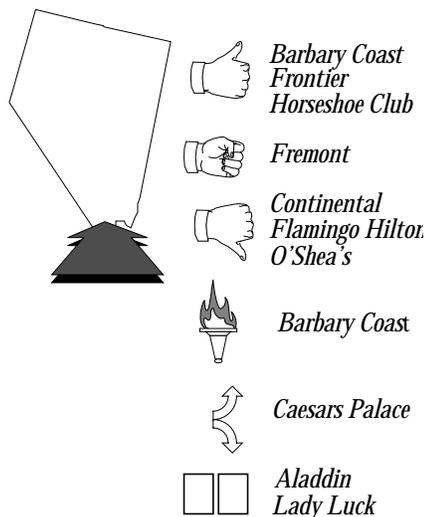
Dealer's Hand

Player's Hand	Dealer's Hand																				
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	AA	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
4			P						P	P	PD	PD	PD	P							
5											D	D	D								
6			P						P	P	PD	PD	PD	P							
7											D	D	D								
8			P						PD	PD	PD	PD	PD								
9		D	D						D	D	D	D	D								
10	D	D	D	D	D				D	D	D	D	D						D	D	D
11	D	D	D	D	D	D			D	D	D	D	D					D	D	D	D
12	P	P	P						P	P	P	P	P	P							
13																					
14		P	P						P	P	P	P	P	P							
15																					
16	P	P	P	P	P				P	P	P	P	P	P						P	P
17																					
18	P	P	P		P				P	P	P	P	P		P				P	P	
19																					
20										P	P	P	P								
AA	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		PD	PD	PD	PD	PD			P	P	P	P	P	P
A2									D	D	D	D	D								
A3			D						D	D	D	D	D								
A4			D						D	D	D	D	D								
A5		D	D						D	D	D	D	D								
A6		D	D						D	D	D	D	D								
A7	D	D	D						D	D	D	D	D								
A8									D	D	D	D	D								
A9										D	D	D	D								
A10												D	D								

BLACKJACK CONDITIONS

The blackjack conditions here were observed during the months of December and January. The symbols give a summary. Good, so-so, or bad condition symbols refer to casinos that are good, so-so, or bad for normal card counters. This does not necessarily include casinos that are good, so-so, or bad for basic strategists, over/under counters, shuffle-trackers, etc.

Las Vegas



brody:

All in all, downtown was pleasant. Friendlier dealers, lower minimums, (good for a low budget person such as myself), and the people were just having a better time.

Aladdin

markd:

I looked for places offering double exposure, but it was bleak. I did find double exposure at the Aladdin, but the rules are nothing great. You can't split uneven 10's, you can only double on 9,10,11, and 6-7-8 will pay double only for Spades. Other rules are as the Lady Luck. The table limits are \$2-500.

Conditions Legend



Good conditions



So-so conditions



Bad conditions



Heat



Over/under bet



Double exposure

Barbary Coast

irwin:

The only casinos from which people whom I know personally have gotten barred are the Barbary Coast, El Cortez, and Union Plaza. Believe it or not, all three of these casinos, as well as the Gold Coast, are owned by the same folks. According to a Mirage dealer my friend knows, these are places to stay away from, for other reasons as well. He says they hate to lose even \$100 to anybody.

jacko:

Managed to beat the Barbary Coast out of a couple hundred bucks without getting barred. So there! :-). Didn't lose any chips in the toilets either.

alan:

Counter's paradise. Double-deck, DAS, double on anything, split up to 3 times, 70-80% penetration. Despite its reputation, I played \$10-2x\$100 for about an hour with *no* heat (maybe a little attention from the pit, but this *is* kind of a small place for "black action.")

marlon:

Conditions (and waitresses) were good at Barbary Coast, but I just didn't get anything to happen, in either sense.

Binion's

brody:

Binion's was OK, but the dealer's there weren't as nice as other places.

Bourbon Street

srt:

At Bourbon Street, we saw a \$2 minimum game, two decks, strip rules, plus surrender. Before you rush off to Vegas, let me mention that the dealers at Bourbon Street looked like the cast from a prison production of "Chorus Line."

Caesars Palace

alan:

Same old Caesars. (Shoes, over/under, you remember.) Big Money is here, although their Olympic Casino still had \$5 blackjack and craps.

Circus Circus

srt:

Circus is a madhouse, but we never had any real problems finding a couple of empty seats at a table and never had to sit at first base. The games we played were \$2, two deck games with strip rules.

