

the
INSIDE Straight™

AUGUST 2009

No Budget? No Problem!

STRETCH

Your Operating Dollars
with IGT's Conversion Pricing Program



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Video Poker News for the Casino Professional





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Stretch your profits, not your poker cards

Optimize your AVP® widescreen machines for video poker

By Shannon Bloom

Not getting the usual level of play from your video poker themes? Have you noticed the cards look "different" or appear "stretched"? Do players comment that the hold buttons do not line up with the cards?

If so, you are not alone. Our Sales Product Specialists have spent a lot of time observing and correcting this in the field. Cards that appear "wrong" and do not closely match up with the corresponding hold buttons can cause a decrease in the playability of machines. Regular players may avoid these machines, thinking the hardware is faulty or their favorite poker theme "changed." Even casual players may experience eye fatigue and a lack of concentration that can diminish their playing experience.

This misalignment occurs when the standard (640x480) widescreen aspect ratio setting is used. Despite this, many properties choose the standard setting to avoid sidebars* appearing on the monitor. Instead, we recommend you preserve the integrity of the card graphics (and the satisfaction of your video poker patrons) by choosing the widescreen (768x480) setting. The sidebars can be configured to blend seamlessly into the game play area by selecting the predominant color (blue for poker games or black for multi-games.)

It is worth the time to optimize your widescreen machines for video poker themes. If you have any questions or concerns about this menu adjustment, please contact your IGT Video Poker Product Specialist.

*Sidebars occur because the horizontal size of the screen is slightly decreased, leaving a solid band of color on the left and right sides.

Standard Setting Stretched cards can fatigue the eye



Widescreen Setting Sidebars balance the screen without stretching the cards



NOTE: These configuration suggestions apply to 80960 games emulated on the AVP® platform on widescreen machines only.



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Configuring and decoding the top seven video poker game families

By Mike Drummond

Properly configured video poker machines maximize the gaming experience and earnings. It's important to set up the right game families, enable the right amount of game choices and keep that menu consistent. We recommend turning on the same six or eight game families on every machine on your floor, creating variety without overwhelming the player with choices. An exception to this would be a bank of progressives, which can work quite effectively with a single game family only.

Since there are more than 50 game families available in our popular multi-game suite, it can be a challenge to understand and capitalize on the sometimes subtle differences. We've broken them down into three key characteristics to help you optimize your setup.

Complexity

Video poker players enjoy the opportunity to learn and employ strategy. Some game strategies (or rules) are easier to learn than others. Players seek games within a certain ability level so we recommend setting up your machines with a variety of complexities.

Volatility

Volatility refers to the degree of risk compared to payout. Game families with low volatility mean the player can expect to enjoy longer periods of game play per wager with smaller but more regular payouts. It is a steady experience with few surprises. High volatility games offer the excitement of uncertainty with a combination of high risk and high rewards. Both gaming

experiences appeal to a wide variety of players. We recommend you enable a range of volatility.

Unique pays

Each game family has an associated pay schedule. The majority of the schedule stays the same but it is the unique pays associated with a game that patrons typically seek and enjoy playing for.

Barring regional preferences, here are the top seven video poker game families in the country, broken out into these three characteristics. We also include ways in which this information translates into meaningful decisions for your machine setup.

For a comprehensive list, please visit the Inside Scoop page on VideoPoker.com.

