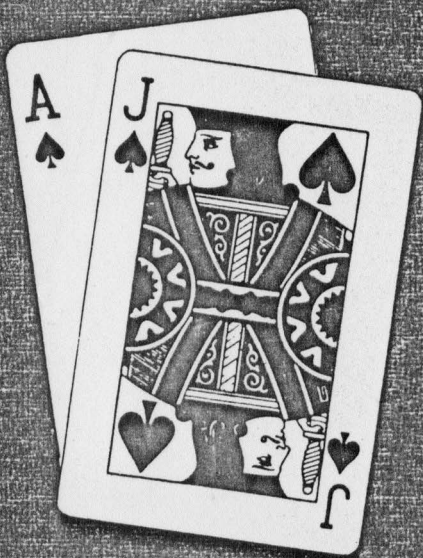


B L A C K J A C K P R O



**A GUIDEBOOK TO
THE COMPLETE WINNING
STRATEGY**

S K I L L W A R E C O R P O R A T I O N

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PREFACE

Welcome to BLACKJACKPRO, the winning strategy for the most popular casino game in the world.

Blackjack attracts more players and brings in more money for the casinos than any other game. Yet blackjack is a game that can consistently be beaten through the correct application of scientifically tested strategy. The BLACKJACKPRO strategy is a practical approach to beating the casinos and becoming a lifelong winner.

Once you have mastered the easy to understand strategies outlined in this booklet through practicing the computerized exercises, you'll become a lifelong blackjack winner.

The goal of the BLACKJACKPRO strategy is to develop players who will experience regular reasonable winnings for as long as they play the game. We call these players Fifth Generation players. In addition to reasonable winnings, a Fifth Generation player learns to enjoy the pleasant surroundings and the excitement

of casino blackjack.

The success of this Fifth Generation is solidly based on the accomplishments and lessons learned by the preceding four generations.

The First Generation of blackjack players was the naive generation. They played the game for fun using intuition, guess work or unscientific systems. Although they occasionally won large amounts, the long term advantage enjoyed by the casinos eventually ground them down and wiped them out.

The Second Generation were the theoreticians who approached blackjack as an intellectual challenge. It was this generation which developed the probability based playing, counting and betting strategies which have successfully given the advantage to the player for years. However, they spent so much time developing and testing alternative theoretical strategies, they did not adapt to casino play and few of these players were lifelong winners.

The Third Generation consisted of daredevils who came to the casinos looking for the big win. Through first-hand experience in high stakes games, they experienced the need for the money management, stress management and camouflage strategies necessary to become a consistent winner. This need became apparent when, in their drive for the big win, many of these players exposed themselves to unnecessary risks, bringing their hopes to an abrupt end.

The Fourth Generation were the Celebrities. They actually wanted to be barred by the casinos to ensure their celebrity status. This generation expanded the popularity of blackjack through television appearances, magazine articles and books. Their attempts to teach blackjack were frustrated because the teaching methods used were unable to easily turn knowledge into skill.

Using the BLACKJACKPRO strategy, you'll learn from the experience of the four previous generations while avoiding their mistakes. You'll develop a straightforward practical approach to the game. Through our unique computer-based exercises, you'll learn to make the best play effortlessly. You'll win regularly and you'll enjoy yourself in comfortable surroundings.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Stress Management.....	3
Chapter 2 The Camouflage Strategy.....	5
Chapter 3 Handling Dishonest Casinos.....	9
Chapter 4 The Flow of the Game.....	11
Chapter 5 Money Management Strategy.....	13
Chapter 6 The Counting Strategy.....	16
Chapter 7 The Betting Strategy.....	20
Chapter 8 The Playing Rules.....	23
Chapter 9 The Playing Strategy.....	27
Table One.....	30
Appendix 1 Bibliography.....	31
Appendix 2 Warranty.....	32



AN OVERVIEW OF THE WINNING STRATEGY

BLACKJACKPRO is a computer aided tutorial designed to turn you into a lifelong blackjack winner who will enjoy regular reasonable winnings as long as you play the game.

The BLACKJACKPRO strategy will work for you, even if you are a first time player who has never been inside a casino. If you are an experienced player who needs some brushing up on your basics, BLACKJACKPRO will help you identify and break your bad playing habits.

This booklet will introduce you to the various strategies which you need to become a lifelong winner. Then the BLACKJACKPRO computer aided exercises will patiently train you until you are ready to face the casinos and start winning.

This booklet starts with the easiest material and proceeds to the more complex. It is designed to be strictly practical. It will tell you exactly what you need to know

to be a lifelong winner.

In the first chapter, Stress Management, you will learn how to remain relaxed and fresh so that you will stay alert and your playing time will be spent enjoyably.

In the second chapter, The Camouflage Strategy, you will learn how to keep your use of the sophisticated winning strategies BLACKJACKPRO teaches from being discovered.

