



the **INSIDE** Straight™



Greetings Poker Fans,

The bottom line is always... the bottom line, right? Well, we watch ours too and our own John Daley and Mike Drummond have thrown their combined four cents together to tackle some of the simplest, cheapest ways you can add a little bit to your bottom line, without spending any capital. For some, these arcane secrets might be matter-of-course. But not everyone knows how finicky and habitual poker players are, or how to best apply that insight.

Contrary to popular belief, not all the great poker houses are in Nevada. One of our favorites is Barona Valley Ranch Resort and Casino in San Diego. Great mix, great pay schedules. We're introducing them to readers of *The Inside Straight* in this issue. If you have local, drive-in business, you have the potential of building and growing a solid, reliable poker business. Barona has done just that. Find out how, here.

This summer looks good on the poker front. In addition to a new *Game King* release with more features and "turbo" speed, we have some solid performing games in the field, or coming out soon. The *SuperTimes Pay* Poker game is one that I really love. I sat for three hours at Green Valley Ranch a few weeks ago and laughed and high-fived with several patrons as that random multiplier popped up. I had a dealt straight with a 3x multiplier pay me 180 coins, and caught a quad on a 2x multiplier that paid me 500. Big fun.

Keep an eye out for lots of consumer ads for our poker products this summer. We owe it to you to promote these games to players, and we have a number of campaigns under way in support of the Granddaddy of Poker – the *Triple Play* theme – as well as our *SuperTimes Pay* and *Five Play Multi-Strike* Poker games.

Did you know that there are "nice" bikers, not just the infamous kind? Our very own John Daley and his High Rollers Riders Association recently raised a fair chunk of change for charity, described inside. This club, comprised of many gaming managers and casino employees, is an excellent venue for fun, relaxation and networking, so if you have a "hog" and get a chance, why not hook up for a fun ride?

A number of years ago, Mandalay Bay opened with a bold, innovative new display technology – plasma screens used to show progressives and entertainment information. Many scoffed, but over time they've proven to be pioneers, as we see LCDs and plasma displays popping up everywhere. If you're interested in these yourself, there are a few "details" you need to know, and we've taken a moment to describe the upside and challenges of these flexible tools for you. Please get in touch with us if we can provide assistance in this medium.

Thanks for reading, and as always – keep those cards and comments comin'!

Mike Fields

July

2004

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Video Poker News for the Casino Professional



Multi-Denomination™ Magic Makes Money

By Mike Drummond

IGT's *Game King* multi-game, and multi-hand *Triple Play/Five Play/Ten Play* games have become quite popular at properties throughout the Midwest. However, many of these casinos are not taking advantage of the full potential of *Multi-Denomination* options. When the available features are properly deployed, operators can enhance revenues while satisfying the needs of different players in relation to their value to the house.



Although the properties may offer *Multi-Denomination* gaming, if the same payable is used for all available denominations, players tend to start and stay with the lowest denomination. If they're lucky enough to put together a full house or four-of-a-kind, logic says they'll likely graduate to a higher denomination – but only if those higher denoms have been stair-stepped.

As an example of stair-stepped denominations, consider a *Double Bonus Poker* game that offers 5¢, 10¢ and 25¢ denominations,

each with a different payback percentage. If the 10¢ and 25¢ games were both offered as an 8/5 return for a flush/full house, why would a player choose the higher denom? At the 25¢ level, they would be wagering more coin-in for the same pay back percentage. Where's the advantage in that?

If the player is offered an 8/5/4 (flush/full house/straight) return on the 5¢ game, 8/5/5 on the 10¢ payable, and a 9/6/4 payback for a 25¢ wager, there is a definite incentive to play at the higher denominations.

If the denomination scale is offered as 25¢, 50¢ and \$1.00, you can choose to stair-step the denominations at three levels, as in our example, or offer the 25¢ with a 9/6/4 payback, and tie the 50¢ and \$1.00 games together with the same higher payback percentage of 9/7/5. We've received a lot of positive feedback from properties that have done this. And we'd love to hear from you! If your slot system does not facilitate *Multi-Denomination* gaming, contact our friends at Acres Gaming at (702) 263-7588, or log on to their web site at www.acresgaming.com, and get the right solution for your exact needs.

Whether your casino offers two or three different payback percentages, this can equate to more coin-in, longer time on the machine, and hopefully a greater win for your casino.



