

the **INSIDE** Straight™

No Holiday for Video Poker

It's that time again when many of your fiscal years end and the holidays set in. For a lot of you, this is the busiest and least-appreciated time of year. Well, just so you know, on behalf of those of us who go to the casinos for some holiday cheer – **thanks for your efforts and hard work!**

The big gaming show is over. We had some great, thoughtful feedback from a number of our customers who came by, played the games, and gave us excellent insights. This year we decided to risk delaying a few games and use your ideas and suggestions. There's a little something inside this issue describing this process. We thought you might like to know that we really do listen. If you have some feedback and didn't pass it on, here's your chance... go to http://www.igtproducts.com/igtproducts/VideoPoker/G2E_Survey.asp, pass on your ideas, and get a free T-shirt while you're at it.

Yours Truly chaired a panel with a couple of poker-proficient gaming execs, and none other than Bob Dancer – professional video poker player extraordinaire. Some interesting facts surfaced and some myths were debunked during the workshop. Read on and see if any of the tidbits surprise you. Also, we've learned that two excellent books are coming out that will give readers a chance to get into the heads of players, and discover the ways they're trying to exploit you, your programs, and your staff. Just a suggestion – I'd say get a copy. Read it. Pass it on. More inside.



If you're looking for ways to freshen up your floor without paying our Action team a daily fee, check out the new *Game King 4.3* Poker release. You can buy this program, and it has seven new poker games in it. Preliminary test results suggest that *Super*

Double Double Bonus Poker and *Super Bonus Deuces Wild* Poker are the early favorites. And there's dedicated glass for both. If you're looking to spruce up your floor, here's an easy, cheap way to do it and give your players some new entertainment choices. See? We really do care!

We reviewed our games for the year and have to congratulate *Hundred Play Draw Poker* as the King of Video Poker for 2002. With more than 350 units going out, this one topped the list. Most popular configuration? Pennies with tickets. For those of you who don't know it yet, tickets are a win-win proposition for your players and for your pocketbook.

Thanks for all your input and support throughout the year and remember, we're here to serve your video poker needs. Happy holidays, and may The Flush be with you!

Poker Rules!

Mike Fields



Winter

2002

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Video Poker News for the Casino Professional



Poker Rules at the Global Gaming Expo



Fifty-one weeks to prepare, then five quick days and it's over. Whew! Visitors at the September 2002 Global Gaming Expo at the Las Vegas Convention Center were treated to what may be the largest gaming show ever, with over 600 exhibitors covering 190,400 square feet of exhibit space. The IGT and Action Gaming booths straddled an impressive expanse of this real estate between the two main entrances to the exhibit hall, making it a logical first stop for arriving attendees, and a "last chance" stop on the way out.

Themed the IGT Experience, our booth featured subdued overhead lighting that enhanced the dramatic effect of the colorfully lit, canopied center aisle. Most of the illumination in the booth came

from the lighting of the more than 200 IGT machines on display, and from the bright smiles of awestruck visitors.

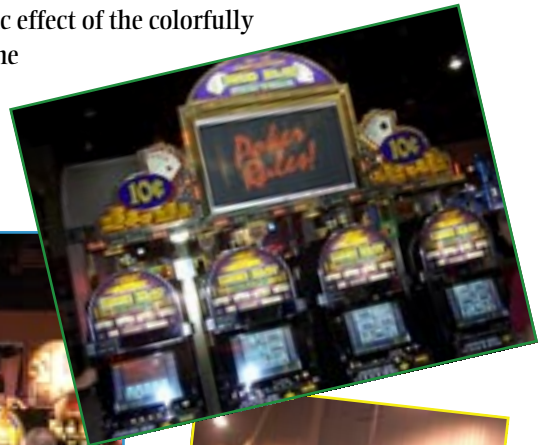
At the Action Gaming end of the booth, we featured some of the hottest video poker products going, along with brand new multi-hand game themes, new progressive poker games, and new signage options.



We also introduced a new concept in gaming with our *Spin 'N' Hold* and *Lock 'N' Roll* games, and offered the first showing of our new *Local Progressive Controller (LPC)* shown at left. It was a feast for the senses, and an impressive display of the creative thinking that goes on between Expos.