In the third chapter, Handling Dishonest Casinos, you will learn about the dishonest countermeasures some casinos use to keep players from becoming lifelong winners and how to handle them.

In the fourth chapter, The Flow of the Game, you'll learn to follow the flow of the game as it is played in casinos around the world.

In the fifth chapter, Money Management, you will learn how to determine your capital base and the proper bet size required to keep you from overbetting your capital before you have a chance to win.

In the sixth chapter, The Counting Strategy, you will penetrate the mystery of card counting, the strategy for knowing when the deck is in your favor.

In the seventh chapter, The Betting Strategy, you will learn how to avoid most losses while making regular reasonable winnings without drawing attention to your counting skill.

In the eighth chapter, The Playing Rules, you'll learn the specific rules for casino blackjack which are necessary to use the playing strategy.

In the ninth chapter, The Playing Strategy, you'll learn how to play your hand in the way which will give you the best possible chance of winning while avoiding plays that could expose you as an expert.

Should you be curious enough to want to learn more about the history and mathematics of the game, consult the bibliography which is provided at the end of the booklet. It will lead you to other sources which will tell you all you could want to know.

However, don't make the mistake of confusing knowledge with skill. It's not what you know about blackjack that counts — it's what you do when you're at the table. With BLACKJACKPRO, you'll make the best play effortlessly.



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Concentration is important to playing accurately and quickly in a casino. If you want to maintain the advantage which BLACKJACKPRO gives you, you must remain relaxed and fresh.

Here are a few tips to keep your trips to the casino enjoyable and stress free.

1. **Never gamble with money you cannot afford to lose.** If the loss of the money will hurt your marriage or your career, if it will make you or your loved ones go without something that is really needed, then don't gamble with it. It would be counterproductive to do so. Winning blackjack requires a clear head and emotional stability. Playing with money you cannot afford to lose would undermine both of these, leading to poor play and a chance of serious defeat.

2. **Don't play when you are tired.**

3. **Don't play when you are distracted or emotionally upset.**

4. **Don't drink while playing and keep your drinking to a minimum when you're not playing.** Alcohol and blackjack don't mix. Casinos are well aware that drink-

ing will affect your play — that's why many of them tempt you with free drinks.

5. Don't use drugs while playing and keep your drug use to a minimum when you're not playing. Drugs and blackjack don't mix. This includes caffeine and "wake up" pills. Get some sleep and resume playing when you are fresh.

6. Get plenty of sleep.

7. Get plenty of rest and recreation. Have fun. Remember, you're on vacation. If you're playing all the time, you'll never have a chance to enjoy the fruits of your victories.

8. Maintain a proper diet.

9. Keep your sessions short.

10. Take plenty of breaks and use them to refresh yourself. Get away from the playing area for a while. Have a soft drink. Go for a walk. Wash your face and hands with cold water.

11. If you make a playing mistake or a counting error, consider taking a break. If you make two mistakes, quit for the day and either rest or practice the BLACK-JACKPRO exercises.

12. Don't gamble at the other casino games during your breaks. The house advantage built into these games will cut into your capital and put psychological pressure on you to go for the big win. If you give into this pressure, you will quickly reveal yourself as an expert or overbet your capital and end up a loser.



THE CAMOUFLAGE STRATEGY

Casinos do not like expert blackjack players. Casinos call them “counters” because of their use of the counting strategy. Counters are disliked for the obvious reason that counters win money that would otherwise be the casino’s profit. Casino employees are constantly on the alert for counters. Some casinos even use television cameras to monitor suspected counters.

Winning is not considered a sign of a counter by itself. Most casinos like to see occasional winners, even large ones, because this encourages others to bet more. However, if you are to win consistently without being suspected, you must convince the employees that you are nothing more than a run-of-the-mill tourist on vacation who just happened to have a small lucky streak.

You can avoid having your winnings noticed by spreading them over a large number of casinos. If, however, they do notice that you are winning consistently,

you will draw a lot of attention from the dealer, the supervisors and the floor personnel. This will happen even if they don't know you are counting. The employees watch all winners closely and try to trick them into admitting or showing that they are using the counting strategy.

If you are suspected as a counter, the casinos may use a number of countermeasures to prevent you from winning. If they are just suspicious, they just pay closer attention to you in the hope that you will make a stereotypical mistake and reveal yourself as a counter. If they are reasonably sure, but without positive confirmation, they may pressure you to reveal yourself, shuffle the cards more often (if allowed) to reduce the advantage counting provides or they may try to cheat you in order to "teach you a lesson". If they are definite that you are a counter, they will permanently bar you from the casino.

Here are a few common casino strategies for catching counters followed by the recommended camouflage strategy you should use.

Casino Strategy

1. Watch you for the typical appearance of a counter.
2. Watch you for the typical behavior of a greedy counter.
3. Watch for preoccupation with system mechanics.