We sat down and immediately got several favorable decks. Unfortunately, my friend was following my betting a little too closely - on several occasions he changed his bet after seeing my bet - and the dealer shuffled up on us more than once. In fact, Circus dealers were pretty conscientious about shuffling up when the bets jumped. They were also pretty good at suckering me into putting out a bet before deciding to shuffle up. Anyway, that's all in good fun. As long as they aren't doing something ludicrous like shuffling up after two rounds (in a two deck game) I have no complaints.

Continental

jacko:

Avoid the Continental. It's a dive. I went there to cash in some match play and couldn't wait to get out of the place.

Excalibur

marien:

I did have one incident that was kind of interesting at the Excalibur in Vegas. There was one particular dealer who, when she slid the downcard underneath the upcard, she would hold it at a very slight angle for a very brief period of time. I found that if I rested my chin on my arms, which were resting on the table, I had an excellent opportunity to read the card as she placed it on the table. The position I sat in was fairly unnatural, but the fact that I looked like I'd been playing for 40 straight hours gave some excuse for my hunched position. Anyway, I was able to read paint-nonpaint about 70% of the time, with a completely accurate read about 30% of the time. The dealers moved in 20-minute shifts, and this was the only hand-held deck at the pit, so the total time I was able to spend with this dealer was about 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Flamingo Hilton

loch:

Conditions weren't so hot at the Flamingo Hilton, as penetration was only about 60% on double deckers.

jacko:

The Flamingo has signs saying they'll cash checks for Amex card holders up to their normal cash advance limits, i.e. \$1000 for the green card, \$5000 for the gold card, and whatever the hell it is for the platinum card. Luckily I didn't need to take them up on it this time. Wonder what they do when you don't get the cash back home in time to cover the rubber check?? 1/2 :-)

Fremont

loch:

I was at the Fremont, and this older woman dealer named Karen was dealing

the single deck to 85% penetration. I was up \$800 in 2 hours betting \$10 to \$50 per hand. After winning a large bet in the last hand, Karen remarked that she shouldn't have dealt the last hand; she showed me that she had about 6 cards left. But I kept tipping her, and we both were winning.

I left and then came back to the Fremont and there was no Karen in sight. In fact, I couldn't find a game with better than 60% penetration.

Most of the downtown casinos have special 5 player tables for the single deck game and only deal 2 games per shuffle no matter how many players there are. One exception: if there are only 2 players, 3 games will be dealt. So let's see, 5 players plus the dealer times 2 games at an average of 2.5 cards per player... yep 60%. And 2 players plus dealer times 3 games at 2.5 cards... Hmmm 46% or so. No wonder I lost money.

brody:

I finally got a chance to go Downtown. Pretty wild! My favorite place was the Fremont. A simple casino, not too much flash, and the dealers were *very* friendly. During the week, these were about the only dealers I ever toked. I only believe in toking if you're enjoying yourself. The dealers here were friendly, talkative, and helpful. At the Hilton, they just sorta glared at you...

Frontier

jacko:

The Frontier seems to have increased the number of single deck tables and changed the remaining shoe games to 6 decks. The single deckers have 7 spots and they deal 2 rounds so good penetration. Doubling only on 9/10/11 and no DAS but stand on 17 and I believe you can resplit and they pay 2:1 on suited Ace/Jack blackjacks (although I saw one clown get one and neither he nor the dealer realized that rule so he got only 3:2). They run right over and ask you your name if you start playing green chips, though. 10x odds on craps.

srt:

The Frontier was interesting, with several \$1 and \$2 double deck games (hit only 10,11), but very crowded.

sjporte:

Had a great night at the Frontier, which lasted midnight until 8 AM. Used a \$1-5 bet spread. Double on 10/11 only, but A/J same suit pays 2-1.

Horseshoe Club

jacko:

Hey guys, I was in the Horseshoe Club over the weekend and guess what they have now?? A four deck shoe!

OK, before everybody goes into cardiac arrest, let me just mention that they have *one* table with a shoe on it, the other 60-odd tables are still single deck, downtown rules. Maybe they put the shoe there for homesick Atlantic City gamblers.

Still the winds of change seem to be blowing at the Horseshoe. I also saw players attempt to enter games in mid-deck and be told by the dealer that they could not play until after the shuffle. This is also definitely a new policy...

The Horseshoe is the embodiment of the American dream. They have single deck \$1 blackjack, and with a little skill and luck and patience anybody could run a hundred bucks into a hundred thousand there given enough time.

