

BLACKJACK:

Revised & Updated
THIRD EDITION

A Professional Reference

The Encyclopedia of Casino Twenty-One!

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Michael Dalton

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Updated
THIRD EDITION

BLACKJACK:

A Professional Reference

**The Encyclopedia
of Casino Twenty-One!**

by Michael Dalton



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To my parents

who warned me of the dangers of gambling.

To my wife, Susan

whose love, patience and understanding
inspired me to write.

Blackjack:
A Professional Reference
The Encyclopedia of Casino Twenty-One!

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I would also like to thank the workers at the *Gaming Resource Center, University of Nevada* at Las Vegas for their invaluable assistance in researching old blackjack related information. If you are having trouble finding some material you might want to check this resource out.

I would also like to thank my co-workers at the *Kennedy Space Center* for bearing with me over the years as I rambled on about my blackjack adventures. Special thanks go to Frank Penovich and Bob Register for being the sounding board during my early learning days. By the way, Frank, sign me up for that upcoming Reno trip ... I'm already packed!

And, of course, I could not have written this book if it were not for the love and patience of my wife, Susan ... I love you honey!

FOREWORD TO THIRD EDITION

Since the first edition of this book my goal has been to create the ultimate resource for serious blackjack players. This resource would directly answer any question that a player might have or it would guide you to the answer. This resource would also describe and rate every blackjack product known to exist and provide advice to new players who want to learn a valid system. This resource would also have the ultimate dictionary and describe every term, rule, game, side bet, acronym and system ever created.

In the third edition of *Blackjack: A Professional Reference* I believe I have achieved my goal. I have to admit, however, that you will undoubtedly find something that you are interested in that is not included. Indeed, this book will never be complete for there will always be someone who attempts to sell some silly system or offer the player the moon in exchange for their credit card number. As you read and use this book please take a moment and jot down things you like and don't like about it and keep your eyes open for possible errors or misrepresentations. I pride myself in attempting to be honest and accurate about this game but I am only human. With your help this book will continue to be the leading resource guide for serious players.

This edition is subtitled *The Encyclopedia of Casino Twenty-One* which I believe is a better description of the book than the original title. In addition to the obvious cosmetic changes, I have added over 40 pages of important new material. This material includes over a hundred new dictionary and reference section entries as well as material that reflects the rapidly changing face of casino gambling in this country.

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION

The second edition of *Blackjack: A Professional Reference* includes several new dictionary and reference section entries, updates some material and corrects a few errors that readers brought to my attention. With the help of some good reviews I managed to sell my entire stock of first edition copies. This reinforces my faith that there is still a market for honest information about this game. If this edition does as well I will strive to keep it up to date by publishing a new version every few years or so. I encourage readers to write me with updates and corrections.

Card counters enjoyed a banner year in 1991, especially if they played in Las Vegas. Some of the best conditions in years could be found in this desert oasis and I, for one, took advantage of them. The Maxim casino even offered, for a short period of time, single-deck games that were dealt *through* the bottom of the deck. Now that's fun blackjack! No, I didn't make enough to quit my job and consider becoming a professional blackjack player. I did manage, however, to have one of my best years ever, earning enough to cover expenses and increasing my bankroll substantially.

I'm a tough player. I'm always on the lookout for great deals, great conditions and great coupons. I take advantage of anything the casinos might offer players. If a dealer makes a mistake in my favor I encourage him to make more mistakes. I'm patient. I put on acts when necessary. I walk when conditions aren't right. I don't drink when I play. I talk and laugh and manipulate dealers and other players. I'm disciplined. I don't cheat. I'm ready, however, to take advantage of information I shouldn't have. I keep records of my play and try to learn from my mistakes. I study intensely before each trip and use proven techniques to beat this game.

