Martin J. Silverthorne

Power Video Poker

The Only Video Poker Book You’ll Ever Need!

Silverthorne Publications, Inc.
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Introduction

It may hard to believe, but video poker can be beaten. One reaction to this statement is “How can you beat a slot machine?”

The fact is that video poker is only played through an computer chip controlled devise that looks like a slot machine, but is operates on much different principles.

With the right machine and the right strategy for that particular machine you can play with a payback of 100% or better.

Many people like slot machines because you can play without anyone watching you. You don’t have to contend with pit bosses or dealers or fellow players who scrutinize and even comment on your play. You’re mostly on your own when you choose to play slots.

Like regular slot machines video poker shares all of these characteristics, but with one important difference: **When you play video poker with the correct strategy you will play at an advantage over the casino.**

Here is a quick point-by-point comparison of slot and video poker play:

- With video poker instead of mindlessly playing like many slot machine players do, you will use a definite strategy. This makes the game much more interesting (and a lot less boring) than playing ordinary slots.

- Video poker players lose less money per hour than slot players do. This is because video poker players can apply their card playing experience to video poker play to reduce the house edge (or, as we will see, in some cases gain a real edge over the casinos).

- Video poker machines offer much higher paybacks than slot machines. While a 95% payback might be considered a very good payback for a traditional slot machine, with video poker you can achieve paybacks of over 100%.

- Video poker is a game of skill where by applying the methods I am going to teach you can win consistently. With slot machines you are almost always at the mercy of fickle dame luck.

- With video poker machines you can determine whether you can play at an advantage by simply viewing the pay out schedule shown on the front of every video poker game. With slot machines you never know what the true payback will be. Two identical slot machines can have very different payback rates as the slot payback is
determined by a computer chip, programmed to pay out at a certain rate. Furthermore, there is no way to know what the payback rate is by looking at the front of a slot machine.

Video poker machines are much more forthright than slot machines. While it is impossible to look at a slot machine and determine what its payback rate is, this is very easy to do so with video poker. A video poker machine gives you the information you need to know if it is beatable right on the front of the machine.

In this book I will show you how to find the best paying video poker machines and give you winning strategies to play and beat them.

I take two very different approaches to playing video poker machines in this book and present different strategies for each type of play.

Short-term players are presented simplified playing strategies that are much easier to learn and use. In fact, there are playing strategy cards in the back of this book that you can print and carry with you.

Short-term play is my preferred method of play. It is easier to learn, wins much quicker and requires a much lower bankroll than long-term play. I use a combination of a higher simplified playing strategies and betting strategies that adjust the size of your bets depending on how the video poker machine is paying off. This Profit Directed Betting is the key to winning at video poker on a short-term basis.

Even though the short-term playing strategies are much simpler than their long-term counterparts, they give up very little in gaining an edge over the video poker game. Unless you are interested in becoming a professional video poker player and spending a great amount of time playing video poker, learning the long-term or professional playing strategies will not be worth your effort.

Short-term players also have more flexibility in how they play the games. I will explain all of this in greater detail and give you plenty of information so that you can decide what kind of player you want to be.

Many of my examples are for video poker games in land-based or “brick and mortar” casinos. However, with the advent of online gambling, every version of video poker found in land-based casinos can be found in online casinos.

The information I will present may at first seem a little overwhelming. If you are an experienced video poker player you will not have much of a problem following it. However, if you are novice video poker player then it is very important that you follow and learn the step-by-step approach I take to showing how to beat the game.
Even if your goal is to eventually become a full time or professional video poker player, I strongly suggest that you learn short-term video poker strategies first, as they are much easier to learn and use.
How to Use This Book

This book is set up in such a way that you can either read it from start to finish or, if you are already an experienced player, you can skip certain sections and go right to the heart of the strategy.

Below is an outline of this book with suggestions as to how you can proceed.

Understanding Video Poker

If you already know how to play video poker and understand the different types of video poker games you can skip this section. If you have played some video poker but are not quite sure by what I mean by “types of video poker machines” you should review this chapter so that you are clear on the differences between 9-5 Jacks or Better, the various Deuces Wild games and the two prominent versions of Joker Wild Poker.

Money Concepts

Everyone should read this section of the book. It deals with the key concepts of bankroll, setting up Profit Goals and Loss Limits, Locking Up Profits, finding trends on video poker machines and when to change machines.

Short-term Video Poker Strategies

This book divides video poker play into short-term or “week-end” strategies and long-term or professional play. I suggest that you first learn the short-term strategies, as they are much easier to learn and use than the long-term strategies. This section teaches the short-term simplified playing strategies for Jacks or Better, Deuces Wild and Joker Wild video poker. There are also playing cards as well as charts of the recommended versions of video poker at the back of this book.

Short-term Betting Strategies

While long-term or professional play requires inserting the maximum number of coins for each play, with short-term play there are a number of different betting strategies you can use in which you will vary the number of coins played. This section covers short-term betting strategies in depth. If you goal to learn how to win at video poker on a three-day trip to Vegas or on a five-day cruise, this section is for you!

Playing Video Poker Professionally

Unless you are interested in becoming a professional video poker player, you can skip this section of this book. Even if professional play is your eventual goal I suggest that you first master the short-term playing strategies, as they are much easier to use.

Detailed playing strategies for Jacks or Better, 10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker, Deuces Wild and Joker Wild games are covered in depth in this section.
**Beating the Game**

This portion of this book summarizes the best strategies for winning at both short-term and long-term play. If you are a short-term player you can skip the chapters on long-term play, and vice versa. If you want to learn about how to get casino comps, this section has a chapter on it. This is important information on keeping records of your play and what you need to know about taxes on your winnings. You will also learn about casino etiquette and safety and get an important helping you put all of this material together so that you will become a consistent winner.

**Short-term Video Poker Strategy Cards and Recommended Versions**

All of the short-term playing strategies are set up in the form of pocket-sized cards that you can print and take with you. You will also find pocket-sized cards for all of the recommended versions of video poker that you can also print, cut out and take with you.

**Video Poker Resources**

Here are recommended books on video poker, web sites where you can play for free and software that will help you practice your play.
Understanding Video Poker

Introduction to the Game

Evaluating Video Poker Hands

Expected Values of Video Poker Hands

Types of Video Poker Games

The Mechanics of Video Poker Play
Introduction to the Game

This book is about video poker. It is not about your Friday night poker games or any other types of poker games played with other humans. It is all about a fairly new phenomenon, that of a machine dealing poker hands and the human pitting his or her skill against the machine.

Video poker games have become one of the most popular slot machine types of games offered where gambling is served as the main dish. They have become the worldwide game of choice for many gamblers. Besides the United States, video poker is found all over Europe, including Russia. It is found in Asia, Australia, South Africa and even on cruise ships. In "wide open" gaming jurisdictions, like the state of Nevada, video poker can even be found in service stations, laundromats and grocery stores.

The game is much more interesting than playing ordinary slot machines, as the video poker player must make decisions on how to play each hand, and his or her skill in playing these hands has a direct impact on the winnings from the game. Ordinary slot machines do not offer the player this degree of involvement. In addition, the video poker machines literally advertise their winnings potential in the payback schedules displayed on the screens. With ordinary slot machines, it is never possible to know the exact payback of a particular machine unless you have access to the slot machine's detailed programming information, which is carefully guarded by the casino.

Besides the challenge of playing out each hand and the ability to determine a machine's winning potential, video poker also seems very familiar as most people have had at least some exposure to playing the card game version of poker. But the similarity to the card version of poker does not mean that video poker should be played the same way as the Saturday night poker game.

In video poker, hands are paid off in accordance with how rare they are. Most poker players recognize that a flush beats any high pair. A poker player holding a flush has a relatively rare hand as compared with a high pair, yet may win only a small amount with the hand, dependent on the size of the pot wagered for the hand. In card poker, even a royal flush, poker's rarest and most valuable hand, may win only a few dollars because of a small pot.

This is not so with video poker. Each hand is paid off in accordance with the difficulty of making the hand. A flush may be paid off at six times the amount wagered, while a high pair is paid off by just returning the amount wagered.
In video poker, all poker psychology is gone. There is never any bluffing. The machine blandly continues along its programmed path. There is never any reason to hold kickers to mislead other players, as there are no other players! The machine doesn't vary from its preprogrammed strategy, so holding a kicker will not cause the machine to alter its strategy and give you an advantage.

With card poker, it is possible to bluff and win large pots. It is also equally possible to win a pittance with rare poker hands. Video poker is much more cut and dried. The machine will pay you more if you are able to make a rarer hand. Thus you will always be rewarded, to some extent, for your skill in discarding and drawing cards to improve your hand.

Because hands are paid off on a predetermined basis, and because these payoffs are displayed on the front of the video poker machine, it is possible to rate how beatable a game is before playing it. Incredibly, there are versions of video poker which offer the skilled player the opportunity to play at an advantage over the house. Skillful play in these versions of video poker is rewarded with a payback of over 100% of the amount played!

These high payback percentages have made video poker a game of choice for teams of professional players who look for certain machines with large jackpot payoffs and then literally play these machines day and night until one of the team members hits the jackpot. This is an example of the "long-term" approach to playing video poker.

Because the payoffs offered by some machines give the player a greater than 100% potential payback, the "scientific approach" is to play one of these machines and accumulate winnings. Usually the machine will go over a 100% payback when a royal flush is attained (about once every 40,000 hands on the average) so that a long-term player must learn the exact playing strategy for the particular version of video poker being played and then execute this strategy as perfectly as possible.

There is nothing wrong with the long-term approach to playing video poker. It is the only approach advocated by nearly every expert who has ever written anything about video poker. In order to use it, you must be willing to commit a substantial amount of time learning the best playing strategy for the version of video poker you chose to play. In addition to spending some time mastering a complex playing strategy, you must be willing to invest a large sum of money and time to beat the game.

I am going to offer you a second, and different, way of playing video poker. Since very few of us want to play video poker professionally, which means a large time and monetary investment, I will show you a second way of playing the game. This short-term or weekend style of playing is much easier to learn than the long-term or professional approach. It not only takes less time to learn, but it requires less money for playing and
much less time invested. It also offers the added incentive of being usable on a greater
variety of video poker machines.

I will lead you through the process of learning exactly how to win at video poker. This process will consist of the following steps:

1. We will review the basic rankings of poker hands. You will learn how to play your hands in the most profitable manner possible.

2. We will discuss the values of hands. We will use the concept of Expected Values to help make some of the hard choices needed to become a successful player.

3. We will discuss the different versions of video poker. You will start thinking about picking a favorite version to learn well.

4. I will show you what is involved in playing on a long-term basis. Even though you may decide that this is not your style of play, you will find the information about playing strategies interesting and helpful.

5. We will learn all about how to use weekend playing strategies. Here we will spend some time learning about managing your money, following trends, locking up profits, and other short-term playing techniques.

Let's take a look at some basic video poker hands next. We'll learn about some of the decisions we need to make to master this game.
Evaluating Video Poker Hands

We will be playing with video poker machines which deal five cards. You, as the player, must choose which, if any, of the five cards dealt you will keep. You may keep one, two, three, four or all five of the cards dealt. Or you may decide not to keep any of the cards dealt you and discard all five cards. After making your choices of which cards to hold and which to discard, you will be dealt enough cards to bring your total number of cards back to five, and you will win or lose based on this final hand.

You get two shots at winning each hand. You first get a shot at a win based on five random cards dealt you by the machine. If this hand contains a winning poker hand, then you have a win "locked up" regardless of any cards you draw. The second draw, where any cards discarded are replaced, gives you your second, and final, chance of winning.

At the start of each hand, you will insert coins or use machine credits to indicate the amount you will wager. The wager is usually from one to five coins. After making your wager, the machine will deal you five cards. You will make your decision on which cards to hold and which to discard. The final cards will be dealt, and the hand will be settled. You will be paid if you have a winning hand.

Video poker hands are ranked the same as the card version of poker. The relative values of each hand are based on how rare the hands are. Thus a Full House, which requires three cards of the same kind plus an additional pair of matching cards, always beats a pair because a Full House is more difficult to achieve.

Table 1 shows the rank of video poker hands with an example of each hand. All decisions we will make in video poker will be based on how our decision helps or hurts us in our attempt to achieve one of these winning hands.
Table 1. Rank of Video Poker Hands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Description of Hand</th>
<th>Example of Hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>The top five cards all of the same suit.</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥A♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>Any five cards in sequence and of the same suit</td>
<td>9♦T♦J♦Q♦K♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>Four matching cards</td>
<td>3♥3♦3♥3♣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>Three matching cards plus a pair</td>
<td>7♣7♥7♣2♥2♣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>Five cards of the same suit</td>
<td>2♥4♥6♥9♥J♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>Five cards in sequential order, but not of the same suit</td>
<td>3♥4♠6♠7♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>Three matching cards</td>
<td>5♥5♦5♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>Two pairs of matching cards</td>
<td>6♥6♦J♦J♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>Pair of matching cards</td>
<td>4♥4♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pair Hand</td>
<td>Hand with no pairs or other poker hands</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥9♥T♥A♦</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The following cards were abbreviated:
- Ace = A
- King = K
- Queen = Q
- Jack = J
- Ten = T

So far, if you have any experience playing poker at all, you probably feel pretty smug. All Table 1 shows are the standard poker hands, the first thing anyone learns who plays the game.

So let’s talk poker strategy. You are playing five card draw poker (the same kind of game the video poker machines offer) and are dealt the following cards: 5♥5♥A♦6♠8♦. Evaluating this hand quickly, you decide to discard the 6 and 8 and keep the low pair of 5s
and the Ace. You reason that keeping the Ace with the low pair may improve your chances of winning the hand. The Ace is your kicker card. Also, by discarding only two cards it appears that you may be holding 3 of a kind, thus deceiving your opponents.

I won't slight your strategy at your Saturday night poker game. But holding that kicker will cost you dearly in video poker. Look at the odds against improving a hand drawing three cards to a pair as shown below.

**Odds Against Improving a Hand Drawing 3 Cards to a Pair**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Odds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any improvement</td>
<td>2.5 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pairs</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a kind</td>
<td>8 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A full house</td>
<td>97 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a kind</td>
<td>359 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the odds you face when you hold just a pair. Continuing our example, if you hold the pair of 5s, you only have one chance in 97 of drawing a full house.

As bad as these odds are, just look at the odds you face when you decide to hold the Ace as a kicker.

**Odds Against Improving a Hand Drawing Two cards to a Pair and a Kicker**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Odds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any improvement</td>
<td>3 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pairs</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a kind</td>
<td>12 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A full house</td>
<td>119 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a kind</td>
<td>1,080 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By holding the Ace as a kicker, our chance of making 4 of a kind, which has a high payoff in video poker, has dropped from one in 359 to only one in 1,080. This is the kind of edge we can never afford to give up in video poker.

I could review different combinations of hands involving holding a kicker. If you hold three of a kind and keep a kicker, your odds against improving the hand are 11 to 1 against improvement. However, without the kicker, your chances of improving the hand are only 8.5 to 1.

Remember that holding a kicker will always reduce your chances of improving your hand and winning. There are no exceptions to this rule.
When you are playing against a microprocessor controlled machine, bluffing and hiding cards from your opponent have no effect on the machine, and keeping a kicker will always reduce your chance of winning.

Let's take a look at straights and straight flushes. Many players tend to underestimate the difficulty of making these hands. The odds against making a straight or straight flush vary dependent upon the number of ways that a hand can be made.

Consider the following poker hand: 3♥ 4♦ 5♣ 6♠ 9♦. If we discard the 9, we can make the straight by drawing either a 2 for a straight of 2 3 4 5 6 or a 7 for a straight of 3 4 5 6 7. This straight is considered open ended or an outside straight as there are two ways of making it if we discard the non-matching card.

Now assume that our hand consists of a 3♥ 4♦ 6♠ 7♥ 9♦. With this hand, we decide to discard the 9. But now we can make this hand only one way, by drawing a 5. This straight is now considered an inside straight as it is only by drawing one card in the inside of the straight that we can make the hand. Since there is only one way to make this hand, we are less likely to be successful in turning an inside straight into a winning hand. A hand like A 2 3 4 is also considered an inside straight as it is only by drawing a 5 that we can make the straight. Look at the odds summarized below:

**Odds Against Completing a Four Card Straight**

| Description                              | Odds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odds against making a straight open at one end or in the middle</td>
<td>11 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odds against making a straight open a both ends</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you see why we might be more inclined to attempt to complete a four card straight open at both ends than one only open in the middle or at one end? The open ended straight is a potentially more valuable hand in that we have a greater chance of turning it into a paying hand.

We face the same consequences in trying to make straight flushes. Assume that our hand is: 3♥ 4♥ 5♥ 6♥ 9♦. If we discard the 9, we can make the straight flush by drawing either a 2♥ or a 7♥. This straight flush is considered open ended, as there are two ways of making it.

Now assume that our hand is 3♥ 4♥ 6♥ 7♥ 9♦. If we discard the 9, there is only one way to make this straight flush, that is by drawing a 5♥. This straight flush can only be made in one way and is considered an inside straight flush. The odds against making an inside straight flush are considerably greater than making an open ended straight flush as shown below:
Odds Against Completing a Four Card Straight Flush

Odds against making a straight flush open at one end or in the middle - 46 to 1
Odds against making a straight flush open at both ends - 22 to 1

Some of the most difficult decisions in video poker entail making hold and draw decisions for three and four card straights and straight flushes. And, as you can see, the number of ways available for making the hands varies greatly, dependent on the number of ways we can make the hand. These decisions are especially important in playing long-term video poker strategies. With short-term play, we tend to discount many of the potential straight and straight flush hands as "not feasible" and go for hands which are easier to make.

Lets assume that we are dealt the following hand: 5♥6♥7♥8♣8♦. There are at least four ways that we can consider playing this hand.

We can keep just the low pair of 8♣8♥, discarding the 5, 6 and 7. This hand does not pay off as is, as virtually no version of video poker pays for only a low pair. However, by keeping the low pair and drawing three new cards, we can hope to draw two pair, three of a kind, a full house or even four of a kind.

Another way to play this hand is to play the hand as a four card straight, discarding one of the 8s. We could keep a hand of 5♥6♥7♥8♣. Here a draw of either a 4 or a 9 would complete the straight. This hand looks very tempting as the straight is open ended and the hand looks makeable.

Or should we go for the higher paying hand. We recognize that if we keep 5♥6♥7♥, discarding both 8s, we have a possible straight flush. Maybe this is the hand we should try to make.

We actually have a fourth option. We could decide to discard all five cards and hope for a better hand.

This hand is not unusual in video poker. Yet there are four identifiable ways we can consider playing this hand. We can work with improving a low pair, or making a straight, or making a straight flush or discard all the cards. Most of you with any poker experience will recognize that discarding all of the cards is not a very good choice, but do you know which of the other options is better?

Making these kinds of decisions is critical to becoming a winning video poker player. In this particular case, there is one clear-cut decision for most versions of video poker. The question you must learn to answer is which one?
Expected Values of Video Poker Hands

I told you a few pages ago that video poker hands are paid based on the level of difficulty of making the hand. How the hands are paid off is disclosed on the face of the video poker machine. By using this payoff information and by knowing just how difficult it is to make any particular hand, we can evaluate how to correctly play any hand.

Let's consider again the hand dealt us in the last chapter of: 5♥6♥7♥8♣8♦. As we saw, we can play this hand as either a low pair, a four card straight, a three-card straight flush or even discard all of the cards and draw five new ones.

To evaluate which hand to pursue, we must first know which version of video poker we are playing. Let's assume that we are playing a popular version of video poker which pays on any pair of Jacks or Better and does not use any wild cards. This version (known as 9-6 Jacks or Better) offers the pay schedule shown in Table 2.

This version of video poker is one of the best around for both long-term and short-term play and is found throughout Nevada. The “9-6” refers to the payoffs for Full Houses and Flushes. Casinos commonly "monkey around" with these payoffs. Thus you will find 8-5 and 6-5 versions of the game, where the payoffs on a Full House have been reduced from 9 for one to 8 for one or 6 for one, and the payoffs on the flush reduced from 6 for one to 5 for one.

These may not seem like big reductions in payoffs, but they make a huge difference in how beatable the game is. We will go over the different versions of video poker in a couple of chapters, but for now, let's just assume that we have found a 9-6 Jacks or Better video poker machine and that it has the following payback schedule:
Table 2. Pay Schedule for 9-6 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand Description</th>
<th>Payoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800 per coin (usually shown as 4,000 for 5 coins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any winning poker hand in this version of video poker will pay off in accordance with this pay schedule. If we are dealt a high pair, say a pair of Kings, then our payoff will equal the amount of money wagered. Any other winning hand will be paid off in the same manner. If we have a straight, we will get 4 times our wager, a flush will pay 6 times our wager, and so on.

In the case of winning hands, the value of the hand is simply the amount shown on the machine's pay schedule. To simplify matters, we will assume that the amount wagered is one dollar and express all values in dollars. Using this approach to valuing hands, a straight is worth $4 and a flush $6.

To obtain these values, we are really multiplying our possibility of winning times and potential payoff. With made hands, our possibility of winning is certain, that is 100%, which is expressed mathematically as 1.0. To determine the value of a hand, we multiply the probability of making the hand times the payoff for making the hand. Thus the value of a made flush, such as 2♥4♥7♥8♥J♥, is 1.0 x 6 for a value of 6, which we will call $6.00.

With hands that are not yet winners, we can use the same approach to evaluate them. We can multiple the probability of winning with that hand, times the payoff if the hand wins.

This approach to evaluating the value of different poker hands is called calculating the Expected Value of the hand. In calculating an expected value, we have a simple way of comparing the value of one poker option with another.
Going back to our hand of \(5\heartsuit 6\heartsuit 7\heartsuit 8\heartsuit 8\spadesuit\), we could evaluate all the possibilities of keeping the pair of eights and drawing three cards by looking at all of the possible combinations of hands. There are 16,215 possible draws, which would include 4 of a Kind - 45 times, a Full House - 165 times, 3 of a Kind - 1,854 times, Two Pairs - 2,592 times and no value hands - 11,559 times.

To convert this information into a form we can use for computing the value of different options, we must multiply the frequency of each hand times its possible payoff and compare these values with the total number of draws. Table 3 shows these calculations for discarding three cards and drawing to a low pair.

### Table 3. Expected Value of Drawing to a Low Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Frequency of Hand</th>
<th>Payoff of Hand</th>
<th>Frequency x Payoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pairs</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Possible Draws with Payoffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Possible Draws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Value (Possible Draws/Total Number of Draws)</td>
<td>13,356/16,215 =</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before your eyes start to glaze, relax. I am not going to make you do any calculations like this. I just wanted to show you what's involved in computing the expected value of a hand.

This means that the value of keeping the low pair and drawing three cards is $.82. Anything less than a dollar means that our whole bet won't be returned. So this hand is going to be a loser on the average. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't play the hand to its highest potential. Let's take a look at the other options of drawing to a 4-card straight or a 3-card straight flush.

Computing the expected values for these hands as well as the low pair, we have:
When faced with a decision like this, calculating the expected value makes our decision of what to do easy. Our basic rule of play is to always go for the hand with the highest expected value. In this case, we will keep the pair of eights and draw three cards.

Let's consider another hand of T♥J♥A♥2♥2♥. If we hold just the low pair of twos, the value of this hand is $.82. But what if we decide to go for the Royal Flush and hold the T♥J♥A♥ and draw two cards? The expected value of this option in the 9-6 Jacks or Better version of video poker is $1.32. But there's still yet another option isn't there?

Let's see what happens if we hold four Hearts and go for a flush. The value of this option is $1.28.

**Here's a summary of our three options:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Expected Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep Low Pair</td>
<td>$.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep 4 Card Straight</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep 3 Card Straight</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculations show us that the prudent course here is to keep the T♥J♥A♥ combination, and discard the low pair. You may think that it is the possibility of making a royal flush that makes this option more viable, but the royal flush can only be made one way with this draw.

There are 1,081 combinations of two cards that can replace the pair of Twos. These include a pair of Jacks or Better - 240 times; Two Pairs - 27 times; Three of a Kind - 9 times; a Straight - 15 times; a Flush - 27 times and only one way of making a Royal Flush. Adding up the values for each of these possibilities gives us a value for the hand of $1.32 and tells us that discarding the low pair is our best option.

Your approach to playing video poker hands should now be obvious. You should always play the hand with the highest rank or value.
Types of Video Poker Games

There are three broad types of video poker games.

The first video poker "family" uses 52 cards and pays on a high pair of Jacks or Better. We have already discussed this version of the game in our earlier examples. There are many versions of this game with the payouts varying slightly with each version.

We are going to concentrate on learning two versions of Jacks or Better well. The first version called 9-6 Jacks or Better, is one of the most common versions of video poker in Nevada. Variations of this game, with reduced payouts on the Full House and Flush, variously called 8-5 Jacks or Better or 6-5 Jacks or Better, can be found around the world. While we prefer the 9-6 version, we will find that we can profitably play on the other versions.

Another version of Jacks or Better video poker that we will cover in some detail is called 10-7 Double Bonus Poker. This version of video poker pays 10 for a Full House and 7 for a Flush as well as offering bonuses for different combinations of Four of a Kind.

These are the only versions of video poker not offering wild cards that we will discuss. In the earlier days of video poker, there were many more versions of video poker without wild cards. Some versions didn't offer payoffs on any pairs, with the lowest paying hand starting at Two Pairs. Others paid for high pairs, but paid on Ten or Better. Nearly everywhere video poker is offered has a version paying on High Pairs of Jacks or Better, and we will limit our analysis of how to play and beat the non wild card games to the 9-6 Jacks or Better and the 10-7 Double Bonus versions of the game.

The second video poker family uses 53 cards with a Joker added to the deck. Five years ago there were dozens of this version of video poker being offered. Because it was possible for players to beat some versions of the game, there are many fewer Jokers Wild games offered today. We will concentrate on learning about two beatable versions of the game.

Our final video poker category is played with a 52-card deck and counts all deuces (Twos) as wild cards. This version is quite popular and is also beatable. We will concentrate on learning a version of the game whose lowest paying hand is Three of a Kind.

I want to clarify where we are going with our analysis of these selected versions of video poker. We are going to offer two levels of play for each of the games chosen.
For the long-term or professional level of play, only versions of video poker where the player can gain a mathematical edge over the game will be analyzed in detail. An exact playing strategy must be learned for each version of the game, and a long-term player will only play a beatable version of the game. Looking at the Jacks or Better family of video poker, we will present the exact long-term playing strategies for two versions of the game that are beatable over the long run. These are the versions of the game you must look for if you plan on playing video poker as a long-term strategy.