	GAME FAMILY	COMPLEXITY	VOLATILITY	UNIQUE PAYS WITH A 5-CREDIT BET PER HAND	WHAT THIS MEANS
1	Bonus Poker®	Easy	Low	FOUR ACES pays 400 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s pays 200 credits	Appeals to beginning players due to ease of strategy and low volatility
2	Bonus Poker Deluxe™	Moderate	High	4-OF-A-KIND pays 400 credits TWO PAIR pays 5 credits	Appeals to seasoned players due to 400 coin 4-of-a-kind usually in top three for amount of game play
3	Deuces Wild Poker	Moderate	Medium	FOUR DEUCES pays 1,000 credits	Appeals to beginning and seasoned players due to mid-level volatility paired with popular four deuces pay
4	Double Bonus Poker®	Very Difficult	Medium	FOUR ACES pays 800 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s pays 400 credits FOUR 5s THROUGH Ks pays 250 credits TWO PAIR pays 5 credits	Appeals to advanced players due to complicated game play strategy
5	Double Double Bonus Poker®	Difficult	High	FOUR ACES + ANY 2, 3, 4 pays 2,000 credits FOUR ACES pays 800 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s + ANY ACE, 2, 3, 4 pays 800 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s pays 400 credits FOUR 5s THROUGH Ks pays 250 credits TWO PAIR pays 5 credits	Appeals to wide range of players due to several 4-of-a-kind pays usually #1 in game play
6	Jacks or Better	Easy	Low	4-OF-A-KIND pays 125 credits	Appeals to beginning and High Limit players due to low volatility
7	Triple Double Bonus Poker™	Very Difficult	Very High	FOUR ACES + ANY 2, 3, 4 pays 4,000 credits FOUR ACES pays 800 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s + ANY ACE, 2, 3, 4 pays 2,000 credits FOUR 2s, 3s, 4s pays 400 credits FOUR 5s THROUGH Ks pays 250 credits 3-OF-A-KIND pays 10 credits TWO PAIR pays 5 credits	Appeals to advanced players due to complicated game play strategy and high-risk/high-reward play



Budget-conscious and built for you

IGT's Conversion Pricing Program

By John Daley

What is the Conversion Pricing Program?

A typical game conversion (EPROM and glass/digital image) requires significant up-front capital. As a result, most casinos are prohibited from acquiring new games, even if they are proven earners.

The Conversion Pricing Program (CPP) is a great way to freshen up your floor with exciting and profitable new game products while remaining budget-conscious. If the game doesn't perform, you simply send it back.

How does it work?

CPP allows you to sign an amendment to your existing Multi-Hand Agreement and get any new daily fee poker game for \$10/day on top of the current game fee, with zero cost up front.

For example, a game at a \$15/day rate would now cost \$25/day and no P.O. is required.

There is no long-term obligation – just keep the game on your floor for 90 days. After the 90 days you can:

- Keep the game at the current daily fee
- Return the game and replace with a new one
- Return the game

Select new games now with CPP

To help you select which games you'd like to add to your floor through the CPP, please visit our Try Before You Buy page at VideoPoker.com/Try. Not only will you be able to play some of our newest games online, but you can also check jurisdictional approvals and download a product brochure.

If you're interested in learning more about the Conversion Pricing Program, please contact me or your IGT Video Poker Product Specialist today.



Quick Tip

How to save money by promptly returning idle daily fee EPROMS

OBTAIN
Return Material
Authorization
(RMA) form
and FedEx
return label.

By e-mail
VideoPoker@IGT.com

By phone
702-492-3214

SECURELY PACKAGE
base EPROMS
for shipping.
We will pay for the
return postage up
to 2 lbs.

BILLING STOPS
as soon as package
is picked up by FedEx.

CPP in action: simple and effective in the field

By Sal Lambert

The Conversion Pricing Program (CPP) enables casinos to get the newest, high-earning daily fee video poker games for just an additional \$10 daily fee without the need for the usual up-front cost required to purchase a conversion. Although CPP is not new – nor was it intended specifically for the customer on a limited budget – it has become a particularly savvy option in today's economy. In my Western sales region alone, I have a total of 13 satisfied customers already taking advantage of CPP.

My customers tell me the beauty is in the simplicity

of the process. All they do is call me, request a particular theme, indicate a quantity and we send out the conversion package (includes firmware, glass and button inserts). With no P.O. required; it's that easy.

I highly recommend you use this versatile program to set up a test bank. Try several different Action Gaming themes at once. You have 90 days to see firsthand what works best for your floor. Once you find the perfect games, you will feel confident knowing you are making an informed buying decision.



Good news about our customers

Riviera Black Hawk Casino in Black Hawk, CO has added or have on order a total of 19 new Action games – just in the last 60 days.

Pechanga Resort Casino in Temecula, CA thought the CPP was such a good deal, it has added 12 Ultimate X Poker™ games and is creating a “new games bank” featuring 12 other Action Gaming themes.

Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa in Rancho Mirage, CA recently added eight Ultimate X Poker™ games, and has eight additional Action games on order. Ken Carnahan, the Executive Director of Slot Performance for both Agua Caliente and its sister property Spa Resort Casino in Palm Springs, CA, says:

“I use this program because it makes sense with my current business plan. I have minimal capital to spend right now and these are easy conversions. The theme selection is solid and there are always new titles to choose from.”