Camouflage Strategy

Blend in. Look, dress and act like a tourist or typical longterm loser. Don't be conspicuous. This is particularly true if you are a young male with a whiz kid attitude.

Avoid this behavior. Don't stand behind a table waiting for the count to change in your favour. Don't be concerned about which seat you sit in. Minimize variations in bet size. Avoid unusual playing decisions. Don't show off your expertise.

Learn the strategy so well that you're free to enjoy the atmosphere of the casino.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4. Ask about your level of skill or say you are a good player. | Never admit that you are a counter. Play naive. Either tell them that you feel lucky today or describe some other unscientific approach. |
| 5. Watch for play and bet variations that match variations in the count. | Keep sessions short. Minimize variations in playing and betting strategy. Only play when the deck is favorable. |
| 6. Bluff and call you a counter. | Don't fall for the bluff. If they knew you were a counter, they would have barred you. |
| 7. Dealer may cheat you. | Avoid this casino. Play elsewhere. (See next chapter for more information.) |
| 8. Casino will bar you. | Play elsewhere. |
| 9. Casino will spread the word that you are a counter. | Let time pass before resuming activity. Alter your appearance so you are not recognized. |

Here are some tips to keep you from being recognized as a card counter.

1. **Don't be a good Samaritan.** Don't give other players good advice, even if asked. Either don't help them or give them bad advice.
2. **Stay relaxed.** Don't look nervous or tense. Have fun. Remember, you're on a vacation. Enjoy the atmosphere.
3. **Act natural.** Smile and be friendly.
4. **Express interest in other tourist activities in the area,** such as shows and tours.
5. **Don't ignore the dealer.** Talk to him or her, but don't overdo it either. Follow the dealer's own desire to talk or be quiet.
6. **Don't be an expert on the rules.** Ask for explanations. Don't argue about house rules.
7. **Don't be an expert on playing strategy.** Occasionally ask the dealer for advice.

Then take his advice and if you win, let him know you appreciate it. If you lose, tease him in a good natured way. Many casinos allow their dealers to accept tips. If he's helped you and you've had a winning session, it's appropriate to share your winnings. This may be a dealer you can return to because he's "lucky" for you.

8. Keep your sessions short. If you think you've been spotted as a counter, play one more hand and then walk away without looking back.



HANDLING DISHONEST CASINOS

While all casinos will put the heat on you if they suspect you of being a counter, some casinos or individual dealers will actually cheat you to prevent you from winning. In fact, some casinos will cheat even if you aren't suspected of being a counter. Afterall, cheating is very hard to detect and it can increase the profits for a casino substantially.

Also possible is the reverse cheat, where the dealer uses an accomplice to cheat the casino and covers it up by cheating you at the same time.

There are many ways you can be cheated. Some dealers will count the cards and shuffle them (if allowed) whenever the pack favors the players. There are dealers who pick up the cards in an order that is to their advantage (stack the deck) and then use a false shuffle to preserve their advantage. There are dealers who use marked cards and others who cleverly peek at the top cards and deal

the second one when the top card would be to the player's advantage.

There are dealers who are so skilled at manipulating cards that the casinos keep them on staff just to "knock out" large winners, whether these winners are counters or not.

Possibly the best cheater is a stunningly attractive dealer of the opposite sex who dazzles the player with a fantastic smile and uses his/her body to distract the unfortunate player while casually stacking the deck and dealing out losing hand after losing hand.

Here are some strategies you can use to handle dishonest casinos. Most of these will be examined in greater depth in the chapter on Betting Strategy.

1. Keep your sessions short.
2. Set maximum win/loss limits.
3. Don't return to a dealer you have lost to.
4. Stop playing when the dealer changes.

Since you really have to be an expert to catch cheating (and even an expert might be taken in by the good looking dealer approach), your best bet is to simply move on to another table or another casino whenever something looks or feels wrong. Don't make a big fuss. Get up and wander off to greener pastures.

It doesn't pay to go to the gambling commissions. The commissions do try to reduce cheating, but they don't really want to expose that cheating exists. All you'll accomplish by making waves is to reveal yourself as a counter.



THE FLOW OF THE GAME

Blackjack is easy to learn, even if you have never played it before. First the players and then the dealer draw their cards. Any player who draws to a higher total than the dealer without going over 21 wins. In the case of a tie, no one wins.

The perfect hand is 21 with only two cards. This is called a blackjack.

Going over 21 is called "busting". Any time the player busts, he loses since he busts while the dealer still has a good hand.

The game is usually played with a number of decks of ordinary playing cards shuffled together and dealt from a dealing box or "shoe".

In standard casino play, each player makes a bet before receiving any cards. Likewise, you will learn to bet before you learn to play.

Starting with the player to his left, the dealer gives each player and himself two cards. The dealer will always give himself one card faceup and one facedown,

although the player receives both his cards faceup or facedown depending on the casino.