Unfortunately, the best long-term versions of video poker are not as readily available as we might like. For example, you may not be able to find many 9-6 Jacks or Better machines anywhere but in the state of Nevada. This does not mean that you will not be able to play video poker profitably. But I want to point out that the relative rarity of some machines will restrict the number of persons who will chose to become long-term players.

If I were presenting this as a "good news, bad news" story, I might say that "the bad news is that the number of machines offering theoretical paybacks of over 100% is very limited, and you may not be able to find one. However, the good news is that if you chose to concentrate on short term play, you will not need to find one of these machines in order to win."

We are going to take a look at two categories of play, long-term or professional play and short-term or weekend play. The long-term play will have very detailed strategies presented for a limited number of versions of video poker. My reasoning here is that the only successful long-term players I know limit their play to these machines, using these proven strategies, and there is no reason to analyze inferior versions of the game on a long-term play basis, as it makes no sense to play these machines if you are a long-term professional player.

Fortunately, the short-term weekend playing strategies are more flexible. You will be able to play on just about any version of poker paying on Jacks or Better or offering Jokers or Deuces Wild and be successful. The playing strategies are much simpler because you don't need the degree of refinement used for professional play for weekend play.

Probably 98% of the people who read this book will opt to use the short-term playing strategies. That is why I will spend more time on these strategies. Nearly every video poker analysis I have seen only allows for long-term play, while hardly anyone wants to spend thirty or forty hours every week playing video poker. That is why we will spend more time discussing short-term strategies and much less time on long-term play.

I do recommend that you read the section of this book called Professional Video Poker Play. Even though you have probably already decided that you are a Week-End
player, you will find the analysis of the different versions of the video poker games helpful in understanding how to be a successful short-term player.
The Mechanics of Video Poker Play

All video poker machines are based on the principles of five-card draw poker. You will begin each game by inserting money or credit slips into the machine. You then will have a choice of playing from one to five coins or credits. The number of coins or credits you play depend on the Betting Strategy you use. You will need to decide on your Betting Strategy first which will determine the number of coins you insert per play.

Once you insert your coins or play your credits five cards will show on the screen. These are your cards. You may keep one, some all or none of the cards. It is your decision. Your Playing Strategy will help you make your decision here.

To keep a card, press the button marked “HOLD” underneath the card you want to keep. There will be five hold buttons, one for each card. You must press the hold button for each card you want to keep.

“HELD” will appear under each card that you chose to keep. The other cards (the ones you want to discard) will not be kept by the machine.

What happens if you press the wrong hold button by accident or change your mind? To change your decision, all you have to do is press the corresponding button again. It acts likes an on-off button so that it is easy to change back and forth from hold to discard. Until you press the draw button you can continue to change your playing decision.

You may also decide to keep all five or your original cards. To do so you will push the hold button under each card. You may also discard all of the original cards by pressing the Draw/Deal button without pressing any of the hold buttons.

Once you have made your playing decision and decided which cards to hold press the Draw/Deal button to received your new cards. This set of cards is your final hand.

If your hand is a winner, the machine will usually flash “WINNER” at the bottom of the screen. Winning hands are automatically paid according to the payoff schedule on the screen.

There is a useful feature on all video poker machines that allows you to play with your winnings by using a credit function built into the machine. For example, let’s say you just hit a win for twenty coins. Two things will occur.

First, you will see a “Credit- 20” appear on the machine. To continue playing without cashing out and reinstalling coins, you can now press another button to play off your credits.
Secondly, after your 20-coin win a button called **Cash Out** or **Payout** will light up. If you press than button, the machine will give immediate payment of the winnings shown in the credit section.

The Cash Out function can be used after any hand is completed to cash out your winnings.
Money Concepts

Bankroll

Profit Goals and Loss Limits

Locking Up Profits

Trends

Changing Machines
Your Bankroll

Your bankroll is the amount of money you bring with you for gambling. Without it, you can't even start the game. If you lose your bankroll, the game is over. The object of gambling should be to increase your bankroll. I define increase as to leave the area where you have been gambling with more money than you came with when you began the gambling excursion.

If your major objective is to leave with more money than you started, then a corollary objective must be to not lose all of your money. In between these two objectives of not losing everything and leaving a winner, I have developed a number of rules to help you achieve these two major objectives.

First, let's consider the "not losing" side of the equation. It is actually easier to not lose at gambling than to win. This one is easy. In order not to lose at gambling, you don't gamble at all. If you have $100 and want to keep it, just don't gamble to begin with.

This approach sort of defeats the purpose of trying to learn how to win at video poker. It is more than a little cynical to state that if you don't want to lose at video poker, then don't play. However, there are a number of precautions we can take to never lose our bankrolls and still be in the game.

Perhaps the first thing to do is to decide that it is important to you to never lose every single cent on you in any single gambling contest. I don't care how you reach this conclusion, but if you decide to agree with me that it is important not to lose all of your bankroll in any single gambling excursion, then it is easier to learn to apply some rules I am going to show you to prevent this from ever occurring.

First, I have to convince you that losing all of your gambling bankroll in a single session, or even during one casino excursion, is a bad idea. Perhaps the main reason that losing all of your bankroll is a bad idea is that it feels bad. Or rather, you feel bad. It is simply bad psychology to lose all of your money in a gambling contest.

I know all the statements that you can make to rationalize that it is all right to lose a sum of money brought exclusively for gambling.

"It's OK to lose because it's my gambling money."

"I don't plan to win anyway."

"What the heck, it's only money."
Notwithstanding these statements, trust me for a moment that losing all of your gambling money is a bad idea. Maybe I can convince you if I tell you that not losing is the first step to becoming a winner. Let me give you an example.

You have just hit a Royal Flush paying you $1,000. Are you a winner? Answering this question depends on a number of factors, not the least of which is "how much have you lost before winning?" If you have only lost $500 prior to this win, then you are definitely a winner. If you have lost $2,000 prior to this session, you are still in the hole.

This is a simplistic example, but it will serve to make a point. When you are gambling, controlling your money is the key to winning. Of course knowledge of the game is important. Strategy is important. Self-discipline is important. But the way I look at it, if you are knowledgeable and use planned strategies and employ self-discipline, then it is impossible not to control the amount of money used for gambling.

Controlling your bankroll for long-term play means bringing a large enough bankroll to outlast the inevitable lengthy losing periods.

The most important thing you can do with your gambling bankroll is to divide it up into smaller bankrolls. Each of these smaller bankrolls will be used for one session, which is typically played during a set period of time, or even at a single table.

The idea behind this is to give you several opportunities to develop some winnings without being overexposed to losses during any single session.

It is also part of our strategy for controlling losses and preserving our bankrolls.

Using smaller bankrolls also will allow you to accept losses. If you are playing with $100 at a table and have lost half of it, it is not too difficult to walk away with a $50 loss. But what if you are playing with $500 at a time? You will be less likely to walk away with a $250 loss even though we are talking about the same concept.

*Game bankrolls* (I use the terms "game bankrolls" and buy-ins interchangeably) do more than allow you to accept smaller losses. They also become an important part of your plan to take some of the casino's money and run. By splitting your gambling bankroll into smaller game bankrolls, you will have several shots at the casino's bankroll with limited risk on each try. Meanwhile, you will never give the casino a single shot at winning all of your bankroll.

Using game bankrolls helps control the emotional aspect of gambling. When you lose a portion of a smaller bankroll, it is fairly easy to take a break; change tables or even stop for the day. After all, winning at gambling is all about controlling emotions.
Game bankrolls can act like guides and tell us when to take a break from a losing session, or on a happier note, when to take our winnings and run.

Game bankrolls can be any size within certain limits. Our objective in setting the size of your buy-in is to have a large enough bankroll to have a reasonable chance of winning, but not so large that we jeopardize our gambling bankroll.

For a typical casino excursion, you should divide your bankroll into at least five session bankrolls. I have found this to be the optimum number of sessions for several days of continuous video poker play. If you plan on playing professionally, you should divide your gambling bankroll into at least ten game bankrolls.

You can approach determining the size of your bankroll several different ways. Here are a few of the acceptable approaches:

1. First decide if you are a short-term or a long-term player. The bankroll requirements are much lower for short-term than long term play.

2. Decide on a size of the units where you will play. When you are just starting you should probably stick with penny or nickel machines or just play in “practice mode” with no money at risk until you gain experience.

3. Pick one of my systems. Several of the systems are based on a set number of coins per session. The game bankroll for one of these systems is based on the number of coins to play the system. Other systems, such as long-term play, require larger bankrolls and you will have to make sure that you have a large enough bankroll to play.

4. Assemble the bankroll for your level of play. You must have the minimum bankroll needed for your level of play (1 cent, 5 cent and so on), your style of play (short-term versus long-term) and the system you will use (play five coins every time or vary the number of coins played.

Below are shown the Game Bankrolls for Forty Coin Games.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Game Size(Buy in)</th>
<th>5 Games</th>
<th>10 Games</th>
<th>20 Games</th>
<th>25 Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cent</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 cent</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 cent</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 cent</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s start by using this table to help you set up your Games based on the bankroll you have available for video poker play.

Assume that your bankroll is $50. You can play 25 games on nickel machine but will have to limit your play to just five games on quarter machines. Let’s assume further that you want to play 9-6 Jacks or Better and there are no nickel machines where you play. Let’s assume further that you like to play at least ten games over a session of play.

You have got to make some choices. If the most you can bring is $50, then you can only play five games on quarter machines. You have to make some decisions. If there is another version of Jacks or Better that accepts nickels, you could play on those machines since your bankroll is limiting your choices. Or, if you are determined to stay with 9-6 Jacks or Better machines, and be able to play 25 games, you will need to bring a bankroll of $250.

Fifty coin sessions allow you more flexibility in choosing playing strategies, and after you learn more about these strategies you may want to use fifty coin.

### Game Bankrolls for Fifty Coin Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Game Size(Buy in)</th>
<th>5 Games</th>
<th>10 Games</th>
<th>20 Games</th>
<th>25 Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 cent</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$12.50</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$62.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 cent</td>
<td>$12.50</td>
<td>$62.50</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$312.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 cent</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$625.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
<td>$1000.00</td>
<td>$1250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are a long-term player or are using our recommended strategy for playing multiple games, then you will be playing five coins each play and your bankroll requirements will be different. The following table shows the bankroll requirements for five-coin play.

### Game Bankrolls for Five Coin Play Showing Both Short-term and Long-term Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Short-term Play</th>
<th>Long-term Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cent</td>
<td>$2.40</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 cent</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 cent</td>
<td>$60.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 cent</td>
<td>$120.00</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$240.00</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For short-term play, your total bankroll for video poker should be five times the size shown for your level of play. For example, as a nickel player, with a Session Bankroll of $12.00, you will need a total bankroll of $60.00.

For long-term play, your total bankroll for video poker should be ten times the size shown for your level of play. For example as a 25 cent player, you will need a total bankroll of $1,000.

For Multiple Game Buy-ins you will need to increase your Game Bankroll as follows:

- For three times play you will need 1.5 to 2 times your single game buy-ins and total bankroll.
- For five times play you will need 2 to 3 times your single game buy-ins and total bankroll.
- For ten times play you will need 3 to 5 times your single game buy-ins and total bankroll.
- For fifty times play you will need 6 to 8 times your single game buy-ins and total bankroll.
- For one hundred times play you will need 8 to 12 times your single game buy-ins and total bankroll.

You can see the advantages of playing multiple play games over single game play. With 25-cent units you only need a buy-in of $200, not $300, to play three games at the same time. To play five games on a 25-cent machine, you need $300 not $500. To play ten games on a quarter machine your bankroll is $500 not $1000. You really see the advantage if you decide to play fifty times or one hundred times, where instead of having a bankroll of $5000 and $10,000, you only need a bankroll of $800 and $1200, respectively.

I have summarized basis bankroll requirements in this chapter. To fine tune managing your bankroll when playing you need to learn the system matching a particular level of bankroll and then stick with the rules for correctly playing that system.
Profit Goals and Loss Limits

Did I convince you that losing all of your gambling bankroll on one video poker machine is not a good idea? Maybe you will consider the idea of dividing up your video poker bankroll into a number of game bankrolls.

Assume that you are a Jacks or Better player. You play quarter machines. You have decided to use a forty-coin game bankroll and brought a total of $250. You figure that this will give you twenty-five opportunities to make your fortune.

Now I want to ask you a question. How much do you expect to make with your bankroll of $250? Are you looking to make $250? Doubling your money is very good. Or will you try for more? How about $500? Or $1,000? Why not $10,000?

It shouldn’t surprise you to read that the higher the amount of winnings, as compared to the amount of your bankroll, the more difficult it is to reach it.

Let’s consider investments for a minute. You can get a fairly safe guaranteed 3 or 4 percent, can’t you? Banks, money market funds, bonds and utility stocks offer this level of return.

What about 10 to 20 percent? Better add some high-flying stocks to your investments. Of course the risk goes up. What to make better than 20% a year? You can, but you will be risking as much as your entire investment.

Even novice investors understand these concepts. The lower the risk, the lower the return. And vice versa. Higher potential returns come with higher risk.

If you want to earn $25,000 a year off a safer 5% investment, then (ignoring income taxes) you need to invest $500,000. If you want to make $25,000 a year and are willing to accept higher risk, you can (again ignoring income taxes) do this with $250,000 invested.

You will notice that I didn’t use examples of investments earning two or three time the amount invested. If you are offered such a return, you had better be prepared to lose all of your money. If the investment comes with leverage, or debt, you may be risking much more than the amount you invest.

With gambling you need to be psychologically prepared to lose your game bankroll in any given session of play. Playing video poker would have to qualify as a higher risk investment. However, if you play one of the versions of video poker where the correct playing strategy gives you a payback of over 100%, and use one of our
tried and proven methods, then playing video poker becomes more like a moderate risk investment.

A huge advantage of using one of the Power Video Poker strategies is that you can take your money out anytime you chose to quit. Tell that to the thousands who are losing money on speculative real estate that they can’t sell for what they paid or those stuck in a money losing hedge fund that restricts withdrawals. With the Power Video Poker approach you will have a way to make virtually unlimited profits. However, you won’t do it in one game or even one session. You will do it by winning smaller amounts over and over.

With video poker playing we advocate an approach based on always limiting your downside risk so that you will never lose more than a fraction of your gambling bankroll.

You will accomplish this by using Profit Goals and setting a Loss Minimizing System using Loss Limits.

A Profit Goal is a set percentage of your bankroll that you establish as a reasonable amount to win. Do you invest in securities offering 200% or 300% returns in a short period of time? Probably not. These kinds of returns are not reasonable for secure investments. For a typical investor, a 25% annual return should be near the top of his expectations. If I offered you a 25% annual return in your 401(K)-retirement plan, you would be foolish not to take it.

Now, let’s determine a reasonable Profit Goal for Video Poker. Do you like 50% as your Profit Goal? How about 25%? Maybe you are thinking of something in between like 30%.

In gambling as with investments the higher the return the higher the potential risk. With this in mind, you should look for lower returns per video poker session. A 10% return from a short session of video poker is a very reasonable Profit Goal, while 50% may not be.

Do you think you could win 10% of $250 or $25 in a short session? You probably feel pretty confident of this amount. The problem is that $25 does not excite you. What about $75? This is a Profit Goal of 30% when you are playing with a $250 bankroll. If your gambling bankroll is $100 you could set a Profit Goal of 25% and aim for a win of $250.

Most people have the wrong idea about gamblers and gambling. They believe that professional gamblers will risk their bankrolls with every turn of the cards. The truth of the matter for successful gamblers who manage to stay in the game and win is very different. True pros tend to be fairly conservative. They know that gambling wins tend
to wax and wane and that they must control and protect their bankroll at all times. As a recreational gambler when you lose your gambling bankroll it is only minor inconvenience. While a loss is never fun it will not cause the loss of your livelihood. However the loss of his bankroll is devastating to a professional gambler. Without a bankroll he or she is out of the game and basically without a source of income. That is why every successful professional gambler I have ever known constantly thinks in percentages and controlling losses. The pro knows how important it is to gather in even small wins and make the house fight like mad to take any money back.

Keep the idea of a Profit Goal in mind. I don’t expect you to fully accept this concept until I show you how having and using Profit Goals does not limit your upside winnings potential. I’ll explain more about later. Just keep in mind that if you use a Profit Goal of 30%, you can still win much more without assuming more risk. This approach will appeal to even the most conservative of gamblers.

For every upside there has to be a downside. Before you can have wins you have got to get a handle on losses.

Controlling losses may be the most important aspect of learning to win. You may recall that I mentioned how important it is not to ever lose all of your gambling bankroll. Here’s how you will accomplish this –

Whenever you pull out a Game Bankroll for a session of video poker play, you must first establish, before you start playing, the maximum loss you will accept. In effect you will set the downside to a video poker session. If you hit this Loss Limit, then you will consider the session over.

Hitting a Loss Limit is a signal that you need to take a break from play. You have several choices when this happens.

You can look for a different machine.

You can take a break from play.

As a minimum you need to quit playing for a while. The one option that you can’t consider taking is that of continuing to play until your Game Bankroll is gone.

Let’s assume that you set a Loss Limit equal to 50% of your Game Bankroll. If you are playing with a $100 Game Bankroll, this works out to $50. This is the maximum amount you will lose in this session. When your losses hit $50, you are finished playing on this machine and you should take a break.
Let’s review the actions you will take briefly. Profit Goals act as signals to tell you when to change your playing behavior. I’ll explain more about this in the chapter called Locking Up Profits. Loss Limits act as barriers to prevent further play. If you hit a Profit Goal, you will continue to play, you will just alter your manner of play. If you hit a Loss Limit, you will quit playing for a while. It’s really very simple.

Next you will learn how to win much more than your Profit Goal without a whole lot more risk.
Locking Up Profits

Assume that you have divided our $500 bankroll into ten sessions of $50 each for play on a $1 video poker machine.

You have set your Profit Goal as 30% of your Session Bankroll, which in this case works out to be $15.

You have just finished a round of play on a Jacks or Better machine. Near the end of your round of play, you hit a Four of a Kind hand with four coins inserted and win $100. At the end of the round you have total coins and credits on the machine of $156.

Here’s how this works out in terms of your session bankroll and Profit Goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Session Bankroll</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Winnings for the Round of Play</td>
<td>106.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Bankroll and Winnings</td>
<td>$156.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Profit Goal</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You obviously have hit and exceeded your Profit Goal of $15.00. In fact you have exceeded your Profit Goal by $81.00. Now what you will do is take all of your original bankroll and set it aside. This leaves you with $106.00. Then take half of this amount and set it aside. This leaves you with $53.00. The $53.00 left after removing your original Session Bankroll plus one-half of your winnings is called your Excess Winnings. This is the maximum amount you will continue to play with.

Let me review the rules for Locking Up your profits:

1. First count your winnings to determine if you have hit or exceeded your profit goal.

2. If your Profit Goal has been met or exceeded, then remove one-half of your winnings and all of your original bankroll from play.

3. Continue to play with only the Excess Winnings, defined as one-half of the total winnings.

4. Each time you add at half one-half of your excess profits as additional winnings, remove this amount, lock it up and continue to play with your Excess Winnings.

5. If you lose your one half of your Excess Winnings, quit playing.

Using these rules you can continue to play on this machine using your excess of $53.00. Assuming that you have set a Loss Limit of 50% of your original Session
Bankroll, apply this amount to your Excess Winnings and if you hit this new loss limit, quit playing.

It is also a good idea to empty any credits left in the machine at this point. This way you will play the next round using only coins and any credits you build during the round.

Let’s assume that you continue to play with the Excess. You leave your Profit Goal set at $15 and your Loss Limit set at 50% of $53.00 or $27 ($26.60 rounded up). Table 23 recaps not only the first round of play, in which you won $106, but five following rounds.
### Table 23. Continued Play With Basic Lockup Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Session Bankroll</th>
<th>Round Winnings</th>
<th>Total Cash</th>
<th>Lockup</th>
<th>Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>-25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let’s follow this play through, round by round. A round consists of inserting all of the coins used for a session (buy-in) through the machine one time.

In round 1 we start out with our original Session (Game) Bankroll of $50. Our total winnings are $106.00 and our total cash at the end of the round is $156. Using our lockup rules, we lock up $103 and continue to play with the excess of $53.

Round 2 starts with a bankroll of $53. For this and the following rounds where we play only with our Excess Winnings, we will use a Loss Limit of $27 and a Profit Goal of $15. We win $10 in Round 2, finishing the round with $63. Since this does not exceed our Bankroll by $15, our Profit Goal number, we start Round 3 playing with $63.

In Round 3, we win $8 and end the round with $71. This exceeds our Profit Goal of $15 and we lock up $21 reducing our Excess to $50. There is no particular rule used here, we just decided that playing with $50 was a little easier to track than $53, so we moved an additional $3 our of play.

For Round 4 we start with $50 and add winnings of $15 ending the round with $65. We decide to continue to play with the entire $65.

In Round 5, starting with $65 we have a loss of $25 and end our round with cash of $40. This loss was not quite large enough to trigger our Loss Limit of $27. We continue to play.

Starting Round 6 with $40 we lose another $20 in the round bringing our total cash down to $20. This triggers our Loss Limit and we lock up all of our remaining bankroll. Using this method of play we end up with a total of $144 locked up. Deducting our original bankroll of $50, we have a net win of $94.

An alternative way of handling Round 6 would be to quit play as soon as our total loss was greater than $27. Assume that we quit playing mid-round when our loss reached...
$30. In this scenario, we would quit playing with total cash of $159 for a net win of $109.

This method of play is not bad. It allowed us to continue playing even when we had exceeded our Profit Goal. Unfortunately, in this particular example we ended up with lower winnings by continuing to play than if we had just quit playing at the end of Round 1.

Let’s modify our rules somewhat and see if we can improve on this record. Let’s put a limit on the amount of our Excess Winnings we will use for continue play. We will limit the Excess to one-half of our original bankroll. Anytime our Excess Winnings are greater than one-half of our original bankroll; we will lock up enough profits to reduce our Excess Winnings to no more than one-half or our original buy-in.

With reduced Excess Winnings, we will reset our Profit Goal and Loss Limit amounts. Our Profit Goal is now 30% of our new Excess Winnings or $8. Our new Loss Limit is reduced to only $10, which is 40% of our $25 Excess Winnings. We will reset our Loss Limit at the beginning or each round of play. Our reasoning here is that by reducing both our Profit Goal and our Loss Limit we will be playing more conservatively and therefore more likely to retain more of our original winnings.

Table 24 recaps our continued play with the Modified Lockup Method #1. Let’s follow this play.

The first round is identical to the first round using the Basic Lockup Method except that we lock up $131 and use an Excess or only $25.

In round 2 we win $5 and end the round with $30 cash. Notice that our winnings are lower than with the Basic Lockup Method as we played with fewer coins and therefore had fewer plays. Our winnings did not meet or exceed our Profit Goal in Round 2 so we started Round 3 playing with $30.

In Round 3 we won an additional $4 and ended the round with a total of $34. This exceeded our Profit Goal of $8 and we locked up $9 for the round, leaving $25 for the next round of play.

In Round 4 we gained another $5 ending the round with $30. We did not add to our Lockup, as our Profit Goal was not reached.

In Round 5 we lost $10 which is our Loss Limit. We quit play at the end of the round and locked up all of our remaining bankroll of $20. Our total amount locked up was $160, which is $110 higher than our original bankroll. We improved our original winnings from Round 1 by $106 by $4.
However, we can still improve our play even more. Let’s try another approach to determining our Excess Winnings. We will use the following rules to determine our

Table 24. Continued Play With Modified Lockup Method #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Session Bankroll</th>
<th>Round Winnings</th>
<th>Total Cash</th>
<th>Lockup</th>
<th>Excess Winnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excess when our original Excess exceeds our original Session Bankroll:

1. The amount of Excess Winnings will not exceed the original Session Bankroll.

2. At the end of each round of play, the Excess Winnings will be reduced by a set amount, say 20% of the starting Excess, until the Excess has been reduced to an amount equal to one-half of the original Session Bankroll.

For our Modified Lockup Method #2 we will again set our Profit Goal at $8 and our Loss Limit at 40% or our Session Bankroll. Table 25 recaps several rounds of play. After the first round, with winnings or $106, we lock up $106 and play with an Excess of $50.

In Round 2 we start with the $50 Excess and win $10 to end the round with a total of $60. Now we lockup enough to reduce our Excess Winnings by 20% of its original amount. We lock up $20 leaving Excess Winnings or $40 for the next round.

In Round 3 we win an additional $6 and lock up an additional $16, leaving $30 for Round 4.

In Round 4 we also add $6 in winnings and lock up another $11, reducing our Excess Winnings to $25. At this point we will not reduce our Excess Winnings any more than the amount needed when we win $8 or more for a round of play. Of course if we exceed our Loss Limit we will quit playing and wrap the game up.
In Round 5 we lose $10 hitting our Loss Limit for this round of $10 (25 x 0.40 = 10). Since we hit our Loss Limit, we lock up all of our remaining cash and take a break from playing.

### Table 25. Continued Play With Modified Lockup Method #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Session Bankroll</th>
<th>Round Winnings</th>
<th>Total Cash</th>
<th>Lockup Winnings</th>
<th>Excess Winnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the Modified Lockup Method #2 we end up winning $168, which is greater than either of the two previous methods.

Let’s recap our modified rules for playing with Excess profits.

1. At the end of a Round of play, where a round consists of playing all of the coins in a Session Bankroll, you will count your winnings to determine if you have met or exceeded your Profit Goal.

2. If your Profit Goal has been met or exceeded, you may cease playing or continue to play by playing with your Excess Winnings.

3. There are several ways to determine Excess Winnings. One way is to define the Excess as an amount less than or equal to the original Session Bankroll. If your Session Bankroll is $50 and your winnings for the round are $75, you may continue to play with Excess Winnings of $50.

4. The amount locked up is removed from play. It will not be used again during this gambling session.

5. The Excess Winnings may be reduced by a set amount or percentage at the end of each round. This reduction can be defined as: Lock up all of the round winnings plus a set amount at the end of each round.
6. Reset the Profit Goal and Loss Limit to lower amounts when playing with Excess Winnings.

7. Terminate a Game (a Session) whenever your Loss Limit is either hit or exceeded.

There are also special rules for locking up total winnings from a gambling trip. Assume that you have played six sessions of video poker as recapped below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session #</th>
<th>Amount Won or Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>+168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Winnings</td>
<td>+212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit Goal (30% of Gambling Bankroll)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess Winnings</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we started with a total bankroll of $500, we have now added $212 to it bringing our total bankroll to $712. This may be recapped as:

- Current Bankroll: $712
- Original Bankroll: $500
- Original Profit Goal: $150
- Total of Original Bankroll and Profit Goal: $650
- Excess of Winnings over Profit Goal: $62

You can now start cheering. Your trip has been a success. You have met the enemy and prevailed. You beat the casinos. Happy days are here again!