Yes, card counting can give a player an advantage in some games, but only if the casinos let you play. Blackjack expertise is an art form that requires knowledge, skill and experience in several different areas including card counting, probability, finance and casino compoment. But even then, the big money in this game is reserved for players with substantial bankrolls and a great act. I hope the casinos continue generating large blackjack profits from all the bad players out there. If it were not for them the game wouldn't exist for us to beat.

If you want to learn how to gain an advantage in this fascinating game take the advice this book has to offer. Be aware, however, that this book is also a reference with good and bad information sources listed. Study the good information and you will have a fighting chance!

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

My original goal in writing *Blackjack: A Professional Reference* was to create an instrument for my own learning experience. Over a period of a few years it had evolved from some cluttered notes into a comprehensive resource that I believe all serious players would find valuable. Although not originally intended, I also believe that the gaming industry will find this book a wealth of information that every casino executive should be familiar with.

What has often confused me about this fascinating game is the lack of organization and consensus of opinion on methods, strategies, and even terminology and history. As far as I know, this book is the first attempt to organize this material in the manner presented. Yes, I do have opinions that I have freely expressed throughout these pages. However, unlike some *system* sellers I have attempted to present an honest and unbiased view of the wealth of material available to the player. To set the record straight, I have no financial interest in any system, method, school, personality, book, publication, or anything else mentioned within these pages except for the book you are holding and my *Florida Cruise Ship Report* that was published in 1990.

Although some may consider it an almost impossible task, this book attempts to reference all known blackjack systems and strategies. I have done this to make the reader aware of their existence and to give the reader a broader understanding of the many systems currently or previously available at one time or another. I know, you will probably find that I haven't managed to list *every* system or method ever devised. If a system or method is, or was, generally known it is probably included, however, research of this type can last a lifetime. If you are a system seller and your system is not included please don't be offended. Just send me a copy for review and I will include a mention of it in my next edition.

In addition to my attempt at describing the many various systems on and off the market are over a thousand entries covering blackjack rules, terminology, history, books, publications, articles, reports, videos, software and sources of information. It is cross-referenced with recommendations and I have included what I feel to be a comprehensive collection of basic strategy charts that cover most games in the world.

This being the first edition of the book, I welcome critical evaluations and suggestions for improvement. As for errors that will undoubtedly be discovered I quote from the preface to Bouvier's *Law Dictionary* of 1839:

"To those who are aware of the difficulties of the task, the author deems it unnecessary to make any apology for the imperfections which may be found in the work. His object has been to be useful: if that has been accomplished in any degree, he will be amply rewarded for his labor."

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this book.

Check the dictionary for further details.

=	equals
>	is greater than
≥	is greater than or equal to
<	is less than
≤	is less than or equal to
???	uncertain
A	ace
a.k.a.	also known as
BC	betting correlation
BJ	blackjack
BS	basic strategy
c	circa
D	double
D9	double on 9, 10 or 11
D10	double on 10 or 11
D11	double on 11 only
DAS	double after split rule
e.g.	for example
ES	early surrender
et al	and others
H	hit

HA	house advantage
H-17	dealer hits on soft 17 rule
i.e.	that is
J	jack
K	king
LS	late surrender
LVS	Las Vegas Strip
OU	over/under side bet
P	split
PA	player advantage
Unless otherwise stated, the player advantage figures given throughout this book assume a single-deck reference point with perfect basic strategy play. (i.e., Single-deck with typical LVS rules with no DAS.)	
PE	playing efficiency
Q	queen
S	stand
S-17	dealer stands on soft 17 rule
Vs	versus
X	ten valued card