Lady Luck

markd:

Lady Luck's min/max bet for double exposure was \$5-1000, but they raised it to \$10 on Dec. 27 for the New year. (It will supposedly go back to \$5 after that.)

davidbe:

Lady Luck had approximately 85% penetration on 4 decks at the \$1 minimum tables (with double after any, double after split, split as often as you damn well can.)

Las Vegas Hilton

jacko:

The Las Vegas Hilton offers surrender.

Mirage

jacko:

Learned that the “guarded door” at the Mirage behind the double-deck pit is the “salon” for players with a \$1 million or higher credit line. Let’s see, how many Visa cards is that...

marlon:

\$5 minimum tables, with dealer standing on any 17, double on any two, double after split, and 2 decks. Also there were \$10 minimum, double exposure shoes.

alan:

There appears to be one pit of double deck games with unposted rules. Actually, it’s about 6 blackjack tables and 2 Pai-Gow Poker tables. I didn’t get a chance to investigate the rules, since the entire pit was \$100 minimum. (This was around New Year’s.) In fact, there were only 2 \$10 and about 6 \$25 blackjack games in the place - the rest were \$100, \$500, \$1,000-\$10,000, and ??? (in the lounge in the middle.) Major Money here.

The management, in their infinite wisdom, put a hold on *all* credit lines, requiring *everybody* to update their profiles and be re-approved. The staff were at their wits’ end - in some cases downright rude.

O’Shea’s

alan:

As someone mentioned a while ago, they are all 6-deckers now. This place experimented with a single deck, strip rules, early surrender game when they first opened. Oh well.

Riviera

jacko:

Riviera no longer offers surrender.

Stardust

irwin:

I’m not sure if Matt mentioned this or not, but the Stardust has a little contraption on some of the tables to help the dealer check the down card. They merely slide the down card into a holder on the

table, and evidently there is a mirror underneath the table, which only the dealer can see. It shows the upper right of the card, which is blank except for the aces, which have the “A” in all four corners. This way, the dealer only knows if the card is an ace or a non-ace.

jacko:

Renovations at the Stardust have entered the casino areas and the place is a mess. I hate that peek-a-boo device.

Tropicana

alan:

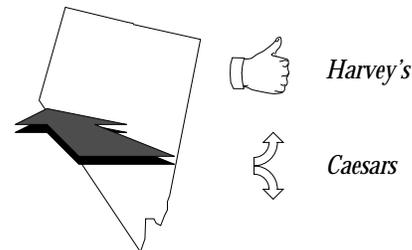
Just like a few months ago, blackjack remains mostly an 8-deck game at “The Island of Las Vegas.” The single pit of 6-deckers was still there as well - this is a nicer setting anyway, since it borders a bar that is a bit off the main floor. The two terrible two-deck games and the two single-deck games seem to have remained. Even on New Year’s Eve, these games remained \$3-\$300.

I had an opportunity to play the single-deck game for quite a long time over the weekend - much to *their* loss :-). The rules are not particularly great, but they will deal two rounds into even a full table (2x8x2.5 = 40 cards.) Cards were changed about once an hour - and always as the dealer was about to shuffle, not after one round like many places seem to do. Double on 10/11 and no DAS.

Most places seem to assign dealers to their own game, with 1-3 dealers that relieve them when they go on break. The Trop (single-deckers, anyway) runs (long) one-hour shifts, and does not repeat dealers. This presented an occasional advantage, in that the dealer would forget the more restrictive single-deck rules and allow DAS or soft doubles.

We were able to get a dealer to give better penetration. The other counter (I think) at the table came right out and remarked about how the dealer had only dealt the first round a couple of times. A number of us agreed. The dealer defended himself with the “I can’t run out of cards...” line, but never dealt less than 2 rounds again. It was all very friendly, and drew no undue attention. For that matter, neither did my \$5-\$150 betting spread (\$10 units, \$5 for *really bad* counts.)

Tahoe



Caesars

eeg:

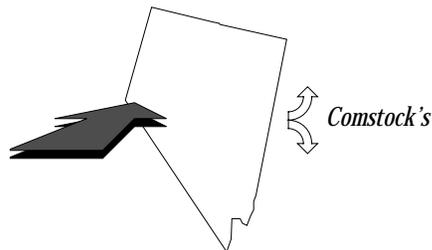
Caesars has over/under bets on a few of the 6 and 8 deck shoe tables.