COMING SOON

Spin Poker With Dream Card™ and Triple Play Five Play Ten Play Draw Poker With Dream Card™

Two of our most popular classic game themes are now enhanced with Dream Card™ – the newest buy-a-pay feature to hit poker. Players can increase chances of winning a Dream Card™ by placing a side bet of five credits per hand. If the extra wager is placed and the feature awards it, optimal autohold strategy is employed

to pick the perfect card to complete the dealt hand. Players will be given the card that yields the highest expected return. In other words, players can count on a 4-of-a-kind in place of the 3-of-a-kind on the deal. Stay tuned – the Dream Card™ is a drop-in feature that will soon be available for other video poker themes.



Two-wheeling with Wheel Poker®

By Sal Lambert

With more than 378 units, Wheel Poker® remains a popular video poker game carrying strong numbers in the field. As our much-anticipated second generation offering, Wheel Poker Deluxe™ is set to release this fall. We'd like to offer an at-a-glance comparison of these two hot wheels.



Wheel Poker Deluxe™

- Bonus eligibility requires five additional coins per hand
- Bonus initiated with a dealt 3-of-a-kind, straight, or full house
- Wheel consists of 11 segments with a variety of starting hands to be played in a specified multi-hand game
- Example: Bonus awards a round of Hundred Play Draw Poker™ with a starting hand of two pair
- Available on Game King® upright and slant machines
- 80/20 daily fee*



Wheel Poker®

- Bonus eligibility requires one additional coin per hand
- Bonus initiated with a natural 4-of-a-kind
- Wheel consists of 11 segments with specific award values ranging from 100 – 3000 credits
- Available on Game King® upright and slant machines
- 80/20 daily fee*

*\$75 a day for jurisdictions that don't allow revenue share

Multi-Strike Poker® Deluxe: fine-tune the suite with optimal setup

By Nikol Abelman

We introduced this great new suite in our last issue of The Inside Straight™ (March 2009). Now we'd like to recommend optimal settings for all five games in this powerhouse, highlighting the unique Pai Gow Poker experience of Big Split Poker®.

NOTE: Each game in this suite has a higher overhold percentage than found in similar multi-hand games. So to keep performance high, we recommend you employ a slightly looser payable.

Multi-Strike® Poker

- Paytable coversheet classification: MX
- Nickel, quarter and dollar denominations
- 20-credit max bet
- Progressive capable – four levels
- Top award: 32,000 credits

Multi-Strike 16X Poker™

- Paytable coversheet classification: MXS
- Nickel, quarter and dollar denominations
- Top award: 64,000 credits

Multi-Strike® Double Down Stud® Poker

- Paytable coversheet classification: MDD
- 20-credit initial max bet
- Double down bets – 5 credits 1st hand, 10 credits 2nd hand, 20 credits 3rd hand, 40 credits 4th hand (up to an additional 75 credits)
- Top award: 80,000 credits

Multi-Strike® Big Pick Poker™

- Paytable coversheet classification: MBD
- Nickel, quarter and dollar denominations
- 25-credit max bet (includes a 5-credit side bet for a chance at the pick-a-tile bonus)
- Top award: 160,000 credits

Big Split Poker®

Game play is similar to the Pai Gow Poker table game. After the deal, the player arranges eight cards into one 5-card hand with the opportunity for a winning 3-card multiplier poker hand. This game is a proven favorite and has been in the field for more than four years.

- Paytable coversheet classification: BS
- Nickel, quarter and dollar denominations
- 10 credits for quarter and dollar denominations
- 20 credits for nickel denomination
- 10-credit max bet top award: 16,000 credits
- 20-credit max bet top award: 32,000 credits
- Hold – tends to over hold due to only one "best choice" despite the possibility of multiple winning hands

Consistency and value are the name of the video poker game

By Shannon Bloom



Every inch of real estate on the gaming floor should be contributing to your bottom line – especially today. Among the key attributes to consider on your slot floor is the payback percentage of each game. With spinning reel and video slots usually configured at payback percentages of 92%, 90% or even tighter and video poker set to 97%, 98% or higher, the numbers may seem stacked against your video poker machines. However, I encourage you to see beyond this single metric and consider the win of the game is what really matters, not the hold percentage. With the proper configuration, you will be able to generate consistent, profitable revenues that are house average or above on your video poker games.