PUBLICATIONS & SOURCES

C&S	<i>Casino and Sports</i> GBC Press
CAM	<i>Casino Magazine</i> Hall Publications
CBN	<i>Current Blackjack News</i> Stanford Wong
CP	<i>The Card Player</i> Linda Johnson
CPM	<i>Casino Player Magazine</i> Glenn Fine / Roger Gros
BJC	<i>Blackjack Confidential</i> Eddie Olsen
BJF	<i>Blackjack Forum</i> Arnold Snyder
BJM	<i>Blackjack Monthly</i> Robert Gates
BJR	<i>Blackjack Review</i> Michael Dalton
BJW	<i>Blackjack World</i> Stanford Wong
EBN	<i>Experts Blackjack Newslett</i> Stanley Roberts
GBC	<i>Gambler's Book Club</i> Las Vegas
GP	<i>The Gambling Prospector</i> Dewey Bryan
GT	<i>Gambling Times</i> Stanley Sludikoff
NBJ	<i>Nevada Blackjack</i> Stanford Wong
ReN	<i>Rouge et Noir</i> Walter Tyminski
WIN	<i>WIN Magazine</i> Stanley Sludikoff
WBN	<i>Wong's Blackjack News</i> Stanford Wong

KEY TO STRATEGY TYPES

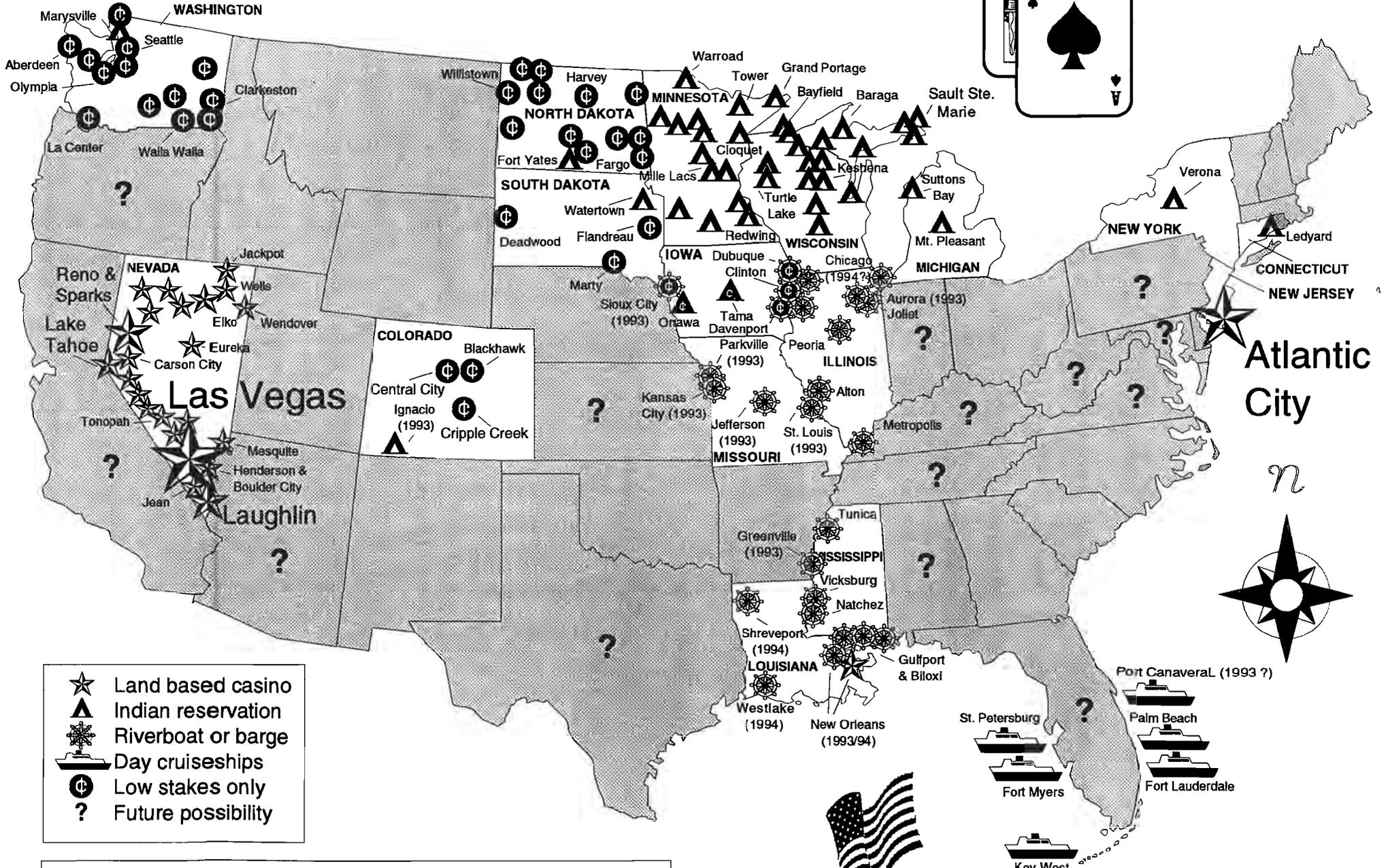
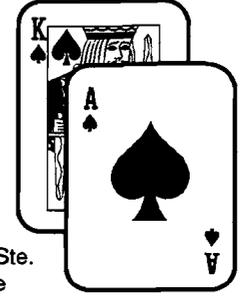
A countless number of blackjack systems and methods have appeared over the years. Many have been proven worthwhile for exploiting the profit potential of this game. Others, however, are probably not worth even mentioning. For example, all the progressive betting system {PBS} type strategies mentioned are for historical purposes only and to inform the reader of their existence. It has been proven time and time again that no betting system alone can overcome the house's advantage in blackjack or in any casino game, for that matter.

