



the **INSIDE** Straight™

Greetings Poker Fans,

Summer is on the way and before you know it, we'll be complaining about the heat – here in Vegas, anyway!

Speaking of “heat,” the *World Poker Tour*™ continues to sizzle. I remember when people used to talk at the water cooler about that game-saving tackle. Now you hear about the moxie of some player who bluffed his way to a million dollar pot. Get in on the buzz. By the time you're reading this, you can be offering your players the *Hold 'Em Challenge*® game. Just wait 'till you see how they take to simulated live poker action – something different and definitely in keeping with the times.

Our buddy John Daley fancies himself as a bit of a poker player. He's been around the gaming business since way back when it was called “gambling.” He's pretty bright and knows his poker games – the *Deuces Wild* theme being his preferred flavor. He actually practices with the “Bob Dancer Presents WinPoker” software and memorizes odds like others remember baseball scores. We've put together some info on John so you'll know who you're dealing with when he comes a-calling, or pitches you hard at G2E this coming October.

Some of our other friends, Jean Scott and Marissa Chien, EA, have a new book out, “Tax Help for the Frugal Gambler.” This is pretty good stuff. Player's love those royals, but they'd better keep records in case they ever face the dreaded audit from our black-suited buddies at the IRS. If you play, or want to take care of some of your best clients, this book might be a great spring stocking stuffer.

One thing's for sure – players are loving lower denominations, attracted by the higher hit

frequency and the perceived value. Pennies and two-cent denoms seem to be all the rage... surprising when you consider it was just a few years ago that casino operators were bemoaning nickels! Anyway, we're sprucing up the *Spin Poker* game, one of our most enduring and fastest growing themes, making it twenty lines for higher hit frequency and a “wonderfully round” dollar wager (5 coins per line times 20 lines), and calling it *Spin Poker Deluxe*. Marry this puppy with tickets and you've got a sure winner. Offer the *Spin Poker* game for your nickel players and the *Spin Poker Deluxe* version for your penny players. More inside.

The long-awaited IGT Progressive Controller has arrived! I could try to baffle you with tech-speak, but chances are you know me too well. Instead, John has outlined what you really need to know about this cool tool in layman terms. Be the first on your block to get one and create some killer progressive banks that will set you apart from your competition.

Speaking of competition, while many casinos in Reno are struggling, one joint in nearby Carson City is doing very well. They've done some unique things for their players that we just have to share with you. No rocket science – just a big dose of common sense and customer-centric thinking. Check out Casino Fandango on page 6.

That's it for now. Keep those cards and e-mails coming – we love hearing from you! Mike.Fields@IGT.com and John.Daley@IGT.com – your partners in poker.

Mike Fields

April

2004

Inside The INSIDE Straight



A New Twist on the Spin Poker™ Game.



If You REALLY Care About Your Players...



The Son of a Preacher Man



New Action Gaming Address



The IGT Progressive Controller



See The IGT Progressive Controller In Action



A Capital Idea



Field Test for EZ Money



Wide Area Marketing Test Results



IGT's Reel Touch™ Series is “Most Innovative Product of 2003”



Grand Casino Gulfport – Another Look





A New Twist on the Spin Poker™ Game

The original *Spin Poker* game was the first cross between a *Triple Play Draw Poker* game and a conventional video slot. More than just a passing curiosity, players found this nine-line "spinning card" format satisfied their desire for slot action, while challenging their video poker skills.

For several years the game gained a faithful following of its own, but never completely caught on with video poker players. Now, after hitting a plateau and then leveling out during the past four years in the field, the *Spin Poker* game has seen a spontaneous resurgence of new placements – an increase, in fact, of roughly 20% in the last 12 months. Players are really coming around to this theme, and savvy operators are responding by putting more *Spin Poker* games on the floor.

While some casinos are quietly cashing in on this revitalization – and while video slot themes with

20 or more paylines and as much as 400 credits per pull are taking off – we decided to give *Spin Poker* aficionados an

exciting variety of new challenges with the enhanced *Spin Poker Deluxe* version. We've taken the game from nine lines to 20 lines, and added progressive capabilities in case you really want to drive the handle.



This hot new product is perfect for lower denominations and higher hit frequencies and is compatible with *EZ Pay* tickets and *Multi-Denomination* gaming. If any of this looks familiar and similar to what you're seeing in the video slots world, it is. And we're not too proud to steal – err, liberate – a good idea and import it to the real games in the casino industry: video poker. The *Spin Poker Deluxe* theme is sure to become a player favorite in your casino. It's scheduled for release in April, so contact your Account Executive now and make plans to add this game to your mix!



