

Greg Fletcher

The Fletcher Formula

**A System So Powerful That Anyone Using It
Can Turn \$11 Into \$50,000 in Just 11 Hours!**



Silverthorne Publications, Inc.

The Fletcher Formula
By Greg Fletcher

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Introduction

The Fletcher Formula is on its way to becoming the Number One Blackjack Strategy in the World Today!

It is so powerful that . . .

Ten hours a week making minimum bets will net you \$13,742!”

This is a breakthrough blackjack method that wins over 90% of the time and produces winning sessions in four to ten minutes!

We just finished seven months of extensive testing and the proof is in –

Nothing produces profits as quickly and safely as the Fletcher Formula

If you’ve got \$11 to spare then you have enough to set yourself up for life!

The Fletcher Formula Sets the New Standard for Winning Blackjack Systems!

The Fletcher Formula is not like any other blackjack system ever released to the public.

It was developed from Game Theory – a field of study so powerful that it has been used to play and win battles!

When you use this new game theory strategy, you will win faster, safer and with less money risked than any blackjack system ever created!

We have just completed testing the Fletcher Formula and here is just some of what we found –

This system beats every version of blackjack offered today.

The Fletcher Formula is the fastest winning blackjack system ever tested. It will beat any online game in a little over four minutes. And, the land-based games fall to this uncannily powerful strategy in ten to eleven minutes!

It has very small bankroll requirements. Our players started playing and winning online with an investment of only \$11!

It has a truly remarkable win rate of 90%+, documented for thousands of blackjack sessions!

It uses the lowest bet spread of any winning blackjack strategy – just four to one!

It has been tested and proven to perform in 6,386 documented games – played in both land-based and online games!

It produces monster wins of \$10,000 to \$20,000 a week, starting with a midget bankroll which will rapidly grow to over \$100,000!

There is No Doubt whatsoever That –

The Fletcher Formula Is going to become the standard against which every other system is measured!

The Fletcher Formula is not like any other blackjack system!

It does not rely on card counting, shuffle tracking, hole card peeking, spoofing, or any of these systems that have been around for a while.

It doesn't use a fixed betting progression.

It doesn't rely on a complex playing strategy.

It doesn't use complicated bets.

In fact, it is not like any other blackjack strategy!

The Fletcher Formula was developed from scratch and is based on Game Theory.

It is easier to use than other systems.

It wins faster than other systems.

It is easy to learn and even easier to use.

And, on top of these advantages, it wins huge amounts of money using a very small bankroll!

Here's another fact that you can take to the bank –

The Fletcher Formula beats the casinos so fast that when you use it, you will be winning game after game at a rate that is unprecedented for blackjack play!

Time is Money and With the Fletcher Formula You Will Win at a Blazing Fast Rate

Many blackjack systems are “grind systems.” With a grind system you will try to beat the game by chipping away at it building up small wins and hoping that you don’t have a huge loss wiping out hours of small wins.

Contrary to popular movies this is definitely how card counting works. In fact, card counting is so ineffective that the few remaining proponents of this now mostly ineffective method recommend that you play with huge bankrolls in order to eek out respectable wins.

Many blackjack systems using progressive betting schemes are extremely vulnerable to large losses. Hours or even days of profits can be wiped out with a few back-to-back losing sessions.

The Fletcher Formula is nothing like any of the card counting or progressive betting systems!

It is certainly not a grind system.

With the Fletcher Formula, instead of trying to chip away at the casino, you will be charging it and pulling out wins at a blinding speed!

Here are a few examples –

If you start with a \$110 buy-in, you will double it in less than 20 minutes playing online!

A \$25 bettor will win \$143 every ten minutes he plays online.

A \$100 bettor, playing online, will win an astounding \$3,435 an hour!

The Fletcher Formula Wins So Fast That You Can Triple Your Buy-In In Less Than an Hour!

The power of ultra-fast winnings has to be experienced to be truly appreciated.

Here are a few examples of what you can do once you turn the full power of the Fletcher Formula against the casinos –

Buy-in for \$110 and in one hour of online play you will more than triple this with winnings of \$343!

Start playing with \$220 in win \$700 in less than 60 minutes!

Quickly move up to using a \$550 buy-in and start pulling in \$1716 in all-cash winnings every hour you play!

I am not aware of any other system or strategy that can pull in profits this fast and then back it up with thousands of fully documented wins!

But, that's exactly what you get when you use the Fletcher Formula!

You get a system so powerful that you will triple your buy-in every hour you play!

Just so we are clear here, I want you to know that the amounts I am presenting are all net win amounts.

The rare losing sessions have been deducted from the amounts I am sharing with you.