The following keys are enclosed within { } when used elsewhere in this book:

BS	Basic Playing Strategy	STS	Shuffle Tracking System
PBS	Progressive Betting System		- And other techniques based on proven card location strategies.
RCS	Rank Count System	RWC	Real World Conditions Strategy
TCS	Ten Count System		- Methods based on the hypothesis that dealer and player biases exist due to the effects of non-random shuffles. Some RWC labeled methods listed in this book also include progressive betting requirements.
PCS/L1	Point Count System / Level 1	HCS	Hole Card Strategy
PCS/L2	Point Count System / Level 2		- Techniques used to determine the dealer's hole-card including tell play.
PCS/L3	Point Count System / Level 3	CHS	Cheating Strategy
PCS/Ln	Point Count System / Level <i>n</i>		- For your own protection, you should be aware of these techniques, however, I do not wish to encourage any player to cheat.
PCS/U	Point Count System / Ultimate		
CS	Counting Strategy		
	- Techniques and methods used to optimize a traditional card counting system.		

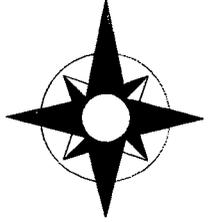
LEGAL BLACKJACK GAMES IN THE U.S.A.

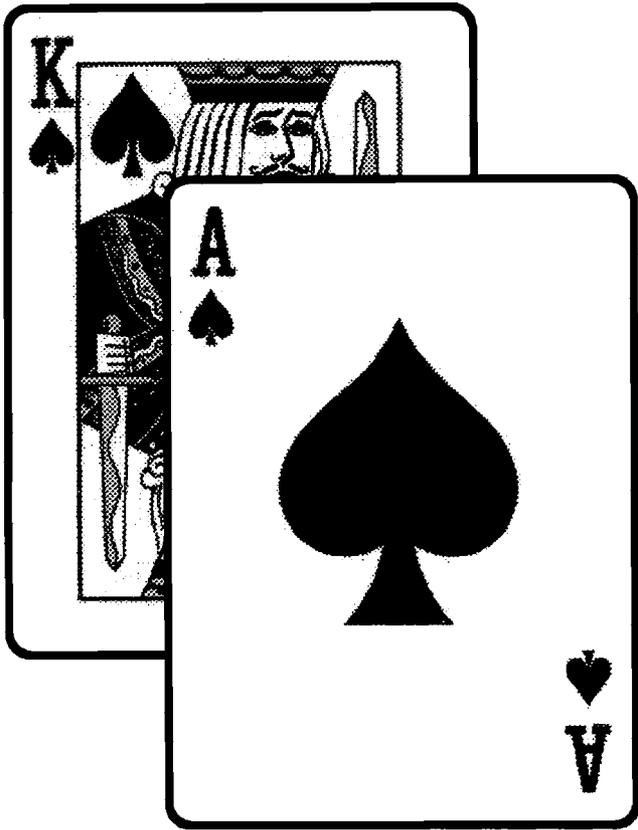
1993/94



- ★ Land based casino
- ▲ Indian reservation
- ❄ Riverboat or barge
- 🚢 Day cruiseships
- Ⓜ Low stakes only
- ? Future possibility

Atlantic City





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AN INTRODUCTION*

* This text was revised and updated since the first and second editions.

An introduction to blackjack you say? Well, not exactly! If you are an experienced or knowledgeable player the last thing you probably want is an introduction to the game of twenty-one. I agree. There are dozens of fine books on the market that will explain and lead the beginner through the rules of this game. I will mention some of these books in a moment.

Blackjack is a love of mine. This fascinating game of money and chance challenges my mind and allows me to act the role of a secret agent infiltrating foreign territory. Yes, I am a winning player. Yes, I use a number of valid winning methods to exploit this game. No, I haven't made my fortune yet playing blackjack. I play for the long run. I respect the risks that I am faced with and understanding the concepts of win rates and standard deviation has helped me develop a successful money management strategy. I am able to afford sufficiently large wagers to pay for most of my trips to Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe, the Caribbean, and other casino locations. I occasionally have some big wins and I occasionally have some long losing streaks. But, since I keep records of each table and/or casino I play, I also know that I am playing correctly and am earning approximately 1 - 1.5% of all the money that I wager.