Except that winning often causes more of a dilemma for most people than losing. When you win you have too many choices.

You can quit. But you may be wondering how much more you would have won if you had played longer.
You can continue to play. But too often this path leads to turning a win into a loss. So what should you do?

If you are within a short time of your planned departure, you should take all of your winnings and bankroll and quit. If you can’t stand sitting around for an hour or more, take out ten bucks and play a nickel slot or video poker machine until you double your money or lose half of it. Then quit.

If you hit your Profit Goal too early you may be tempted to just keep playing. This is generally a mistake. It is much better to use special lockup rules for trip winnings.

Here’s one way that you can lock up some of your profits and continue playing:

1. Lock up one-half of your total winnings and all of your original bankroll and play with the excess. Here’s how this would work out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Bankroll</th>
<th>$500.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ or Winnings (1/2 x 212)</td>
<td>106.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Locked Up</td>
<td>$606.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. This approach will leave you with “playing money” of $106.00. Whenever I come up with an odd amount like this I lock up whatever is needed to round the amount down. Here I would lock up an additional $6 leaving $100 for play.

3. After rounding, we have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Cash</th>
<th>$712.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Locked Up</td>
<td>612.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining Session Money</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you use this approach you will be left with $100 for continued play and $612 will be locked up, giving you a guaranteed win of at least $112. If you want to add some conservative moves to your continued play, you might try doing the following:

1. Divide the remaining Excess into smaller Session Bankrolls, dependent on how long you would like to continue play. If you would like to try four more sessions, then divide the Excess of $100 into four sessions of $25 each.

2. Place additional restrictions on how you can play each session. For example, you may want to lock up one-half of any winnings as they occur.
3. As an additional precaution, you can add the rule that anytime your session bankroll is reduced by ten or more coins at the end of a round, your play at that machine is over and the remaining coins are locked up.

   You can modify my rules. You can use a Profit Goal of 40% or even 50%. However, I will caution you. Setting a larger Profit Goal does not mean that you will win a larger amount; in fact, you will have a better chance of winning with a lower Profit Goal.

   You can use different Loss Limits. If you are more conservative, play with a larger number of coins per round, or play with larger amounts of money, you may want to use a lower Loss Limit of 40% or even 30%.

   My numbers are not set in concrete. They allow a large degree of flexibility. However, I consider the concepts to be inflexible. It is critical that you determine your bankroll size, session size, Profit Goal and Loss Limits before you even begin to play. Then you must stick with these amounts after you have begun gambling.

   Most gamblers will not or can not stick with a predetermined set of rules once they have entered a casino. Even the most disciplined of us have a hard time ignoring the lure of the bright lights, free booze and the adult “Land of Oz” type of atmosphere created by the casinos. That is why it is so important to use all of the controls I have shown you so that you have an objective means of controlling your gambling impulses. In the next chapter we will learn how to put some of these controls to use by finding the right video poker machines.
Trends

Trends are a fact of life in gambling. They occur in virtually every gambling game ever devised.

Blackjack dealers go on streaks and win nearly every hand. At other times, the dealers bust hand after hand.

Roulette wheels repeat some numbers with much greater frequency than expected and other numbers are not hit at all.

And video poker machines will go into a streak mode where a large number of higher paying hands are made in a short time period. At other times, the machines have periods of almost no winning hands.

When all of the favorable, neutral and unfavorable streaks are added together over an extremely long period of play, the results will approximate the mathematical expectations of the game. In other words, if you play at a game with positive expectations, and play every hand and do not vary the size of your wagers, then over a long period of continuous play, certainly for at least a month and more likely for three to six months, your results will start to resemble the long-term expectations of the game you are playing. This result is the basis of long-term or professional video poker play. If you have a mathematical edge over a game and you play the game long enough, then your winnings should approximate the long-term expected value of the amount of your advantage.

With short-term play, our expectations will be different. For one thing, we will not play any single game or machine long enough for the mathematical expectations to have much bearing. In addition, we will vary the size of our wagers dependent upon how well we are faring on a particular machine.

Let me rephrase this last thought. When you are a weekend video poker player, you will adjust your wagers based on how the machine is trending.

We have already discussed the most basic adjustments to machine trending. You will divide your gambling bankroll into smaller bankrolls for session play. A round of play consists of playing all of your coins in your Session (Game) Bankroll through a machine. With a loss hitting or exceeding your Loss Limit, you will quit playing on this machine. If you hit your Profit Goal, you will modify your play and lock up some profits.

If you think about it, when you quit playing because of losses or go into your profit-taking mode playing with your excess winnings or Protected Profits you are
adjusting your play to the machine’s trends. The ultimate goal of changing your style of play is to follow favorable trends and avoid unfavorable ones.

There is yet another way you will react to trends. You will change the size of your bets as you play. Let’s take a look at a hypothetical coin toss game. There are three players in the game and each player bets only tails. When tails shows, the players’ have a win, when heads show, they all lose.

Table 26 compares the results of the three coin players’ betting styles.

Player A wagers $10 on each coin toss. He does not modify his bet size regardless of whether he is losing or winning. His style of betting is the way most players gamble - whether the game is a coin toss, blackjack or video poker. In eight coin tosses, consisting of four heads and four tails, Player A breaks even, ending the contest with exactly the same amount of money as when he started.

Player B decides to double his bet following a loss and to continue doubling losing bets until he has a win. His strategy shows a profit of $30 in eight coin tosses.

Player C uses $10 as his neutral bet. If he has a win, he increases his next wager to $15, and if this bet also wins, he reduces his next wager to $5. If his bet loses, he continues to wager $10 on the next bet. Using this strategy he wins a total of $20 in eight coin tosses.

Player A’s betting, where he never varies the size of his wager, requires that the wager he is making must win a majority of the decisions in order for him to win. He is betting that there will be a dominance of either heads or tails in a few decisions and that his wager on tails will dominate. Because neither heads nor tails dominates, he breaks even.

Player B wagered that any short-term losing streak would be broken by a winning wager in a few decisions. This strategy gave him the largest win of the three players. However, his largest bet was $80, and, if he had lost this bet he may have been in too deep to double his wager again. Even though his strategy had the highest win, it may be too risky for practical use.

Player C’s strategy won $20, with a high wager of only $15. He raised his wagers moderately after a win and then immediately reduced the size of his wager following a second win.

This example is better suited to betting even chance wagers at table games. There are virtually no video poker games which allow you to raise your wager from $10 to $80, or from one coin to eight coins, so we really can’t duplicate this strategy at video poker.
Table 26. Wagering Styles in a Coin Toss Contest
(Players bet on tails (t))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Toss Outcome</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>Net Win</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Player A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount Bet</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won (Lost)</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>-10</td>
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<td>+10</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Player B</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>-10</td>
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<td>-40</td>
<td>+80</td>
<td>+10</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>+30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Player C</strong></td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>-10</td>
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</table>

Let’s try a different set of strategies designed especially for video poker. Table 27 shows the results of ten plays of video poker. The top portion of the table recaps a Neutral Strategy of betting one coin per play. This strategy wins a total of 7 coins, shown as the Total Win in the last column under Play #10.

The results are very typical of Jacks or Better video poker. Let’s follow the action playing this Neutral Strategy.

In this first play, we insert one coin and lose it. Our payoff is –1, indicating the loss of our coin and our Total Win is –1 after this play. On the second play, we win a 1 for 1 payoff with a High Pair (HP). The payoff is shown as –0-, as we really don’t gain from the payoff, we just receive our money back. Our Total Win is still –1 after this play.

We lose on play 3, and our total loss (shown in the Total Win row) is now –2. On the fourth play, we hit another High Pair (HP) and maintain our total loss of –2. The fifth play is another loss, increasing our total loss to –3. On play 6 we hit a Flush (FL) and add a net 5 to 1 (the flush pays 6 for 1, which the same as 5 to 1) to our winnings. Our total win is now positive with a +2.

Plays 7 and 8 are both losses, bringing our net win down to zero. On play 9 we hit a Full House (FH) and add a net 8 to 1 (the full house pays 9 for 1, which is the same as 8 to 1) to our winnings for a total net of +8. We lose the last play and end up the series with a net win of +7, representing 7 coins.

With our Neutral Strategy, betting one coin per play, we wagered at total of 10 coins and won 7 coins. Our win rate was 70% computed by dividing the amount won by
the amount wagers \((7/10 = 0.70)\). This is a very good win rate. Let’s see how some different betting strategies fared.

### Table 27. Comparison of Wagering Styles at Video Poker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Hand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>HP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>FH</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payoff</td>
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<td>-0-</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>+1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>+7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+14</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Player B</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Player C</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>-4</td>
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<td>+4</td>
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<td>-4</td>
<td>+28</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Player D</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>-0-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Win</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>+14</td>
<td>+1-</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+36</td>
<td>+34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Player A bets 2 coins per play and doesn’t adjust his play. His only decision is to insert 2 coins and then play the hands. He wins a total of 14 coins, with a total investment of 20 coins, for a win rate of 70%.

Once we decide to play the same number of coins each play, or win rate will remain constant, whether we insert one, two, three, four or five coins per play. This is why Player A has the same win rate as the Neutral Strategy. Wagering the same amount (also called “flat betting”) may not be the best strategy as we have seen in our earlier coin toss example. Let’s look at some different strategies devised specifically for video poker.

Player B varies the size of his wager dependent on the outcome of the previous play. He starts with a two-coin bet and raises his wager by one coin after a losing bet and bets the same after a “break-even” bet.
For play 1, he wagers two coins and loses. Because this was a losing bet, on play 2 he wagers 3 coins and breaks even with a High Pair. Play 3 following a break-even play is also for 3 coins. He loses play 3 and raises his bet to 4 coins for play 4, which also loses. Play 5 is a 5-coin bet. If he had lost this bet, he would have starting reducing his wagers. Fortunately, this wager wins and his next wager is reduced to 2 coins following a win. Play 7 loses and Player B raises his wager to 3 coins for play 8. Play 8 loses and 4 coins are wagered for play 9 which wins. Following this win, the wager for play 10 is reduced to 2 coins.

Player B wagered a total of 32 coins and won 41 coins for a Win Rate of 128% (41/32 = 1.28). We can see that this wagering style is more efficient than the style used by Player A as the Win Rate is better.

Player C decided to start his wagering at two coins. He decided to raise his wager only after winning bets in contrast to Player B who raised his wagers after losing bets. Player C used this formula:

Bet the same amount (starting with 2 coins) until there is a net win. If the wager is a break-even one, ignore it and wager the same amount on the next play. Following a net win (not a break-even), raise the next wager to 4 coins and keep it at this level until a bet wins or for three losing plays. If there are no wins in three plays, drop the wager back down to 2 coins.

Using this betting pattern, Player C made two-coin bets for plays 1 through 5 as there was no net win until play 5. Following the win on play 5 he raised his wager to 4 coins. He had a net win on play 9 and continued with his 4 coin wager on play 10.

Player C wagered a total of 28 coins and won 24 coins for a win rate of 85% (24/28 = .85).

Player D’s betting pattern was a fixed one as follows: 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 1, with each number representing the number of coins on the play. He inserted a total of 30 coins with a net win of 34 coins, for a Win Rate of 113% (34/30 = 1.13).

I don’t want you to try to pick a preferred wagering method at this time. So long as you exclude wagering the same amount over and over as your preferred strategy, you can be successful with increasing your wagers after losses, like Player B or only increasing your wagers after you have a net win, like Player C. Or, you may prefer to use a fixed betting pattern like Player D.

As we shall see in the next few chapters, there are many ways to devise betting strategies, including mixing the concepts of increasing wagers after losses and increasing wagers after wins.
Changing Machines

Winning at video poker is based on control. You control the amount of money used for gambling. You divide your bankroll into smaller bankrolls used for individual sessions. You control your losses. You set Profit Goals and Lock Up winnings. You select a betting strategy designed to produce higher returns that flat betting would do. And, you learn which machines offer the best chances of winning and the correct playing strategy to achieve a maximum return from these machines.

This should be enough to win, right? Well not quite. You have got to be willing to change machines. While the long-term player will tend to “settle in” with a particular video poker machine and attempt to play as fast as possible knowing that his ultimate win rate is dependent on how fast he plays, the short-term or week-end player is more of a “hit and run” type of player. The long-term players resemble a patient strategist: his goal is to rely on a mathematical advantage to create winnings. The short-term player is more or an opportunist. He will grab winnings whenever he can, and then run.

A long-term player does not have to worry about Loss Limits, Profit Goals, Session Bankrolls or changing betting strategies. His concerns are learning the correct expert playing strategy and then finding the right machine to apply the strategy. If he has a large enough bankroll, he can ride out days and even weeks of losing play and eventually come out a winner.

The short-term player has got to be more vigilant. He is aware that his opponent, the casino, has an almost unlimited bankroll, while his is limited. Consequently, his every move is designed to preserve and protect his bankroll. And one of the most basic bankroll protections a player can use is to change machines.

There are a number of reasons to change video poker machines. Here are some you should consider:

1. You are tired or otherwise losing interest in playing. There is nothing to prevent you from taking a break form play anytime you want. If you need to meet someone for lunch, if you find that your concentration is slipping, if you are becoming bored, irritated, angry or just need a change, you should quit playing for a while or change machines. How you leave the machine is the most important consideration. Try to leave after a winning play. This will improve your cash position a little more. If you are already playing with Protected Profits, just lock up all of your remaining coins and call the session over. If you are down, there is no reason to wait until you hit your Loss Limit. Quit playing now.
2. **You are running short of time.** You are in the middle of a video poker contest. You are aware that you have to leave in twenty minutes. You are trying to get in just a little more play before your plane departs. You are down now but you hope that by betting the maximum number of coins that you will be able to recoup your losses. Because playing five coins at a time takes a higher bankroll, you have decided to double or even triple your session bankroll. You don’t have time to count coins, so Profit Goals and Loss Limits are not considered. Finally, with no time to spare, you are forced to quit. Only when you have reached the airline gate do you take the time to count your remaining bankroll. You are shocked by the losses you incurred in just a few minutes. All of your winnings are gone, and even your original bankroll is depleted. Maybe you should have quit sooner or at least have changed machines.

   I have a standing rule which I don’t violate. Don’t gamble within a couple of hours of your planned departure time. If you are like most people, you will be very aware of the limited amount of time you have. You will be tense and highly likely to throw caution to the wind in your pursuit of last minute profits. The easiest way to handle this situation is not to get into it.

3. **You have hit your Loss Limit or are close to hitting it.** You are playing with a forty-coin session bankroll and have a Loss Limit set at 50%. You have played only one round on a machine and have lost 16 coins, which is not quite half of your Session Bankroll. You are uncomfortable continuing to play on the machine, but have not technically hit your Loss Limit. Should you quit?

   I would probably quit in a situation like this. Or I might put the machine on a “short string” by limiting my continued play to five or less additional plays with the stipulation that I must have a win in the next five plays in order to continue playing.

   There is nothing wrong in quitting before your Loss Limit is hit. Also if you have a sense that things are not going well on this machine, listen to your own judgment and change machines.

4. **You have been playing with your Protected Profits and have hit a losing streak.** It is permissible to change machines anytime you have hit or exceeded your Profit Goal. This is especially advisable if the machine seems to be getting cold. By this I mean that the payoffs are becoming less frequent. If you have had a number of losing plays in a row, set a short number of additional plays you will make without a win. If you don’t get your win, change machines.

   One way that you can limit the number of losing plays that you will accept on a machine is to set the maximum number of plays that you are willing to accept without a payoff before quitting. The number of Loss Plays can vary from six to ten.
I would use the following guidelines for setting my number of Loss Plays:

1. If you are playing on a Jacks or Better machine, set your number of Loss Plays between six and eight plays.

2. If you are playing on a Deuces Wild, a Joker Wild or a 10-7 Double Bonus machine, set your number of Loss Plays between eight and ten plays.

   The reason we use a higher number of Loss Plays with the wild card games and 10-7 Double Bonus games is that payoffs occur less frequently with these games than with Jacks or Better.
Short-term Video Poker Strategies

Concepts of Short-term Play

Get Started Playing Short-term

Jacks or Better

Deuces Wild

Joker Wild
Concepts of Short-term Play

Unless you want to spend a tremendous amount of time and energy studying and learning video poker, you should consider yourself a short-term, or weekend player.

If you play two or three times a year, you are a short-term player.

If you like to play online a couple of times a week, you are a short-term player.

If you vacation in Las Vegas, Atlantic City, the Gulf Coast or just occasionally play in any of the Native American casinos you are probably a short-term player.

If you play with a smaller bankroll and don’t want to always insert the maximum number of coins in a video poker machine you are a short-term player.

On the other hand, if you live in Las Vegas and play video poker four or five days a week you may be a long-term player.

Let’s differentiate between short-term and long-term play.

First, each type of play has different playing strategies. In this section of this book I will present short-term playing strategies for different versions of video poker. Later in the book in the chapters dealing with long-term or professional video poker play, you will find more advanced strategies that slightly increase your edge. As a long-term player, the more advanced strategies are worth learning. As a short-term player you can stick with the more simplified strategies developed for short-term play.

Long-term play is the only type of play discussed by most video poker experts. I have no gripe with this except that the authors don’t usually make it clear that their recommendations only apply to those seeking to achieve a professional level of video poker play. Then also tend to gloss over the different bankroll requirements for short-term and long-term play.

Short-term players can get by with much lower bankrolls than long-term or professional players. The reason for this arises from differences in approach.

Long-term players are playing to win the highest paying hands with is usually the Royal Flush. When playing to win the long shot jackpot there is no substitute for putting in lots of playing time. Many long-term oriented players will form teams and concentrate on finding progressive video poker machines where the payoff for the Royal Flush is high enough to raise the players’ long-term expectation of return to a fairly high level. With a team, team members can attempt of monopolize a machine, and play in shifts making sure that no one but other team members get a chance to play on the machine. Many
casinos attempt to limit and control teams, but they are not always successful and this is the way that many professional video poker players earn their livings.

Long-term video poker play is somewhat similar to using card counting to play blackjack. Long-term players’ experiences large swings in their bankrolls in either game. To win at video poker you have to play long enough that a small edge has a chance to work when a jackpot is hit. It is not unusual for a video poker pro or card counter to be in the hole for weeks or even months at a time before becoming a net winner.

If you ever learned a card counting strategy or a long-term video poker strategy and tried it for a weekend, you probably lost money. You may have assumed that you just didn’t play correctly, which very well may be true. However, it is more probable that you just didn’t play long enough or you changed your strategy as your losses mounted. In either or these cases the result was the same. You lost money using what had been touted as a “winning strategy.”

I am here to tell you that the strategy you lost with may very well have been a winning strategy if used long enough with a large enough bankroll to absorb the short-term losses.

But what if don’t have time to absorb short-term losses? If you are playing for a couple of days or even for three or four days, a short-term loss is equivalent to a net loss for your gambling excursion.

What is needed is a way to play video poker that wins over short time periods. And, that’s what I have developed.

The next few chapters are devoted to showing how to become a video poker winner over very short periods of play.

There are other benefits as well.

The playing strategies are much easier to learn.

You will be able to play with a smaller bankroll.

You will be able to play on more video poker machines since as small reduction in a machine’s overall payback will have little effect on your ability to win in shorter time periods.

To engage in short-term play you will, in many ways, play quite differently than you will with long-term or professional play.
The long-term player is used to having hour after hour of losses. He is waiting for the Royal Flush jackpot which may take days or even weeks to hit.

As a weekend warrior, you don’t have hours or even days to endure losing. Consequently, you will watch your bankroll and cut any losses quickly.

The long-term player always inserts the maximum number of coins so that if a Royal Flush shows, the bonus for playing with the maximum number of coins will be paid. When playing 700 to 800 hands an hour on a dollar machine, the long-term player can easily lose $40 or more an hour. The long-term player has to play rapidly, as his payback is based on long-term play.

The short-term player will probably not spend enough time playing to hit a Royal Flush. He is less concerned with the long shot payoffs than with accumulating as many smaller payoffs as possible. The short-term player will limit his losses on any machine, and lock up profits as they occur.

The short-term player will play more like an opportunist. He will find a good, but not necessarily perfect machine. He will limit his bankroll to the amount set aside for play in that machine. He will watch his losses and look for and lock up a reasonable profit whenever he is ahead.

He may play on many more machines than the long-term player. A long-term player may become “chained” to a particular machine because of a larger jackpot. The short-term player will jump from machine to machine, or may settle in with a steady profit producer. But the short-term player will never become chained to a particular machine, especially an unprofitable one.

My personal prejudices are starting to show. I am not a long-term or professional video poker player. I just don’t have the inclination or the patience to spend eight or more hours every day playing video poker. Quite frankly, I like my video poker in one or two-hour doses, thank you.

Does this mean that I am an inferior player? The professional video poker players would like to think so. As a short-term player, my playing strategy is a few hundreds of a percentage point weaker than theirs. Their focus is on increasingly complex and difficult to learn refinements in playing strategy which may give them an additional forty cents an hour in theoretical profits if played perfectly. My focus is on using a simplified strategy with a lower bankroll and then limiting losses, changing machines as needed, waiting until I have a profit and then locking up the profit and departing a new winner.
I personally believe that my short-term playing strategy is superior to the long-term strategies when it comes to overall wins. It is certainly easier to learn and use and (as least in my opinion) a whole lot more fun.

In the next few chapters I will present complete simplified playing strategies for Jacks or Better, Deuces Wild and Joker Wild video poker games.
Get Started Playing Short-term

You will get started by mastering Jacks or Better first. After you have perfected your play with this one game, you may choose another of the video poker games. I would suggest learning Deuces Wild next since these games tend to be very profitable.

There are sixteen preferred video poker games covered by our short-term playing strategies. They are divided into three general categories of video poker games.

They are:

1. **Standard Video Poker Games (Jacks or Better).** These are games where the lowest winning hand is a pair of Jacks or better. Anything less than a pair of Jacks, such as a pair of tens, in your final hand is a loser.

2. **Deuces Wild Games.** In this version of video poker you will need a hand of at least Three of a Kind in your final cards to win. Although Three of a Kind is a more difficult hand to achieve in a normal poker game than a high pair (Jacks or higher), the deuce is a wild card in this game. One of the top winning hands for instance is four deuces. In this version of video poker, any final hand less than Three of a Kind is a loser.

3. **Joker Wild Games.** There are two types of games in this category. Joker Wild Ace-King (also called Kings or better) needs a minimum hand of a pair of Kings to pay off. Joker Wild Two Pair and Joker Wild Double Joker Poker require a hand to at least two pairs in order to win. All of the Joker Wild games are played with 53 card decks with one Joker. The Joker, as a wild card, can be any value.

   For each of these categories you will find a playing strategy as well as recommended games that match the playing strategy.

   It is important to note that there are essentially only three playing strategies to learn. All versions of Jacks or Better follow the same playing strategy.

   The same goes for the Deuces Wild games – they all use the Deuces Wild playing strategy.

   With Joker Wild, you will have to learn slightly different strategies for the Kings or Better and the Two Pair versions of the games.

   However, I want to stress that there are basically only three playing strategies for a total of 16 versions of video poker.
The Jacks or Better playing strategy covers nine versions of this game and can be used with versions that have slightly different payoffs as well.

The Deuces Wild playing strategy applies to four more versions of video poker.

Finally, the Joker Wild playing strategy covers the last three preferred versions of video poker.

Overall, just three playing strategies cover sixteen different versions of video poker. Below are listed all of the versions of video poker covered by our playing strategies.

Your first step is to learn the playing strategy for Jacks or Better.

After you learn this playing strategy you can add a Betting Strategy and start playing.

At the end of each of the playing strategy sections there are summaries of the playing strategy as well as descriptions of the preferred versions of video poker to play. You will find card-sized versions of the playing strategies in the appendix to this book that you can print and take with you when you play.

**Recommended Versions of Standard Poker (Jacks or Better) Games**

1. Jacks or Better (start your play with this version of video poker)
2. Bonus Poker
3. Bonus Poker Deluxe
4. White Hot Aces Bonus Poker
5. Double Bonus Poker
6. Double Double Bonus Poker
7. Triple Double Bonus Poker
8. Triple Bonus Jacks or Better
9. Super Double Bonus Poker

All of these versions or slight variations of the these games can be played using the Jacks or Better Playing Strategy.

The difference in the games is in the payouts, not the playing strategy. For example, with Bonus Poker you will receive a payout of 80 units per coin played with Four Aces. With Jacks or Better you will receive only 25 units for the same hand. The difference in the payouts is the bonus paid on four of a kind and other bonus hands on the machine.
But the key thing for you to know is the playing strategy which is the same for all of the games in this family of video poker.

**Recommended Deuces Wild Games**

1. Deuces Wild  
2. Loose Deuces  
3. Deuces Deluxe  
4. Bonus Deuces Wild  

Don’t be confused by the different versions of this game. You will use the same strategy to play all of these versions as well as versions with slightly different payoffs.

**Recommended Joker Wild Games**

1. Joker Wild Ace-King (Kings or Better)  
2. Joker Wild Two Pair  
3. Joker Wild Double Joker Poker  

The three Joker Wild games have almost the same strategy. There are some differences in playing strategy between the Kings or Better and Two Pair versions of the game.

Joker Wild Kings or Better games are mostly found in Nevada and Joker Two Pair in Atlantic City.

**Finding Your Game**

Video poker machines are easy to find. Most of the time casinos will group games in the same category together in the same section of the casino. That is, there is an area for Jacks or Better games, a different one for Deuces Wild games and yet another for Joker Wild video poker.

For online play, you will typically just click on the version of video poker you want to play.

If you are an expert at Jacks or Better video poker you will be able to find all of the Jacks or Better games in the same area.

In fact, most machines offer more than one game. You can change from Jacks or Better to Bonus Poker or Triple Bonus Poker on the same machine. In addition, you can use one buy-in for all three games.
I don’t encourage switching from one version to another version of video poker. You should stick with Jacks or Better until you master it, then slowly add another game at a time. But you will discover that finding the game of your choice is not a problem. Finding the recommended pay table for that version will become your main concern. However, you can still use the same playing strategy on versions of video poker in the same category even if they have slightly different payoffs than the versions I recommend.
Jacks or Better Short-term Playing Strategy

The following chart shows the Simplified Playing Strategy for all versions of Jacks of Better video poker. While this playing strategy was developed for short-term play, you may use it for long-term play as well giving up only a few hundreds of a percent of potential return.