Thanks to all who entered our drawing for the spectacular plasma display sign. Andrew Carroll of Eureka Casino in Mesquite, Nevada held the winning entry. Congratulations!

How do we top all this excitement in 2003? We're still sifting through the results of this year's show, and are already formulating plans for next September... so stay tuned!



Workshop Revelations



Mike Fields with Bob Sobczyk

The Global Gaming Expo is more than just a labyrinth of trade show booths. There's also an impressive lineup of educational seminars and workshops covering a wide range gaming-related topics. Our "Crafting Video Poker" workshop, hosted by Mike Fields, included panelists Bob Sobczyk, Vice President

of Slot Operations for Ameristar Casinos; Suncoast Casino operator Marcus Suan; and Bob Dancer, a professional gambler.

More than 50 attendees participated in this lively "ask the experts" forum. We'd like to share with you a few of the priceless nuggets that emerged during the workshop.

- Many people think that tickets result in players hitting a jackpot, printing a ticket and heading out the door. "Not so," said Marcus Suan. He claims that the vast majority of tickets get fed right back into

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Panelists Marcus Suan and Bob Dancer with Workshop Host Mike Fields



Hot New PromoPak™ for a Hot New Progressive Game!

You can read about our newest video poker games in *The Inside Straight* newsletter, or in our sales literature. You can play them at the trade shows before they're available in casinos. And now you can even see one of them in action on your PC when you get hold of the new *Fast Action Triple Play, Five Play, and Ten Play Draw Poker* game *PromoPak*. This hot new multi-hand game theme features eight progressive jackpots in a single machine, all with the most popular poker game families.

The *PromoPak* demonstrates game play basics, with special emphasis on the various progressive jackpot features and player choices available in the game. Video clips run through options such as picking a game family, making denomination and multi-hand selections, and dealing, holding, and drawing cards. There are explanations of paytable and help screen menus, as well as a look at progressive jackpot configuration menus.

Request your copy of the *Fast Action Triple Play Draw Poker* eight level progressive game *PromoPak* by sending an e-mail to VideoPoker@IGT.com. Please be sure to include your mailing address and any other information we may need to ensure this reaches you. Or phone the Video Poker Hotline at (702) 896-8201.

While you're at it, also request a *PromoPak* for the new *Austin Powers™ Poker* game. It's smashing, Baby!



Up Progressive Creek Without a Paddle?

Not any longer! Call attention to the hot new progressive versions of our popular *Fifty Play Draw Poker* and *Hundred Play Draw Poker* games on your floor with these jazzy, paddle-shaped candle toppers, and get the progressive message across at first glance.

These high-profile toppers shout "Play Me!" and are included with all new orders for these games. Toppers are also available upon request if you're lucky enough to already have the new progressive programs in your casino. Just give us a call at (702) 896-8201, or send an e-mail request to VideoPoker@IGT.com.



Revelations (continued from page 2)

another machine, and that on average 4% of printed tickets "walk," although he said these are usually small amounts and don't help the hold too much. So much for that ticket myth...

- The panel agreed that determining how loose a game should be is often dictated by the amenities offered by the gaming site. For an older casino with few comp outlets, price is the leading point of competition. For a casino with nice outlets, restaurants and shops, paytables don't have to be as loose. The most important factor is that casinos need to take care of their customers...
- Bob Dancer commented that playing in Atlantic City is not as bad as most people may think, IF you know what you're doing and can visit frequently enough to benefit from their "bounce back" promotions...
- Bob Dancer also suggested that casinos' animosity toward video poker pros is often misplaced. It's essential that casinos be healthy and profitable so that people who make a

living playing video poker have a place to play. He suggests a symbiotic relationship...

- Marcus Suan admitted he's not crazy about pros hanging out at his properties, but he doesn't actually discourage the honest professional. What he won't tolerate is team players who gang up on a big progressive jackpot that has been funded by his loyal and frequent patrons. In these instances, Marcus will ask the team folks to back off, clearly demonstrating his commitment to his players, and acknowledging their right to win...
- Bob Sobczyk "confessed" that he uses the consulting services of professional gamblers in order to ensure that he has a balance of attractive pay schedules, comp club benefits, and player friendliness. In other words, keep your friends close and your "enemies" closer. (Editor's note: we wonder if Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" is Bob's favorite book)...
- And finally, it was confirmed by all of the panelists that video poker, as a percentage of your floor, always grows as markets mature, and the sooner you get on-board, the sooner you can develop this loyal and profitable player segment!