Harvey's

eeg:

During December, \$3 minimums, single deck, dealt as close to the bottom as practicality would allow, no burn card, full table. During January, \$5 minimums and this time they were burning the top card. [*Gee, they’ve really got it rough in Tahoe... to think they now actually burn the top card! Dripping sarcasm - ed.*]

Reno



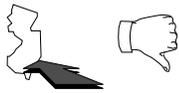
Comstock's

jacobs:

I’ve been told that Comstock’s in Reno offers a 2-deck over/under game. I’m sure there are others. Even the six deck over/under games will give about 1.5% advantage if penetration is good, but ordinary single deck games are about this good.

Counting +1 for A,2,3,4 and -1 for tens (Snyder’s “Over/Under Count”) gives a pretty good count for the over/under games when the over-13 bet is taken if true count ≥ 2 , and the under-13 bet is taken if true count ≤ -5 .

Atlantic City



The whole damn city!

hall:

The chart at right summarizes what I observed during my trip in early January. The columns "Shoe Notches" and "Shuffle Type" might need some explaining.

Notched shoes have lines or slots on the outside of the shoe, allowing the casino to control precisely where the dealer puts the cut card.

There are three main shuffles being used in Atlantic City currently. The Stutter Plus shuffle is a full stutter followed by a full riff. The Criss-Cross shuffle is a five zone shuffle, where picks are taken from the diagonally opposite piles as well as the fifth pile. The Random Pick shuffle is a six zone shuffle with picks from two random piles at a time.

jacko:

For "couponomy", **Trump Castle** and **Tropworld** continue to be the most reliable coupon droppers. Get a rating card at these places and give each of them a few hours of play, preferably on multiple visits. Then sit back and wait for the coin coupons to roll in. Also, if you have a rating card/slot card, you should be able to get a room rate of no higher than \$35 any night except Saturday over the next few months in AC.

Bally's Park Place

hall:

Poor penetration; extremely complex shuffle; back-counting is your only hope.

The Claridge

hall:

The Claridge now has glitzy signs in the pits, proclaiming "Surrender." Nice touch, and it shows that late surrender is there to stay. The Claridge's shoes have notches, but I didn't see any dealer use them. No one was playing the \$100 four deck table, so I was unable to observe the penetration; however, this is probably

the "best" game in town, if you can afford it, now that the 2-deckers at Resorts are gone.

Resorts

jacko:

Resorts has eliminated the one remaining double deck 21 table. Looks like the tremendous financial drain of operating one double deck table with an imposed maximum 1:4 spread finally caught up with them (can you sense the dripping sarcasm?). Resorts has abandoned the stutter shuffle and gone back to their old 6-pile zone shuffle! Most of their dealers are rookies and I'll bet the stutter was causing a considerable loss of playing time and thus a drop in the blackjack win rate. At their 8 deck games Resorts continues to offer about the worst penetration in Atlantic City--at least 2.5 decks cut out of play.

Craps: only four of their tables offer 5x odds. I was under the impression that they had expanded 5x odds to all their tables, since on a previous visit there was a huge banner at the casino entrance announcing it. Now here's the interesting part: their other dozen or so craps tables offer *double odds*. I seem to recall that 6 months or so ago, they all offered triple odds, same as the Claridge. So it looks like Resorts giveth, Resorts taketh away. It's probably moot, since I observed the 5x odds tables and I only saw one man out of three packed tables who was taking full odds. The other players were mostly low-action players, taking double odds, probably for money management

reasons...losing a few \$25 odds bets would probably knock them out for the evening. (There were 3 \$5 tables and one \$10 craps tables with 5x odds. Friday night around midnight. Saturday afternoon Showboat had a \$3 craps table, but AC was deserted this weekend.)

In my opinion Resorts has become a master of the bait-and-switch, and I would urge all gamblers, even basic strategy 21 players and craps players, to avoid Resorts.

hall:

Stay tuned to Resorts for 5 Card Grifins. If you get exactly 21 on exactly 5 cards, and the dealer doesn't have 21 also, then you get paid 2 to 1. [See the next issue of 21 NEWS -ed.]

Sands

jacko:

Sands changed their shuffle in late December. Looks like a 6-pile zone, but each pick takes a small number of cards from all 6 piles, so it's really sort of a poor-man's stutter. The second pass of the shuffle is a 2 piles into 1 riffle shuffle.

hall:

During my visit in mid-January, Sands had reverted to their old 5-pile Criss-Cross shuffle (as opposed to the new shuffle mentioned by Jacko.) I was able to track it with some success, racking up quite a few hours of play on my Sands comp-card to boot.