The cards dealt to you are called your "hand". The value of your hand is determined by adding the values of the individual cards together. Face cards (Jacks, Queens and Kings) are worth 10. The numbered cards are worth their numerical value. Aces, which are special, are with either 1 or 11, whichever you choose.

After examining his cards, each player may stand with the cards he has or take one of several options for receiving additional cards. Some of the options involve increasing his bet.

When every player has finished his decisions, the dealer draws cards according to fixed rules. These fixed rules are the reason why the dealer can be consistently beaten over the longterm. You will only play when the rules work against the dealer.

After the dealer has played, the winners are determined and the bets are paid off.

It is important to note that you only have to beat the dealer, even though there can be as many as six other players. This means all the players can win in a game. Therefore, if you bring a friend who counts too, you won't be playing against each other. In fact, team play can increase your winnings by making it easier to spot hot decks, as long as you don't also make it easier for the casino to spot you.



MONEY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

At its simplest, the money management strategy is designed to keep your bets in proportion to your bankroll or capital so you won't overbet your capital.

First, how much capital do you have?

Your total capital is not the amount that you would bring on an individual gambling trip. As you will read in the next chapter, it's a good idea to limit your losses or winnings to one fifth of your capital on any individual trip.

Your total capital is the amount that you can comfortably set aside exclusively for blackjack for a one to two year period. It is money that is not needed for some other purpose and should be money that, if lost, would not seriously affect your lifestyle.

Second, now that you know how much capital you have, always remember

no matter how much or how little capital you have, it is important that you not overbet that capital. There is a chance you could wind up losing all your capital if your bets are too large in proportion to your bankroll, even though you use the counting and playing strategies that would lead to long term winnings.

Here's how that could happen if you overbet your capital.

Let's say that over 100 hands, you had won 52 hands and lost 48 for a net win of four games. You would be a net winner. However, those wins wouldn't necessarily have come in a nice win-loss-win-loss order. There would have been streaks of wins in a row and streaks of losses in a row.

What if by some weird luck, you had experienced the 48 losses in a row followed by the 52 wins in a row? If your total capital was only enough to have covered 30 bets, then your capital would have been wiped out before the winning streak would have made you a net winner.

Here's another example. If a player with a modest bankroll of \$200 was betting \$25 a hand, he would be wiped out by eight consecutive losing hands.

Sometimes your losses will come in a row. Losing streaks are a fact of life. The lifelong winner expects them and prepares for them by never overbetting in relation to his capital.

Yes, with BLACKJACKPRO you will win more often than you lose, but if your bets are so large that your capital cannot see you through the losing streaks, you could be wiped out before you collect on the winnings.

To get a better idea how these fluctuations can occur, let's consider flipping a fair coin. We know that over the long run, say 1000 flips, the number of times a fair coin comes up heads will be about the same as the number of times it comes up tails. But over the short term, there can be wide variations in the number of heads and the number of tails that come up in a row.

Now, since counting the cards lets you play only when the deck is favorable, expert play is like flipping a coin weighted in your favour. If you are betting heads and the coin is weighted to turn up heads more often than tails — a situation similar to playing with a favorable deck — you would experience a net gain over time. However, you would still have losing streaks on your way to the net gain.

In order to be a lifelong winner, you have to manage your money so that you will be able to roll with the short term losing streaks. Since using BLACKJACKPRO strategies will give you an advantage over the casino, all you have to do is avoid running out of capital and the long term winning will take care of itself.

To avoid running out of capital, your bets should be small enough that your total capital can support at least 100 bets. To put it another way, your capital to bet ratio should be at least 100 to 1, no matter how large or how small your betting unit is. This is indicated in the following table.

STARTING CAPITAL	RECOMMENDED BET SIZE
\$100,000 or more	\$ 1,000
\$10,000 or more	\$ 100
\$5,000 or more	\$ 50
\$2,500 or more	\$ 25
\$1,000 or more	\$ 10
\$500 or more	\$ 5
\$100 or more	\$ 1

With a capital to bet ratio of at least 100, you will be able to absorb at least 99 net losses and still be unaffected. While the odds of such a string of losses are low, one becomes a lifelong winner by avoiding unnecessary risks.



THE COUNTING STRATEGY

The BLACKJACKPRO counting strategy is the key strategy that actually gives the player an advantage over the casino. This is because card counting enables you to tell whether the remaining cards are in your favor.

You will then be able to pick out a table to play at where the odds are in your favor and to stop playing when the odds turn against you. You will also be able to increase your bet appropriately when it is to your advantage to do so.

Card counting is amazingly easy to learn. You do not even need to know how to play blackjack to count effectively. With the practice the BLACKJACKPRO computerized exercises will provide, you will see that card counting is a skill anyone can master.

WHAT MAKES A DECK FAVORABLE

The deck is favorable to the player when the remaining cards contain a relatively

large number of high cards (tens and aces). In this situation, you are more likely to wind up with a winning total. It might seem that the dealer is also more likely to wind up with a winning total, which would make the game even. However, as a player, you have a number of options which the dealer does not have and these options give you an edge. While this information will be covered in greater depth in subsequent chapters, let's look at a couple of brief examples.