Video Poker Takes a New Twist With Trade Up Poker™

By Bob Dancer

The *Trade Up Poker* game plays like regular *Triple Play* or *Five Play* video poker, but with a novel twist: sometimes you're given the option to trade three or five starting hands for at least twice as many hands. Trading up is always a good idea when you have the choice, as the trade-up option adds between 1.4% and 3.1% to the base payable.

The game opens with a regular *Triple Play*/*Five Play* multi-hand game format with a variety of game choices, including *Jacks or Better*, *Bonus Poker*, *Bonus Poker Deluxe*, *Double Bonus Poker*, and *Double Double Bonus Poker*. A dealt 3-of-a-kind (a once in 47-hands event), and some or all dealt full houses (a once in 700-hands to once in 9,000-hands event, depending...) brings up the option to exchange that hand for at least twice as many identical hands in which the 3-of-a-kind must be held. A look at the available pay schedules will help illustrate which hands trigger the Trade Up option.

Figure 1 shows the *Triple Play*, 8/6 *Jacks or Better*, *Trade Up Poker* game with a dealt hand of trip aces. Holding the three aces is the best play by far. Under the normal version of *Triple Play*, on each hand we have a 6.1% chance to draw a full house worth 40, a 4.3% chance of getting 4-of-a-kind worth 125, and the other 89.6% of the time we end up with the trips we started with, worth 15.



Figure 1

In the *Trade Up Poker* theme, we have the option of giving up the normal three hands and receiving TEN hands in their stead,

as shown in Figure 2. We still have the same 6.1% and 4.3% chance to get the full house and the 4-of-a-kind on each hand,



Figure 2

but after the trade we receive nothing when the 3-of-a-kind hands don't improve.

We could lose on this trade up. In 41% of all times we draw to ten 3-of-a-kinds we'll end up with the same ten 3-of-a-kinds we started with. On those occasions, we'll have lost 45 coins by trading up, because each of the three original 3-of-a-kinds would have paid 15 coins when they didn't improve. The remaining 59% of the

GAME DESCRIPTION	Optimal Return	3 of A Kind	FH with 3 5s-Ks	FH with 3 2s-4s	FH with 3 Aces
BONUS POKER - 6/5, 3X-->10X	99.950%	X		X	X
BONUS POKER - 5/5, 3X-->10X	98.533%	X		X	X
BONUS POKER DELUXE - 8/5, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	99.944%	X			
BONUS POKER DELUXE - 7/5, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	98.764%	X	X	X	X
BONUS POKER DELUXE - 6/5, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	97.803%	X	X	X	X
BONUS POKER DELUXE - 5/5, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	96.843%	X	X	X	X
DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 9/6/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	100.338%	X			X
DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 9/6/4, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	98.912%	X			X
DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 9/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	97.812%	X			X
DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 8/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	96.598%	X			X
DOUBLE DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 8/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	100.102%	X		X	X
DOUBLE DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 7/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	98.914%	X		X	X
DOUBLE DOUBLE BONUS POKER - 6/5, 4OK = 55, 3X-->6X, 5X-->10X	97.736%	X		X	X
JACKS OR BETTER POKER - 8/6, 3X-->10X	100.364%	X			
JACKS OR BETTER POKER - 8/5, 3X-->10X	99.269%	X			
JACKS OR BETTER POKER - 7/5, 3X-->10X	97.817%	X			
JACKS OR BETTER POKER - 6/5, 3X-->10X	96.365%	X			

NOTES:
X = ELIGIBLE FOR THE TRADE UP FEATURE
THE FEATURE IS ONLY OFFERED ON HANDS WHERE ACCEPTING THE FEATURE IS THE BEST PLAY.



time, we'll score at least one full house and possibly up to several quads. We'll improve on three or more of the trips about 4% of the time. Overall, this is a good deal. Refusing the trade-up option leaves us with a 98.39% game. Taking the trade-up option every time it's offered creates a 100.36% game. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that you should press the "Always Trade Up" button.