Simplified Playing Strategy for Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two High Cards</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One High Card</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanation of Simplified Playing Strategy for Jacks or Better

The chart above lists the hierarchy of hands to be played in Jacks or Better video poker games. The higher the hand is in the chart, the greater its value. For example, Three of a Kind is ranked higher than a Straight and Two Pair outranks a High Pair.

Hand to be Held- Refers to the hand dealt to you with the first five cards. You will always keep a hand that is closer to the top of the chart.
Cards Held – the number of cards you will keep of the original cards dealt.

Cards Drawn – the number of card you will draw. For example, if you are dealt a High Pair, keep the pair and draw three cards.

Explanation of terms:

1. The term high refers to any card ranked Jack or higher. The term low refers to cards less than a Jack in value. Ace, King, Queen and Jack are high cards. 2 through 10 are low cards.

2. A Royal Flush is refers to five sequential cards of the same suit staring with a 10 and ending with an Ace. For example, 10, Jack, Queen, King and Ace of spades. This is the top hand for Jacks of Better.

3. A Straight Flush refers to five sequential cards of the same suit but not starting with a 10 and ending with an Ace. For example, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Jack of hearts.

4. Four of a Kind refers to four cards of the same number or picture card. For example, four 2s or four Kings.

5. Full House consists of a hand with three cards of the same number or same picture card and two cards of the same number or same picture card. For example, three 6s and two Queens.

6. Four to a Royal Flush means that you have four of the five cards needed to make a Royal Flush. For example, if you have Jack, Queen, King and Ace of diamonds. In this case you only need one card, the Ten of diamonds to complete the Royal Flush.

7. Flush consists of five card of the same suit. For example 2 4 5 8 9 and Jack of spades.

8. Three of a Kind is three cards of the same number or same picture card. For example, three Jacks or three 7s.

9. Straight is five cards all in sequential order but not of the same suit. For example, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 or mixed suits.

10. Four to a Straight Flush means that you have four of the five cards needed to make a Straight Flush. For example, if you have 4, 5, 6 and 7 of spades.
11. **Two Pair** refers to two pairs of the card of the same number or card picture. For example, two 4s and two 9s.

12. **High Pair** is a pair of cards valued Jack or Higher. For example, a pair of Jacks or a pair of Kings.

13. **Three to a Royal Flush** means that you have three of the five cards needed to make a Royal Flush.

14. **Four to a Flush** consists of four cards of the same suit. For example, 4, 7, 9 and Jack of diamonds.

15. **Low Pair** is two of the same cards valued ten or lower. For example two 5s or two 9s.

16. **Four to a Straight** consists of four cards in order but not of the same suit. For example 4, 5, 6 and 7 of mixed suits.

17. **Three to a Straight Flush** means that you have three cards in order and of the same suit to make a Straight Flush. For example, 3, 4, 5 or hearts or 5, 6, 7 of clubs.

18. **Two to a Royal Flush** means you have two of the cards in order of the same suit to secure a Royal Flush. For example, a Queen and King of hearts or a Jack and Queen of spades.

19. **Two High Cards** means two cards which are not a pair valued as Jacks or better. For example, Jack, Ace.

20. **One High Card** refers to one card ranked Jack or better. For example, if you have one King or just one Ace.

21. **Nothing** means that none of your cards will make any of the hands mentioned above in the first five cards dealt to you.

   Let’s take another look at the playing chart and consider some of the decisions you will have to make when you follow this playing strategy.

   1. Whenever you hold **Four Cards to a Royal Flush** discard the fifth card even if that card gives you a flush or a pair.

   2. **A High Pair, Three of a Kind, a Straight and a Flush** all outrank **Three to a Royal Flush**. Play the **Three to a Royal Flush** when you have lesser hands such as **Four to**
a Flush or a Low Pair.

3. With Two Cards to a Royal Flush keep Four to a Straight, Four to a Flush or a High Pair. Otherwise, go for the Royal Flush.

4. Never break up a made Straight or a Flush, unless one card gives you a chance to make a Royal Flush. Another way of saying this is that you will give up a Straight or Flush if you only need only card to make a Royal Flush.

5. Keep a High Pair over Four to a Straight or Four to a Flush.

6. You will never break up Four of a Kind, a Full House, Three of a Kind or Two Pair. The worthless cards for the last two hands will be discarded.

7. Always keep a High Pair unless you have Four Cards to a Royal Flush or Four to a Straight Flush.

8. Keep a Low Pair over Four to a Straight or Three to a Straight Flush. However, you will discard them in favor of Four to a Flush or Three or Four to a Royal Flush.

9. If you are dealt an unmade hand you will try to improve them in the following order: Four to a Royal Flush and Straight Flush, Three to a Royal Flush, Four to a Flush, Four to a Straight, Three to a Straight Flush, Two to a Royal Flush, Two High Cards and one High Card. Any of these nonpaying hands can, with the right draws, turn into winning hands.

10. Lacking any of the above, that is numbered cards 1 to 9, with no card Jack or higher, discard all of the cards and draw five fresh ones.

This strategy can be applied to the following versions of Jacks or Better:

1. Jacks or Better
2. Bonus Poker
3. Bonus Poker Deluxe
4. White Hot Aces Bonus Poker
5. Double Bonus Poker
6. Double Double Bonus Poker
7. Triple Bonus Bonus Poker
8. Triple Bonus Jacks or Better
9. Super Double Bonus Poker
Simplified Playing Strategy For Jacks or Better 8-5 Progressive Game

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
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<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
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<td>Two High Cards</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 8-5 Jacks or Better Progressive chart is similar to the Jacks or Better chart except that greater preference is given to Royal Flush draws in two cases:

1. If you hold a **High Pair** and **Three to a Royal Flush** discard the High Pair and go for the Royal Flush.

2. If you hold **Two to a Royal Flush** and **Three to a Straight Flush** in the same hand, go for the Royal Flush draw instead of the Straight Flush draw.
# JACKS OR BETTER RECOMMENDED GAMES

## 9-6 Jacks or Better – 99.54% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Bonus Poker – 99.16% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2s, 3s or 4s</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 5-K</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bonus Poker Deluxe – 98.49% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
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<td>4000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
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<td>400</td>
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<td>Full House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### White Hot Aces Bonus Poker – 99.57% Payback

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>240</td>
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<td>Four 5-K</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</table>
# Double Bonus Poker – 100.71% Payback

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Royal Flush</td>
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<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four 2s, 3s or 4s</td>
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<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four 5-K</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Double Double Bonus Poker – 100.67% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces w 2-4</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2-4 w/A-4</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four 2-4</td>
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<td>400</td>
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<td>Flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
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### Triple Double Bonus Poker – 102.56% Payback

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four As w/2-4</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2-4 w/A, 2, 3, 4</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>Four Aces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four 2, 3, 4</td>
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<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
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<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
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<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Triple Bonus Jacks or Better – 99.80% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2s, 3s or 4s</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Kings</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2-4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Super Double Bonus Poker – 98.68% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four J-Q-K</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2s, 3s, 4s</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 5-10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deuces Wild Short-term Playing Strategy

Like the Jacks or Better games, the Deuces Wild game uses a 52-card deck. However in this version of video poker the four deuces (2s) are wild. They can be used as any card in the deck, even to make five of a kind. The minimum winning hand in this version of video poker is Three of a Kind.

With the Deuces Wild Game Strategy, there are five variations. Each variation depends on whether there are any deuces in the first five cards dealt.

We start with hand with no deuces deal on the first hand with its own playing strategy. There are different playing strategies dependent upon whether you have one deuce, two deuces, three deuces or four deuces in your first hand.

DEUCES WILD STRATEGY SHORT-TERM PLAYING STRATEGY CHARTS

NO DEUCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Pair (discard second pair)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ONE DEUCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Deuce</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: With one deuce you will always have a minimum hand of one pair. Therefore, you will always look to use this wildcard to improve your hand.

**TWO DEUCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Deuces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: With Two Deuces you have a minimum hand of Three of a Kind. Always draw three cards against a pair of deuces to improve your hand.
THREE DEUCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Deuces</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: With Three Deuces you have a minimum hand of Four of a Kind. You will draw two cards and see if you can improve this hand.

FOUR DEUCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explaining the Strategy for Deuces Wild Games

Deuces are the most valuable cards in this version of video poker. You will never discard a Deuce. There are no payoffs for hands less than Three of Kind which requires adjusting your playing strategy.

The key to winning big in Deuces Wild is to go for the Royal Flush more frequently than you would with Jacks or Better. Thus, when you have three cards toward a Royal Flush you will discard two cards and go for the Royal. If you have two Deuces and a 10 or higher along with two cards lower than 10, keep the 10 and discard the lower valued cards, going for the Royal Flush.

Likewise, if you have two Deuces and three cards below 10 in value, discard all of the lower valued cards keeping the Deuces, unless two of the cards are paired. In that case you have Four of a Kind, or four cards to a Straight Flush. If you have two Deuces and no other cards to make Four of a Kind, or a Royal of Straight Flush, discard all of the cards while keeping the Deuces.

If your hand is really poor and you’re dealt five unrelated cards, get rid of all of them and draw five new cards.
Please note that three card Flushes or Straights are worthless in this game as are single unmatched High Cards. Discard these hands. With no Deuces, you should also discard of two pair hands since they don’t pay. Hang onto one of the pairs and draw three new cards.

If you are dealt a pair on the first round, keep it, unless you are dealt a Three-Card Royal Flush. In that case, dump the pair and go for the Royal.

In Deuces Wild you will find that many of the hands you are dealt will contain nothing of value and that you will frequently be drawing five new cards. Three card Straights and Flushes fit in this category along with unmatched High Cards. Don’t be afraid to discard all of the first five cards if you hold nothing of value.

Our Simplified Deuces Wild Strategy applies to the following versions of Deuces Wild:

1. Deuces Wild
2. Loose Deuces
3. Deuces Deluxe
4. Bonus Deuces Wild

Do not start with Deuces Wild or any of the Deuces Wild variations. Start with Jacks or Better and master it before trying your hand at any of the Deuces Wild games.
DEUCES WILD RECOMMENDED GAMES

Deuces Wild – 100.76% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Loose Deuces – 100.96% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Deuces Deluxe – 100.32%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural 4 Kings</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild 4 Kings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Bonus Deuces Wild – 99.45% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces with Ace</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Aces</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five 3s, 4s or 5s</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five 6-K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Joker Wild Short-term Playing Strategy

There are two strategies for the Joker Wild games –

One for **Ace-King (Kings or Better)** and an alternative strategy for **Two Pair** and **Double Joker Poker**.

**Ace-King (Kings or Better)** needs a minimum hand of a pair of Kings to quality and **Two Pair** and **Double Joker Poker** need two pair to quality.

### JOKER WILD STRATEGY CHART

**ACE-KING (KINGS OR BETTER)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five of Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair (Kings or Aces)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### JOKER WILD STRATEGY CHART
#### ACE-KING (KINGS OR BETTER)

**NO JOKER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair (Kings or Aces)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of 2s through Queens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace and a King</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## JOKER WILD STRATEGY FOR TWO PAIR AND DOUBLE JOKER POKER

### WITH JOKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five of Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## JOKER WILD STRATEGY FOR TWO PAIR AND DOUBLE JOKER POKER

### WITHOUT JOKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight (1 gap)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### RECOMMENDED JOKER WILD GAMES

**Joker Wild Ace-King (Kings or Better) 100.64% Payback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (natural)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Joker)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Joker Wild Two Pair – 98.72% Payback**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
<th>5 Coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (natural)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Joker)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Short-term Betting Strategies

Short-term Systems That Increase Bets After Wins

Short-term Systems That Increase Bets After Losses

Fixed Betting Patterns for Short-term Play

Multiple Game Play
Short-term Systems That Increase Bets After Wins

Increasing the size of your wager after a win is one of the soundest betting strategies for short-term video poker play. The idea behind increasing wagers is to bet more aggressively during a winning streak and to reduce the size of your wagers during losing periods. Another name for using a betting strategy that increases the size of your bet after a win is a Profit Maximizing Betting System. Using this type of betting strategy is a very effective way to increase your profits when you are on a winning streak.

The easiest system to accomplish this is called the Basic Step-Up, Step-Down System. With this system, you will start a game by wagering a neutral sized bet, such as three coins, and increase it by some predetermined amount after a win and decrease by the same amount following a loss. If you have a number of back-to-back winning wagers, this system will work very well. Like all systems entailing increasing the size of your bets following wins there is the risk that your timing will be off, so that the larger wagers are the losing ones and the winning bets are for reduced amounts. The biggest plus side of this approach to betting is that the amount lost will be less than if you bet a fixed amount.

Table 28 shows a basic system applied to ten video poker plays. The strategy used here was to start with a three-coin wager, with the minimum bet consisting of a two-coin bet. We started with a three-coin bet for wager one. Since this was a losing bet, the next bet was reduced to two coins. Play two was a break-even wager so we continued with two-coin bets. This wager was not increased until play 7 following the win on play 6. Here the wager was increased to 3 coins and was again reduced to 2 coins for play 7 following a loss. After the win on play 9, the wager was again increased to 3 coins for play 10.

For this series of plays, we wagered 23 coins and had 34 coins returned for a Net Win of 11 coins. Our win rate was 48% of the amount played (11/23 = .48). However, our system did not increase our win rate over betting making flat bets (the same amount each time) in this example.
Table 28. Ten Plays Using the Basic Step-Up, Step-Down System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Payoff for 1 coin</th>
<th>Wager</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Reduce bet after loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>Increase bet after win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Reduce bet after loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+18</td>
<td>Increase bet after win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Reduce bet after loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+23</td>
<td>+34</td>
<td>Net Win = 11 coins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we had made a constant wager of one coin per play, we would have won 7 coins for a win of 70% (7/10 = .70). In this instance, flat betting would have out performed the Basic Step-Up, Step-Down System.

The biggest problem with using the Basic Step-Up, Step-Down System is the dependence on back-to-back wins to support this system.

One way to rectify this deficiency is to increase wagers after wins but delay the increase for a set number of plays before increasing the wager. This approach works well when a win occurs every three to five plays.

Table 29 shows how a Delayed Step-Up, Step-Down System would have worked on the same video poker plays. Here our rules were:

1. Start with a 2 coin bet as our neutral bet.
2. Anytime we have a net win (break even bets don’t count) we increase our wager to 4 coins on the second wager following the win. We will keep the larger bet up for the next three plays. If no win occurs while this bet is being made, we will drop back to our neutral bet of 2 coins.
3. Following any win, our bet will be reduced back to the neutral bet.

This series of wagers produced a Net Win of 28 coins, with a total of 24 coins being wagered and 52 coins returned as payoffs. The Win Rate was 117% (28/24 = 1.17), an excellent return.
Table 29. Ten Plays Using the Delayed Step-Up, Step-Down System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Payoff for 1 coin</th>
<th>Wager</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Continue minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>Increase bet after next play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase bet next play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Same wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+36</td>
<td>Reduce bet after win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Same wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+24</td>
<td>+52</td>
<td>Net Win = 28 coins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewing the plays shown in Table 29, we note that our basic wager of 2 coins was not increased until play 8, two plays following the win in play 6. The payoffs in plays 2 and 4 were ignored as these plays simply returned the coins wagered and are considered break even plays.

This approach to wagering worked fairly well with this series of video poker payoffs. But what if we had had back-to-back payoffs or even payoffs every other play? With this method of betting we would have had a minimum bet for each of these winning situations.

The delayed Step-Up, Step-Down System with gradual increases in designed to raise wagers one coin at a time after a win for a set number of plays.

Let’s try a round of plays using this approach.

Our rules for the Delayed Step-Up, Step-Down System with gradual increases is:

1. Start with a 2 coin bet as our neutral bet.

2. Anytime we have a net win (break even bets don’t count) we increase our wager to 5 coins, one coin at a time over the next three plays.

3. Following any win, our bet will be reduced back to the neutral bet.

Let’s see how this system fared against the same video poker decisions. Table 30 shows the results of using this system. Here we won 35 coins, with a total of 26 coins played. Our Win Rate was 135% (35/26 = 1.35) a sizable increase from our original win rate of 48%.
Table 30. Ten Plays Using the Delayed Step-Up, Step-Down System with Gradual Increases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Payoff for 1 coin</th>
<th>Wager</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Continue minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Minimum wager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>Increase bet by 1 coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase bet by 1 coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase bet by 1 coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+45</td>
<td>Increase bet by 1 coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Reduce bet after win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+26</td>
<td>+61</td>
<td>Net Win = 35 coins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are many different types of Step-Up, Step-Down Systems you can use. To create one of these systems, use the following rules:

1. **Basic Bet.** Determine the size of the basic or neutral bet. It is usually from one to three coins when playing on five coin machines.

2. **Amount to Increase Bet.** Decide on how much to increase the wager following a win. You can increase your wager from two coins to five coins, three coins to four coins, or any other combination you decide. Or, you may want to increase your wagers gradually (see rule 5 below).

3. **Timing of Increase.** You will determine when to start increasing your wagers following a win. You can start on the next play, the second following play or whenever you decide.

4. **Length of Time for Increased Wagers.** Decide how long you want to use increased wagers. You can increase your bet for one, two, three, four or even more plays following a win.

5. **Use of Gradual Increases.** You can immediately increase the size of your wager following a win or increase it one coin at a time. For example, a fixed increase might be from two coins to four coins, immediately following a win, with the increased wager to be made for the next three bets or until a win occurs. A gradual increase might be defined as: increase each of the following three wagers by one coin until a win occurs.

6. **Timing of Decreases.** Normally you will decrease a wager immediately following a win. But you can define this anyway you want. You could delay decreasing your wager.
until the second play following a win, hoping for back-to-back wins. Or you may use a gradual decrease, and reduce the size of your wagers one coin at a time until you reach your neutral bet.

7. **Amount to Decrease Bet.** After a win, you can decrease your wager all the way back to the basic or neutral bet, or only decrease it by one coin.

The possibilities for developing Step-Up, Step-Down Systems are numerous. Table 31 shows some of the possibilities by rule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2,3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-4-5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2,3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-4-5</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>4-3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2,3,4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3-3-4-4</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>4-4-3-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2,3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-4-5</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>5-4-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here’s how to interpret Table 31. System #1 uses a Basic Bet (Rule 1) marked “3” of 3 coins. After a win this will be increased by 2 coins (Rule 2 marked “2”). The increase will be on play 1 following the win (Rule 3 marked as “1”). The wager will be increased for 3 plays after the win (Rule 4 marked “3”). The increase will be immediate, not gradual (Rule 5 marked “no”). The wager will be decreased on the next play following a win (Rule 6 marked “1”). And the amount that the bet will be decreased is 2 coins (Rule 7, marked “2”).

Let’s try another one. System 7 is one of the more complex ones. It’s Basic Bet is 2 coins (Rule 1 marked “2”). After a win this wager will be increased by 3 coins (Rule 2, marked “2”). The increase will occur on the next three plays after the win (Rule 3 marked “1,2,3”). This increased wager will continue for 3 plays (Rule 4, marked “3”). The wagers will be increased gradually from 3 to 4 to 5 coins (Rule 5, marked “3-4-5”). Following a win the size of the bets will be reduced over the next three plays (Rule 6, marked “1,2,3”). After a win the wager will be reduced using the formula 4 coins, 3 coins, 2 coins (Rule 7, marked “4-3-2”).
Short-term Systems That Increase Bets After Losses

Increasing wagers after losses is one of the more aggressive ways of betting in video poker. If you plan on betting this way, you should probably bring a larger bankroll. The concepts underlying increasing your wagers following losses is that the eventual win will occur when you are wagering a larger amount, recouping previous losses.

Another name for a betting system that advocates increasing the size of your wagers following a loss is a Profit Recovery Betting System. Using the type of betting strategy can be very effective is rapidly turning around what might have been a losing game otherwise.

The greatest risk in the concept of increasing wagers after losses lies in the event that no win occurs before you run of bets. When this happens, as it will on occasion, you will be out a larger amount of money than if you had made flat bets or used an up-as-you-win type of betting strategy.

Considering the risk inherent in this approach to playing video poker you many wonder why I am even discussing these systems.

The main reason you will want to consider using systems where you increase the size of your bets following losses is that these patterns of betting produce some of the highest wins within a given number of wagers.

Then easiest system to use that entails increasing the size of your bets following losses is the Basic Step-Down, Step-Up System. With this approach, you will start out wagering with a lower one or two coin bet. Here are your betting rules for this system:

1. Start with a 2-coin wager. If the wager loses, raise the next wager by one coin. If this wager breaks even, the next wager is for the same amount.

2. After any win, reduce the next wager by one coin.

3. If the maximum wager of 5 coins is reached and this bet loses, repeat it one time before reducing your wager back to one coin.

Table 32 shows this system in action over a period of ten plays. Let’s go through this play-by-play to make sure that you thoroughly understand this approach to betting.

Play 1 begins with a 2-coin wager, which is the minimum wager we will make with this system. This wager loses so we raise our bet by one coin for play 2. Play 2 is a break-even wager where our 3-coin wager is returned. Since we broke even, our next
wager is for the same amount. We wager 3 coins on play 3 and lose. According to the rules, we must now raise our next wager by one coin.

Play 4 is for 4 coins and breaks even. We will now wager 4 coins again on the next play. Play 5 is a 4-coin wager which loses, indicating that the next play will be

Table 32. Ten Plays Using the Basic Step-Down, Step-Up System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Payoff for 1 Coin</th>
<th>Wager</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Same wager after breaking even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>Same wager after breaking even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+30</td>
<td>Reduce by 1 coin after a win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Same bet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+45</td>
<td>Reduce by 1 coin after a win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>+17</td>
<td>+39</td>
<td>+82</td>
<td>Net Win = 43 coins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

raised to 5 coins. Betting 5 coins on play 6 we win 30 coins and reduce our wager back to 4 coins for the next play. Play 7 loses, so again we raise the next wager by one coin. Play 8 also loses. This is our first 5-coin wager to lose. According to our rules, we will wager a second 5-coin bet following a losing bet. On play 9 we wager 5 coins and have a payoff of 45 coins. For play 10 we reduce our wager back to 4 coins and lose.

If we had wagered one coin for each play during this series of plays, we would have won a net of 7 coins with 10 coins played, for a Win Rate of 43% (3/7 = .428)
Using the Basic Step-Down, Step-Up System, we wagered a total of 39 coins and had 82 coins returned for a Net Win of 43 coins. Our Win Rate was 110% (43/39 = 1.10), an excellent return.

A major concern with this approach is the larger amount of wagers used in the system. We wagered a total of 39 coins which was much higher than any of the systems increasing wagers after wins. The average number of coins “invested” in this same series of plays, using the three examples of increasing wagers after wins covered in the previous chapter was 24.33 coins, considerably less than the Basic Step-Down, Step-Up System.

Let’s try a different approach to increasing our bets after losses. The Modified Version of the first version of the Step-Down, Step-Up System uses the following rules.
1. Start with a 1-coin wager. If the wager loses or breaks even, raise the next bet by one coin.

2. After any win, reduce the next wager back to 1 coin.

3. If the maximum wager of 5 coins is reached and this bet loses, repeat it one time before reducing the wager back to one coin.

**Table 33. Ten Plays Using the Modified Version #1 Step-Down, Step-Up System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Payoff for 1 Coin</th>
<th>Wager</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Increase wager 1 coin after break even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>Increase wager 1 coin after break even</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Repeat 5-coin bet one time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+30</td>
<td>Reduce to 1 coin after a win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+27</td>
<td>Reduce by 1 coin after a win</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-0-</td>
<td>Increase wager after a loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>+17</strong></td>
<td><strong>+27</strong></td>
<td><strong>+63</strong></td>
<td><strong>Net Win = 36 coins</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the Modified Version #1 of this system, we won 36 coins with an investment of 27 coins for a Win Rate of 133% \( (36/27 = 1.33) \). While we won only 35 coins using this version of the system, compared with 43 coins won using the Basic Version, the reduced investment required to use this system (27 coins as compared to 39 coins) and the improved Win Rate (133% as compared to 110%) make us inclined to use the more conservative modified version.

There are many variations you can use when increasing the size of your wagers following losses. To create another system, use the following rules:

1. **Basic Bet.** Determine the amount of the basic or neutral bet. It is usually better to start small with a one or two coin wager.

2. **Amount to Increase Wager.** I nearly always increase a wager following a loss by one coin, although you could increase the next wager by 2 or even 3 coins. You also need to decide whether to increase wagers following break-even bets or treat these plays as “neutral” and continue with the same size bet on the next play.

3. **Timing of Increased Wager.** You need to decide when to increase your wager following a loss. Normally it is increased on the next wager, but you could decide to delay the increase until the second wager following a loss.
4. **Number of Plays to Increase Wagers.** The easiest way to increase wagers following losses is to increase the wager for only one play following a loss. But you could decide to increase the next two wagers or even the next three wagers by some predetermined amount.

5. **Timing of Increases.** Usually wagers are decreased immediately following a winning bet. But you could decide to delay decreasing your wager until the second or even third play following a win.

6. **Amount to Decrease Wager.** Wagers can be reduced all the way back to the level of your Basic Bet following a win, or reduced one or two coins following a win.

Table 34 shows some of the possible Step-Down, Step-Up Systems possible with each rule variation explained.

Let’s go over a couple of systems. System #2 uses a Basic Bet of 2 coins (Rule 1, marked “2”). After a loss this bet will be increased by 1 coin (Rule 2, marked “1”). The increase will occur on the next play following the loss (Rule 3, marked “1”). The increase will be for one play (Rule 4, marked “1”). The wager will be decreased following a win on the first play after the win (Rule 5, marked “1”). The wager following a win will be decreased by 1 coin (Rule 6, marked “1”).

**Table 34. Variations of Step-Down, Step-Up Systems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fixed Betting Patterns for Short-term Play

One of the easiest ways to play video poker is to use a set or fixed pattern of wagers. Another name for Fixed Betting Pattern types of systems are Profit Matrix Betting Systems. These betting series can be effective in all kinds of circumstances and should be considered the “all purpose” betting strategies.

Let’s say that you have broken down your gambling bankroll into several Game Bankrolls of 40 coins each. Now you have a choice of how to play these coins in a video poker machine.

If you are a professional long-term player there is no decision to be made. You will always play the maximum number of five coins. If you are weekend type of short-term player, you are always looking for the most bang for the buck, and you will probably not want to play five coins at a time.

In fact, you will not want play a set number of coins at all, whether it is one coin, three coins or five coins!

You can use one of the systems calling for increases after wins or increases following losses. Either type of system can dramatically improve your winnings over flat betting.