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



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Play Me! New Releases Wow Players



Do you have yours? Do you have enough? After six months of play, the *Super Times Pay* Poker game is performing on a level that looks very much like the *Triple Play* game did shortly after its introduction. The buy-a-pay feature gives players a real incentive for max-coin bets on every game. The nice thing is that we didn't hammer the base payable to do it, or force players to change their strategy. Instead, the sixth coin bet buys a chance on a random multiplier of 2x to 10x. Get your *Super Times Pay* Poker games now, or add more to your floor and take advantage of the earning potential of this hot theme.



Cash in on the popularity of this award-winning theme, now with five times the action! Players have already demonstrated their loyalty to the *Multi-Strike Poker* theme. Adding *Five Play* multi-hand action gives them improved volatility, and more chances of reaching the top of this exciting multi-level game. Even timid single-hand players will see the logic in betting all hands in the *Five Play Multi-Strike Poker* game.



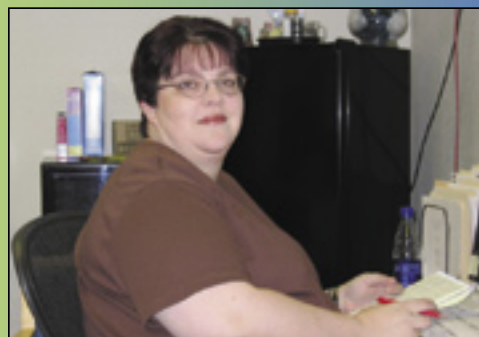
Players like a game that uses a loaded deck, especially when it's loaded in their favor – with an extra ace! The extra ace means more chances for four aces, four aces with that juicy “kicker,” and a BIG jackpot for all five aces. Available in single and multi-hand versions, the *Five Aces Poker* game theme offers your players all of their favorite game families, with plenty of extra ace excitement to keep the cards rolling, deal after draw.

In The Chips

Meet Cristy Gullett, our newest EPROM Administrator, and the latest addition to our Las Vegas Video Poker team. Cristy manages the whereabouts, deployment and return of unique, serialized EPROMs (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory chips) programmed with Intellectual Property – the Action Gaming games your players love.

Cristy works with other EPROM Administrators, all of whom are dedicated to reducing billing errors and ensuring accurate collections. Administrators handle your calls, provide RMAs for return of chips, and generally track the whereabouts of each EPROM. (By the way... remember to return your inactive game chips so we can take them off the active duty list, and stop billing you for chips you're not using!)

Gifted with a spontaneous smile and cheerful attitude, Cristy originally worked with Anchor Gaming, and came to IGT as a Product Compliance Representative II. She's a welcome addition to the Video Poker team, and she's looking forward to your call at (888) 777-2101, Prompt 6, or fax at (702) 837-2302.



The Man From WAM

The *Five Aces Poker* game has been on Wide Area Marketing (WAM) test, and it's showing very good play. At one WAM site it's averaging over \$2,500 per day coin-in, which is not too shabby for a single-hand game. See for yourself. Give your *Double Bonus Poker* and *Double Double Bonus Poker* players something extra – a fifth ace in every deck! The WAM numbers say they're going to love it in your casino, too.



working well in traditionally “slow” areas. And it still is. In fact, recent numbers from a casino hosting the World Poker Tour™ had *Hold 'Em Challenge* games that were averaging over \$8,000 per day in coin-in! A couple of these games outside your live action poker room would be a great fit, even without the magnetism of television coverage.

You may recall in the April 2004 issue of *The Inside Straight*, we reported that our *Hold 'Em Challenge* Multi-Hand Poker game is