Atlantic City at a glance

CASINO	# DECKS	SHUFFLE POINT	BETTING RANGE	SHOE NOTCHES	SHUFFLE TYPE
Bally's PP	8	72%	5,10-500	None	Stutter Plus
	6	?	25,50-1000	?	?
Claridge	8	75%	5,10-500	Yes	Criss-cross
	6	72%	25,50-1000	?	?
	4	?	100-?	?	?
Sands	8	75%	5,10-500	None	Criss-cross
	6	72%	25,50-1000	None	Criss-cross
Taj Mahal	8	75%	3,5,10-500	?	Stutter Plus
	6	?	25,50-1000	?	?
Resorts	8	60%	5,10-500	Lines	Random Pick
	6	?	25,50-1000	?	?
Showboat	8	70%	5,10-500	Lines	Stutter Plus
	6	?	25,50-1000	?	?

Showboat

hall:

Like Bally's Park Place, but even worse penetration. Don't waste your time.

Taj Mahal

hall:

There was a line for \$3 minimums.

TropWorld

hall:

TropWorld added late surrender late in January. Advanced shuffle-trackers may find the best Atlantic City conditions here.

Trump Plaza

hall:

Trump Plaza also added late surrender during late January.

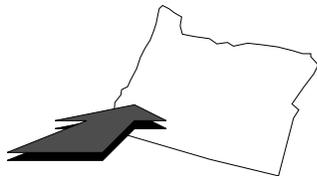
Trump Castle

stank:

At Trump Castle (I think that's where it was), there was a sign that \$5 blackjack tables and roulette wheels will be available at all times that the casino is open.

Sounds like in A/C, \$5 tables are supposed to be the "bargain" that \$1 BJ games and 25 cent roulette wheels are in Las Vegas.

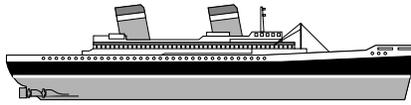
Oregon



northam:

In Oregon, at least Tillamook County with which I'm most familiar, they deal mostly single deck and double deck. There are a couple of shoes, but most people don't like to play them. For those not familiar, Oregon and Washington both have BJ in some bars--it's a city/county local option kind of thing. Usually \$10 maximum bet.

Cruise Ships



petew:

Having just gotten back from an NCL four day cruise on the Southward, I thought I'd share my observations. Southward goes from Los Angeles to Catalina to San Diego (omitted on the 3 day cruise) to Encenada, Mexico, and back to LA.

There are two types of blackjack tables. One is \$3 minimum 6 deck with consistent penetration of about 2/3. Double down on anything, split pairs and 10 values. Second table type \$5 minimum 2 deck. I didn't play this one, so I don't know what the rules were. [bnkjfyedrghsfedrgkuji - as the editor pounds his head on the keyboard...]

For roulette, they had rather strange betting rules. 50 cent chips minimum. In order to be the outside (rows, thirds, odd, even, red, black, etc.) the minimum bet was \$3 *each bet*. Playing inside, minimum bet of \$1.50 (3 chips) but placed any way you like.

I watched this wheel for about 30 spins before playing and noted that only once did it land on the last 1/3 (25-36). There was a distinct pattern to the way the dealer spun the wheel. The ball was always released above the number on which it had previously landed. I started playing a pattern of nine numbers (such as 4 through 12) with various coverages, and turned \$20 into about \$140 in a period of 30 minutes!

This brought up an interesting question. Since a cruise ship is rarely level, could this have a tendency to skew the wheel? While I was playing, I never played the top third, and it only landed there twice. Considering the way the numbers on the wheel are allocated, it doesn't seem reasonable that the ship movement would account for the lack of numbers 25-36 being hit, but who knows?

They also had a brand of caribbean poker and one craps table.



Casino Stats

manny:

Released by the Gaming Control Board on 12/26/90, here's the October figures for Nevada Casino Revenue. Once again, it was over \$400M.

Here is the chart comparing last year to this year:

Nevada Casino Revenue by month/year

MONTH	1990	1989
October	474.1	412.3
September	482.3	412.1
August	430.6	385.7
July	452.1	412.4
June	426.4	375.9
May	438.6	398.4
April	439.6	381.4
March	440.2	399.3
February	400.8	328.6
January	433.0	373.4

SOURCE: Gaming Control Board (all figures in millions of dollars. Revenue is the casino take before expenses and taxes)

At this rate, Nevada is expected to top \$5B for the first time ever. Although figures cannot be broken down into individual casinos, they can be divided into areas.