EXAMPLE ONE: When the deck is rich in tens, the dealer is often forced to take another card even though a ten would make him lose. In the same situation, you, the player are not forced to take a card.

EXAMPLE TWO: When the deck is rich in aces, the likelihood of getting a perfect hand (blackjack) increases. You, the player get an extra payoff (3 to 2) for a blackjack, while the dealer does not.

Because of these and other player advantages, the skilled card counter plays with an advantage over the casino. This advantage to the player is usually around one per cent, but it can range as high as ten per cent.

Conversely, the deck is unfavorable to the player when the remaining cards contain a relatively high number of low cards. When the high cards and the low cards neutralize each other evenly, then most house rules give the dealer a slight advantage.

COUNTING THE CARDS PLAYED

That's fine, you say, but how can you tell what cards *haven't* been played yet?

Easy — just look at the cards which *have* been played. Because there are an equal number of high and low cards, there is an opposite relationship between the cards remaining and the cards played. The remaining cards are rich in high cards when more low cards have been played.

In order to determine whether the cards remaining are in your favor (High), you must keep track of whether the cards played are the opposite (Low).

This is easier than it may seem at first and through practice you will find that you can master card counting, even in fast paced game situations.

COUNTING THE LOW/HIGH CARDS

Your job as a card counter is simplified because it is not necessary to keep track

of individual cards. It won't really help you to know, for example, that an Ace of Spades has been played. This is because the suits do not affect the rate of winning. Also, remembering each and every card that had been played in a multi-deck game would not produce enough additional winnings without creating unusual playing situations that would expose you as a counter.

All you really need to do is keep a running total of low cards versus high cards to determine whether the overall count is low or high.

The BLACKJACKPRO Counting Strategy divides the deck into three groups:

LOW — 2,3,4,5,6 (count these cards as low)

NEUTRAL — 7,8,9 (do not count these cards)

HIGH — 10,J,Q,K,A (count these cards as high)

KEEPING A RUNNING COUNT

As was explained above, the number of high and low cards in a complete deck is the same (2,3,4,5,6 versus 10,J,Q,K,A). Therefore, at the beginning of a deck or "shoe" when no cards have been played, the running count is neutral (neither low nor high). When the count is neutral, the deck slightly favors the dealer under most house rules.

If the first card you see is a low card, count it as LOW 1 (ONE). When the running count is low, the deck favors the player.

If the first card you see is a high card, count it as HIGH 1 (ONE). When the running count is high, the deck favors the dealer.

Neutral cards do not change the count.

Low cards and high cards neutralize each other out. If your count is LOW 1 (ONE) and the next card is High, simply subtract one from your Low count and your count becomes neutral. If the next card is high again, then your count becomes HIGH 1 (ONE). Likewise, if your count is High 1 (ONE) and the next card you see is low, then your count becomes neutral.

What would the running count be if the following cards were played — A,2,K,7,3,5,9,J,4, 6,2,8,3,5?

You would count as follows: (No cards played so count is) Neutral, First card shown is (A) so count is HIGH 1 (ONE), (2) neutral, (K) HIGH 1 (ONE), (7) HIGH

1 (ONE), (3) neutral, (5) LOW 1 (ONE), (9) LOW 1 (ONE), (J) neutral, (4) LOW 1 (ONE), (6) LOW 2, (2) LOW 3, (8) LOW 3, (3) LOW 4, (5) LOW 5.

After the above 14 cards had been dealt, the running count would be LOW 5.

Again, since there are an equal number of high cards and low cards in every deck, when a single deck has been completely dealt out, the count returns to neutral.

When more than one deck is dealt from a "shoe" or dealing box, the same holds true. At the end of the shoe, if all cards from the shoe have been dealt, the count has returned to neutral.

USING THE LOW/HIGH COUNT

Now you will know when the deck is favorable (whenever the count is LOW) and when the deck is unfavorable (whenever the count is neutral or HIGH). Only play when the deck is favorable.

So when you want to pick a table to play at, you just glance at the cards showing on the available tables and sit down at the one where the count is LOW.

Remember from the chapter on camouflage strategy: DO NOT stand at one table waiting for it to turn favorable. Instead, wander from table to table, quickly counting the cards shown. Then move on unless you've found your table, in which case you just sit down. This should appear to be just like a normal tourist who is getting the feel of the tables so he can play where he likes the atmosphere or vibes of the table or where he feels lucky.

This does not mean that you can never stand around watching other tables. This is part of the fun of a casino and is often done by regular tourists, especially when they see a big bettor. So please go right ahead and enjoy. But when you watch a table for fun, do not count the cards on the table, and do not sit in on the table that you've stood around and watched.