However, there is an even easier way to play the machine. You can learn a few betting patterns and use them when you play video poker.

The beauty of pattern play is its simplicity. To use a pattern, you decide on which pattern to use and then proceed to play video poker using the pattern to determine your bets.

Pattern play takes the guesswork out of how to play any machine. When you use a predetermined betting pattern you will not vary the number of coins played dependent upon the machine’s payoffs. Just follow you own betting pattern. When a pattern of bets is finished, you can repeat the pattern or try a different one.

There are two broad groups of playing patterns. Neutral patterns do not follow any particular formula other than the total number of coins required to complete a pattern. Table 35 shows a number of Neutral Patterns. These patterns are shown as 10, 15 and 20 coin patterns, dependent upon the total number of coins needed to complete all of the wagers in each pattern. In general, the smaller the session bankroll, the smaller the betting pattern you want to use. For example, if you are using a 40-coin Game Bankroll (buy-in) you may want to use a 10-coin pattern, which can be repeated four times with a
40-coin buy-in. With a 60-coin session, you may want to use a 15-coin pattern or even a 20-coin pattern, which can be repeated four and three times, respectively.

Table 35. Neutral Betting Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Coins in Pattern</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-1-1-2-1-1-2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-2-1-2-1-2-1-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2-1-1-1-2-1-1-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-1-3-3-1-1-1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-2-2-3-1-1-1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2-3-2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-3-5-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-2-4-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1-1-1-3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1-1-1-1-1-2-2-2-2-2-1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1-2-2-1-1-1-2-2-2-2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1-1-2-2-3-3-2-2-1</td>
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<td>3-1-2-1-3-2-2-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2-3-1-2-3-2-2-2</td>
</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>1-1-1-3-1-1-1-1-1-2-2-1</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>1-2-3-4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-2-2-3-3-3-2-2-2</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>2-2-4-4-3-3-1-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3-3-3-4-4-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-1-1-1-2-2-1-1-3-4-2-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A separate family of fixed patterns are patterns with preset steps. These patterns have built in biases to either increase the size of wagers in a fixed pattern, known as a Step-Up Pattern, or to gradually decrease the size of wagers in a fixed pattern, know as a Step-Down Pattern.

Table 36 shows a number of Step Patterns.
### Table 36. Step-Up and Step-Down Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern Bias</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up</td>
<td>1-1</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-3</td>
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<td>4-4</td>
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<td>5-5</td>
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<td>Up</td>
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<td>3-3</td>
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<td>Down</td>
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<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I recommend that you try several different Neutral Patterns as well as several of the Step Patterns. You may want to develop some of your own betting patterns. You will find that pattern betting is not only fun, but also profitable!
Multiple Game Play

After you have become accomplished at using one of our strategies to play a particular version of video poker, you may want to move up to playing on a Multi-Line video poker machine.

These games tend to be more fun than conventional single-payline machines. With the multiple play option you can play more than one hand at a time. That is, playing with the first five cards, you can play three, five, ten, fifty and even one hundred hands with these same five cards. Depending on how many cards you choose to hold, each successive hand will be dealt the same number of selected cards out of the successive new deals.

Here’s an example of how this game works. Let’s assume that you are playing on a 9-6 Jacks or Better machine and you get a pair of Jacks dealt to you with the first five cards. According to our strategy, you would hold that winning pair and draw three new cards. In multiple play poker, all of the other hands (whether three, five, ten, fifty or one hundred) would hold that same pair of Jacks.

You would now be assured of three, five, ten, fifty or one hundred times your payoff of 1 to 1 for all hands wagered. But you also have the chance to improve this initial hand and each additional hand with three new draw cards. In is not unusual on a three pay machine to have one of the three hands improve to a Full House and another to Two Pair. Now, imagine playing ten, fifty or even one hundred multiple hands, starting with a hand that is already a winner. Your position can only improve and the possibilities to make a high profit on this round of play are very good.

Here are some pluses in favor of these multi-line machines:

1. You can look at the paytable on the screen and know whether this is a playable game. If it has the classic 9-6 Jacks or Better schedule, you know that the payoff on this machine is 99.5%, the same as on a single-line 906 Jacks or Better machine.

2. You can use the same strategy as you would on the same game in single-line, so you don’t have to learn a new strategy.

3. These games are exciting and fun.

Now, for some cautions –
Because these games are fun you may be tempted to stray away from the strategy you know is correct on a single-line machine as you get caught up in the excitement of multi-line play. As tempting as it may be, your best approach is to stick with the strategies I have shown you. The strategies don’t change because you are playing on a multi-line machine!

One very positive factor is that you don’t have to calculate your total bankroll requirement by multiplying the requirement for a single-line game times the number of lines. Here are the Game Bankrolls you need for multiple game play.

**Bankroll Requirements for Multi-line Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Line Played</th>
<th>Multiple of Single-line Bankroll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Times Play</td>
<td>1.5 to 2 times single game bankroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Times Play</td>
<td>2 to 3 times single game bankroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Times Play</td>
<td>3 to 5 times single game bankroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Times Play</td>
<td>6 to 8 times single game bankroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 Times Play</td>
<td>8 to 12 times single game bankroll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here’s how you will compute your Game Bankroll for multi-line play.

Let’s assume that your normal buy-in on a 25-cent machine is for 50 coin sessions. The bankroll table for Fifty Coin Games shows a requirement for 25-cent play of $62.60 per session. If you decide to play five multiple games on a 25-cent machine, you would compute your buy-in as –

Low 2 x $62.50 = $125.00

High 3 x $62.50 = $187.50

It is hard to believe but because you can win more quickly playing on multi-line machines your bankroll requirements are not increased proportionately to the number of lines you are playing.

When you call a session completed depends on your Profit Goal and Loss Limit.

Here is how I suggest that you play multi-line games.
**Profit Goal:** If you are ahead of 30% or your buy-in, lock up two-thirds of the win and play with one-third of your profits. If you lose this one-third, the game is over. If you double the one-third lock up, lock up one-third of your win and continue playing with the original one-third. Keep repeating this formula as long as you win.

Here’s an example of how you do this –

Assume that you are playing a 25-cent machine with a buy-in of $125 and you go up $40 (a 32% win). You will set aside $152 (two-thirds of your win, plus your original bankroll of $125 for a total of $152) and continue to play with $13.50. If you turn the $13.50 into $27.00 you will add another $13.50 to your locked up money and continue playing again with $13.50. You will continue this process until you lose the $13.50.

**Loss Limit:** When you are playing a multi-line game with its comparatively modest bankroll requirements, you can set your loss limit as equal to your buy-in.
Playing Video Poker Professionally

Concepts of Long-term Play

Jacks or Better Video Poker

10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker

Deuces Wild Games

Joker Wild Games
Concepts of Long-term Play

There are a number of people around who play video poker for a living. Playing the game for a living means spending a considerable amount of time behind the machines. Many persons who chose to play video poker professionally, chose to become members of teams, because many times "playing for a living" means nonstop marathon type play on a single video poker machine until one of the team members is able to hit the jackpot.

If you are interested in learning how to play video poker professionally, then this is the section you need to read. I will let you know what you will face in terms of time commitments, dollar investments and emotional wear and tear.

If you have ever read any other publications on video poker, chances are, you never saw a chapter like this. The author never bothered to tell you that the concepts of expected value, playing only the maximum number of coins per play and always aiming for the ever elusive Royal Flush were all concepts of long-term play. The author assumed that if you had bought his book you must be interested in long-term play, because that was the only concept the author was prepared to discuss. So he never leveled with you.

You may have tried out video poker using the strategies advocated by one of the video poker experts. And the chances are that you lost money. I can say this because if you followed the author's advice, you were attempting to play perfect video poker, but you were not playing as a "long-term" player because the author had not emphasized that playing perfect strategy only works when you play at a advantage to the machine and win Royal Flushes periodically.

There is nothing wrong with long-term play. I am just going to level with you up front and tell you what is really involved. This may be the opportunity you have been waiting for, and you may want to jump on the next plane to Las Vegas (the best machines are still in Nevada). On the other hand, once you learn what is really involved with long-term or professional play (I use the terms more or less interchangeably) then you may decide that you are really a short-term or what I call a Weekend player.

To play professionally, you are going to limit your play to just a few versions of the game which offer the opportunities of playing at an advantage to the casino. The greatest opportunities lie in playing progressive machines with large jackpots for hitting a Royal Flush. Because the royal flush shows once on the average every 40,000 hands, playing for the royal can become a major time commitment.

The professional play versions of video poker are found primarily in Nevada. If you want a decent choice of machines which qualify for professional play, you might as well plan on moving to Nevada or at least close enough that you can play on a daily basis.
(Some of my acquaintances who play video poker professionally live in Bullhead City, Arizona, which is right across the Colorado River from Laughlin. Laughlin has plenty of machines qualifying for professional play, and the daily commute takes about five minutes.)

Your first steps in becoming a pro will be to learn how to play the versions of video poker which offer player advantage poker and then moving to a locale where you can practice your trade.

You must also consider the bankroll necessary to survive as a video poker pro. Several experts I have consulted advise that if you plan on only playing quarter machines, then a bankroll of $10,000 should be adequate. However, at this level of play, you are strictly "small potatoes" and you really need to move up to dollar machines as quickly as possible. For dollar machines, I would recommend a minimum bankroll of $50,000 to finance your play.

When you play professionally, you will experience large swings in your bankroll. Typically, you will lose every hour that you play video poker until a royal flush shows. So you must be prepared to finance many hours of losses, anticipating that the royal flush payoff will replenish your bankroll.

Like professional blackjack players (card counters), if you become a professional video poker player, you will want to play as rapidly as possible, since your winnings rate is dependent on the number of hands you are able to play. Many professional video poker players play at the rate of 750 to 800 hands per hour. At 800 hands per hour, inserting five $1 coins every play, you are going to insert about $4,000 per hour of play.

With this high rate of "investment" in the game, even moderate losing streaks can cause major dents in your bankroll. As a professional, you have to have enough faith in your play and a large enough bankroll to withstand prolonged losing streaks, knowing that a royal flush will reimburse your losses and more.

For those of you who choose this path, the rewards can be great. Professional players may earn from $50,000 to $100,000 a year playing video poker. If you have the time, the temperament and the bankroll, you may want to consider this option. But put aside any notions of the glamour of earning your living in a casino. Most pros start to look at professional play as just another way to earn a living and a darned hard way at times.

Examine the next few chapters in depth if you are interested in learning how to become a professional player. If you are already leaning towards becoming a Weekend player, I still suggest that you read the next few chapters to increase your knowledge of the game.
Jacks or Better Video Poker for Long-term Play

If you could only learn one version of video poker, your best choice would be to learn to play Jacks or Better video poker. This version of video poker has no wild cards and offers its lowest payoffs with high pairs of Jacks, Queens, Kings or Aces (hence the name, Jacks or Better).

With some versions of the game, the payoffs will exceed 100% and therefore offer excellent opportunities for professional play.

We will cover two versions of Jacks or Better in this chapter. The first is 9-6 Jacks or Better, which is not a beatable game in its basic version, but with higher payoffs for Royal Flushes becomes a beatable game. The other version we will discuss is 8-5 Jacks or Better when progressive or larger jackpots are paid for royal flushes.

The strategies for the two games are similar enough that if you just learn the strategy for 9-6 Jacks or Better, you will be able to successfully play either game.

Jacks or Better is the most common version of video poker and is the easiest version of video poker to master. The lowing paying hand in the original version of the game pays on Two Pairs or Higher, and you want to avoid any of these machines in favor of the version paying on high pairs.

The 9-6 Version of Jacks or Better may be identified by the payoffs shown in Table 4. These payoffs are shown on the front of the video poker machine. As discussed earlier, casinos commonly change the payoffs for Full Houses and Flushes, reducing them from the 9-6 payoffs of the full pay version of the game to 8-5 or even 6-5 for different versions of Jacks or Better. We will recommend long-term play on the 8-5 version of the game when the jackpot on quarter machines is at least $2,200. In order to play the 6-5 version of the game with the expectation of winning, the royal flush payoff for quarter machines must equal or exceed $3,100.
Table 4. Payoffs and Frequencies for 9-6 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Payoff per coin</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.00248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.0109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.2363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.1513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.4453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.9281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair, Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.4595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pay</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54.5418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to payoffs, Table 4 also shows the frequency of drawing to a particular hand if you use the strategy we recommend. These frequencies can be changed if you play the game differently. For example, the frequency of royal flushes can almost be doubled if you modify your play to only play for royal flushes when there are any high cards in your hand.

Using this strategy, we might encounter a royal flush on the average once every 20,000 hands instead of the usual once in 40,000 hands. However, if we played this way, we would end up losing more on the hands we would throw away than we would gain in additional Royal Flushes.

Table 5 ranks all of the playable hands for 9-6 Jacks or Better. If you intend to play this version of video poker professionally, you need to learn the plays in this chart cold. This is the information you need to instantly make decisions about which hands to keep and which hands to discard.

You will notice that the lowest playable hand is a 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside). An example of this hand is shown as 5♥ 6♥ _ _ 9♥, where the double gap is obvious. I have presented hands in the chart this way, leaving out extraneous cards which
makes the illustrated hand a little easier to see. Of course, in the actual game, hands are not presented in order, nor with extraneous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example of Hand</th>
<th>Expected Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥A♥</td>
<td>800.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9♥J♥Q♥K♥</td>
<td>50.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>3♥3♣3♠3♣_</td>
<td>25.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>19.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9♥9♥9♣3♥3♥</td>
<td>9.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥9♥J♥</td>
<td>6.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>9♥9♥9♣_</td>
<td>4.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♣6♥7♠</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♣6♥_</td>
<td>3.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>3♥3♥9♥9♣_</td>
<td>2.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Inside)</td>
<td>3♥4♥_5♥6♣</td>
<td>2.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
<td>J♥J♣_</td>
<td>1.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>J♥Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>1.450*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥9♥_</td>
<td>1.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside, 3 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♣_</td>
<td>0.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>T♥T♣_</td>
<td>0.824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside 1 or 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>8♥9♥T♥J♣_</td>
<td>0.750*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♣<em>J♥Q♣</em></td>
<td>0.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥T♥J♣_</td>
<td>0.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside)</td>
<td>4♥5♥6♥7♠_</td>
<td>0.681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Fl (Double Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥_Q♥K♥</td>
<td>0.640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥T♥<em>Q♥</em></td>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>7♥8♥9♥_</td>
<td>0.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (JQ, JK or QK)</td>
<td>J♥Q♥_</td>
<td>0.600*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 4 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>J♥Q♣K♠A♣_</td>
<td>0.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (Includes Ace)</td>
<td>J♥A♣_</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Fl (Double Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥T♥_Q♥</td>
<td>0.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside)</td>
<td>6♥7♥<em>9♥</em></td>
<td>0.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 3 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥<em>J♥Q♥K♣</em></td>
<td>0.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hi Cards (King Hi)</td>
<td>J♥Q♣K♣_</td>
<td>0.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards (Queen Hi)</td>
<td>J♥Q♣_</td>
<td>0.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (J Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥J♥_</td>
<td>0.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards (King Hi)</td>
<td>J♥K♥_</td>
<td>0.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥Q♥_</td>
<td>0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards (A Hi)</td>
<td>K♥A♣_</td>
<td>0.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card (J Hi)</td>
<td>J♥_</td>
<td>0.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (K Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥K♥_</td>
<td>0.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card (Any)</td>
<td>Q♣_</td>
<td>0.470*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (A Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥A♥_</td>
<td>0.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside)</td>
<td>5♥<em>8♥9♥</em></td>
<td>0.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>0.360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cards removed, so that this hand might look like: 6♥ 2♦ 9♥ 5♠ T♣. This hand is not as easy to identify as a 3 Card Straight Flush with a double inside gap, and it is for this reason that hands like this are often missed.

Any hands below a 3 Card Straight Flush, such as a Two-Card Straight Flush, with no high cards, will be discarded and five new cards drawn.

All cards ranked below a 4 Card flush have expected values less than 1.0 and therefore are expected to lose. If these hands lose on the average, then why do we worry about them?

We work to improve these hands because these values add up. In other words, by playing these hands correctly we will still win more often than if we just gave up on them and drew five new cards. The option of drawing five new cards has a expected value of just 0.360, so that any options with a value greater than this amount add some value to our expected return.

You will notice that there are some expected values in the table with an asterisk (*) after them, such as 4 Card Royal Flush, expected value 19.000*. The asterisk was added because this value is an average value for several different versions of the hand. For example, with 4 Card Royal Flushes we have different values for hands with an Ace as the high card and the King as the high card as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 Card Royal Flush (King High)</th>
<th>19.681</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush (Ace High)</td>
<td>18.489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather than present this additional information, which really does not help you play the hand any better, as you will try to complete either 4 Card Royal Flush, I have averaged the return as a 19.000. Similar situations exist for 3 Card Royal Flushes, which have an average value shown as 1.450, 4 Card Flushes, with an average value of 1.200, 4 Card Straights (Outside, 1 or 2 Hi Cards) with an average value of 0.750, a 2 Card Royal Flush, with an average value of 0.600 and one High Card, with an average value of 0.470.

Some of these rankings defy logic and simply have to be learned. Let's say you are dealt the hand: T♥ T♦ J♥ Q♠ K♠. We recognize this hand as having a low pair of T♥ T♦ which can be kept. Most players would play the hand this way. Please note that even though Tens are one of the cards making up a Royal Flush, they are not considered High Cards in themselves, and a pair of Tens held in video poker has no more value than a pair of Twos. So the option of keeping the pair of Tens is considered to be keeping a low pair.
This play is almost right for this hand except we notice that the hand can also be played as a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 3 Hi Cards). To play this hand, we would discard one of the Tens and keep T♦J♥Q♣K♠. In this particular case, this would be the correct strategy. Look at Table 5. You will notice that the 4 Card Straight (Outside, 3 Hi Cards) has an expected value of 0.872, while the value of a Low Pair is 0.824. So in this case, we draw to the straight.

But notice the straight outranks the low pair only when it has three Hi Cards. Consider the hand: 9♥9♦T♣J♠Q♥. Here we have a potential straight consisting of the cards 9 T J Q and also have a low pair of 9 9. Here the correct play is to keep only the Low Pair of 9 9 and discard all other cards. Why? We go with the Low Pair in this case because the straight only has two Hi Cards (J and Q) and is therefore ranked as a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 1 or 2 Hi Cards) with an expected value of 0.750. This value is less than the value of holding the Low Pair of 0.824, so we keep the Low Pair.

Let’s consider another hand. We are dealt J♥J♦2♥5♥8♥. We can play this hand as a High Pair by keeping only the pair of Jacks, or keep the four cards with hearts and attempt to draw to a 4 Card Flush. Once again, let's consult the table.

We see that the value of a High Pair is 1.537, while the value of the 4 Card Flush is 1.200. So we discard all cards except for the pair of Jacks and go with the High Pair.

Let's try another hand. Suppose you draw the cards: 9♠T♦J♥Q♥_. A couple of options are apparent. We have a 4 Card Straight (Outside) so we can keep all four cards and draw one card, hoping for either an 8 or K to complete the straight. Or we can go for the Royal Flush, discarding the 9 and T and keeping only the J♥Q♥. Consulting the chart, we identify the first hand as a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 2 Hi Cards), which has an expected value of .750. The other possible hand is a 2 Card Royal Flush (JQ) which has a value of .600. Here we will keep the 4 Card Straight.

What if we have the hand J♥Q♥K♦A♠_. Here we have a 4 Card Straight (Inside, 4 Hi Cards). We classify this straight as Inside, because there is only one way of making it, by drawing a T. We notice that this hand is valued at 0.596 in the chart. Since the 2 Card Royal Flush J♥Q♥ is valued at 0.600, we keep the 2 Card Royal Flush, discarding the K and A.

How about this hand: 8♥8♦9♠T♣J♥. We can readily find the Low Pair of 8 8 and the 4 Card Straight of 8 9 T J. We notice that the straight can be further described as a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 1 Hi Card). The rank for this hand is 0.750, while any low pair is ranked 0.824. So we keep the Low Pair.

Please note that a Low Pair outranks any 2,3 or 4 Card Straights except for 4 Card Straights (Outside, 3 Hi Cards). The hands ranked below a low pair consist of all other 4
Card Straights, 3 card straight flushes, and any 2-card royal flush. Since a low pair is a fairly common poker hand and it outranks so many of the combinations of straights and straight flushes in 9-6 Jacks or Better, playing many of these hands becomes fairly straightforward when they contain a low pair.

Look at the following combination of hands containing low pairs. Every hand offers the option of playing the hand in a different way, and in every case the correct play is to keep the low pair:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand:</th>
<th>Options:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9♥9♦T♦J♦</td>
<td>Low Pair 9 9, 3 Card St Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card) 9♦T♦J♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8♠8♥9♣T♠J♥</td>
<td>Low Pair 8 8, 4 Card Straight (Outside, 1 Hi Card) 8 9 T J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4♥4♦5♥6♥7♥</td>
<td>Low Pair 4 4, 4 Card Straight (Outside, 0 Hi Cards) 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T♥T♦J♥Q♥_</td>
<td>Low Pair T T, 2 Card Royal Flush (JQ), 3 Card Straight (Outside, 3 Hi Cards) T J Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9♥9♦J♣Q♠K♥</td>
<td>Low Pair 9 9, 4 Card Straight (Inside 3 Hi Cards) 9 J Q K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9♥9♦_J♦Q♦</td>
<td>Low Pair 9 9, 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 2 Hi Cards) 9 _ J ♦ Q ♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9♦9♥_Q♥K♥</td>
<td>Low Pair 9 9, 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 2 Hi Cards) 9 ♥ _ Q ♥ K ♥</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 summarizes the payoffs per coin, the frequency of each payoff, the frequency as a percentage and the expected value of each win.
### Table 6. Summary of Values for 9-6 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Frequency %</th>
<th>Added Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>40,390</td>
<td>0.00248</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9,150</td>
<td>0.0109</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>0.2363</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>1.1513</td>
<td>10.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>1.1015</td>
<td>6.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>1.1229</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>7.4453</td>
<td>22.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>12.9281</td>
<td>25.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>21.4595</td>
<td>21.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Winners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>54.5418</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Paybacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>99.56%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Ranking of Hands of 8-5 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example of Hand</th>
<th>Ex Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♠J♣Q♥K♠A♥</td>
<td>800.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9♥T♥J♣Q♥K♥</td>
<td>50.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>3♥3♣3♠3♣_</td>
<td>25.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♣Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>19.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>9♥9♥9♥4♥4♥_</td>
<td>8.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥9♥J♥</td>
<td>5.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>9♥9♥9♥_</td>
<td>4.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♥6♥7♥_</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♥6♥_</td>
<td>3.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>3♥3♥9♥9♥_</td>
<td>2.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Inside)</td>
<td>3♥4♥<em>6♥7♥</em></td>
<td>2.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
<td>J♥J♣_</td>
<td>1.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>J♥Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>1.370*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush (at least one Hi Card)</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥J♥_</td>
<td>1.050*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush (no Hi Cards)</td>
<td>2♥4♥7♥9♥_</td>
<td>0.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside, 3 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>T♥J♣Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>0.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>T♥T♣_</td>
<td>0.814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside, 1 or 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>8♥9♥T♥J♣_</td>
<td>0.780*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥<em>J♥Q♥</em></td>
<td>0.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥T♥J♣_</td>
<td>0.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside)</td>
<td>4♥5♥6♥7♥_</td>
<td>0.681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td><em>J♥Q♥</em></td>
<td>0.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card St Flush (Double Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥<em>Q♥K♥</em></td>
<td>0.599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>8♥<em>T♥J♥</em></td>
<td>0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 4 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>J♥Q♥K♥A♥_</td>
<td>0.596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>7♥8♥9♥_</td>
<td>0.594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (A or K Hi, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td><em>Q♥K♥</em></td>
<td>0.570*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 3 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥<em>J♥Q♥K♥</em></td>
<td>0.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hi Cards (K Hi)</td>
<td>J♥Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>0.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards (Q Hi)</td>
<td>J♥Q♣_</td>
<td>0.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card St Flush (Double Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>7♥<em>T♥J♥</em></td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside)</td>
<td>4♥<em>6♥7♥</em></td>
<td>0.497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (J Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥J♥_</td>
<td>0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards (K or A Hi)</td>
<td>Q♥K♥_</td>
<td>0.480*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card (J Hi)</td>
<td>J♥_</td>
<td>0.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥<em>Q♥</em></td>
<td>0.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card (Q or K Hi)</td>
<td>Q♣_</td>
<td>0.468*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (K Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥<em>K♥</em></td>
<td>0.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card (A Hi)</td>
<td>A♣_</td>
<td>0.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (A Hi, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>T♥<em>A♣</em></td>
<td>0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside)</td>
<td>5♥<em>8♥9♥</em></td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You will recall that I said the basic version of 9-6 Jacks or Better is not a game where the player can gain an edge over the house. The basic game returns 99.56% with correct play. However, if we find a version of the game with a 1,000 coin payoff for a Royal Flush, then we have a game which returns 100% with correct play. Jackpots higher than 1,000 for 9-6 Jacks or Better may be played with the expectation of long-term winnings.

Let's take a look at the 8-5 progressive version of Jacks or Better. With these machines, the payout on a Full House has been reduced from 9 to 8 and the payout for a flush reduced from 6 to 5. These changes alone make the game less beatable. However, if the machine has a progressive jackpot for a Royal Flush of at least $2,200 on a quarter machine or $8,800 on a dollar machine, then the game becomes beatable.

Table 7 shows the ranking of hands for 8-5 Jacks or Better Video Poker with a payout for a Royal Flush of 800.00. On a machine with a progressive jackpot for a Royal, this payback and the payback for any of the royal flush hands will be increased.

With long-term play, you are really playing to win the royal flush. With the reduced payouts for Full Houses and Flushes in the 8-5 version of Jacks or Better, you will invest money every hour you play the machine until the Royal Flush shows.

Totally accurate play requires that you adjust your play dependent upon the size of the Royal Flush Jackpot. Table 8 shows some adjustments you will want to make in your play after the jackpot exceeds certain limits.

I have shown Royal Flush progressive jackpots for both quarter and dollar machines in this table. You will always insert the maximum number of coins when playing long-term, so I have shown the quarter machine play as $1.25 (five quarters) and the dollar machine play as $5 (five dollars).

To limit confusion in discussing these playing options, I will refer to the Royal Flush Jackpots for quarter play only. Whenever the jackpot for the Royal Flush reaches $3,000, then we will begin to change our playing style. Once a minimum level of jackpot is reached for any play modification, then the modified play will continue to be correct, no matter how large the jackpot is.