The Month of October looked like this:

Revenue for October by Area

AREA	Oct. 90	Oct. 89
LV Strip	\$215M	\$171M
Downtown	\$67M	\$63M
Laughlin	\$37M	\$31M
Washoe	\$75M	\$66M

Note: The 12 largest casinos on the strip accounted for \$142M of the \$215M in revenues. These casinos are believed to include Caesars Palace, Circus Circus, LV Hilton, Flamingo Hilton, Mirage and Excalibur. ♠

Packages, Lodging, & Travel

Las Vegas

twhalen:

I hold in my hands a flyer from the **Dunes** offering \$300 in casino benefits, distributed by "Vacation Invitations," of Las Vegas. Their number is 702-795-1060.

The deal: \$2 "registration fee" You get the vouchers over 3 days. You can redeem one per hour. You must redeem them in order. (It says "in sequence"- can you skip some? I dunno.) You can take until midnight to redeem, and you get - I guess - a new book as early as 6:00 a.m. You must be out-of-state.

You get: 12 "buy five get \$6" nickels (\$12) 18 "\$10 free slot play" (\$180) 18 "lucky bucks" \$3 for \$2 bet bj/craps/roulette (\$18) \$36 in free drinks (Boy Howdy!) 3 free pancake and egg breakfasts (\$19.50) Max \$44.25 food value, 50% off coupons for lunch and dinner.

Very strange - I don't quite see how you can do these one an hour, they must be given out in lumps. Any of it valuable? I dunno. I like three for twos, as far as freebies go, and the slot play is probably on a gizmo machine, but at least you get breakfast.

The registration fee is refunded, by the way.

I should also mention the **Sands**, which is furnishing my apartment in coffee cups, has a "learn to gamble" package, which goes for \$10 and includes a "strategy wheel" and \$15 in non-redeemable-unless-won chips.

frants:

Currently MVP tours offers deals for **Aladdin**, **Sahara** and **Continental** with 8 hours at \$5 minimum bet condition. (Player's Express seems to have more choices at higher minimums but only Sahara at \$5 minimum.)

Here are the useful names and numbers for this deal:

The deal is: for approximately \$280 each for two people (more expensive for a single person) you get a double room

for 3 nights, 9 buffets, \$60 of drinks that you can probably get for free when you gamble anyway, show, airport pickup and \$100 back in cash and \$200 back in match play chips. You also get flown there of course.

You only get \$100 + \$200 match chips back after you play for 8 hours at \$5 minimum. Meals you charge to your room and they are only free after you play for eight hours i.e. if you have not played ten hours you will have to pay upon leaving. If two people go only one has to play for 8 hours but then of course only one gets back \$100 + \$200 and the meals.

You do not have to stay 3 nights exactly - if you stay more or less the price per night is about \$30 so you can calculate the price of the trip yourself. Also the price changes slightly depending on whether you go on the weekend and what flights you are taking, but only slightly.

A useful number is 1-800-555-1212 - free directory for all 800 numbers - in particular all the casinos seem to have one and so far the travel agents that offered interesting packages.

Player's Express - for number call the above. I think they may arrange trips from a number of places - not just San Francisco.

MVP tours - for number call the above.

They both offered the same deal - MVP to less casinos but about \$30 cheaper.

Also one can call casinos directly and they will direct you to places where you can get packages like that for their casino.

tjarc:

Last time I stayed in Vegas I stayed at the **Aladdin**. \$40 on the weekend and the rooms were comfortable; lots of sunlight, decorated with light, pastel colors. The casino lacks atmosphere but the dealers are as courteous as anywhere else. I don't like playing craps there though. I prefer lots of light on the table. If you've ever played craps at the Four Queens then you know what I like: they

have a couple of spotlights on the green of each table.

Observation: is it just my experience that the television service in the hotel rooms in Vegas *sucks*? I mean, when you get up in the morning (afternoon?) or are coming back to the room to chill out a bit, I like to turn on the t.v. ESPN would be great but the hotels don't seem to carry it on the house system. All I ever seem to get is fuzzy soap operas and the channel that teaches you how to gamble at the particular games, and even that one comes in shitty. I've stayed at many different places and it always seems to be the same story.

But then, it could be a ploy to keep you from getting too comfortable in the room. After all, they want you down in the casino spending your dough. That is why you'll find some of the interior room decor to have *really* obnoxious color schemes.

Reno

konstan:

Every hotel is cheap this time of year. **Bally's** is \$39 a night, and that is on the high end. I like **Circus Circus**, because the rooms are basically all the same (and they are big and comfortable). Also, they have entire non-smoking floor.