THE BETTING STRATEGY

Once you have mastered the preceding counting strategy, you will be able to tell when the deck is in your favour. The betting strategy is designed to let you take advantage of that favourable deck without giving away the fact that you are counting cards.

As you will recall from the chapter on Camouflage Strategy, the casinos will bar you if they identify you as a counter. While you want to make the best possible use of situations when the deck is favorable, you must never become greedy and reveal yourself.

1. **Only play if the count is LOW.** Count the cards on a table before you join a game. If the count is LOW (favorable to you), drop in. If the count turns high, drop out. If the count turns neutral, you may play another hand but if the count doesn't return to LOW, then drop out.

2. **Keep variations in your bet size to a minimum.** If you have been betting a single chip and you suddenly increase your bet to 4 or 5 chips when the deck goes

strongly in your favor, you will quickly be identified as a card counter and the casino will take countermeasures to keep you from winning. Remember, your goal is to be a lifelong winner. Going for the big win is like eating the goose that lays the golden eggs.

3. Usually bet just one unit (one chip). The correct value of this unit, based on your capital, was discussed in the chapter on Money Management Strategy.

4. Increase your bet to two units only when your count is LOW by at least two times the number of remaining decks. A LOW count is much more significant near the end of the shoe when there are fewer decks remaining to be played. For example, if there are only two decks left then you can bet two units if your count is at least a LOW 4. But if there are four decks left, you can bet two units only if your count is at least a LOW 8.

5. Do not bet more than two units unless you are a little old lady who no one would ever suspect of being a counter or you only play one or two times a year. The rule then is bet 3 units when the count is LOW by at least 3 times the number of remaining decks. Don't fool yourself. If this attracts attention, then stop using it and go back to a 2 unit maximum.

6. Set win/loss limits for each trip, session and table. Change tables if you win or lose five units, end your session if you win or lose 10 units. End your trip if you win or lose 20 units. Don't cancel your vacation. Just stop gambling and go to shows and have other kinds of fun instead.

7. Drop out when the dealer changes. Dealer changes are usually routine. However, as outlined in the chapter on Handling Dishonest Casinos, the casino might be putting in a skilled dealer or "mechanic" to cheat you or to determine if you are a counter. Just act impatient, as though you don't want to wait for the shuffle and preliminaries to be completed and move on. If the dealers change in the middle of a shoe, then play one more hand and leave.

8. Set time limits for each session and table set. Keep your sessions short (1 hour) and the time you spend at each table short (15 minutes). This will prevent you from being noticed as a consistent winner. It will also keep you fresh and alert for later sessions. Often, your time at one table won't reach 15 minutes

anyway, because of the previous seven betting rules.

9. **Ignore the insurance side bet.** Although there will be occasions when this bet can be profitable, they are so rare that if you use it only when it is to your advantage, you will draw attention to your intimate knowledge of counting. The profits available to you by making the insurance side bet properly are not worth the risk of exposure. It is smart to play dumb or else say you never bet against yourself.

10. **Avoid dealers you've lost against. Return to dealers you've won against.** One loss to a dealer may be alright, but two losing sessions is definitely not to be ignored. Avoiding dealers you've lost against will help you avoid cheaters and will also make you feel more comfortable and relaxed. It is alright to let a dealer know that you have returned to his table because you won there before, as long as you make him think that it is only because you consider it a "lucky" table or him a "lucky" dealer or you like talking to him.

11. **Don't bet on blackjack machines.** These machines use a slightly different set of rules which undercut your advantages. They can also be tampered with to improve the house odds.



THE PLAYING RULES

If you have followed this booklet in the recommended order, you're now at the point where you will only be placing bets on tables where the deck is favorable and you are ready to learn about drawing your cards.

What you need to know is the dealer's rules, your possible hands, your playing options and the playing strategy which will give you the best chance of winning in the long run.

Make sure you understand Chapter Four: The Flow of the Game, before continuing this chapter.

RULES FOR THE DEALER

We will cover the dealer's rules first because they are simple yet very important to understanding the playing strategy.

Unlike the players, the dealer must play according to a fixed set of rules,

The dealer always plays last. After every player has made his decisions and either stood or busted, the dealer turns over his hole card.

If his total is 16 or less, he must draw and continue to draw until his total is 17 or greater or he has busted. If his total is 17 or greater, he must stand, even if there are players whose hands will beat his hand. If his total is over 21, then he has busted.

A PLAYER'S HARD AND SOFT HANDS

A player's hand can be either hard or soft. The distinction between the two is important. The playing strategy may be different for hands of the same value, depending on whether they are hard or soft hands.

A hard hand is one that has a fixed and unchanging value. Any hand which does not contain an Ace is automatically a hard hand. For example, if your hand consists of 7/8, you have a hard 15.

A hand in which all of the aces count as 1 and not 11 is also a hard hand. This happens when the aces cannot be valued as 11 without going over 21. The hand is hard because it can only have one possible value. For example, if your hand consists of 4/A/9, you have a hard 14.