In Figure 3 we've drawn both a single full house and a single quad. Upgrading exactly two of the trips – including both being full houses or both being quads – happens about 16% of the time.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the same hand in the 8/5 *Bonus Poker Deluxe* game. When accepting the trade-up option here (Figure 5), we only receive SIX hands starting from trips, rather than the TEN hands we had in the *Jacks or Better* game. That's because when we connect on 4-of-a-kinds in the *Bonus Poker Deluxe* game we receive 400 coins, rather than the 125 coins we receive when playing *Jacks or Better* video poker. Since it's so much more lucrative to connect on the quad, we're offered fewer chances in the bonus. Even so, always taking the trade up option when offered turns a 97.40%

game into one worth 99.94%. Again, it's a no-brainer to always accept the option.

Depending on the game family, sometimes you're given a choice to Trade Up full houses. The pay schedule gives the complete rules for this, but you don't need to worry about it. Just follow the rule to ALWAYS trade up when offered the chance.

Will I personally play this game?

Absolutely, providing the pay schedule is lucrative enough given a casino's slot club and promotions. I like this game a lot, but if a casino offers a less-than-acceptable pay schedule, I simply won't play.



Figure 5



A Suit Fit For A King

Did you know that at one time, the king of hearts represented

Charlemagne, the king of diamonds was Julius Caesar, the king of clubs was Alexander the Great, and the king of spades was King David from the Bible? These fascinating identities, along with special designations for the other court cards, were bestowed by the French who were instrumental in bringing the pleasures of card play to people in Europe and in the New World.

While researching this lineage of the kings for this issue of *The Inside Straight* newsletter, we learned another

interesting playing card fact we felt worth sharing with you:

The ace of spades served a famous purpose in the war in Vietnam. In February of 1966, two lieutenants of Company "C," Second Battalion, 35th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, wrote The United States Playing Card Company (USPC) and requested decks of cards containing nothing but the "Bicycle" ace of spades. The cards were useful in psychological warfare. The Viet Cong were very superstitious and highly frightened by this ace. The French previously had occupied Indo-China, and in French fortune telling with cards, the spades predicted death and suffering. The Viet Cong even regarded lady liberty as a goddess of death. USPC shipped thousands of the requested decks gratis

to our troops in Vietnam. These decks were housed in plain white tuckcases, inscribed "Bicycle Secret Weapon." The cards were deliberately scattered in the jungle and in hostile villages during raids. The very sight of the "Bicycle" ace was said to cause many Viet Cong to flee.

Next time you're surfing the 'net, visit the USPC web site at www.usplayingcard.com/history.html, and see what other little-known historical facts you can come away with.

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If You Can't Beat Them, Understand Them...

By Mike Fields

As good managers, it's a challenge to come up with ways to teach our employees things and make learning fun. This may be alien to many, but if you remember back in school, our favorite teachers were always the ones who made boring old history/science/biology fun. I believe this concept is true in all our roles, and I'd like to suggest a fun, interesting way to reward some of your better employees – or yourself – while learning some fascinating and important things about our mutual customers... poker players.

Two books are coming to bookstores soon that will truly get you inside your players' heads. Jean Scott, author of "The Frugal Gambler," is releasing a sequel this fall. Her original book was the first really easy read on how to assess and exploit comp programs, and her newest book picks up where that one left off. Jean and her husband travel the U.S.A., know gambling inside out, and most importantly are teaching your players how to work the system. She's been featured on The Learning Channel and Discovery Channel, and is well known among die-hard players.

She's a terrific poker player and comp program user. Your hosts and player development people should read this book.

The other book coming out is equally fascinating. Bob Dancer, after scraping by for years clipping coupons and working three shifts for 200-coin bonuses, finally hit it big last year and netted a million bucks. With the growing number of knowledgeable players – and wary casino execs – beatable games just aren't around anymore to the extent they once were, which is a big part of the reason Bob has

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Find out what the players do.

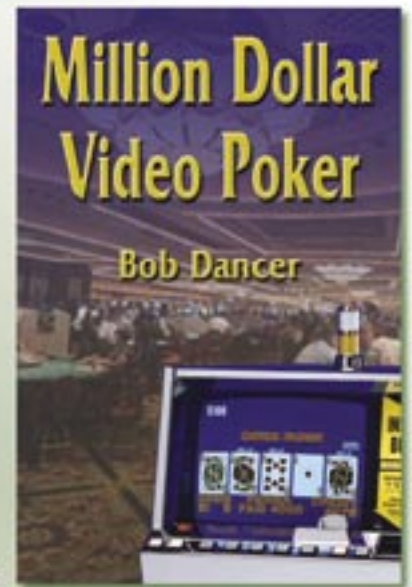


Two New Books from Two Big Names

Jean Scott exploded onto the national scene in 1998 with the release of *The Frugal Gambler*.