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EZ Pay Ticket and *Multi-Denomination* options are not available in all jurisdictions. Contact your IGT representative for more information.



If You REALLY Care About Your Players...

All casinos have slot parties, player appreciation parties, and similar events designed to give players a little something extra. The service levels differ, the menus are diverse, the themes vary, but despite the differences there are lots of “me too” similarities. So, how do you distinguish yourself from your competition?

Why not do something really nice, thoughtful, and unique for your players? Show the love and offer them a copy of the new book, “Tax Help for the Frugal Gambler” by Jean Scott and Marissa Chien, EA. This is a practical guide to help gamblers cope with the complex regulations of the IRS. The authors stress sensible, responsible gambling, and show how to stretch out casino fun time whatever the gambling bankroll.

This is probably the best treatment of gambling and taxes available anywhere, written for anyone who must declare gambling wins on their tax forms. The tax implications of gambling are a big mystery to almost everyone, yet we all must

deal with the taxman, even if it’s just to prove we lost more than we won. Help your players out and show them you really care.

But why stop with passing out copies of the book? Jean Scott is a popular and knowledgeable speaker who can give your patrons a customized presentation, field a lively question and answer session, and top things off with a fun book signing – all the while racking up loyalty points for your casino. Find out more. Visit Jean’s web site at www.frugalgambler.biz/.



The Son of a Preacher Man



John Daley grew up in a family with three siblings, and a loving mother and father who, incidentally, was a preacher in their hometown of London, Ontario, Canada. During his senior year of high school, John found work in a local lumber mill where he earned enough to buy his first car, a Plymouth Rideau. Eventually he struck out on his own and fell into a “slot” that seemed made for him – Slot Technician at the Wild Bill Bar & Gambling Hall in Deadwood, South Dakota. He advanced to Slot Manager, gaining experience along the way that ultimately convinced him

to pursue a career in the gaming industry. John was Production Manager for Casino Signs, and held a variety of Operations and Sales Management positions at Mikohn Gaming Corporation where he learned all about progressives and controller devices.

Today, John directs the marketing activities for IGT’s multi-hand video poker games, and recently added marketing the IGT Progressive Controller to his list of responsibilities. A good fit, wouldn’t you agree? Still, he’s been known to return to Sturgis, SD – Harley and all – for a motorcycle rally every now and then. As a matter of fact, he’ll be there again this year as President of the Las Vegas-based “High Rollers Riders Association,” a riding association comprised of professionals in the gaming industry. Visit the club web site at www.highrollersra.com.

New Action Gaming Address

Ernie Moody and his Action Gaming organization have relocated to new offices in Las Vegas. Please update your address book with the new street, suite and zip code. The phone, fax, E-mail and Internet information remains unchanged.

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Action Gaming is an independent casino games designer whose games are manufactured and distributed by IGT. Stephen Grogan, Action Gaming COO, can also be reached at the new address. E-mail contacts include:

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The IGT Progressive Controller

By John Daley

The wait is over – it’s finally here... the IGT Progressive Controller (in most jurisdictions anyway).

And just what’s so special about the IGT Progressive Controller (IPC)? Lots, but we’ll keep it simple and just tell you about the “biggies,” and we’ll do it in plain English. Sure, the techs will dig all the intricate details, but what you want to know is the “why” and “how” of using the IPC to make more money. Here are my two favorite things:

1. Multiple denominations can be progressed in a single machine.

Progress Multiple Denominations In One Machine



One important feature is that now you can set up progressive jackpots for more than one denomination in the same box, versus the old way of just having one denomination progressed. (See sample screen above.) If you want to make that box full of options for your players – and profits opportunities for the house – you can. Progress



quarters, halves and dollars – all on the same machine! And all with only one controller.

2. Multiple, independent jackpot categories – again – in the same machine.

Independent Jackpot Families In One Box



This impressive feature allows you to progress independent game families in the same box (see screen example above). In the old days, you were limited to only one game family and a specific number of progressive jackpots. Typically, you’d progress *Double Bonus Poker* for the royal flush, aces, twos through fours, and fives through kings. You might offer the *Jacks or Better Poker* family with a royal flush progressive. The *Double Double Bonus Poker*® game would be similar to the *Double Bonus Poker* group, but with the extra kicker jackpots. Using the IGT Progressive Controller, you can literally create progressive jackpots for all of these game families, featuring different jackpot categories on the same machine, with one controller. Is that hot or what?!