A soft hand is one that has two possible values. Only a hand containing an Ace which you can count as 11 without going over 21 is a soft hand.

It is called soft because, you can safely draw another card without going over 21. For example, if you have an A/4 hand, it is called a soft 15. If you then draw a 3 your hand becomes a soft 18. But if you then draw a 7, the Ace can no longer be counted as 11 without your total going over 21. You can only count your Ace as 1 and your hand would be a hard 15. (A/4/3/7).

PAIRS

Pairs are a special type of hard or soft hand that are considered distinct because they have an additional playing option just for them.

When your first two cards have the same value, such as 2/2, A/A, J/Q or 10/K, this is considered a pair.

A PLAYER'S OTHER HANDS

Stiff Hand

Any hand with a *hard* value of 12 to 16 is known as a "stiff" hand. A stiff hand is a tough hand to play because your total is not enough to beat the dealer unless

the dealer goes over 21 and busts. However, if you draw another card, you run the risk of drawing a high card and busting yourself.

Even though some stiff hands are the hardest hands to play, the Playing Strategy outlined in the next chapter will show you the best longterm decision to make. **Blackjack**

If your first two cards or the dealer's first two cards are an Ace and a 10-value card, the hand is called blackjack.

This is the perfect hand and beats every other hand, unless you and the dealer both have blackjacks. In this case, the game is a tie and no money is exchanged.

However, if you have a blackjack and the dealer does not, you win automatically and your original bet pays off at 3 to 2, which means you win \$3 for every \$2 you had bet.

PLAYER OPTIONS

A large part of the excitement of blackjack is the many options a player has which affect the outcome of the game.

In most games, you will either simply draw another card or stand with what you have. Two other important options involve increasing your bet. They are doubling down and splitting a pair. The last playing option, surrendering, is often not available and is best used as part of your camouflage strategy rather than your playing strategy.

Each of the options will now be explained in more detail.

Standing

You leave your hand and your bet as they are. This ends your play.

Hitting

You take another card but do not increase your bet. This does not end your play.

Doubling Down

You double your bet and receive only one more card. This ends your play.

To do this you must be very likely to beat the dealer by drawing one and only one more card.

Splitting a Pair

You separate the two same-value cards into two different hands, then draw an

additional card to each. You must bet on each of the two new hands, so you double your original bet to cover your new hand. This does not usually end your play (see below).

Once you've split a pair, the rules may vary from casino to casino as to what options you can apply to your split hands. Some guidelines follow, however, accept the house rules whatever they are. If they are unusually strict for the city, then play elsewhere.

Most casinos allow you to double down after splitting any pair except two aces. When you double down after splitting, you can double down on one or both of the new hands.

In some casinos, splitting a pair of aces would end your play. This is because some casinos will allow you to receive only one additional card on each and not permit you to draw any more cards.

If you get a 21 after splitting, this is not considered a blackjack. If you split two 10-value cards and then draw an Ace, or if you split two aces and draw a 10-value card, the resulting hand is not considered blackjack and the payoff for a win could be 1 to 1, not the 3 to 2 bonus for a natural. A 21 of this sort would tie the dealer if he had drawn additional cards to reach 21, but it would lose to a dealer blackjack.

Surrender

In a small number of cities, such as Atlantic City, the local rules allow you to throw in your hand after seeing your first two cards and lose half your bet. Rules for this may still vary between casinos. But casinos usually won't let you surrender against a dealer blackjack.



THE PLAYING STRATEGY

Using the BLACKJACKPRO counting strategy outlined in this booklet, you will know when you have a winning advantage over the casinos.

In order to realize that advantage, however, you will have to use the playing strategy exactly as it appears in Table One. If you don't follow the strategy exactly, you will lose your longterm advantage. It is the optimum strategy because it is designed to maximize your profits while minimizing your chances of being barred from the casino. This is like getting the most golden eggs from your goose without giving it a heart attack.

Of course, as explained previously, this does not mean you will win every hand with this strategy. However, you will win more of your good hands and lose fewer of your bad hands. You will receive the benefits of playing with a favourable deck and win a reasonable amount on a regular basis.

TWO WAYS TO WIN

The key to understanding the playing strategy is knowing that the object of

BLACKJACKPRO is not to get you as close to 21 as possible without going over — the object is to get you to beat the dealer.

There are two ways to do this. The first, of course, is to get a higher hand than the dealer. but, the second way is to hold on to a hand and let the dealer go bust. Remember — the dealer has no options. He has to hit a stiff hand even if the count indicates he is likely to bust.

The playing decisions shown in Table One assume a favorable deck and consider both your chances of improving your hand and the dealer's chances of going bust.

This table shows you the correct decisions to make based on the cards in your hand and the dealer's upcard.