Let's look at how we change our play whenever the jackpot on a quarter machine reaches or exceeds $3,000.00. We will now discard a made straight flush for any 4 Card Royal Flush. If we have a 9♥T♥J♥Q♥K♥, we will discard the 9 and draw to the 4 Card Royal Flush. Because this playing option is triggered whenever the Royal Flush payoff hits or exceeds $3,000.00, we will, of course, play our hands this way for any larger jackpots, such as $4,000, $5,000 or more.
Let's look at some more adjustments in your play. Whenever the jackpot hits or exceeds $3,700, we will discard a 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 1 Hi Card) for any 2 Card Royal Flush with 1 Hi Card. Assume we have a 9♥T♥_ Q♥. With a jackpot of $3,700 or greater, we will discard the 9 and go with the T♥Q♥ possible Royal Flush. Notice that this 2 Card Royal Flush only has one Hi Card as a Ten is not considered a Hi Card in Jacks or Better. For this reason, we rank 2 Card Royal Flushes as those having 2 Hi Cards, which rank higher, and those with only one Hi Card, which rank lower.

If the jackpot on a quarter machine reaches $4,000 ($16,000 on a dollar machine), we will discard a 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside) for a 3 Card Royal Flush. If we draw the hand 9♥T♥J♥Q _, we will discard the 9♥ and go with the TJQ Royal Flush.

When quarter jackpots reach $4,500 ($18,000 for dollar jackpots), we will discard a 4 Card Straight (Outside, up to 1 Hi Card) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (2 Hi Cards). This one is tricky. Assume our hand is 8♦9♣T♥J♥A♥. Here we have a 4 Card Straight of 8 9 T J and a 2 Card Royal Flush of J♥A♥. We will discard the 8 9 and T and keep only the 2 Royal Cards.

Whenever our quarter jackpot hits or exceeds $5,600 ($22,400 on dollar machines), all kinds of rules changes kick in.

We will discard a Low Pair for a 2 Card Royal with 1 Hi Card. With a hand of 9♥9♠T♥Q♥ _, we will discard the pair of 9s and draw to the TQ 2 Card Royal Flush.

We will discard a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 2 Hi Cards) for a 2 Card Royal Flush with 2 Hi Cards. With a hand of 9♠T♥J♥Q♥, we will discard the 9 and T and keep the JQ 2 Card Royal Flush.

We will discard a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card) for a 2 Card Royal Flush. With a hand of 9♥T♥J♥_ _, we will discard the 9 and keep the TJ 2 Card Royal Flush.

When the quarter machine jackpot hits or exceeds $6,000 ($24,000 on dollar machines), we will discard a made Flush in favor of a 3 Card Royal Flush. If we have 2♥6♥J♥Q♥K♥, just keep the JQK 3 Card Royal Flush.

Have you had enough? I know I am throwing a lot at you. If you are interested in becoming a long-term video poker player, you are going to need to know all of this information.
Table 8. Adjustments for Size of Jackpots — 8-5 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progressive Jackpot</th>
<th>Quarter Machines ($1.25)</th>
<th>Dollar Machines ($5.00)</th>
<th>Rule Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>Discard a Straight Flush for a 4 Card Royal Flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,300</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 0 Hi Cards) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (1 Hi Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,700</td>
<td>14,800</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 1 Hi Card) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (1 Hi Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside) for a 3 Card Royal Flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a 4 Card Straight (Outside, up to 1 Hi Card) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (2 Hi Cards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,600</td>
<td>18,400</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a Straight for a 3 Card Royal Flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,600</td>
<td>22,400</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a Low Pair for a 2 Card Royal Flush (1 Hi Card) Discard a 4 Card Straight (Outside, 2 Hi Cards) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (2 Hi Cards) Discard a 4 Card Straight (Outside) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (1 Hi Card) Discard a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card) for a 2 Card Royal Flush (1 Hi Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discard a Flush for a 3 Card Royal Flush</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let's assume that you have decided to become a professional video poker player. I strongly recommend that you learn the professional playing rules for the 8-5 version of Jacks or Better. You may find this version of video poker with progressive jackpots in locales other than Nevada, so it will be a good version of the game for you to learn.

We've got one more version of Jacks or Better to learn. The 10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker is a Jacks or Better variation that offers the player the chance to play at an advantage over the house. But learning the ranking of this version of video poker is especially complex and it gets its own chapter.
10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker for Long-term Play

This game is another version of Jacks or Better. It is slightly profitable (100.17%) without any progressive jackpots for royal flushes. It is a game of choice for many poker pros who play dollar and five dollar machines. That's the good news. The bad news is that it is a fairly difficult game to master.

The "double bonus" part of the name comes from the fact that many casinos use this game as part of their promotions and pay bonuses for hands of straights or higher. This bonus aspect to the game can add even more bucks to your pocket.

To find this game, look for the following schedule of payouts:
Table 9. Payoffs for 10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin Payoff</th>
<th>5 Coin Payoff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind — Aces</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind — 2 thru 4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind — 5 thru K</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing this version of Jacks or Better with the 9-6 version (Table 4), shows a number of differences:

Only the Double Bonus version of the game offers different payoffs for different combinations of 4 of a Kind.

The payoffs for a Full House and a Flush increase from 9 and 6 to 10 and 7. In exchange for this "generosity", the payout for Two Pair is reduced from 2 to 1.

Versions of the Double Bonus game can be found offering 9-7 and 9-6 payoffs (9 for a Full House, 7 or 6 for a Flush). Avoid these versions of the game as the 9-7 version offers a 99.11% payback and the 9-6 version pays 97.81%.

Do not even think about learning this version of video poker until you have mastered the 9-6 Jacks or Better version. Fortunately, the 9-6 strategy works pretty well for this game. For strictly casual play, you may use the 9-6 Jacks or Better strategy and play with a 99.6% return in the Double Bonus game!

You will find that when playing Double Bonus, you will have bigger swings in your bankroll. The payoffs from Two Pair account for about 13% of all payoffs, and the reduction in the payoff to only 1 for 1 in the Double Bonus version of the game reduces the
average flow of payoffs. This reduction is made up when the higher 4 of a Kind payoff shows in the Double Bonus version of the game, but these combinations occur much less frequently than Two Pair, and your bankroll can fall considerably between 4 of a Kind payoffs.

There are several different playing rules you need to know to correctly play the Double Bonus game.

First, you want to hold all Two Pair hands, even pairs of Aces. This is not a change in strategy from the 9-6 version of the game, but sometimes new players of Double Bonus are tempted when dealt a hand like $3\spadesuit 3\heartsuit A\clubsuit A\spadesuit$ to discard the pair of threes and attempt to draw the 4 of Kind Aces. This temptation occurs because of the 160 for 1 payoff for 4 of a Kind Aces. However, even though this play looks tempting, don't do it. Holding Two Pair offers a better chance of winning.

Second, in the Double Bonus game, you will hold a 4 Card Straight (Outside) over a pair of low cards. If dealt $4\spadesuit 4\heartsuit 5\spadesuit 6\clubsuit 7\spadesuit$, keep the 4 5 6 7 straight and discard the extra 4.

Next, you want to learn to hold any 3 Card Flush with one hi card over two high cards and to hold any 3 Card Flush with no hi cards as the lowest playable hand. Three Card Flushes are never kept in the 9-6 Jacks or Better game, but because of the higher payoff for Flushes, they become playable hands in the Double Bonus game.

You will attempt to make 4 Card Inside Straights in this version of the game. Whereas you would draw five new cards when dealt a $2\heartsuit _4\heartsuit 5\spadesuit 6\spadesuit$ in the 9-6 game, here you will attempt to make the straight straight.
Table 10. Ranking of Hands for Double Bonus 10-7 Jacks or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example of Hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♦J♦Q<em>K</em>A♦</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind - Aces, 2-4</td>
<td>A♠A♠A♠A♠_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>3♦3♣5♥6♥7♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind - 5-K</td>
<td>5♥5♣5♠5♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q<em>K</em>K_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind - Aces</td>
<td>A♥A♣A♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3♥3♣3♥9♠9♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2♥4♥6♥8♥T♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind - 2-4 or 5-K</td>
<td>K♥K*K♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5♥6♦7♥8♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside or Inside)</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♥6♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>3♥3♥9♠9♠_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of Aces</td>
<td>A♥A♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush (2 or 3 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>6♥9♥J♥A♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of J-K</td>
<td>K♥K♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush (0 or 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>4♥6♥9♥J♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside)</td>
<td>5♥6♥7♥8♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2-4</td>
<td>2♥2♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥T♥J♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 5-10</td>
<td>5♥5♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 0 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>8♥9♥T♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>8♥<em>T♥J♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>8♥_J♥Q♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 3 or 4 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>9♥<em>J♥Q*K♣</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush - no 10</td>
<td>J♥K♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>9♥<em>Q♥K♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Inside, 0 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>4♥<em>6♥7♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>8♥<em>T♥J♥Q♣</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hi Cards</td>
<td>J♥Q♣K♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>7♥<em>9♥T♥J♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight (Outside, 2 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♣_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (QJ only)</td>
<td>J♥Q♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 0 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>6♥<em>9♥T♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (JT only)</td>
<td>T♥J♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (no A or T)</td>
<td>J♥Q♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside, 0 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>6♥<em>8♥9♥T♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Flush (1 Hi Card)</td>
<td>3♥9♥Q♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hi Cards</td>
<td>J♥K♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Hi Card</td>
<td>J♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Flush (0 Hi Cards)</td>
<td>3♥6♥9♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A 3 Card Flush with 1 Hi Card is preferred to 2 Hi Cards. If your hand is 3♥7♥J♥J♥___, discard the J♥ and go with the flush. All flush hands have higher values in this version of video poker.

The lowest 4 Card Inside Straight you would hold in the 9-6 game was a 4 Card Straight (Inside, 4 Hi Cards). With Double Bonus, any 4 Card Inside Straight has some value. In this game, if you drew 8♥9♥__T♣J♠, you would go with the 8 9 T J straight. In the 9-6 version of the game, you would only keep the J.

Want to try some more? A Pair of Aces outranks a 3 Card Royal Flush. When dealt J♥Q♥A♥A♠, discard the J and Q and keep the pair of Aces.

A 4 Card Flush with at least 2 Hi Cards outranks a Pair J-K but not a Pair of Aces. If your hand is 3♥6♥8♥J♣J♠, discard the J♣ and go with the 4 Card Flush. However, if your hand is 3♥6♥8♥A♠A♣, keep the pair of Aces.

A 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card) outranks a Pair 5-10, but not a Pair of J-K or a Pair of Aces. If dealt 9♥9♥T♥J♥___, you will discard the 9♥ and keep the 9♥T♥J♥. However, if you have a 9♥T♥J♥J♠, you will discard the 9 and T and keep the Pair of Jacks. Confusing? Here's more.

A Pair 2-4 outranks a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card). However, a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, 1 Hi Card) outranks a Pair 5-10.

If dealt 2♦2♠9♥T♥J♥, keep the pair of 2s and discard the 9 T J. However, if you were dealt 5♠5♥9♥T♥J♥, you would discard the pair of 5s and go with the 3 Card Straight Flush of 9♥T♥J♥.

A 2 Card Royal Flush containing QJ outranks a 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 0 Hi Cards). However, the 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside, 0 Hi Cards) is ranked higher than any other 2 Card Royal Flush, such as JT. If dealt 6♥9♥T♥J♥Q♠, keep the J♥Q♠ and discard the 6 9 and T. However if dealt a 5♥6♥9♥T♥J♥, discard the T♥J♥ and keep the 5♥6♥9♥ potential straight flush.

I could go on with these examples. Look at Table 10. If you compare it with Table 5, which ranks the hands for 9-6 Jacks or Better, you can come up with a number of these examples. Incidentally, I left the Expected Value rankings off of Table 10. You don't really need to know these numbers to play the game, and I felt that after seeing hands ranked with the expected values shown a couple of times, you would get the idea. From here on out, I will not be listing expected values in the poker charts, just to simplify things slightly.
I started out this chapter telling you that mastering Double Bonus 10-7 is fairly difficult. However, if you take the time to do so, and want to become a long-term player, this is an excellent game to learn. In the next chapter we will leave the exciting world of Jacks or Better behind and learn about Deuces Wild Video Poker. I think you'll enjoy this game.
Deuces Wild Video Poker for Long-term Play

If you regularly play video poker in Nevada or online and only want to learn one version of the game, you wouldn't go wrong learning how to beat the high paying version of Deuces Wild! This game is widely available in Las Vegas, with mostly quarter machines. If you prefer playing on dollar or five-dollar machines, you won't find much selection in the high pay Deuces Wild game.

The version of Deuces Wild I want to talk about is beatable. With correct play, the game pays back 100.76%.

The version of this game you want to play offers the paybacks shown in Table 11 when five coins are inserted.

The critical numbers to watch for to find the high pay version of Deuces Wild are the payoffs on the Wild Royal Flush (25), Five of a Kind (15) and Four of a Kind (5). You can live with a slightly reduced payback on the Wild Royal Flush and 5 of a Kind, which are reduced to 20 and 12 in some versions of Deuces Wild. However, the payback of 5 for 1 is absolutely critical for Four of a Kind. Do not play any version with a payback less than 5 for 1.
Table 11. Summary of Values for Full Pay Deuces Wild

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Frequency %</th>
<th>Percentage Added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.00221</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.0204</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush - Wild</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.1796</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.3202</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.4120</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.4938</td>
<td>32.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1229</td>
<td>6.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6522</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.6623</td>
<td>11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28.4544</td>
<td>28.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Winners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54.6800</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Paybacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This game is played using a 52-card deck and each of the Twos, which are always called deuces in poker, are wild.

Because of the use of wild cards, new poker hands appear in this version of poker. A Natural Royal Flush is a Royal Flush without any wild cards, and it is still the top dog. The next highest hand is now Four Deuces. A Wild Royal Flush is a Royal Flush made using deuces as wild cards, and it pays much less than a Natural Royal Flush. Five of a Kind is any combination of deuces and other cards to create the five of a kind formation.

The lowest hand with a payback of any kind is Three of a Kind. Nothing is paid for Two Pairs or a High Pair in Deuces Wild.

I'll give you a quick set of down and dirty rules for Deuces Wild, then we'll go over the chart of exact plays in some detail.

1. Always play only the version with the payoffs shown in Table 11 for long-term play. With short-term play, you can consider versions with lower paybacks on Wild Royal Flushes and Five of a Kind hands, but never play any version with a payback less than 5 for 1 for Four of a Kind.
2. As with all strategies geared to long-term play, you must continuously insert the maximum number of coins so that you will receive the bonus payoff whenever you hit a Royal Flush. Plan on inserting five quarters ($1.25) per play on a quarter machine.

3. The only single card you will always keep in this game is a Two. No other single card will ever be kept. In this game, face cards have no more value than Three or Five or any other low card.

4. Watch out for the number of wild cards in your hand. The number of Twos in a hand totally determines how the hand is played. For example, if your hand contains three deuces, the only hands you will keep other than the three deuces are a Wild Royal Flush and Five of a Kind. With every other hand, even made hands like straights or flushes, you will discard all of the cards except the deuces.

5. This is a game where you will hold inside straights. If you were weaned on Jacks or Better, it goes against the grain, but it is a big part of Deuces Wild.

6. You will discard all five cards at deuces wild much more than you will at Jacks or Better.

Before we start looking at the chart for the game, let's revisit Straight Flushes and talk about how we classify hands.

A hand of 6♥7♥8♥_ _ would be classified as a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside) as there are no gaps in the middle of the hand.

A hand of 5♥_7♥8♥_ is a 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside) because it has a gap inside the hand. We classify this hand differently than the outside hand because it is more difficult to make the hand. But this and hands with even more gaps are playable in Deuces Wild so we must become concerned with them.

Notice that a hand like 3♥4♥5♥_ _ would be classified as 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside) because we can only make the hand on one end by drawing a Two. Since Twos have much more power as wild cards, any hand which must be completed by using a Two as just that, is downgraded one notch.

If we draw a 4♥7♥8♥_ _, we have a 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside). If the hand were 3♥7♥8♥_ _, it would be classified as Triple Inside.

When there is a deuce in a hand, it is counted as making the hand, but it is not counted as filling a gap. Consider how we classify each of the following hands:

2 4♥5♥6♥_ — 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside)
2 4♥6♥ _ 7♥ — 4 Card Straight Flush (Inside)
2 4♥5♥ _ 8♥ — 4 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside)
2 4♥5♥ _ 9♥ — 4 Card Straight Flush (Triple Inside)

I did not bother to show a suit with any of the deuces, as the suits with the wild cards are totally irrelevant.

Table 12 summarizes the playable hands for this version of Deuces Wild. You will notice that the table is divided into sections classified as 4 Deuces, 3 Deuces, 2 Deuces, 1 Deuce and No Deuces. The number of deuces in a hand is the single most important item in this game, and the playing hands are classified based on the number of deuces in the hand.

With 4 Deuces in your hand, you do nothing. You have drawn the second highest hand in the game. The only higher hand is a Natural Royal Flush. With this hand, hold all cards and enjoy your winnings.

With 3 Deuces, you have just a couple of options. If you have a Wild Royal Flush, such as 2 2 2 Q♥A♥, just keep the hand. If you have Five of a Kind, such as 2 2 2 8♥8♠, just keep the hand.

With any other hand, you will discard the other cards and just keep the three Twos.

With a Two-Deuce hand, there are a few more options to consider. With two Twos in a hand, you will keep a made hand of a Wild Royal Flush, Five of a Kind, a Straight Flush or Four of a Kind. Any other made hand will be discarded if it is ranked lower than Four of a Kind.

Table 12. Ranking of Hands for Deuces Wild

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Deuces</td>
<td>2 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Deuces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Royal Flush</td>
<td>2 2 2 Q♥K♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 2 2 5♥5♣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Deuces</td>
<td>2 2 2 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Deuces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Royal Flush</td>
<td>2 2 J♥Q♥A♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 2 4♥4♦4♣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>2 2 6♥7♥8♥</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 12. Ranking of Hands for Deuces Wild

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 2 6♥6♠ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>2 2 J♥Q♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside, Hi Card &gt;= 6)</td>
<td>2 2 6♥7♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Deuces</td>
<td>2 2 _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1 Deuce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wild Royal Flush</td>
<td>2 J♥J♥Q♥♥A♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 6♥6♠6♠6♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>2 6♥7♥8♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 5♥5♥5♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>2 J♥Q♥Q♥K♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>2 3♥3♥9♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>2 6♥7♥8♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>2 5♥5♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2 4♥5♥6♥7♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2 4♥5♥7♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card St Flush (Inside, Double or Triple Inside)</td>
<td>2 4♥ _ _8♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush (No Ace)</td>
<td>2 J♥Q♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, Hi Card &gt;= 6)</td>
<td>2 6♥7♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush (Ace Hi)</td>
<td>2 Q♥A♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Deuce</td>
<td>2 _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 0 Deuces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥Q♥K♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥Q♥K♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♥6♥7♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>3♥3♥3♥3♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3♥3♥3♥9♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>3♥3♥3♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3♥4♥5♥6♥7♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>3♥5♥7♥9♥J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Outside)</td>
<td>5♥6♥7♥8♥ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi)</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Ranking of Hands for Deuces Wild

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight Flush (Inside)</td>
<td>5♥6♥7♥_9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Royal Flush (other than TJQ)</td>
<td>J♥K♥A♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Pair (if Two Pair, just keep One Pair)</td>
<td>8♥8♠_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Outside)</td>
<td>5♥6♥7♥8♠_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Flush</td>
<td>3♥5♥7♥9♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Outside or Inside)</td>
<td>5♥<em>7♥8♥</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (J or Q Hi)</td>
<td>T♥Q♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside)</td>
<td>5♥_8♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Card Straight (Inside)</td>
<td>4♥_6♥7♥8♠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Card Royal Flush (K Hi)</td>
<td>Q♥K♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_ _ _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus with a hand of 2 2 3♥7♥9♥ which is a Flush, we would discard the 3 7 and 9 and only keep the Twos. We will also keep any 4 Card Royal Flushes and a Straight Flush (Outside) whose highest card is greater than or equal to a Six. In all other cases, when we have two deuces in a hand, we will just keep the deuces.

Single deuce hands entail more options. Here we will keep most made hands. But notice that a 4 Card Royal Flush outranks a Full House, Three of a Kind, a Straight and a Flush. If your hand was 2 6♥J♥Q♥K♥, a made flush, you would discard the 6 and go for the Royal Flush. If you drew the hand 2 T♥T♠J♥Q♥, which can be played as Three of a Kind (2 T T) or a 4 Card Royal Flush (2 T J Q), you will go for the Royal.

Take a look at a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside, Hi Card >=6). This is something new that we see in the Deuces Wild game. The description "Hi Card >= 6" means that the straight flush must have as its highest card a card valued Six or Higher. Thus a Straight Flush of 2 3♥4♥_ _ would not qualify because its highest card was only a Four.

However, a Straight Flush of 2 6♥7♥_ _ would meet our criteria as the highest card is a Seven, which is greater than (> a Six. The reason we specify at least a 6 as the high card is because we have more ways to make these Straight Flushes containing "middle cards" like 6, 7 and 8, as compared to Straight Flushes containing low cards like 3, 4 and 5, which can be made in few ways.

We also differentiate between Royal Flushes containing Aces and Royal Flushes without Aces. Royal Flushes containing Aces have lower values, because they are closed at one end. In other words, it is easier to complete a 2 Card Royal Flush of J♥Q♥ for a winning hand than a 2 Card Royal Flush of J♥A♥, because there are more ways to makestraights and straight flushes with a hand of JQ than a hand of JA. You will notice in the
hands with 1 Deuce and 0 Deuces, we rank Royal Flush hands without Aces higher than those with Aces.

With no wild cards in a hand, there are several tricky hands you have to learn. If you are dealt Two Pairs, always keep just one of the pair. There is no payoff for a Two Pair hand in Deuces Wild and keeping the second pair hurts your chances of drawing Three or Four of a Kind. When you are dealt Two Pair, it makes no difference which pair you discard as there is no difference between a high and low pair in this game. With a hand of $3\spadesuit 3\heartsuit A\clubsuit A\spadesuit$, you will discard either the Threes or the Aces.

Notice that a 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside) outranks a 3 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi), which outranks a 4 Card Straight Flush (Inside). If dealt $9\spadesuit T\spadesuit J\spadesuit Q\spadesuit _, you will keep the 9 T J Q Straight Flush. However, if this hand was $8\spadesuit _ T\spadesuit J\spadesuit Q\spadesuit$, you would keep the TJQ Royal Flush.

A 2 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi) is ranked below a 3 Card Straight Flush (Outside or Inside) but above any 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside). If dealt $9\spadesuit _ J\spadesuit Q\spadesuit _$, keep the 9 J Q Straight Flush. However, if this hand was $8\spadesuit _ _ J\spadesuit Q\spadesuit$, you would keep the J Q Royal Flush.

The lowest ranked hand with no deuces is a 2 Card Royal Flush (K Hi). A 2 Card Royal Flush with an Ace will be discarded. We will keep a $J\spadesuit Q\spadesuit$, a $T\spadesuit J\spadesuit$, or any 2 Card Royal with a K, such as $T\spadesuit K\spadesuit$, $J\spadesuit K\spadesuit$ or $Q\spadesuit K\spadesuit$. However, if we draw any 2 Card Royal with an Ace, we will discard both cards.

This version of Deuces Wild offers real value for long-term play. However, it is a very streaky game and long losing streaks can develop. This makes it a less likely candidate for short-term play as its short-term wins and losses are very unpredictable.

It is also the video poker game where you are most likely to dump all five cards. If you have a great deal of patience and the larger bankroll required for long-term play, you will find this a rewarding version of video poker.
Joker Wild Video Poker for Long-term Play

Joker Wild Video Poker is an excellent version to learn for long-term play. Several versions of the game are beatable. That's the good news. The bad news is that it is just about impossible to find these games anymore. Too many people learned how to beat these versions of video poker, and the good versions of Joker Wild video poker are now very hard to find.

There are two versions of this game you can look for that are beatable. The first version pays on hands higher than Two Pair. The beatable version of this game has the values shown in Table 13.

This version of the game offers a total return of 101.5%. I want to repeat that you are not likely to find any versions of this game around. If you do, by all means jump in and play the game. A more common version of the game looks almost like this version but has the payout on Straight reduced from 6 to 5. This version of the game offers a long-term payback of 98.68%, which is high, but not beatable.

The second version of this game which is beatable pays on high pairs of Kings or Better and has the values shown in Table 14.
Table 13. Summary of Values for Joker Wild, Two Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Frequency %</th>
<th>Percentage Added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.00192</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00905</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush - Wild</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.00716</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.0594</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.8072</td>
<td>16.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.4902</td>
<td>11.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.2560</td>
<td>15.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8254</td>
<td>16.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.2713</td>
<td>24.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.3877</td>
<td>10.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Winners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69.8847</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Paybacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>101.50%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14. Summary of Values for Joker Wild, Kings or Better

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand</th>
<th>Payoff in Coins</th>
<th>Frequency %</th>
<th>Percentage Added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>0.00243</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.00933</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush - Wild</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.0104</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.0575</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.8555</td>
<td>17.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5679</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.5577</td>
<td>7.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6595</td>
<td>4.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3937</td>
<td>26.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.0873</td>
<td>11.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair, Kings or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.1958</td>
<td>14.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Winners</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55.6029</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Paybacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.66%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are not likely to find many versions of this game around either. Very common changes in payoffs are reduced payoffs for Four of a Kind, Full Houses and Flushes.

In Joker Wild games, you will hold more hands than you will in Jacks or Better. Playable hands include such hands as 2 Card Straight Flushes (Double Inside) and 4 Card Straights (Inside).

An additional classification is added to card rankings. With a Joker (designated "j" in the charts) it is sometimes advantageous to hold just a Middle Card, valued 5 to 9. Thus a hand like j 5♥ is ranked higher than a j Q♥ in the Joker Wild Two Pair game.

Table 15 shows the rankings for Joker Wild Two Pair. You will notice that Joker Hands are classified separately from Non-Joker Hands. Needless to say, whenever you have a Joker, the Joker will never be discarded.