You’ll find plenty of other cool features – such as one controller can manage up to 63 machines – but the first two are my personal favorites.

Multiple Jackpot Levels

ROYAL FLUSH	250	500	750	1000	\$100,000
STRAIGHT FLUSH	80	160	240	320	\$25,000
4 ACES	40	80	120	160	\$10,000
4 IN A ROW	25	50	75	100	\$5,000
FLUSH	5	10	15	20	\$1,000
STRAIGHT	4	8	12	16	\$500
3 OF A KIND	3	6	9	12	\$250
TWO PAIR	2	4	6	8	\$100
JACKS OR BETTER	1	2	3	4	\$50

Double
Bonus
Poker™
5
Progressive
Levels

The IGT Progressive Controller at work, with the *Game King 5.0* suite, featuring the *Bonus Poker* game with five progressive levels.

Multiple Jackpot Levels

11
Progressive
Levels

The *Ten Play Jacks or Better Poker* game with 11 progressive levels.

Using this new technology, we've started upgrading other game offerings for compatibility with the IGT Progressive Controller. The *Game King 5.0 Multi-Game™* – with all your players' favorite poker families – as well as the *Triple Play/Five Play/Ten Play Draw Poker* games are raring to go. Additionally, we're developing a line of *Game King Premium Series* video slots that will also work with the IPC, the first of which is *The Terminator™* game.

Future Action Gaming themes will also be progressable with the IGT Progressive Controller, and will include the *Spin Poker Deluxe*, *Five Aces Poker*, *Anything's Wild Poker*, and *Triple/Five/Ten Play Double Down Stud Poker* games... and we're just getting started!

See The IGT Progressive Controller In Action!

Take the mystery out of managing your progressive games with this hot new IPC training video, available now on CD-ROM. View it on your computer and you'll learn how simple it is to configure a progressive system. You'll also see highlights of some of the powerful features the IPC can bring to your casino.

Get your copy now by contacting your IGT Representative, or visit us at www.IGT.com/IPC and click on the link to the IPC training video to have a copy mailed to you. We'll even include a bag of popcorn to pop and enjoy while you watch the six-minute video.



**FREE DEMO
ON VIDEO!**



A Capital Idea



Carson City, Nevada's capital, is now home to the newly opened and very elegant Casino Fandango, operated by Larry Woolf, formerly of the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, and Caesars Tahoe. Casino Fandango opened its doors in August with five table games, plus 175 slot machines all featuring ticket-in ticket-out. Under the direction of General Manager Steve Forester, the property expanded to 430 machines and ten tables on Christmas Eve, and has plans for four restaurants, seven bars, and hundreds more machines in the months ahead when the 65,000 square foot casino is completed.

So why is this place special and why has it enjoyed such growth in a market many consider "tired" or "doomed because of California's growth?" From a player's perspective, Casino Fandango has created some truly unique features, and the service is great. What isn't so obvious is what players experience at the subconscious level.

First, the whole casino is 100% tickets. It just doesn't get much easier than that. Tickets mean convenience and customer freedom. With tickets growing so fast, this drum needs no further beating.

Second, these guys did something we absolutely love. Trusting the keen insight of Reno architect Pete Wilday

for the design of the casino and slot stands, they installed shorter-than-usual 14" tall stands (patents pending) for upright machines, and shortened the cabinets on their slant-top machines throughout the casino. (Being 100% TITO, no coin drop boxes are needed,

so machines can sit closer to the floor.) There are two things this does for their floor and players. The most immediate benefit is C-O-M-F-O-R-T.

With machine buttons at wrist level, players can sit with their feet flat on the floor and their arms comfortably resting on the bolster, buttons within easy reach. A comfortable player plays longer. Is your casino this comfortable? (Take Mike Fields' easy two-step test outlined in the sidebar and find out for yourself!)

On the subconscious level, players enjoy a great line-of-sight above the low profile banks of machines. Such openness just "feels" right. Players can find their favorite game, the restroom, or the buffet quicker, without standing on a slot stand or wandering aimlessly. This is all good, especially for local players.

You can wallow in technology and agonize over reports, or you can focus on the basics. Larry Woolf has been doing this for years and has done it yet again.

Next time you're at the south end of Carson City, stop in at Casino Fandango. Enjoy live entertainment at the Cabaret stage and dance floor, check out the gaming action and special effects at the Infinity Pool, and while you're at it, play a little video poker!

Field Test For EZ Money

By Mike Fields

Are you tiring out your players and costing yourself "that next twenty?" Take this simple two-step test to experience your customers' comfort and play experience.