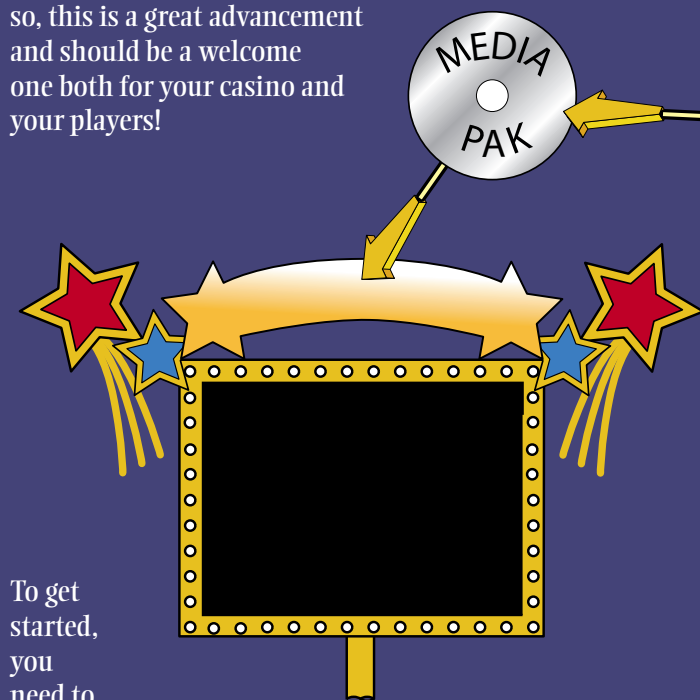
Contact your Account Executive for details, and to add either or both of these hot themes to your property.



So You Want To Display Progressives On An LCD?

By John Daley

Now that IGT has released its progressive controller (in a lot of markets anyway) you may be thinking, "Okay, the time is right to start running multi-denomination, multi-game progressives in the same box." Since you have never had the ability to do so, this is a great advancement and should be a welcome one both for your casino and your players!



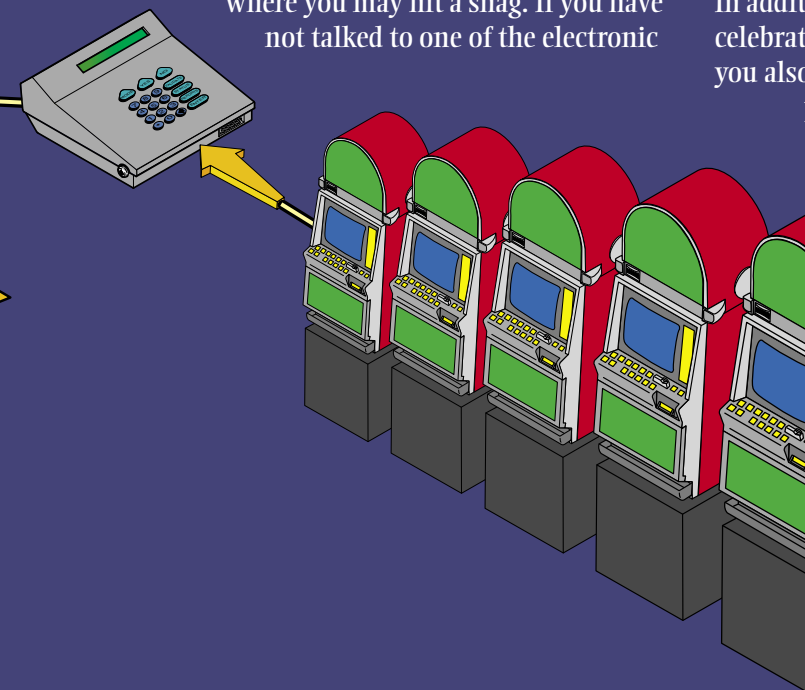
To get started, you need to order a sign from your favorite sign vendor, giving consideration to your options for displaying the jackpot values. Should you use the typical LED meter that's been around for years? Would a plasma screen be a better choice? Or should you use an LCD screen? After a few calculations you realize that if you intend to display four or more levels of jackpot value, the cost of an LCD or plasma display is actually cheaper than purchasing four new LED meters.

Although the plasma screen is a little cheaper and a little bigger than the LCD screen, it will most likely begin to show burn-in within a couple of months. By comparison, the LCD will last longer, will not develop burn-in, and will be brighter than the plasma. This makes it pretty easy to decide to spend a few more bucks today to get a better-looking, longer-lasting product on your floor.

Now you think, "We're almost there! I'll just have the sign vendor get the LCD and 'pop' it in to the sign, and we'll be all set. Then the techs will set up the jackpot values when we do the install, just like they would do with an LED meter." Oops. One moment please. This is where you may hit a snag. If you have not talked to one of the electronic

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companies that have worked with IGT on the interface – currently Mikohn Gaming and others – your LCD sign will not be able to display jackpot values!

in addition to having someone create background video, attract screens, and attract modes to dazzle players, you will need an interface (commonly called a media pack) between the IGT Progressive Controller (IPC) and the LCD so it understands what to display.