Laughlin

vijay:

The **Flamingo Hilton** has some very attractive rates.

Atlantic City

stank:

The \$50 room I got at **Harrah's** was very nice.



Food, Freebies, & Fun

Las Vegas

brody:

I stopped by **Slotsafun** and made sure to get my \$0.99 shrimp cocktail. Not bad, although I felt that 4 ounces of shrimp really didn't need 3 ounces of *sauce*. (cough...)

I stopped by **Caesar's**, and took in one of their IMAX showings. Good stuff. I always loved those theaters. Cost: \$4.50.

I of course *had* to stop by **Binion's** and get my picture taken by the \$1 million dollars. It was kind of disappointing. I expected to see a huge glass crate full of hundred dollar bills. Instead, they have a single glass sandwich holding \$10K bills. Oh well. According to one of my Vegas guides, Binion's offers a free "polaroid" of you next to the money. Close, but not quite. They have *pictures* - regular 35mm. i.e., you gotta come back in an *hour* to get your free photo. (Gee, wonder what they expect you to do during that hour? :-)

irwin:

It looks like Bob Stupak's **Vegas World** was the place to be between December 28 and January 2. In the Galaxy Showroom appeared none other than Ms. Zsa Zsa Gabor!

jacko:

Forget the free coffee mugs at the **Sands**. Get the free watches down at the **Fitz**. One for coming in, one for playing 15 minutes, and one more the first time you get a blackjack. You need their coupon from the tourist magazines. You might be able to sell the damn things on the street in New York for a buck or two apiece! Give them away as Christmas presents to your co-workers! The perfect prize for those Christmas grab bags. :-)



markd:

When I was in Vegas for Christmas, I decided to check out what was new in the Fun Book department at all the different casinos. I found several casinos offering these books that weren't doing it the last time I checked (around July.)

You can now get your \$3 for \$2 at **Aladdin** and **O'Shea's**. The best fun books are at the **San Remo** and the **Riviera**. **San Remo** has a free ace with max \$5 bet and a \$10 for \$5 on the Big 6 wheel, although the wheel was closed both days I was there. The **Riviera** has a \$3 for \$2 and \$7 for \$5 on blackjack, craps, and roulette.

If you want to walk in and receive money without doing anything, the best place is the **Klondike**, on Las Vegas Boulevard, south of all the casinos. When you buy about \$60 in change, they will give you \$3 extra.

srt:

We hit the **Imperial Palace** Emperor Buffet as soon as we got checked in. Acceptable for the price, but the big thrill for me was seeing the Liberace impersonator from the Palace shoe. To me, I never feel like I've been in Vegas until I've seen a man with glitter in his hair.

We tried breakfast at the **Imperial Palace** buffet - a bad mistake. Spend the extra bucks and go across to the **Mirage**, which has a very good buffet.

Reno

konstan:

The food at **Circus Circus** was pretty poor this time. The breakfast buffet (which has good the last time I was there) was really weak (the little bagels were still somewhat frozen - the french toast sticks were soft.) The Hickory Pit was still a good deal, but the salad and other items were not fresh at all and the service was slow (stupid for a casino that would rather get you on the floor losing money.)

The food winners included the **El Dorado** (if you press them you can get a coupon for 2-for-1 shrimp cocktail, regularly \$1.50 each. Also, try the breakfast from the coupon book at the **Sands** (\$1.99 for 2 eggs, potatoes, toast, bacon.)

I'm fanatical about visiting the casinos and getting any and all deals. So we went from place to place to see what they had to offer. **Harrah's** gave us nothing but the Greyhound deal of \$10 and \$3 towards food (they have a nice buffet we used.) The **Fitz** gave each out-of-towner staying in another hotel \$1 in quarters and a souvenir. A few casinos were giving out 25 cents in nickels to get you inside.

The only really worthwhile coupon deals were the **Flamingo Hilton** and the **Sands**. The **Hilton** gave books with lots of coupons including 2 each of:

- 3-for-2 on even money bets at Super Pan 9
- 3-for-2 on even money at a dice game I forgot
- 3-for-2 on even money bets at Roulette
- 3-for-2 on any bets at the Big Wheel
- 5-for-4 at Blackjack

All of these are the "bet \$X, and if you win, we'll pay you an extra dollar of payoff" variety.

The **Sands** book was more flexible. They had two sections (6 am to 6 pm and 6 pm to 6 am), each of which had:

- 5 free nickels
- two "extra dollar payoffs" on table game bets
- 50 cents off on keno bets of \$1.50 or more

Any game is profitable with the right coupon, even Keno at 33% off!