THE DEALER'S UPCARD

The key to assessing the chances of the dealer busting is the dealer's upcard. When the dealer has certain upcards (4-6), and the deck is favorable, then the chances of the dealer busting are high. However, with some upcards, even when the deck is favorable, the chances of the dealer busting are low (10s).

If the chances of the dealer busting are high, the tendency to stand, double down and split will be increased. But if the chances of the dealer getting a hand worth 17 to 21 are good, the tendency to draw will be increased.

PLAYING A HARD HAND

When your total is less than 12, you cannot bust by drawing an additional card. So you will always draw to a hard hand worth 11 or less. Sometimes with a favorable deck your chances of winning are so good that you will double down.

When you have a stiff hand (hard 12 to 16), you may bust by drawing another card. But by standing, you can only win if the dealer busts. Sometimes you will draw and sometimes you will stand.

When you have 17 or over, you will always stand, as the chances of busting are very high with a favorable deck and you have a good hand.

PLAYING A SOFT HAND

As it is impossible to bust with a soft hand, you will almost always draw unless your soft total is very high (19 to 21). Certain dealer upcards give the dealer such

a good chance of busting and your odds of winning are so good that you double down.

SPLITTING PAIRS

You will always split aces and eights and never split fives and tens. The few occasions (very low count) where splitting tens (breaking a good hand) can pay a dividend leads to the rule of thumb that "only fools and counters split tens".

With the remaining pairs, you will split when chances favour the dealer going bust or when the split improves your hand. If the chances favor the dealer drawing to a high total, and a split won't improve your hand, you will draw.

SURRENDER

The majority of casinos around the world do not offer the surrender option and those that do sometimes vary their rules. When it is available, most tourists don't understand how to use it correctly and the situations which could result in a reasonable player advantage are rare enough that confident knowledge of the correct play would likely lead to exposure as a counter. It is better not to use this rule regularly.

When you are in a casino which offers the surrender option, this is a good opportunity to practice the camouflage strategy. Ask the dealer about the rules and get his advice in certain playing situations.

The times to ask for the dealer's advice on surrender are when it is obvious such as if you have a high stiff hand (15,16) and the dealer's upcard is an ace or ten. If he is a good dealer, he will tell you whether to surrender. It is best to ignore the few other times when there is an advantage to surrendering.

THE PLAYING STRATEGY

Player's Total	The Correct Decision Based On Dealer's Upcard
Hard 17-21.....	Always Stand
Hard 13-16.....	Stand on 2-6. Otherwise hit.
Hard 12.....	Stand on 4-6. Otherwise hit.
Hard 11.....	Always double.
Hard 10.....	Double on 2-9. Otherwise hit.
Hard 9.....	Double on 3-6. Otherwise hit.
Hard 2-8.....	Always hit.
Soft 19-21.....	Always stand.
Soft 18.....	Double down on 3-6. Stand on 2,7,8,A. Hit on 9,10
Soft 16-17.....	Double down on 3-6. Otherwise hit.
Soft 14-15.....	Double on 4-6. Otherwise hit.
Soft 13.....	Double on 5-6. Otherwise hit.
Pair of As.....	Always split
Pair of 10s.....	Never split. Always stand.
Pair of 9s.....	Split on 2-6, 8,9. Otherwise stand.
Pair of 8s.....	Always split.
Pair of 7s.....	Split on 2-8. Otherwise hit.
Pair of 6s.....	Split on 2-7. Otherwise hit.
Pair of 5s.....	Never split. Double on 2-9. Otherwise hit.
Pair of 4s.....	Split on 5. Otherwise hit.
Pair of 3s.....	Split on 2-7. Otherwise hit.
Pair of 2s.....	Split on 2-7. Otherwise hit.

NOTE:

1. When a split is not allowed, follow the rules for the hard count of the hand (For a pair of As follow hard 2)
2. When a double down is not allowed, hit (except on soft 18, when you stand.)
3. The surrender option should be used as part of the camouflage strategy. Play dumb and ask the dealer's advice if you have a high stiff hand (15-16) and dealer has an A or 10.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books on subjects related to blackjack. Many are interesting and useful; many are not.

Before you begin reading, it is important to remember that it is not what you know about blackjack that counts; it's what you do while you're at the table. And BLACKJACKPRO is complete in that respect. Do not let reading interfere with your training and playing.

However, many of us have developed a taste for knowledge as a pleasure in itself. If you wish to indulge in that pleasure, then here are three books that will give you a broad range of styles and ideas to savour.

Anderson, Ian. *Turning The Tables On Las Vegas*.
New York: Vanguard, 1976.

Epstein, Richard A. *The Theory of Gambling and Statistical Logic*.
New York: Academic Press, 1977.

Thorp, Edward O. *Beat The Dealer*.
New York: Random House, 1962.
Revised edition: New York: Vintage Books, 1976.

After reading these three, you may decide further indulgence cannot be resisted. In that case, the bibliographies of each of the above will provide enough further readings to fill endless hours of wanton pleasure.

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