There are some strange rankings when you hold a Joker. A 4 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi) with a Joker is ranked higher than a j Straight, but a 4 Card Royal Flush (K or A Hi) is ranked lower than a j Straight.
Table 15. Ranking of Hands for Joker Wild Two Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joker Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Non-Joker Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 of a Kind</td>
<td>j 5 5 5 5</td>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T J Q K A A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Royal Flush</td>
<td>j T W J Q K</td>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>j 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>4 Cd RF</td>
<td>T J Q K _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>4 5 5 5</td>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>8 8 8 8 8 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>j 5 5 3 3</td>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8 8 8 3 3 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>j 2 4 7 9</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>A 3 5 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd RF (Q Hi)</td>
<td>j T W J Q _</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>6 7 8 9 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>j 6 7 8 _</td>
<td>4 Cd SF</td>
<td>6 7 8 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>j 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>7 7 7 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd RF (K Hi)</td>
<td>j J Q K _</td>
<td>3 Cd RF (Q Hi)</td>
<td>T J Q _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ _ 7 _</td>
<td>2 Pair</td>
<td>8 8 3 3 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd RF (A Hi)</td>
<td>j J W K A _</td>
<td>3 Cd RF (K Hi)</td>
<td>J Q K _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd SF (D Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ _ 8 _</td>
<td>4 Cd Flush</td>
<td>3 5 7 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>j 5 _ _</td>
<td>3 Cd RF (A Hi)</td>
<td>J Q A _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>j 6 7 8 _</td>
<td>4 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>5 6 7 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (J Hi)</td>
<td>j T W J _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF Out/Inside</td>
<td>7 8 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>j 7 8 9 _</td>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>8 8 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd St (Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ _ 7 _</td>
<td>4 Cd St (Inside)</td>
<td>5 6 7 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (Q Hi)</td>
<td>j 3 W 5 7 _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF (D Inside)</td>
<td>4 _ _ 7 8 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>j J W Q _</td>
<td>2 Cd RF J or Q Hi</td>
<td>T J _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (K Hi)</td>
<td>j J K _ _</td>
<td>3 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>7 8 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (D Inside)</td>
<td>j 6 _ _ 9 _</td>
<td>3 Cd Flush</td>
<td>3 6 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>j 6 7 _ _</td>
<td>2 Cd RF K or A Hi</td>
<td>K A _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ _ _ 9 _</td>
<td>2 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>8 _ _ 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (A Hi)</td>
<td>j J A _ _</td>
<td>3 Cd St (Inside)</td>
<td>6 _ 7 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair (5-9 or T)</td>
<td>j T _ _ _ _</td>
<td>2 Cd SF (D Inside)</td>
<td>6 _ _ 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd St (D Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ _ 8 _</td>
<td>2 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>8 9 _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd St (Inside)</td>
<td>j 7 _ _ _</td>
<td>2 Cd SF (3 gaps)</td>
<td>5 _ _ 9 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair (J or Q)</td>
<td>j Q _ _ _ _</td>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_ _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 4</td>
<td>j _ _ _ _</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are dealt j 9 T W J Q Q, you will break up a made straight and discard the 9 to go for the Royal Flush, keeping j TJQ. However, if you are dealt j T W J Q K K, you will keep j TJQK as a made straight rather than going for the Royal Flush.

Here's some more strange rankings when a Joker is held. A Pair containing a Joker and a card valued Five to Ten (shown as Pair (5-9 or T)) in the chart is ranked higher than a 3 Card Straight (Inside). But the 3 Card Straight (Inside) outranks a Pair with a Joker and a J or Q (Pair (J or Q)) in the chart. If dealt a hand of 5 5 7 8 _, you will hold the 5 5 pair.
and dump the possible 5 _ 7 8 straight. But if you were dealt 9 T Q Q, you would dump one of the Queens and go for the 9 T _ Q straight.

The lowest playable hand in the Two Pair version of the Joker Wild game is a Pair of Jacks or Queens when made with a Joker. We will play pairs of Joker and cards of 5-9, Ten, Jack and Queen. If a 2,3,4,K or A is present with a Joker, we will keep only the Joker and Draw 4 Cards.

Continuing with Table 15, lets look at some hands without a Joker. Note the Two Pair is outranked by a 3 Card Royal Flush (Q Hi) but that Two Pair is ranked higher than any other 3 Card Royal Flush. If dealt T♦T♥J♦J♥Q♥, keep the T♥J♥Q♥ and discard the T♦ and J♦. However, if we were dealt a T♦Q♦Q♥K♦K♥, we would keep the Two Pair hand of Q Q K K and discard the T♦, breaking up a possible 3 Card Royal Flush.

A 2 Card Royal Flush containing a J or Q as the High Card (2 Cd RF J or Q Hi) outranks a 3 Card Straight (Outside), but the Straight outranks any other 2 Card Royal Flush. With a hand of 9♦T♥J♥ _, you will discard the 9 and go with the TJ Royal Flush, rather than trying to complete the 9TJ Straight. However if the hand dealt was J♦Q♥K♥ _, we would keep the 3 Card Straight of JQK.

The lowest playable hand in the Two Pair version of the game when there is no joker in the hand is a 2 Card Straight Flush with 3 gaps such as 5♥_ _ _ 9♥. These hands are hard to spot, but well worth playing correctly in this tricky version of video poker.

Table 16 shows the ranking for the Kings or Better version of Joker Wild video poker. This version of the game is easier to learn than the Two Pair Joker Wild version. Remember that with this version of the game, only Kings and Aces count as High Cards. A single Jack or Queen has lower ranking than a middle valued card.

Several hands are tricky in the Kings or Better game. With a Joker in the hand (denoted by "j" in the table), a 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside) outranks a made flush. If you are dealt j 2♥6♥7♥8♥, which can be played as a flush by keeping all five cards, or as a 4 Card Straight Flush (Outside), by discarding the 2♥, you will discard the 2 and go with the hand of j 6♥7♥8♥.

However, a Flush outranks a 4 Card Straight Flush (Inside). If dealt a hand of j 2♥5♥7♥8♥, which can be played as either a made flush by keeping all five cards or as a 4 Card Straight Flush by discarding the 2 and going with a hand of j 5♥_ _ _ 7♥8♥, you will keep the made flush.

With a joker in the hand, a 3 Card Straight Flush (Inside) outranks a High Pair, but a High Pair still outranks a 3 Card Straight Flush (Double Inside). **Table 16. Ranking of Hands for Joker Wild Kings or Better**
### Joker Hand Example Non-Joker Hand Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joker Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Non-Joker Hand</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 of a Kind</td>
<td>j 5 5 5 5</td>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥A♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Royal Flush</td>
<td>j T♥J♥Q♥K♥</td>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>4♥5♥6♥7♥8♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥</td>
<td>4 Cd RF</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥K♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>j 5 5 5 _</td>
<td>4 of a Kind</td>
<td>8♥8♥8♠8♠_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd RF</td>
<td>j T♥J♥Q♥_</td>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8♥8♥8♣3♠3♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>j 5 5 3 3</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>A♥3♥5♥8♥9♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>j 6♥7♥8♥_</td>
<td>4 Cd SF</td>
<td>6♥7♥8♥9♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 of a Kind</td>
<td>j 5♥5 _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF</td>
<td>T♥J♥Q♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>j 5 _ 7♥8♥</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>6 7 8 9 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>j 3 4 5 6</td>
<td>4 Cd Flush</td>
<td>3♥5♥7♥9♥_</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (K Hi)</td>
<td>j Q♥K♥ _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>7♥8♥9_ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd Fl 1-2 Hi Cds</td>
<td>j 3♥7♥9♥K♥</td>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>3 3 _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (J Hi)</td>
<td>j T♥J♥ _</td>
<td>4 Cd St (Out, K Hi)</td>
<td>T J Q K _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (A Hi)</td>
<td>j J♥A♥ _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>5 _ _7 _8♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Outside)</td>
<td>j 7♥8♥ _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF (D In 1 Hi)</td>
<td>9 _ _ Q♥K♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd RF (Q Hi)</td>
<td>j J♥Q♥ _</td>
<td>2 Cd RF (KA)</td>
<td>K♥A♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF 3 gaps 1 Hi</td>
<td>j 9 _ _ K♥</td>
<td>4 Cd St (Out 0 Hi)</td>
<td>4 5 6 7 _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Inside)</td>
<td>j 7 _ _ 9♥ _</td>
<td>3 Cd SF (D In 0 Hi)</td>
<td>4 _ _ _7 _8♥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
<td>j K _ _ _</td>
<td>2 Cd RF (A or K)</td>
<td>Q♥K♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cd SF (Double Ins)</td>
<td>j 5♥ _ 8♥ _</td>
<td>1 or 2 Hi Cards</td>
<td>K _ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd Fl (0 Hi Cd)</td>
<td>j 3♥5♥7♥ _</td>
<td>2 Cd RF (0 Hi Cd)</td>
<td>T♥J♥ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cd St (Outside)</td>
<td>j 5 6 7 _</td>
<td>Draw 5</td>
<td>_ _ _ _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Pair</td>
<td>j 7 _ _ _</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw 4</td>
<td>j _ _ _ _</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your hand is j 7♥_ _ 9♥K♣, which can be played as a High Pair of j K or a 3 Card Straight Flush of j 7♥_ _ 9♥, the correct strategy is to discard the King and go for the Straight Flush. However, if the hand was j 6♥_ _ 9♥K♣, we would keep only the j K as the 3 Card Straight Flush has two gaps and is ranked Double Inside, which is lower in value than the High Pair.

With non-joker-hands, a High Pair outranks a 4 Card Straight (Outside) so that if you draw a T♥J♥Q♣K♠K♥, you will only keep the pair of Kings.

The lowest playable non-joker hand is a 2 Card Royal Flush with no High Cards, such as T♥Q♥. Any Straight Flushes lower ranked than a 3 Card Straight Flush (Double
Inside) are not playable. Likewise the lowest ranked non-joker straight is a 4 Card Straight (Outside). A hand of 4 5 6 7 _ is playable while a hand of 3 _ 5 6 7 is not and will be discarded.

The key is beating either version of the Joker Wild game is to watch for Straight Flushes and learn the rankings. If you can't find a beatable version of Joker Wild to play and you want to learn a wild card version of video poker, then I suggest that you stick with the Deuces Wild version of the game.
Beating the Game

Winning at Short-term Play

Winning at Long-term Play

Casino Comps

Keeping Records

Casino Etiquette and Safety

Walking Out a Winner
Winning at Short-term Play

While long-term play requires that you “out wait” the casino and allow percentages on your side to come into play, short-term or weekend play is a “hit and run” style of play.

As a short-term player, you will only risk a limited amount of money on any machine. If the machine takes a preset amount of your money, you quit playing the machine. If the machine pays a preset amount of winnings, you start locking up profits.

In contrast to the long-term player, a short-term player will put the gambling establishment on a very short leash. It will have to fight for every win and it makes against you, and you will not easily give up profits once they are in your hand. This strategy makes you a very tough player.

Here’s a brief rundown of what it takes to be a successful weekend player:

1. **Play only on the best video poker machines.** I have recommended 16 possible video poker games for short-term play. Jacks or Better is found everywhere video poker is offered. While the 9-6 version of the game is the one of the best ones to play, you can manage very well playing the 8-5 version of the game. After you have mastered playing Jacks or Better, my next choice of games are the Deuces Wild family of games. Several of the Joker Wild games are good too.

2. **Learn the correct playing strategies for the version of video poker you choose.** It is critical that you learn to correctly play video poker. Winning at the game entails learning the correct plays. Fortunately, when you are a short-term player, you can use the simplified playing strategies I present for short-term play.

3. **Plan your bankroll.** Most players don’t have a clue as to how much money is needed to gamble intelligently. They grab whatever amount of money they have on hand and head to the casino. Now you know that all aspects of your play must be controlled, starting with your bankroll.

4. **Divide your bankroll into session bankrolls.** Setting u the number of sessions and the size of each session bankroll should be done before beginning gambling. Session bankrolls are determined by the size of your gambling bankroll, the number of sessions you want to play, and the denomination of coin the machine accepts. You should review the information on betting strategies and determine which ones you want to use, as the bankroll size is partially determined by the betting strategy. For example, if you want to play multiple games on the multi-line machines you must have a larger bankroll than for single-line play.

5. **Set Profit Goals and then stick by them.** A Profit Goal is a percentage of your
bankroll that you set as a reasonable amount to win. Most gamblers overestimate the amount they hope to win and underestimate potential losses. Using a Profit Goal will force you to be more realistic about the possible amount you may win playing video poker. I like to use 25% as a reasonable Profit Goal.

6. **Set Loss Limits.** A Loss Limit is the absolute amount of money you are willing to risk in a session before calling the session over. It is never your entire Session Bankroll (an exception to this may be made for multiple play games where you may set your Loss Limit equal to your Session Bankroll). I like to use 50% as my Loss Limit. Whenever you hit your Loss Limit, the session is over and any remaining Session Bankroll is locked up, not to be used again for play on this particular gambling excursion.

7. **Lock up profits and play with Protected Profits.** Hitting or exceeding your Profit Goal sets the stage for you to start locking up profits. To lock up profits, you will as a minimum:

   a. Lock up one-half of your winnings and

   b. Lock up all of your original Session Bankroll.

   c. Continue to play only with Protected Profits, no greater than one-half of your session winnings.

8. **Learn how to use a betting strategy.** Trends are a fact of life in gambling. They occur regularly in video poker. A typical gambler makes the same bet over and over (flat betting) regardless of whether he is winning or losing. For many reasons, this is not usually the soundest betting strategy. The key to beating video poker on a short-term basis is to maximize your winnings during a winning trend. This is best accomplished by using one of the betting systems recommended.

9. **Learn how to increase wagers after wins.** Increasing bets after wins is one of the soundest betting strategies for beating video poker. Table 31 reviews a number of different combinations of wagers entailing increasing bets after wins.

10. **Learn how to increase bets after losses.** Increasing bets after losses is an aggressive way of playing video poker that can be very profitable. Table 34 shows you a number of different systems utilizing this concept.

11. **Learn how to use fixed patterns of bets.** One of the easiest and soundest ways to bet is to use a fixed betting pattern. Neutral Betting Patterns are shown in Table 35, and examples of Step Patterns are shown in Table 36.
Winning at Long-term Play

If you want to play video poker for a living, then I have given you the information you need to get started. There is no question that if you have the time, the temperament and the bankroll, you can earn a nice living playing video poker.

Before you decide to try this, you need to spend several days in a row playing video poker. If you like playing for several hours a day, then you may want to consider becoming a professional player. One possibility is to alternate playing in brick and mortar casinos and online casinos for increased variety. I have a problem with the concept of playing video poker full time. Quite frankly, after a couple of hours of play I not only lose interest, but I start becoming too fatigued to play well. For me, playing video poker on a long-term or professional basis is simply not an option. The game doesn’t interest me enough to commit myself to long-term play. That is why I strongly suggest that you test the reality of professional play before committing to becoming a professional player.

The first aspect of long-term play is a substantial time commitment. Like professional blackjack players who use card-counting techniques, professional video poker players can gain an edge over the house with long-term play. But I want to emphasize the term “long-term.” If you plan on playing video poker for a week, this is not long-term play. Unless you have three to six months that you know you can commit to more or less continuous video poker play, you should not consider trying to win as a long-term player.

The second critical aspect of being a successful long-term player is your bankroll. You have got to have enough to withstand fairly long losing periods. A quarter machine player should have a total video poker bankroll of at least $10,000 and a dollar machine player should have a bankroll of at least $40,000. If you want to play five-dollar machines, your bankroll should be $200,000. This is not a get rich quick scheme. You have got to bring the bankroll with you to outlast the lengthy losing streaks.

The third critical aspect of becoming a long-term player is your temperament. This is where I fail. I don’t find that playing video poker is satisfying enough that I want to do it full time. Other persons will find that the game is a relatively pleasant way to earn a living and will readily take to a full time commitment. One of the aspects of full time play which also bothers me is the long losing periods between substantial wins. I guess that I am not patient enough to wait out the losing periods. My temperament, even more than bankroll or level of commitment, disqualifies me from becoming a successful long-term player.

The fourth aspect of successful long-term play is to only play on machines offering player advantage and to know how to play these machines perfectly.

You can play Jacks or Better machines if you can find machines offering a positive edge to the player who plays perfect strategy.
A 9-6 Jacks or Better machine needs to pay a Jackpot for a Royal Flush of more than 976 coins. A jackpot of 976 coins is a break-even game. Greater than this becomes a positive game.

One of the favorite games of professional players is the 8-5 Jacks or Better game with progressive jackpots. To beat this version of video poker, you need a Royal Flush jackpot greater than $2,200 on a quarter machine or $8,800 on a dollar machine. You will also need to adjust your play dependent on how large the Jackpot is. Table 8 shows you the variations in play you need to make for larger jackpots.

One game you can play “as is” and have an advantage if 10-7 Double Bonus Video Poker, which is really a hybrid Jacks or Better game. If you chose this game, you need to be prepared to live in Nevada where the game is found. A negative aspect of this game is that it is more difficult to learn to play correctly.

Yet another game offering player advantage without any larger Royal Flush payoffs is the full pay version of Deuces Wild. The skilful player can earn a return of 100.76%. These “full pay” machines are generally found in Nevada, even in grocery stores. The bad news about this excellent game is that very few dollar machines can be found; the game has become a quarter machine game. Many pros favoring dollar machine play have had to abandon this game because it is not possible to earn a decent living on quarter play only.

If this information is discouraging, I won’t apologize. I am doing what few writers on this subject have done. I am telling you the truth. Fortunately, I am offering an excellent alternative to long-term play – short-term or weekend play.
Casino Comps

Whether you chose to become a rated player at the casino table games, join a slot club or both, once you get into the system, you can start getting your share of comps. There are a number of tried and proven ways to multiply the number of comps you get. Here are some pointers.

**Chose a primary casino and then play there.**

A basic premise of the whole comp system is to reward loyal players. Casinos offer comps to lure new players to their casino and to make sure that their current customers remain their customers. If you think you have it tough trying to use the comp system to your advantage, just think what the casinos are up against with new competition springing up every day.

If you are a whale, you can ignore my advice. Just plan on either bringing or setting up a credit line of $100,000 or larger, and wherever you decide to land will be glad to comp you. If you are in the million dollar plus range, the casino will not only comp you, but anyone else you chose to bring with you. They'll even charter a 737 and fly in as many of your friends as you want to bring along.

If you are not quite in this range, then it will pay to find a primary casino and reward it with your patronage. A player with as little as $1,000 can get RFB treatment in some of the downtown casinos in Las Vegas. A player with a $2,500 bankroll will have an even greater choice of hotel casinos. Move up to the $5,000 to $10,000 range, and a whole other batch of casinos become available.

But, in order to get noticed and adequately comped with a bankroll from $1,000 to $10,000, you have to be willing to reward a casino with your playing time.

A friend of mine visits Las Vegas about ten times a year. He usually takes $5,000 to $10,000 and manages to lose between half and three quarters of it per trip. I won't comment on his approach to gambling. Quite frankly, it stinks. Anyway, the subject is comps.

Believe it or not, he doesn't get any. He stays at a different casino every trip. He thinks he believes the constant changes might improve his luck. This is not necessarily bad, if he would play at the casino where he stays. He invariably changes casinos every hour or two.
and ends up playing in ten to twelve different establishments over the course of two or three days.

Because of the size of his buy-ins, he is constantly asked if he wants to be rated. He always declines. He confesses that he doesn't want the casinos to know how much he is losing. I think that he is trying to kid himself about his losses.

I have explained the comp system to him. As long as he is losing, he might as well have the casinos kick in $750 to $1,000 per trip. This money is there for the asking if he would only pick a primary casino and give it a reasonable amount of play.

I can't convince him to change his ways. But, maybe I can influence you.

There are many other benefits to playing more in a primary casino. The first benefit is the application of the old saw, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

The casino will accelerate the rewards offered you the more you play. Some casinos formalize this process and actually accelerate the comps to slot club members as their total number of points increases. Many casinos offer more and more free rooms and entertainment the more you patronize them.

The key to maximizing your benefits from this whole process is to find a casino that matches your needs and then start playing there. If you have picked correctly, your loyalty will be well rewarded.

**Join a slot club and/or get a VIP card.**

The start of getting comps is to be into the casino comp system. If you bet $25,000 a hand, the host will find you. If you bet $5 to $25 a pop, you have to get the casino's attention. And the easiest way to do this is with a little piece of plastic which looks just like a credit card.

Once you have a card, getting comped will become part of your routine. The first thing you will do as a machine player is to insert your club card in the card reader.

When you sit down at a video poker machine and insert your player’s card, you will start accumulating points towards comps.
Get to know your casino host or hostess.

The casino host or the slot host will be your key to getting the most comps in most casinos.

If you are a member of the casino's slot club, you will get nearly all of your comps by asking the casino slot host. Many times comps for food, rooms, shows and merchandise are built right into the slot club payoffs. If you have just joined a slot club, try giving them some play for an hour or two and then asking the slot host for a buffet comp.

My experience with comps from playing video poker is that the slot hosts are much more likely to be generous with comps than the personnel at the slot club booths. If you want brochures on the slot clubs or general information on the slot club, talk to the clerks at the booth. If you want a particular comp, ask the slot host.

Casino hosts, catering to the table game players, are at the top of the casino pecking order for granting comps. Their top priority is to cultivate new customers and to keep the current customers happy.

The casino hostesses are the persons working for VIP Services who help you check in, arrange your limo service, make dinner and show reservations and so forth.

The hostesses will handle most of your scheduling and reservation needs. The casino hosts are the people you need to talk to to arrange RFB and airfare reimbursement.

You can meet a casino host a number of ways. One way is to call a casino before coming and ask to speak to a host. This is a good way to ask about the casino's comp policy and to tell the host that you are interested in playing there.

If you are playing with front money, you should meet your host after depositing your money with the cage but before you begin play.

If you are a cash player and make a large enough buy-in, you may have a chance to meet a host when the casino sets you up with a VIP card.

After you have played in a casino, you can make reservations through the casino host. Making a reservation through a host who knows you is a good way to get a room even if the front desk claims that no rooms are available. Casinos always
reserve a block of rooms for their best customers, and a casino host can get you a room when a reservation clerk can't.

I recommend taking a little time to develop a relationship with a host. Part of developing a relationship is consistency. If you make one casino your primary casino and visit several times a year, it will be easier to become known to a host than if he only sees you every other year.

If you are using a casino credit line, the host will introduce himself to you. With front money or cash, you will want to make a point of meeting the host.

Treat your host with respect and nurture the relationship. He can shower you with all kinds of freebies, including gifts, food, a free room and VIP treatment. And he is paid to do this. For your part, you have to convince your host that your action is sufficient to justify the comps you want. And being a nice person won't hurt either.

**Be a nice person.**

You can get enormous leverage out of maintaining friendly relationships with the people who work in casinos.

Start with the dealers and cocktail waitresses. These people have a couple of the hardest jobs in the casino and are at the bottom of the casino hierarchy. A smile and a reasonable tipping policy will do wonders to get these folks on your side. I believe that creating a positive atmosphere starts with how you act towards the casino personnel. A positive atmosphere is conducive to winning as well as to getting your fair share of comps.

**Visit the casino at off times.**

I nearly always schedule my casino trips for the middle of the week. I will typically arrive on a Monday afternoon and stay until Thursday afternoon. The benefits of visiting during the week are many. If there are any drawbacks to avoiding the weekend crowds, I haven't found them.

I don't like waiting and I hate lines. By timing my visits to the middle of the week, I can usually walk into any coffee shop, make reservations for a gourmet
restaurant just about any time I chose and get show tickets to the shows I want to see.

If you want to really reduce the size of the crowds, travel in the middle of the week during off-season. Las Vegas is slower during the middle of summer when it is hot and in the late fall and early winter when it's colder. The slowest time in Vegas is usually between Thanksgiving and Christmas. But watch out for conventions. The Comdex is usually in town in November. Then it's impossible to get a room (unless you are a rated player or belong to a slot club).

If you like to visit Atlantic City, try visiting during the middle of the week in the dead of winter. You'll not only avoid the larger crowds, but you'll find that the minimum wagers on many tables have been reduced.

Visiting during an off time is also an excellent way to get noticed for purposes of getting rated and getting your comp career off to a roaring start.

With fewer players to contend with, a host or a floor person is easier to meet and to visit with. Also, during slow times, casinos tend to be more generous with comps. After all, they are more likely to have a slew of vacant rooms just waiting to be given away to qualified players on a Wednesday night in December.

**Ask for comps.**

If you play $10,000 a hand at baccarat, you do not have to ask for comps. The casino will shower you with them. If you are like the rest of us playing on nickel quarter or even dollar video poker machines, you need to ask for comps.

Slots and video poker players have the more systematic approach as the card readers on the machines are tied into a centralized computer system, and comps are based on points. If you are a slots or video poker player, getting a comp is pretty straightforward with this system.

Table game players have to deal more with people. And unless you are a whale, a boss will almost never offer you a comp unless you have just won big in a smaller casino which watches every loss. Facing a player who might walk out with their money in hand, some casinos will start throwing comps at the player. But
most of the time, even rated players can play and play and never be offered a comp unless they ask for it.

My advice? Always ask for the comp. I have given you several examples of how to do it.

**Maximize your comps.**

Anyone who follows the steps I have described can get comps. Your first step is to pick your primary casino and give it most of your business. Before you pick your casino you want to make sure that the casino has a reasonable comp policy and that it has beatable games. You should also like the casino, as you will be receiving a lot of invitations there once you get into their comp system.

After picking your primary casino, you need to join its slot club and get a VIP card. I usually do both. Some casinos, like Rio in Las Vegas, combine rating slot, video poker and table players on one card. Others track machine and table action separately. However, it usually pays to join the slot club, even if you are mostly a table game player.

In many ways, slot club players have an advantage over the table game players. Their rating is automatic, they don't have to get the attention of some boss. By joining the slot club, they start receiving mailing from the casino. I have received offers of free rooms from casinos where I had never played a slot machine, but had joined their slot club.

If you are just establishing your rating and want to get a room on a crowded weekend, your slot club membership can be invaluable. After the reservation clerk tells you there are no rooms available, tell her you are a member of the slot club or ask to speak to a slot host. Chances are, the casino will find a room for you.

Getting to know the casino personal is critical. The more the casino personnel know and like you, the more comps are likely to flow your way. This is even true for slot players with their automated rating system. A slot host can easily "bump up" your comp from a buffet for two to a coffee shop comp for two, even if your rating is not quite there.
With table players, interacting with the pit personnel is critical. A boss can make or break you in terms of your rating. If your average wager is $25, your goal is to be rated as at least a $50 to $75 player. It is not enough to increase your wagers when the boss is looking, you need to be a nice person.

Playing with front money gives the casino a real shot at beating you. When you deposit the money in the cage, the casino knows that they have a shot at winning all of your front money. If you are willing to risk $10,000, this will open the door to full RFB at most establishments.