Virginia City

jfr:

Virginia City is about thirty miles outside of Reno and is good for some "western" fun and games. It is an old cow town that sort of looks like a movie set but is supposedly exactly like it was back in the 1880's. There are some museums you can wander through and I believe a sort of amusement park "ghost mine" ride.



Product Reviews

Theory of Gambling and Statistical Logic

vishal:

Epstein's book, *Theory of Gambling and Statistical Logic*, would be a great deal of help to anyone who wants to better understand blackjack and other gambles. For one, it satisfies the mathematical/probabilistic curiosities associated with gambling that many other (particularly the best-seller-type) texts don't bother to. So it is good for blackjack lovers who prefer to be awarded an explanation of why something is the way it is. I know I like to get such explanations. So, yes, it is a great book. In fact in a Roulette paper, Thorpe has a reference to Epstein's book and says that this is a "very significant work".

The book is intended, probably, to rigorously analyze the mathematics pertinent to each game. In the preface Epstein mentions that...."the intent of this book is to dissipate the mystery, myths, and misconceptions that abound in the realm of gambling and statistical phenomena..."

About blackjack, there is slightly more than a full chapter devoted to the subject, plus there is a very comprehensive assortment of tables in the appendices. These tables depict relative merits and demerits of various situations that can arise in the game. The book provides no discussion of ruin or money-management which is a bit strange, if not unexpected.

All in all it is a good reference book. However, it costs over \$50. I'm a graduate student, and I definitely don't have the money to buy it. I keep checking it out of the department library on a regular basis.♣

ADVERTISING SPACE

Want to find teammates or people to practice with? Want to sell a great product? Then submit it to **21 NEWS**. Advertising space is available, for free!

Classified Advertising

Miscellaneous

FOR SALE: Slot machine glass panes removed from slot machines.

These are silk-screened glass panes that were removed from slot machines both antique and modern. Very colorful, some have casino logos.

There are basically three types --

1) panes that have the windows where the reels were. Most are 3 reelers but I do have a few 2 and 4 reelers. Some have the payout schedule with miniatures of the bells, cherries, etc.

2) panes with the payout schedule only. Shows the payout for the various winning combinations depending on number of coins bet

3) casino logo panes or ones that have an artistic logo for that type/brand of slot machine.

I have some mounted and framed in real oak frames. Some have backlighting installed in them to make them look really nice hanging over a bar or whatever. These vary in price from \$40.00-\$75.00 each.

Most are unmounted glass panes that can be easily mounted by you in the frame of your choice. Prices range from \$20.00-\$30.00 each.

Discounts given if you buy more than one or two at a time.

These are pretty much the same panes you'll see selling in the casino gift shops for double my price.

I do have a few sets. Sets are two or more panes from the same machine and match each other such as a reel pane and a payout pane.

days:408-745-2020

eves:408-247-3893

Michael Nowicki

Sunnyvale, CA

Books/software

Exploring Operations Research and Statistics... (Book and Software)

tijms@econ.vu.nl:

Exploring Operations Research and Statistics In the Micro Lab by Erwin Kalvelagen and Henk Tijms. Publisher: Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1990 price in US \$32.00 (in Europe, International Student Ed., ISBN 013-296-5674, \$30.95)

This lively book uses the interactive and graphics capabilities of the micro for promoting applied mathematics and showing how useful it can be to solve real-life problems. The book and software concentrate on basic concepts and problems from operations research and statistics. Unique computer graphics enable you to do the laboratory experiment like in the physical sciences. The software contains the ten modules, Linear Programming, Shortest Path Problem, Law of Large Numbers, Central Limit Theorem, Kelly Betting, How to Gamble if You Must, Q-Q Plot, Statistical Tables and Graphs, Integer Programming, and Traveling Salesman Problem.

The gambling modules are much cheaper than playing in a casino, not as exciting, but just as much fun. See also ACM Computing Reviews, December 1990.



BLACKJACK CONFIDENTIAL

Blackjack Confidential is published 10 times/year and is packed with information on casino conditions and casino industry news. Subscriptions are \$55/six months, \$99/year, \$190/two years in the U.S. - Canada and all other foreign add \$4.50 a year; foreign air mail add \$35 a year. To see a sample of a recent issue, send \$10 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Blackjack Confidential Publishing Co., Inc., 513 Salsbury Rd., Cherry Hill, NJ 08304