As far as the recommendations that I make are concerned, I have tried to remain unbiased in my treatment of controversial¹ strategies and subject matter. Let me begin by first recommending a book that is probably *not* considered controversial in any ordinary sense of the word. Written in 1990 by two highly qualified scientists, Chambliss and Roginski's *Fundamentals of Blackjack* contains one of the finest general treatments of the game of twenty-one that I have seen anywhere. There are a few other books on the market that are

¹ I don't use the term *controversial* in a negative sense here. Controversy has followed the development of blackjack winning strategies for as long as most players and blackjack authorities probably care to remember. Many ideas, techniques and methods that were once considered controversial are now regularly employed by expert players as valid tools of the trade.

absolute must reading for serious players who want *valid*² and accurate information about how to exploit the profit potentials in this game. These include (in alphabetical order) the following:

Basic Blackjack

by Stanford Wong

Basic strategy, tells and warp play.

Beat the Dealer

by Edward O. Thorp

History of card counting.

Blackbelt in Blackjack

by Arnold Snyder

Card counting and the Zen count.

Blackjack: A Professional Reference

by Michael Dalton

Resources available.

Blackjack for Blood

by Bryce Carlson

The art of twenty-one!

The Blackjack Formula

by Arnold Snyder

Win rates, standard deviation and bankroll requirements.

Blackjack Secrets

by Stanford Wong

Tricks, tips and tactics

Fundamentals of Blackjack

by Carlson Chambliss and Thomas Roginski

General study.

How to Play Winning Blackjack

by Julian Braun

Basic strategy and the Hi-Lo system.

Million Dollar Blackjack

by Kenneth Uston

Card counting and team play.

Playing Blackjack as a Business

by Lawrence Revere

Basic strategy and card counting drills.

Professional Blackjack

by Stanford Wong

Card counting and the Hi-Lo system.

The Theory of Blackjack

by Peter A. Griffin

Single-deck basic strategy and the mathematics of the game.

The World's Greatest Blackjack Book

by Lance Humble and Carl Cooper

The Hi-Opt strategies.