This has enormous implications for your winnings when you use this strategy –

It means that even with occasional losses, you will still be able to triple the amount of your buy-in in less than an hour!

Here's How the Fletcher Formula Was Developed . . .

I decided to go back to school.

As a professional trader I felt like I needed to learn how to use probability analysis more in my trading. I have access to advisors who are well versed in probability and statistics, but the last time I had studied this stuff was in college and quite frankly it wasn't my favorite subject. Whatever I might have learned back then was long since gone.

I signed up for an evening course in statistics, geared towards business people trying to bone up on their long lost knowledge of statistics.

The class was going along as well as a dry subject like statistics can go until the professor actually assigned a research project. Lord, I haven't done one of these things for a long, long time.

I thought about dropping out since I was taking this class for my own amusement, but I decided to play with the professor's head a little bit. I decided to write a paper showing how probability theory is used in the game of blackjack.

I chose this topic because I had already done most of the research years ago when I had developed a winning blackjack system.

I updated my old research with more emphasis on probability theory for the prof's benefit and turned it in feeling quite proud of myself. Who knows, I thought, maybe the old boy will actually have some ideas that will improve my system.

The professor took his time about grading and returning our projects, and when I got mine back instead of a grade I got a note to see the professor.

My first thought was I am too old for this crap. If he doesn't like a blackjack system as my project, he can just take his course ...

My thoughts were interrupted by the professor.

“Greg can you see me after class. I think you will find it interesting.”

A New Way of Looking at Blackjack

I had expected that a paper on blackjack would throw Professor C. for a loop. In class he had come across as a guy who lived, breathed and dreamed statistics. We had even used a textbook written by his wife who also taught statistics in a different university department. He didn't strike me as a guy who ventured too far from the university campus much less into a casino.

But, I was wrong. As we sat down in his office, piled high with stacks of papers, books and numerous computer printouts, he started the conversation by saying that he knew Ed Thorp, the man responsible for two generations of blackjack card counters.

He explained that he had actually worked on a blackjack system before and my paper had rekindled his interest in taking a different approach to blackjack.

He asked me if I remembered studying Game Theory in his class a couple of weeks ago. I vaguely remembered it, and I recalled that it struck me as extremely dull and not particularly useful for anything I was interested in.

I gave him some kind of academic sounding answer. He nodded and proceeded to dig through a precarious looking pile of notebooks which looked as if the slightest motion might send it careening into an equally vulnerable looking stack of papers standing next to it.

“Ah, here it is. This is my work on blackjack. I had forgotten about it until I received your paper.”

I nodded not knowing where this conversation was heading.

“Now you believe like Ed Thorp did, that blackjack is all about probabilities and the likelihood of different hands appearing. Is that correct?”

“Well, that is sort of what I believe, but my approach is really focused on practicality. Like how to really beat the game. I believe that the right betting strategy can win at blackjack and ... ”

He interrupted me. “That is all old news in blackjack. How would you like to try a different approach?”

He treated me to a lengthy discussion of Game Theory.

He explained that it is a branch of mathematics that is used in social sciences, economics, biology, engineering, international relations and computer science.

He went on in that vein and somewhere between the Nash equilibrium and zero-sum games, I got lost.

He brought me down to earth when he handed me a dusty notebook. “This is the work I did on blackjack. I combined some attributes of the Dictator Game with Rock, Paper and Scissors and applied them to blackjack as another zero-sum game.

I told him quite honestly that I had no idea what he was talking about.

He smiled. “That’s okay. I am not looking for someone who knows mathematics. I am looking for someone who knows blackjack. You do know blackjack don’t you?”

For a mousy little guy at least a head shorter than I, he was remarkably persuasive and by the time we finished talking I had agreed to take a look at his blackjack strategy, based on Game Theory, and see if it made any sense at all for blackjack as it is played today

The Fletcher Formula is Born!

The professor’s blackjack system was not like any blackjack strategy I had ever seen. Once I got past the Game Theory math, I could see that the system boiled down to using a short three-bet series with up to three levels of bets.

I had to review the professor’s lengthy notes several times before I could convert his ideas into what it really was – a very simple approach to playing blackjack!

I decided that the easiest way to learn this system was to try it.

I made my own notes on how to use the professor's system leaving out the jargon and just focusing on the actual steps and procedures needed to play the system.

By 8:30 that night I was playing the system using blackjack software I had purchased years ago.

The system seemed to perform flawlessly. As I practiced I converted more of the professor's higher level concepts into simple procedures that were easy to follow.

The decision-tree boiled down to three different bets.

The matrix of options turned into easy-to-understand bet levels.