When you play with front money, be sure to put it all in play. If you deposit $10,000, draw markers for the full ten grand. This doesn't mean you should lose the money. If you look like a loser and the casino sees that you have put all of your front money into play, your rating will increase.

Once you know how to play the comps game, you will be able to milk the casinos for every dime your action entitles you to. I have given you some pointers on how to get a quarter's worth of comps for a dime's worth of action.

When you combine getting the maximum number of comps with the Power Video Poker Strategy, you are in the best position to maximize your profits from casino gambling.

If you at least break even, then the comps you receive constitute a profit for your play. If you are able to win money at the casino games, then your profit will be even greater.
Casino Etiquette and Safety

If you have finished reading the first part of this book, you know how to pick a video poker machine, the best machines to play, how to set up your bankroll and at least a couple of tested playing strategies. But if you plan to visit a casino – whether it is a commercial casino, a riverboat casino, a Native American casino or a cruise ship casino - you need to know more. You need to know about correct playing etiquette and you need to know how you can safeguard yourself and your possessions and a casino and when you leave.

There is nothing complicated about casino protocol and safety. It is mostly based on common sense and courtesy towards others. But nonetheless, people get into unnecessary arguments with other players or with casino personnel every day or lose their money or other valuable to thieves or pickpockets.

This doesn’t have to happen. By following the suggestions in this chapter you will be able to enjoy a safe and more pleasant casino experience.

CASINO ETIQUETTE

We don’t normally think much about it but everywhere we go requires that we adhere to certain etiquette. When we are waiting in line to see a movie we wouldn’t think of pushing our way to the front of the line. Waiting in line and taking turns is common etiquette.

This etiquette consists mostly of adhering to certain social conventions that may be mostly cultural. The first time I went to a bank in Mexico to conduct a transaction, I was startled to see that there was no orderly line in front of the teller’s window. Instead, all of the customers were in a crowd around the window, waving their paperwork at the teller trying to get her attention and be waited on next. Fortunately, being very tall I was able to reach over many of the people next to me and get waited on fairly quickly. So, with that caveat, we will take a look at casino social conventions as practiced in English speaking and Western European casinos.

Make Sure That a Machine is Free Before You Start Playing

In the old days players would mostly place the plastic or paper coin cups over the handles of slot or video poker machines to “save” a machine if they took a break from play. Now that the cups have mostly disappeared as the newer ticket-in ticket-out (TITO) machines don’t have coin cups, you usually won’t see machines reserved this way.
Sometimes players will leave an ashtray on the seat or tilt a movable chair against a machine to reserve a machine.

Needless to say, it is considered bad manners to grab someone else’s machine. If the machine looks like it might be saved, don’t play there if there is another machine available. If you want to play on the machine (let’s say it is a desirable 9-5 Jacks or Better machine – the only one you see available) I would ask the nearest slot attendant or nearby player if the machine is saved. If no one knows I feel that it is safe to assume that it is not saved and start playing. However, if the machine is saved, give the person ten minutes to return. If they don’t return by then, you can probably safely start playing it. Just be aware that players can become quite irate if you take a machine they believe they have saved.

Don’t Save Your Machine More Than a Few Minutes

If your have to take a restroom break but intend to return and continue playing you should do so as quickly as possible. It a machine is open for ten minutes I consider it fair game. It is inconsiderate to “reserve” a machine for a longer period of time when there are other people who would like to play – especially if there is a scarcity of good machines. You should also be aware that it you machine is unattended, despite any precautions you have taken, there’s always the chance another player will start playing it, possibly with your credits.

Play Just One Machine at a Time

In many casinos there are signs posted saying “One machine per player during peak hours,” or some similar wording. Nevertheless, there is always a player who uses two or more machines at once while other players are unable to find a free machine. While you can’t control others, you can control your own actions. I strongly suggest that you only play one video poker machine at a time. Not only will this give other people a chance to play, but you really won’t be able to correctly play the strategies recommended in this book if you try to play two machines at once.

What can you do if another player is using more than one machine? First politely ask her to let you use one. If she refuses, notify casino management and as them to take the next step.
Be Aware That Chairs Are at a Premium

Some players like to spread out. They will use the next chair as a footrest or as a receptacle for personal items such as handbags, coats and other items. You don’t want to do this. Even though the chair is temporarily free, sooner or later someone will want to play the machine next to the chair. You can save yourself a confrontation by limiting yourself and your personal items to just one chair.

Likewise, some players like to plop down in chairs and rest even when they are not playing. Maybe they need the rest or they are just engaging in a little people watching. Whatever the reason it is not polite to take up a chair when you are not playing. Remember that the slot and video poker areas are not for lounging and show a little courtesy to your fellow players by vacating your seat whenever your gambling session is over.

Tip Appropriately

While tipping is a personal choice, you should remember that casino personnel are in the service business, like waiters and waitresses and they rely on tips for a good portion of their income. Moreover if you plan on patronizing a casino for more than a few hours it won’t hurt to create a little good will among the staff by being a “George” which is casino employee jargon for a tipper.

Whom should you tip? Since video poker doesn’t require dealers like craps, roulette or blackjack, you’ll be tipping few people than the table game players. However, you should consider tipping the following people:

The cocktail server. Most casinos provide free drinks when you play. When someone brings you a drink, even it is a coke and not a cocktail, it is usual to tip her at least $1.

The bartender. If you are paying at the bar be sure to leave the bartender a tip of at least $1 a drink. Bartenders can also keep an eye on your machine for a few minutes if you need a break and they usually are well informed on all casino promotions. Human nature being what it is they will be more helpful if you are a reasonable tipper.

The attendant delivering a jackpot. If you win a jackpot requiring a hand delivery (such as jackpots greater than $1,200 which come with W-2G forms) you will be expected to share a little of your wealth. While some casino employees recommend tips of 10%, I wouldn’t tip this much. A tip of $10 to $20 is usually enough for a $1000 jackpot. If you win $4,000 or more consider tipping $40 or $50. If more than one person brings the money ask them to split the tip.
**The casino host or hostess.** It is not necessary to tip a casino host, sometimes called a slot host. This the person who can advise you of your comp status, offer discretionary comps and perform a range of other services. Although it is not necessary it is customary to buy your casino host a small gift, such as a bottle of wine or a box of candy if she has done a favor for you.

Finally, you should consider tipping any casino employee who performs a small service for you. If a staff member is kind enough to watch your machine while you take a break or walk you to the car after a win, a tip is definitely in order.

**Total Your Tickets Before Cashing Them In**

When you finish playing on any TITO machine and you hit the *Cash Out* button, the machine will dispense a bar-coded ticket through a slot called COLLECT TICKET. If the ticket shows any remaining credits, it can be exchanged for cash by a casino cashier or at a self-redemption machine.

If after playing several sessions you find yourself with several of these tickets you’ll want to avoid wasting the time of other players in line behind you by totaling all or your tickets before handing them to the cashier. Here’s how you do this. Insert the tickets, one after the other, in the bill validator on any slot or video poker machine and the machine will print out a single ticket that shows your total credits. Sure, you can hand the cashier a pile of tickets and have her do the work, but for just a little effort on your part you can speed up the process for everyone concerned.

**CASINO SAFETY**

Casinos try to protect their patrons with the use of surveillance cameras and a security force. However, whenever there is a money involved, and the in the case of casinos a lot of money, there will always be unscrupulous people looking to take from others. And, of course, even the most elaborate security system can’t protect you every moment. That’s why you will need to take some measures to protect yourself.
Take a Minimum of Cash and Other Valuables Into the Casino

Safeguarding your personal possessions should begin at home before you leave for the casino. Start with paring down what you will take with you. If you think about it you can get by with just one or two credit cards, your driver's license, and your cash. Leave everything else at home.

If you are a male and like to carry a wallet in your rear pants pocket, consider using a money clip and carry it in your front pocket.

Women should eliminate the large handbags for casino carry as they are too easily grabbed. I suggest a small purse you can set on your lap while playing video poker.

For years I have used a money belt both for travel and for casino visits. It straps around my calf. Before I go into a casino I transfer the cash I need for my session to my front pants pocket, leaving the rest of my stash in my money belt.

If you are not a money belt type or just don't feel safe walking around with a lot of cash on you, you may leave the rest of your cash in your room safe or in the hotel safe. Most large casinos offer safety deposit boxes at the main cashier's window.

Keep Your Eyes on Your Possessions

In spite of my suggestions that you use a money belt, you will probably be carrying a wallet, a handbag or both. You should keep these items on you at all times and especially when you play. Men should carry wallets in a front pocket as a deterrent to pickpockets. Women should keep their pocketbooks wrapped around a shoulder or set in their lap. In no case will you ever place a purse or other valuables in a free chair or a bar top or on the floor. This is tantamount to an invitation to theft. While you are relaxing and having fun there are pros specializing in ripping people off who are watching you for a chance to steal your possessions. Don't give it to them.

Avoid Leaving Your Video Poker Machine Unattended.

I've already shared my thoughts on tying up a machine too long while you take a break. But, besides being bad manners this practice is also unwise if you want to avoid losing some cash. More than once I've seen players leave a machine with credits in it. There are people who watch and wait for this opportunity. Quicker than you can say, "It's all gone," they will cash out your credits and be on their way. Even another player with no ill intentions can start playing your machine and using your credits without a second thought.
If you have to leave a machine be sure to cash our all credits before you leave.

**Be Careful With Your Winnings**

Many people walk away from the cashier’s cage with their cash in their hands. I urge you to take the time to first count it and then put it away, even if you just shove it in your front pocket before walking away from the cage. There is no need to advertise your win by exhibiting a stack of bills.

If you decide to use a self-redemption machine to cash your credits instead of visiting the cashier, note that sometimes the cash is dispensed in two or more packets instead of just one. This makes it even more important to count your money before stepping away from the machine. If you don’t then the next person to use the machine may end up with some of your winnings.

If you have won a jackpot, especially a large hand-paid jackpot, be aware that the commotion will make others aware of your good fortune. For this reason, it is a good idea to ask for some help in getting your cash to a safe place. If you are a guest of the casino, ask the staff to keep the money in a safe deposit box for the remainder of your stay. Most casinos have this service available for their guests. If you are staying in another casino hotel, ask security to escort you to your car or taxi to make sure you get there safely. Or, just ask the casino to issue you a check instead of paying you in cash – they are usually happy to oblige for a larger jackpot.

**Be Aware of People Around You**

One of the best ways you can keep yourself safe is to constantly be alert and aware of people around you. Keep your eyes open for anyone who is watching you play a machine or following you within or without a casino. If you feel someone is paying undue attention to you, don’t hesitate to contact security. They will be just as eager as you to get ride of that person.

One of the most important things to do is to constantly look like you are alert and on top of things. Many criminals admit that they look for persons walking along with their eyes downcast and unaware of their surroundings. You should walk looking up and glancing to the right and left so that any potential assailants are less likely to choose you because you do not look like an easy target.
Women should avoid carrying large handbags which are more easily snatched. Instead carry a smaller purse which is held closer to your body so that the potential purse-snatcher is not as tempted to grab your purse away from you and run.

**Immediately Report Losses of Money or Other Valuables**

Despite taking precautions your may lose your wallet, pocketbook or other valuables. As soon as you notice the loss, be sure to report it to security. If you’ve misplaced an item like a coat or driver’s license, there’s a good chance someone will have turned it in. Slot club cards accidentally left in machines are often found and turned in by the next player. However, the chance of recovering stolen money or credit cards or jewelry is not as good. If you are very lucky security may nab the thief with your possessions. Most likely you will never see them again. Consider it another of life’s lessons and consider getting and using a money belt.

**IN CONCLUSION**

Most people are reasonably honest including casino visitors. But, it only takes one thief or pickpocket to ruin your casino vacation. By taking some precautions you remaining alert at all times you’ll be able to have an enjoyable stay and return home with good memories and more money than you came with.
Keeping Records

Along with all of the new habits I am asking you to form, I am going to add one more. I want you to start keeping written records of how you do playing video poker. Actually, you want to keep a written record of all of your gambling, but since this book is about video poker, we’ll just focus on video poker play.

There are a couple of reasons you will want to keep records. One is to honestly measure how well (or how badly) you are doing. Most players wince at this suggestion. They know that they have been long-term losers. They like to remember the occasional jackpots, and they will tell you all about them. But, they know that, overall; video poker machines have not been moneymakers for them.

I am going to ask you to be honest and start writing down how you actually do. You don’t have to show this to anyone else. But, aren’t you at least a little curious about your gambling wins and losses?

Another reason I am suggesting that you start keeping written records is that you will eventually need them for income tax reporting. I’ll tell you more about this later.

I have given you a couple of good reasons to start keeping written records of your gambling. They are - first, to honestly measure how well (or badly) you are dong, and second, to have a record for income tax reporting.

How you set up your records is up to you. You may want to purchase a small notebook which fits in your pocket or purse. I like to keep records on individual sheets of standard size 8.5” x 11” accounting paper. I usually carry one sheet with me, neatly folded in my pocket. After each session of play, I will update the information I like to record on the piece of paper. Eventually, after I have returned home, the sheet will be filed in a loose-leaf notebook.

Whatever system you use is fine with me; just make sure that you start using some kind of recording system.

Before I start a gambling excursion, I like to record some basic information about what I plan to do. This information will outline my strategy and would look like this:
Location: Las Vegas
Profit Goal: $250
Video Poker Bankroll: $1,000
Days of Play: 3 days
Number of Sessions: 25
Session Size: $40
VP machine denomination: $1.00
Profit Goal Per Session (Percent & Dollars): 25%, $10
Loss Limit per Session: 50%, $20

The results of each session should be recorded as soon as possible after finishing play. The following information should be recorded:

Location: (City, casino, etc.)
Date: (I usually use one date per sheet)
Machine Description: (Describe version, i.e. 9-6 Jacks or Better, $1)
Session Bankroll: (Amount used for each game or session, i.e. $40)
System: (System or pattern used for play)
Won (Lost): Amount that you won or lost for the session.
Total Won (Lost): A running total of the amount you have won or lost.

Your actual record might look like the record shown in Table 39.

You may not like it, but whenever you win $1,200 or more on a video poker machine, you pick up a partner. This partner offers only a one-sided partnership. If you win $1,200 or more, he expects you to pay him part of your winnings. If you lose, you are on your own. I am, of course, talking about our ever vigilant and helpful government as represented by its tax collecting arm the Internal Revenue Service.

For US players the basic rules for gambling are that all gambling winnings should be reported on your tax returns as other income. Gambling losses are deductible only to the extent that you report gambling winnings and then only as an itemized deduction. Home ownership with the attendant home mortgage interest is usually the deductible expense which allows people to itemize their deductions. If you don’t own a home, or if your home mortgage interest is too low, or you have paid off your mortgage, you may not have enough expenses to itemize deductions, which could mean that you end up reporting gambling winnings as income but are not allowed to deduct gambling losses.
Table 39. Video Poker Record of Daily Play

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<th>Machine Number/Location</th>
<th>Session Bankroll</th>
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As a practical matter, most folks ignore their gambling wins and losses when filling out their tax returns because all they have is losses, and they couldn’t document them if their lives depended on it. Because of the skill you now have using Power Video Poker techniques, you are more likely than ever to have reportable gambling income. So pay attention!

Whenever your win is $1,200 or more, an attendant will have to pay you your jackpot, and the amount of your winnings will be reported to the IRS. You will need to furnish identification to the casino which shows your social security number (most driver’s licenses have this information). If you don’t have any identification with you, you will receive a casino receipt instead of a check, pending your furnishing the casino with the information required by the IRS.

If you are a United States resident, no taxes are normally withheld from your winnings. If you are a Canadian resident, 15% of your winnings will be withheld from your winnings. If you reside in any other foreign country, 30% of your win will be withheld for U.S. taxes.

If you hit a couple of jackpots, with forms W-2G furnished to you, you will be glad that you have kept records to substantiate gambling losses. To substantiate losses, you will
need not only your video poker records, but also copies of airline tickets, hotel receipts and so forth to prove you were really there. If you learn the names of casino personnel, you should also record this information as additional proof that you really were doing what you claim.

The easiest way to meet the IRS guidelines for documentation is to keep the daily record of video poker play, as well as invoices, receipts and other documentation from your trip. File this information in an envelope, a file folder or a notebook. Then, when you hit a jackpot, you will be prepared to document losses to help offset your winnings.
Walking Out a Winner

The object of playing video poker is to walk out of the casino with more money than you came in with. That's what this book has been about. If you want to have fun playing video poker, be my guest. It's supposed to be fun. But, if you have consistently been losing to the casinos, then I question how much fun you have really been having.

There is no substitute for winning. Can I guarantee that you will always be a winner? No. But I will guarantee that your play will improve immensely and that you will have a better chance of winning than ever before if you follow the suggestions I have given you. Here is a brief rundown of what we have covered.

1. You have learned about which versions of video poker games are beatable. I recommend that you start first with Jacks or Better and thoroughly learn the short-term playing strategy for this game. Even if your goal is to become a professional player you should learn the short-term playing strategy and become proficient at it before tackling the more difficult long-term playing strategy.

2. You now know how to plan your bankroll before you start your gambling. Whether your bankroll is $50 or $5,000, there are video poker machines and winning systems you can use. I have tried to cover just about all of them. The key thing to remember is that the size of your bankroll will govern the size of slot machines you will play. You won't play dollar machines with a $50 bankroll, nor will you need to play nickel machines with a $1,000 bankroll. I have given you a number of ways to use your bankroll, I have and even showed you how to use a midget bankroll to get maximum bang for your buck.

3. You will divide your bankroll up into sessions. Each session gives you a shot at one machine, or in some cases, several machines. You should try to use at least ten sessions, and twenty or twenty five sessions is even better. The loss of a session will tell you when it is time to change machines. There are also other rules telling you when to change machines which will prevent you from ever losing all of your session bankroll.

4. The size of your session will govern the size of machine you will play. A $10 session will work for a quarter machine, but not for a machine which only accepts dollars. The size of your session will also help you chose the betting patterns to use. In general, the more coins or tokens you have in a session bankroll, the more flexibility you have in choosing the betting patterns you will use.

5. You will set a Win or Profit Goal before ever starting to play. You can set a goal of 10%, 20%, 25% or 50% of your bankroll. If your goal is much greater than 50%, you are not being realistic. You can't bring $100 and expect to win $1,000. On the other hand, using the power slots moves, this can very well happen. Your Profit Goal will never keep
you from continuing to rack up the profits. It is not an upper limit or cap on how much you can win. With the Power Video Poker strategies, there is no limit on how much you can win. The only limits set are on how much you might lose, which will never be your entire bankroll. Profit Goals act as signals, telling you when to start locking up profits and reducing your risk. I prefer to set lower Profit Goals so that I will start locking up profits as soon as possible. In general, the more bankroll I bring for video poker, the lower Profit Goal I set. Try this approach. You'll like it.

6. You will avoid losses like the plague. Every time you begin playing a video poker machine you will have your Loss Limit in mind. A Loss Limit is a percentage of your Session Bankroll. It can be as low as 25% or as high as 75%. I prefer limits in the middle area of around 50%. The rules for loss limits are simple. If you hit your loss limit, your session is over, and you will remove all of the remaining session money from play. By doing this, you will never have a complete loss of a session.

7. You will look for favorable trends on video poker machines. I have showed you a number of ways to play favorable trends. You must get into the habit of adjusting the size of your bets up and down. You can use Neutral Playing Patterns or increase bets after wins. You can use Step Patterns or increase bets after losses. Your approach will always center of a “hit and run” approach. My point is that the one thing you won't do is stand there and play the same number of coins play after play. Now you have the tools to get involved and adjust your play to match what the slot machine is doing.

8. You will use even more tools to limit losses. There is no reason to continue to play a video poker machine with no payoffs. You can even pull you off a non-paying machine before you hit your loss limit. In this case, you may continue to use the same session bankroll and change slot machines.

9. Locking up profits will now be a big part of your video poker play. Hitting or exceeding your Profit Goal will tell you that it is time to lock up all of your session bankroll and at least one-half of your winnings. Some of you still may not be clear on the concept of locking up winnings. Locked up winnings are locked up until you get home. At that time, you are free to spend them. But so long as you are gambling, this money is not to be touched again. It is not locked up until the next session or the next day. It is not locked up until you have a big loss and need to reach for your reserves. It is not locked up until your husband or wife asks for some more money. Locked up means it is the same as gone. It will not be used for gambling on this trip.

10. You can play the jackpot machines using the betting strategies I have shown you. Jackpot machines are not usually frequent payors and tend to eat up your money fairly quickly. If you stick with the Jacks or Better 8-5 progressive machines you can play for the progressive jackpots.
12. You will want to learn several of the video poker systems I have showed you. You can combine some of these systems in unique ways. The easiest betting system to use is a Pattern Betting Strategy. Let’s say you pick a Step Pattern like 1-1-2-2-3-3-4-4-5-5.

I often use this method of play as a quick way of finding the best machine in a group I have selected to play. But once I have found a machine with decent payoff characteristics, I will switch to another method. Often I will use a Step-Up, Step-Down Betting System picked to match the size of my session bankroll and denomination of machine. It will pay you to learn several of these betting strategies and then employ them as the situation calls for. If the machine offers no clues as to what system might work best, you can always use a Neutral Pattern or one of the conservative Up-As-You-Win Patterns. I generally limit my use of the Up-As-You-Lose Patterns to proven machines which seem to alternate between several plays with no payoffs followed by larger paybacks. The choices are almost endless, and as you practice using these strategies, your play and your winnings will improve.

13. Start keeping records. If you play on a regular basis you may be facing several W-2G Forms a year, and you will appreciate the ability to document losses to offset gains. I employ record keeping mainly to keep score. If I have a Profit Goal in mind I want to know when I have reached it. I know for a fact that most gamblers underestimate the amount of their losses and overestimate how much they are ahead. Record keeping will not only keep you honest, but also it will improve your winnings.

14. Finally, I suggest that you learn to play another casino game. If you want to continue to stare at machines all day, learn a winning slot machine system. If a little human interaction suits your style, try roulette or even craps. If cards are more your cup of tea, try blackjack. A much over looked game is baccarat. Try it. It is a great game. You can try the Mini-Baccarat version on tables with $5 minimum wagers. My point is that your casino experience will be much more enjoyable if you learn another game.

I hope you enjoyed this book and picked up some useful pointers. It's tough to win at gambling. But the real trick is not to lose too much. If you keep your losses low, then when the large payoff comes (and it will if you are around long enough to enjoy it), you will end up a net winner.

I know how hard it is to use discipline in a casino environment. But once you leave the casino and arrive home with real winnings, you will see the value in the strategies. I wish the very best to you and in your gambling endeavors.
Short-term Video Poker Strategy Cards and Recommended Versions

Short-term Jacks or Better Players’ Cards & Recommended Versions

Short-term Deuces Wild Cards & Recommended Versions

Short-term Joker Wild Cards & Recommended Versions
### Jacks or Better Short-term Playing Strategy Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Flush</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pair</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Low Pair</td>
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<td>3</td>
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### Jacks or Better 8-5 Progressive Playing Card

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<td>Four of a Kind</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Flush</td>
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<td>Three of a Kind</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Two High Cards</td>
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### Jacks or Better Recommended Games

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<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
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<td>Full House</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<td>Jacks or Better</td>
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</table>

### Bonus Poker

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four 2s, 3s or 4s</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four 5-K</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
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</table>
Bonus Poker Deluxe  
98.49% Payback

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White Hot Aces Bonus Poker  
99.57% Payback

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### Double Bonus Poker

**100.71% Payback**

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<td>Two Pairs</td>
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### Double Double Bonus Poker

**100.67% Payback**

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<td>Four 2-4</td>
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<tr>
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### Triple Double Bonus Poker

**102.56% Payback**

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<tr>
<td>Four 2-4 w/A, 2, 3, 4</td>
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<td>Four Aces</td>
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<td>Two Pairs</td>
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### Triple Bonus Jacks or Better

**99.80% Payback**

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<tr>
<td>Four Aces</td>
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<td>Four 2s, 3s or 4s</td>
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<td>Four Kings</td>
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<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacks or Better</td>
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### Deuces Wild Short-term Playing Strategy Cards

#### DEUCES WILD CARD – NO DEUCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Pair (discard second pair)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
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#### DEUCES WILD CARD – ONE DEUCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Deuce</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>

#### DEUCES WILD CARD – TWO DEUCES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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### DEUCES WILD CARD –THREE DEUCES

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<th>Hand to be held</th>
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<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Deuces</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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### DEUCES WILD CARD –FOUR DEUCES

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DEUCES WILD RECOMMENDED GAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Deuces Wild
100.76% Payback

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Loose Deuces –
100.96% Payback
**Deuces Deluxe**  
100.32%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>Payback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Deuces</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural 4 Kings</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild 4 Kings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Three of a Kind</td>
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**Bonus Deuces Wild**  
99.45% Payback

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<tr>
<td>Royal Flush with Ace</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Deuces with Ace</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five Aces</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five 3s, 4s or 5s</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five 6-K</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Wild)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Joker Wild Short-term Playing Strategy Cards

## Joker Wild Kings or Better
### With Joker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five of Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair (Kings or Aces)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joker</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</table>

## Joker Wild Kings or Better
### No Joker

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Pair (Kings or Aces)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair of 2s through Queens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace and a King</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
## JOKER WILD STRATEGY FOR TWO PAIR AND DOUBLE JOKER POKER

### WITH JOKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five of Kind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joker</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>0</td>
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### WITHOUT JOKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand to be held</th>
<th>Cards held</th>
<th>Cards drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Royal Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three to a Royal Flush</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Flush</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight Flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Pair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four to a Straight (1 gap)</td>
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<td>Three to a Flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three to a Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two to a Straight Flush</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
Recommended Joker Wild Games

Joker Wild Ace-King
(Kings or Better)
100.64% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (natural)</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Joker)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings or Better</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Joker Wild Two Pair
98.72% Payback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Hand</th>
<th>1 Coin</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Five of a Kind</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush (Joker)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a Kind</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pairs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Video Poker Resources

Books

*Million Dollar Video Poker* by Bob Dancer

*Video Poker Optimum Play* by Dan Paymar

Web Sites

2. [www.freeslots.com/poker.com](http://www.freeslots.com/poker.com)
3. [www.casinoguide.ws/](http://www.casinoguide.ws/)
5. [www.multistrikepoker.com](http://www.multistrikepoker.com)

Software

*WinPoker* – [www.zamzone.com](http://www.zamzone.com)

*Optimum Video Poker* by Dan Paymar.

*Bob Dancer Presents Win Poker* by Bob Dancer

*Video Poker Strategy Master* by TomSki