While using LCDs is possibly the best way to show multiple levels of jackpots, you need to do a little groundwork to ensure a smooth and successful installation. You'll need to work with your electronic display provider to develop your video content, similar to the way you had LED graphics created in the past. You'll need your media pack set up to display the jackpot values you want, placed where you want them to appear on the screen.

Because you can scroll through multiple screens showing a variety of jackpot values on each frame, you do not have to try to fit them all on one screen shot. Add some nice jackpot celebration video to build extra excitement, and don't forget the ever important attract mode! Be colorful, animated and creative. Make it interesting to capture the attention of your customers.

Do remember: LCD and plasma displays are NOT plug and play! It takes some forethought, planning, and a little extra hardware to make things happen, but the effort pays off with an attractive sign that adds real value to your gaming establishment. So contact your favorite sign vendor and let the games begin!



Barona Valley Ranch Resort and Casino in San Diego, CA, knows the power of video poker and knows how to attract and hold its players. You could credit the lavish facility for making this property a proving ground for the newest and best video poker products on the market, but the real reason is the slot floor management.

Barona has scripted a success story through research, innovation and knowledge of the game. To begin, the casino took a posse of its best players to Las Vegas to track down the best video poker themes and paytables. It didn't take them long to find the top performers and paytables offering the best odds. In Vegas, players can walk next door to find a better game, and Barona brought this aggressive approach back to Indian country.

Great paytables were one chapter in the story, but game theme was the other. The Action Gaming poker products, multi-hand games, *Triple Play* and *Hundred Play Draw Poker* games were getting most of the play. Having 400 poker games on the floor – including a number of progressives – gives Barona great latitude. Barona wants the best games IGT has to offer, and is not afraid to circulate games on a regular basis.

As a rule, video poker players are more sophisticated in their approach, but "We really deal in entertainment here," said Greg Liggett, Director of Slots. "We have provided a place where players know they will find the newest games and generous paytables. That my friends, is the winning hand!"

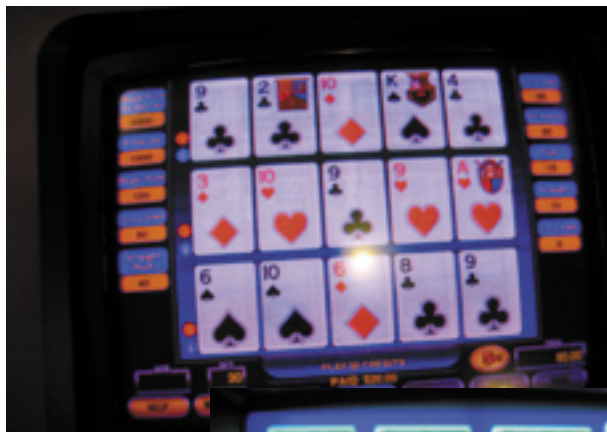
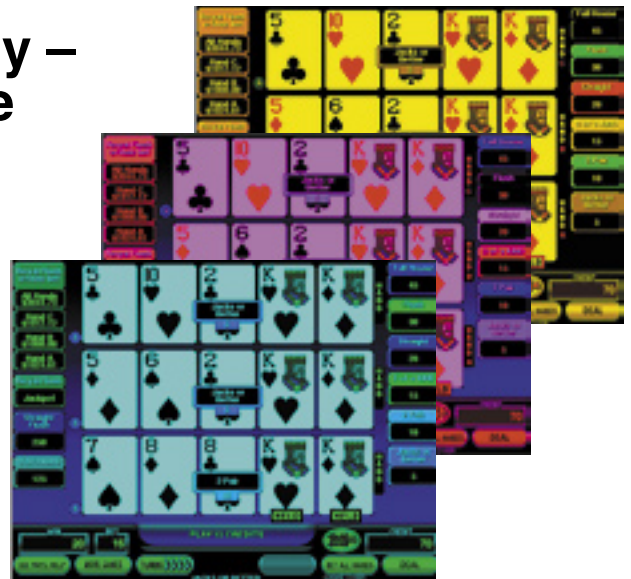


The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly – Maintenance Makes A Difference

By John Daley

Do you have machines on your floor or at the bar that have malfunctioning buttons, touchscreens that are not calibrated, and/or monitors that are blurry or hard to read? How are these games performing? Based on my experiences in the last 15 years I'm willing to bet they're under-performing; the degree of under performance is determined by how far from "normal" the machine appears to your players.