The reason for this high performance despite lower hold percentage can be explained by the activity of the typical video poker player. They represent the most loyal of patrons, and many return to play two, three or more times per week. They also spend a great deal of time on your property, not only playing

their favorite game but also visiting your sports book and coffee shop. Happy players who enjoy fair games will also create a feeling of action and excitement on your floor. This lively atmosphere will encourage others to join in the fun. When the right number of video poker machines are placed and configured properly, you can create a reliable base of these treasured customers and keep performance numbers where you want them.

Do you have the right mix?

If you feel your casino does not currently get good video poker play, examine how your machines are set up. If the paytables are too tight, loosen some of them (we recommend at least 10% should be in the 98% range). It's easy and crucial to advertise these changes by placing paddles on the machines, features in your monthly mailings, and table tents in the restaurants and bars.

Once changes have been made and players are aware of the looser paytables, look at the percentage of video poker on your floor versus the win percentage of video poker on your floor. If you're generating 16% of your slot win from video poker and only 10% of your floor is video poker, you need to add more machines. However, if you're generating 16% of your win from video poker and 30% of your floor is video poker, it's time to convert some of those games to Game King® video slot themes.

If you have questions about your video poker inventory or would like setup and configuration ideas, please don't hesitate to contact your Video Poker Product Specialist today.

Designing the floor for video poker players

By Sal Lambert

While video slot players enjoy and respond to the excitement of a raucous bonusing event, video poker customers typically enjoy quiet areas where they can concentrate on game strategy. With this in mind, we highly recommend you create dedicated video poker areas rather than disperse video poker machines in ones and twos around your floor.

Say you have a property with 2,000 games on the floor. We recommend at least two or three areas (not including the bars) for serious poker patrons. A caveat to our recommendation is to also offer smaller banks of video poker among the reel and video slots to accommodate couples who differ in their preference for games but still enjoy playing near each other.



Turn web traffic into casino traffic

VideoPoker.com gives insight and control

Who doesn't see the value in a test drive? Or a free sample? Trying something before you buy it is just good sense. Informed decisions are powerful decisions. Just as you take a spin around the block when shopping for a new car or sample that dollop of ice cream when considering a departure from good ol' vanilla – you should try a game before you buy it. That's the whole idea behind our new "Try Before You Buy" promotion.

Test drive our games

We've teamed up with VideoPoker.com – the premier online video poker site for casino professionals – and turned it into the only place to play IGT video poker games. Now you can play our games online before you place an order. This includes popular recent releases like Good Times Pay Poker™ and Big Times Draw Poker®, and even much-anticipated new games such as Quick Quads Poker® and Ultimate X Poker™.

Drive traffic to your casino

Your players can also try games before they play them in your casino. Action Gaming can provide playable versions of the new games you decide to buy for your players to play online – giving them a great new reason to visit your web site and property. During this promotion, VideoPoker.com will provide you with a free, playable version of your recently purchased video poker

games to offer to your players club members. The online games will be customized with the specific game families and paytables you pick, giving your players the true look and feel of the game on your floor. Your video poker players will love the opportunity to play and learn for free.

How can we help?

VideoPoker.com will build, host and maintain the game web page to look and feel exactly like your web site. Your customers will have no doubt where they are when they take advantage of this exciting free game play. They provide a dynamic link to the game page for use on your web site and in e-mail communications, so no downloading is needed. And because visitors will be spending an extended amount of time on your game web page, we can add other promotional offers or art elements of your choice.

Recent promotions we've done with casinos have shown us players are enthusiastic and responsive to e-mail and links on sites promoting new features. Chances are high that people will visit your page and interact with your brand long after the initial promotion. You'll know first-hand how your customers are responding because we will



From their home...



to your house

send you reports and statistics highlighting web site traffic and analytics on your game page.

Start today

Qualifying for this special, no-cost promotion is easy: visit VideoPoker.com/Try today. If you see a game you like, contact your IGT Account Executive or Video Poker Product Specialist to place an order. It all starts with your purchase of an Action Gaming video poker game. Upon installation, tell us how you want the online game to be configured and we will create your game page. Drive traffic to your site with an e-mail to your players club members announcing this special page.

For more information, please contact Mike Fields at Mike.Fields@ActionGaming.com.