More Frugal Gambling is Scott's long-awaited sequel to the best-selling *The Frugal Gambler*. In the inimitably warm and reassuring style of the "gambling grandma," Scott reveals a further five years' worth of casino experience and exploits. *More Frugal Gambling* includes extensive coverage of slots, video poker, slot clubs, casino promotions, and couponing, as well as practical advice on keeping money safe, gambling and taxes, and casino security.

375 pages ♦ \$14.95us



Bob Dancer is the best known video poker player and writer in the world.

In just six years, after coming to Las Vegas with a \$6,000 bankroll, Dancer won more than \$1 million playing beatable machines. *Million Dollar Video Poker* recounts the events of those six years, with stories about his dizzying ups and downs and lessons for players of all skill levels. Video poker is one of those rare casino games that can be beaten by a talented and informed player, and Dancer explains how it's done. Never before has a top video poker professional shared so many of his secrets for winning.

225 pages ♦ \$16.95us

To order, visit www.greatstuff4gamblers.com



If You Can't Beat Them...

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gone the "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" route. This book makes my toes curl just to read about how hard he worked at playing poker to avoid having a "real job." If you want to understand professional players and how they think, this book's for you.

I'm convinced that to understand games, we have to play them with money, not using the "gaff" button at a show. And to understand players, we have to hang with them.

These two books will save you a lot of time, dry cleaning, and sanity, and I recommend them to you and your staff, as I have to our team and our IGT sales reps.



Those Elusive "Available When?" Dates...

One of the most frustrating things for both suppliers and casinos alike has to be the question: When will the game really be released? Everyone has cool games, but they never seem to be available when you're ready to buy.

Well, sadly, we have some of the same problems as other manufacturers, and the "available when" dates for a few games seen at the show have changed. However, rather than blame it on gaming authorities – which some see as an easy target – we'd rather be right up-front about explaining what happened, to give you an inside look at the mechanics of delivering great games.

Double Down Stud Poker This game was really popular and remembered fondly. The five-buck price went over well, too! However, we got some great feedback on it during the show. One excellent suggestion was that we should add the dealt winner message on-screen, as we do in the *Triple Play Draw Poker* game, where a dealt winning hand is highlighted in a box with the credits won. We agree that this will make the game more understandable for first-timers. A number of people correctly pointed out that we need an easy-to-order custom button panel with only the available selection options, so that's under way, too. We're going to add both of these features and a few other refinements. The net result is that the *Double Down Stud Poker* theme will probably not be available until March.

Trade Up Poker This was also very well received, but several people thought we should make the gamble-within-the-gamble easier to understand. If a player is giving up a guaranteed winning hand, they should know that clearly. The upshot is, we're changing the glass and changing some of the messages within the game to make it clear and easier to understand. This moves the *Trade Up Poker* theme out into the mid-February range.

Fast Action Draw Poker You know what? We found a bug. No excuses. So we had to move the release date out to around January.

Whether you care or not, we wanted to give you a little insight into some of the factors that can affect our production schedules. We'd be fools not to use your input from the show, of course, and to put a game out there that has less than the best possible chance of succeeding is a waste of both our time and your conversion dollars.



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The game descriptions, photos, artwork and machine details depicted in this newsletter are subject to change subsequent to publication.



Yesss!



Experience the kiss-me-quick thrill of filling out three winning hands in one extreme game of *Triple Play Draw Poker™*. The payable magic built into this game means that when you're dealt three-of-a-kind, you've got more than just a snowball's chance at converting it to a big winner. You can hit four-of-a-kinds – especially when you have three hands going for you!

Satisfaction. Winning. Fun. That's what makes the *Triple Play Draw Poker™* game the best poker theme ever invented. Three times the excitement. Three times the winnings. Three times the fun.

Win, win, win, with the *Triple Play Draw Poker™* game at your favorite casino.



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