...and several others as recommended elsewhere in this book.

² I use the term *valid* here to refer to systems and methods that have been *proven* to work by mathematical, statistical, or computer simulation means. However, it should be noted that so-called statistical proof given by some system sellers *can not* be considered valid unless their methods can be repeated by an independent and unbiased group. Those system sellers who refuse to provide a repeatable means of proof for their system can only be considered at best controversial and at worst scam artists.

Some of the above books may be difficult to obtain such as Julian Braun's book that is now out of print. The gambler's book stores in Las Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City and elsewhere should have all the rest. Before aspiring players attempt to explore the controversial ideas of the effects of non-random shuffles³ I believe they should have a firm understanding of the traditional aspects of the game. These include the basic strategies of play, the effects of rule variations and the theory behind card counting. Players should be able to recognize when a game is good or not from a traditional point of view. In addition, players should have developed a proper money management plan and understand the concepts behind win rates, expectation, and standard deviation. Players should have also implemented self discipline techniques in their play, including the keeping of documentation for each table or casino played. And last but not least, players should understand that to be ultimately successful at the tables they need to be able to manipulate casino personnel into making a game favorable or at least into continuing a favorable situation.

As of this writing, computer simulations have still been unable to validate non-random shuffle strategies such as TARGET³. The inability to prove a particular strategy or system by mathematical means or by computer simulation is valid grounds to label these types of methods controversial. As a space system avionics engineer I am in the daily business of developing and using simulation results. However, I also know that computer simulations are only an approximation to real world events and they can be misleading due to erred assumptions and faulty algorithms. Like many others, I have attempted to validate these methods mathematically and by running non-random computer simulations. However, I have only been able to prove that detectable dealer biases may exist in the real world⁴.

³ The effects of non-random shuffles, insufficient shuffling, and the clumping of cards have become one of the major areas for blackjack research and study in recent years. Although valid traditional means already exist to exploit these types of games none was as controversial as the TARGET system invented by Eddie Olsen, the publisher of *Blackjack Confidential*. As taught to me by Jerry Patterson, TARGET is a table selection method and playing style that claims that exploitable biases exist in the real world of casino play due to the effects of non-random shuffling and the clumping of cards. Since its original marketing by Jerry Patterson in 1981, TARGET has become one of the most controversial blackjack strategies to ever have been marketed. A number of heated debates, reviews, and analyses can be found in past issues of Arnold Snyder's *Blackjack Forum* magazine. Information about TARGET was first mentioned to the general public in Jerry Patterson and Eddie Olsen's book *Break the Dealer*, which was published in 1986.

⁴ In 6-deck simulations performed using John Imming's *Real World Casino: Universal Blackjack Engine* software, I have determined that insufficient shuffling *may* have a negative impact on a basic strategy player's expectation. Although these simulations are worst case scenarios they are not necessarily unrealistic for some games, especially during the first few shoes of a

I have thoroughly studied the TARGET techniques and methodology and have used them in the casinos with and without card counting⁵. To be honest, although I have had good success with TARGET you would probably expect about 50% of good players to have success with such a methodology, especially if these players are also card counting. The buyer should realize that these systems have not been proven mathematically or by computer simulation.

Now ... back to some traditional thinking. When referring to and discussing specific card counting strategies I often compare them to the Hi-Lo system, which I highly recommend all players consider using. The Hi-Lo system is adequately described in the books *How to Play Winning Blackjack* by Julian Braun and *Blackjack Secrets* and *Professional Blackjack* by Stanford Wong. However, as any respected blackjack authority will probably tell you, a card counting system is also a personal choice. The player is often told that he must weigh the costs of simplicity versus complexity. If the complexity of a system will cost you more money due to errors and fatigue, then a simpler system is that much more appropriate, even if the more complex system is theoretically more profitable.