1. First, sit at your desk and note where your wrists fall in relationship to your keyboard. Are they a) Level with the keyboard? b) Above the keyboard? Or c) Under the keyboard? If they're under it, and you're reaching up to type, you probably already know how tiring this can be when working for an extended period of time. Well, the same is true for players who are selecting betting options or holding cards.
2. Now, get out of your office and sit at a machine or two. Pretend you're a player, and gauge your comfort level. Where do your wrists fall? If you or your players are "reaching up," then you're making your players tired. And tired players move on sooner than comfortable ones.

Optimal slot-stand height combined with an ergonomic seat height make a huge difference in how long a player will sit and play. Remember to take your height into account too. In my experience, I often have to reach up to play and it wears me out when I'm on a roll. "Come on quad! I want to cash out – I'm tired." I bail with money in my pocket because it just isn't comfortable. Considering I'm 6' 2" and must usually reach up to hit the buttons, how do you suppose this feels for the typical 5' 4" player?

Give shorter stands a try, particularly if you're under way with tickets. Don't wear out your players. Casino Fandango sure doesn't!



Wide Area Marketing Test Results

Before they're officially released, our new games are brought before a tough panel of judges – real casino players – in a diverse cross section of Nevada casinos. We call this ongoing ritual our Wide Area Marketing (WAM) test, and it lasts four rigorous weeks. Through the magic of meters and modems and mathematicians, the performance of each new game is compared daily against comparable control games located in the same WAM test sites.

When the results are in, we can usually give you a pretty good idea of how well a particular game will fare in your casino. Some recent results we thought you'd like to see include the *Multi-Hand Blackjack*, *Hold 'Em Challenge*, and *Five Aces Poker* games.

WAM results for the *Multi-Hand Blackjack* game show this is performing best in high denominations, and is getting good results at casinos on the Strip. Although it started a little slower in off-Strip properties, after four weeks of testing, the play increased steadily each week. We expect this game will ultimately attract a stable player base, although due to the nature of Blackjack



players, it may take a little longer to build this base than we've seen with conventional video poker games.

There's no bluffing with the *Hold 'Em Challenge* game; this theme is dealing operators something new indeed! The game concept is one that players have not seen on a slot machine, but with all of the exposure live poker is getting on television, this game is sure to attract players and build an excited following. This game is performing well in



those "hard to make work" areas outside of poker rooms, and keeping players near the tables! Player interest has been piqued by the vast amount of live Hold 'Em poker on television, and this game is an easy way for the novice to ease into learning how to play Hold 'Em without a bunch of experienced players sitting around the table intimidating the "new guy."

The *Super Times Pay Poker* game is growing a "super" following of its own, and continues to perform well above the



area and denomination averages! With no change in game strategy, players love the multipliers, and are happy to bet the extra coin to be eligible for them. This theme is fast becoming a must-have on the floor, with hundreds out there and more to follow. Do you have yours?

IGT's Reel Touch™ Series is "Most Innovative Product of 2003"

Attendees at the American Gaming Summit in Las Vegas have honored IGT's *Reel Touch* Series of gaming machines as the "Most Innovative Product of 2003." The competition, now in its seventh year, begins with a list of products submitted by various companies in the industry. The list is then narrowed to a top 20 by a panel of four gaming industry judges, and those attending the American Gaming Summit vote for their favorites among the 20 finalists.

The *Reel Touch* Series features a touchscreen LCD in the machine top box that adds interactive entertainment to the bonus game. IGT also took the top spot last year for the *Multi-Strike Poker* game.

Grand Casino Gulfport – Another Look



Lazy days at the poolside give way to some of Mississippi's most exciting nightlife action at the Grand Casino Gulfport.



Triple Play™ Poker just got ten times better.

*Appearing Soon
In Your Players'
Favorite Magazines*



Introducing the Super Times Pay™ Poker game. Think of it as the Triple Play Poker™ theme with a fantastic bonus. Just play an extra coin per hand and you'll randomly get a bonus of two to ten times your winning hand. And you can still play your favorites – the Five Play™ and Ten Play™ Draw Poker games. Wow!

Get into your favorite casino soon and look for the Super Times Pay™ Poker game. It's more fun because you can win more money. Need we say more?

Action Gaming multi-hand poker games utilize U.S. Patent Nos. 5,823,873; 6,007,066; 6,098,985; and other patents pending that are licensed from Action Gaming, Inc., and must be operated under separate license agreements with IGT, WAGER WISELX. If you think you might have a gambling problem, call toll-free 1-800-522-4700 for help. Must be 21 to play.