When I travel, I'm always amazed to see games that operators are paying a flat daily fee for in poor, run-down condition. Why would you take a game that is a proven earner and not keep it in perfect working order so you maximize the revenue from these games? We're not talking 80/20 games here, so they do not cost more if the coin-in increases. As the operator, you make more when these games win more, and nobody shares in the extra revenue!



The average *Triple Play/Five Play* games will generally do 2 to 2 ½ times the coin-in of a single-hand poker game. If the game is in poor condition, however, it may struggle to even generate the same amount of play that a single-hand game does! How much is this costing you?

Let's consider a hypothetical casino where the average single-hand game does \$1,300 in coin-in, and is a 4% hold game. In our example, multi-hand (*Triple Play/Five Play*) games in good working order average \$3,250 and are also 4% games. If the Slot Director and Lead

Technician allow any of these games to deteriorate into a condition that looks like the screen shots on this page, the games will start dropping in play. In fact, they can easily drop below the play of a good single-hand game – the \$1,300 from this example. That's a difference of \$1,950 in play per day, or at 4% hold, \$78 in win!! That's over \$28,000 a year in lost revenue, and that's just from one poorly maintained machine!

How much would it cost you to keep these games running in premium condition, or to upgrade them to a new box? Even if you bought new boxes to replace old ones in poor condition, you would have your money back from the extra revenue in less than six months. It's a lot better for your bottom line to keep those games in top working order.

So why don't you make some notes today or tomorrow when you are walking your floor and see if you have any "deferred maintenance" games with conditions that are costing YOU money. If so, call Customer Service and get them upgraded and increase your profits, and the quality image of your gaming venue.





Poker Rules At Charity Motorcycle Poker Run

A colorful Las Vegas motorcycle group – High Rollers Riders Association – held their third annual Charity Poker Run on

March 28, 2004, an event that raised \$22,164 for the Southern Nevada Cancer Research Foundation! Over 380 participants rode the 145-mile Poker Run.

Motorcyclists pay an entry fee to join in the Poker Run, entitling them to receive a poker hand along the way. They ride their “scooters” from one location to another, stopping to draw a card at each location. After each rider has drawn five cards, riders compare hands to determine who holds the high hand. The best hand at this year’s event was three aces, and received a \$300 cash award. The worst (or low) hand received a \$100 “booby” prize. In addition to cash prizes, over 335 door prizes were given away, including 12 slot machines and a 42-inch plasma screen TV.

The Las Vegas-based High Rollers Riders Association is made up mostly of gaming industry people. It was chartered in January 2000, and now has 45 active members, including our own John Daley who is a co-founder and current President of the organization. The group holds monthly meetings, and members usually attend two or three rides a month as a group. They have sponsored a number of charity fundraisers, and have donated monies, Christmas presents, meals, and the like over the years. The largest event, however, is their annual Poker Run.

This event is the culmination of over four months of work – soliciting door prizes and silent auction items; arranging the stops, entertainment, and food; enlisting volunteers to work the event; printing and distributing flyers; and an endless list of “little” details. The High Rollers’ Poker Run is recognized as one of the best Poker Runs in Southern Nevada, and it has always rewarded participants with some of the best prizes of any run.



You can see more pictures of this year’s event at www.highrollers.com, as well as learn how you can participate in upcoming rides the High Rollers have planned, and view pictures of past events. There’s even an e-mail link you can use to contact the group about becoming a member.



This is just another example of how much fun playing poker can be.



PIZZA & BEER LOVE & MARRIAGE FAME & FORTUNE FIVE PLAY™ & MULTI-STRIKE POKER™

(Each is great on it's own. But put 'em together and they're even better.)

Two of the greatest poker innovations in the last ten years are now the next great poker game. Players love advancing to the next level in *Multi-Strike* hoping for a trip on the top level and an 8x multiplier pay off. Adding *Five Play* to *Multi-Strike* progresses them up to five times more often! More trips to the top means more excitement, more fun and more profitability. As a hundred coin wager, it's perfect in many denominations and just right with EZ Pay™.

Five Play Multi-Strike Poker™.....

A perfect combination.

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