If you wish to devote the time and effort to learn an advanced card counting system I would recommend Arnold Snyder's Zen count which is described in his book *Blackbelt in Blackjack*. I have found this practical and powerful system as simple to learn and play as any advanced card counting system could be. Both the Zen and Hi-Lo count have essentially the same betting correlation, however, the Zen count has a significant advantage in playing efficiency. The bottom line to the player is that if you plan to generally play single- or two-deck games, the extra effort to learn a system such as the Zen count may be worthwhile. However, if the only games you play are multi-deck games, then the Hi-Lo count may be your best choice.

game with new cards or in games that repeatedly introduce old cards back into play in new deck order. I believe that these long term *dealer biases* can have as much as a 0.25% negative impact on a player's long term win rate. Players are advised either to not play during these periods or to use other strategies. Recent evidence even suggests that playing position may have a small but significant effect on your expectation in severely insufficiently shuffled games.

⁵ I have taken Jerry Patterson's TARGET class as well as his advanced Blackjack Enrichment class during the period 1989-1990. My review of TARGET lasted approximately one year.

A number of other good card counting systems are also available that are noted in this book with a ★ . Whatever system you select you should verify that accurate playing indices for the most important plays⁶ are available and that the system is practical to use in the casino environment. If you are seriously interested in keeping up to date about this game, including information on the latest systems and methods, instructional advice and casino playing conditions, I strongly recommend that you subscribe to the following newsletters and publications:

Arnold Snyder's *Blackjack Forum*

Published 4 times a year by *RGE Publishing*

Stanford Wong's *Current Blackjack News*

Published monthly plus special issues by *Pi Yee Press*

Eddie Olsen's *Blackjack Confidential*

Published 10 times a year by *Blackjack Confidential Publishing*

Robert Gates's *Blackjack Monthly*

Published monthly by *Richard Canfield & Associates*

Michael Dalton's *Blackjack Review*

Published 4 times a year by *Spur of the Moment Publishing*

Arnold Snyder's *Blackjack Forum* is currently the best card counter's resource available anywhere. This quarterly publication (published since 1981) gives good reporting of games across the country and is an excellent technical forum for serious card counters. I would highly recommend that all serious players purchase most if not all back issues of this publication. Snyder's reporting is no-nonsense, technical in nature and very reliable when it comes to traditional card counting techniques and methods. You will also appreciate his sense of humor.

Stanford Wong's *Current Blackjack News* (published since 1979) is currently the best source for comprehensive rule and condition reporting for most Nevada and Atlantic City

⁶ See Donald Schlesinger's article *Attacking the Shoe* in the September 1986 issue of *Blackjack Forum* and Michael Dalton's *The Most Important Plays For Card Counters* in the Summer 1992 issue of *Blackjack Review* for important information on these plays. Also, refer to *Illustrious 18* in the dictionary section of this book. These are the plays that provide the most gain from varying from basic strategy.

casinos. Included are hot tips about playing conditions that may last only a few days or weeks. Stanford Wong seems to always be on top of the blackjack scene and he strives to get this information to subscribers as soon as possible. He even provides a FAX service for hot items. If you have an adequate bankroll to do some harm then you will want to subscribe to this newsletter.

Eddie Olsen's *Blackjack Confidential* (published since 1986) is definitely in the magazine category. This publication started out quite controversially, however, today it includes good reports of newsworthy blackjack related items as well as reporting that gives players insight into the casino and gaming industry. Of course, blackjack conditions are reported for casinos around the world along with feature articles and methods of play. You will find recommendations based on published casino win rates, player feedback, casino shuffling procedures, and whether games do or do not exhibit excessive like-card clumping. It is interesting to note that past issues of *Blackjack Confidential* have completely disclosed Eddie Olsen's TARGET methodology, which was previously marketed, although in a somewhat different format, by Jerry Patterson. This publication has improved considerably in the past few years with expanded coverage of the games in places outside of Nevada and Atlantic City. This publication also provides the best blackjack tournament coverage that I have seen anywhere.

Robert Gates's *Blackjack Monthly* (published since 1987) provides good reporting of blackjack conditions in Nevada and Atlantic City and, in my opinion, is useful for lower stakes players. This traditional style blackjack newsletter also includes monthly articles and information on gaining an edge in this game.

And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention my own newsletter. Michael Dalton's *Blackjack Review* (published since 1991) provides unbiased and no nonsense reporting for new and experienced players alike. From instructional advice for new players to advanced tips and tactics for card counters to player reports of casino conditions across the

country and around the world *Blackjack Review* may be your best bet yet. Oh, oh... I guess I am a bit biased in this regard so why don't you pick up a copy and check it out for yourself.

WHY YOU SHOULD TRUST MY RECOMMENDATIONS

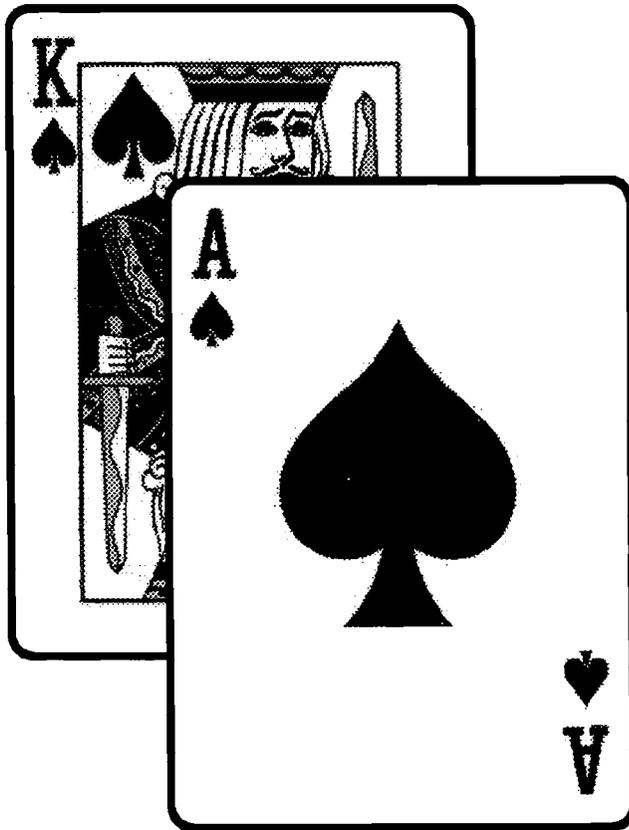
My criteria for recommendations in this book are as follows:

- ★ Is the information accurate and proven by mathematical and/or valid statistical means?
- ★ Is this the best source for this information?
- ★ Is the author honest with his/her readers?
- ★ Does the material live up to its advertising?
- ★ Does the author accept criticism and acknowledge mistakes?
- ★ Is an addendum available?
- ★ Is the information presented well?
- ★ Is the material otherwise of value to players?

As I have mentioned before, I have attempted to remain unbiased in my ratings and recommendations, however, I reserve the right to change my mind from one edition to another. Yes, even I can make mistakes and can be proven wrong occasionally! If you think I rated or described some system, product or term incorrectly please write me with the details. Other comments and criticism are always welcome and appreciated.

LOOKS LIKE I HAVE SOME SPACE LEFT NOTE

Since I have some space left let me tell you the story behind the **BLACK-JACK TABLE CONDITION REPORT FORM** that you will find in the back of this book. First of all, don't take it too seriously! I don't expect players to walk around the casinos filling out these forms. On the other hand, if you were to walk around a blackjack pit looking at games, these are the questions I would most like answered. I put this form together as an exercise only. You should use it in the same manner. For training purposes only try filling out a few forms for your favorite casinos. If you think something should be on the form that isn't please write me and let me know.



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THE BLACKJACK
DICTIONARY