And, alternative betting options turned into a simple, but highly effective, way to modify future bets based on changing table conditions.

I started playing with stacks of poker chips using the chips to represent the professor's trades, moves and countermoves in his zero-sum version of the game of blackjack.

By midnight I had racked up quite a few practice games, and I could see that the professor had come up with an amazing new way of playing blackjack that was winning like crazy!

And, I had figured out a simple way to boil his "matrix of options" down to a simple chip stacking technique that perfectly emulated the system!

I Give the Fletcher Formula a Real World Workout!

I maintain a couple of accounts with two of the highest regarded online casinos. The next day I finished trading early and spent the rest of the day online trying out the Fletcher Formula.

I started out risking a total of just \$25. I figured I could lose this amount half a dozen times if need be.

I started out making \$1 bets and quickly doubled my \$25 deposit. I decided to see what would happen if I moved up to \$2 bets, and at the end of my first hour of play I had turned \$25 into \$173!

This was getting interesting. Since my total “capital” was only \$25, which I was perfectly willing to risk, I continued to raise my bets as my winnings grew larger and larger.

I started playing at 9:10 AM. By noon I was up over \$900. This win rate was almost scary fast. I couldn't believe that this wasn't a fluke, but the more I played the more I began to see that sky-high winnings were being delivered game after winning game!

That afternoon, I signed on to a different online casino and decided to see if I could repeat the success of my morning's play.

Again I decided to limit my risk to just \$25. I pretty much followed the same procedures I had followed earlier. As my winnings continued to grow I would increase the size of my minimum bets.

Once again the Fletcher Formula's winnings were almost unbelievable –

I started playing at 1:15 PM with a \$25 deposit. By 6:20 PM I had \$1,158 in winnings!

I don't know how much you know about blackjack but this win rate was almost unreal.

Yet, it wasn't really unreal.

I had actually lost two games in the morning.

And, in my afternoon session I lost three more.

So the strategy did lose.

But, it didn't lose often.

And when it lost, the losses were easily recouped.

As a result my winnings continued to grow as long as I played!

The Next Step Was a Quick Trip to Las Vegas

By the middle of next week I was in Las Vegas. I had planned to visit my friend Martin Silverthorne about some investments and by now my burning interest in The Fletcher Formula gave me a terrific incentive to travel a little sooner than I had planned.

Martin picked me up at the airport and gave me a quick tour of Las Vegas's newest extravaganza - Citycenter. We had lunch at Cafe Vetro at the Aria Hotel

and Casino, which Martin called an entertaining fiscal nightmare. Nonetheless the food was good and we talked investments.

After the waiter had cleared our plates and the coffee was on the way, I pulled out my notes on the Fletcher Formula.

Martin looked at it nodding his head as he studied the system and making notes in his pocket notebook.

Finally he looked up. “It’s very different. It has very low bankroll requirements and a very creative way of betting. What else does it do?”

I pulled out the results of my play. He studied my play online. Then he studied it some more. He pulled out his pocket calculator, entered a bunch of numbers and then looked up shaking his head.

“These results can’t be real,” were the first words out of his mouth.

“There is just no way that any system can win this fast and win this much money starting with such a small bankroll.”

Surprisingly, I agreed with him. It had been several days since I had used the system and maybe I had just been lucky. It didn’t seem like I was any luckier than normal when I played, but maybe Martin was right and all my winnings were the results of some fantastic lucky streak!

Now, sitting there with one of the premier gambling experts, I started to have my doubts

Martin had a suggestion.

“If you have some time, why don’t you try the system out right here. You will have to make \$25 minimum bets, but that won’t be a problem for this system with its low bankroll requirements.”

I asked him if he wanted to play too.

“I think I’ll just watch. This is your baby, Greg.”

I reminded him that it was actually the professor’s baby.

The Las Vegas Workout

I played blackjack a couple of hours at Atria. I started out with a buy-in of \$275 making \$25 bets. At the end of the second hour I was making \$100 bets. In two hours I won \$1,594.

I was tired of sitting so I colored up my chips, cashed in and decided to take a break.

We drove over to Martin’s vacation home, had some liquid refreshments and continued our discussion of investments.

Around 5:00 in the afternoon, Martin asked me –

“Are you thinking the same thing I am thinking?”

“If it’s about blackjack instead of securities, I probably am. Are you game to go for another round of play?”

“Yeah, but would you like to play somewhere else?”

“Sure. You like to play downtown. Why don’t we give it a try.”

“Good.” He smiled. “They offer a great game at Main Street Station.”

We didn’t quit playing until after midnight. Martin had decided that he wanted to try the system too and we both kept track of our play.

We didn’t compare notes until we got back to his home and poured a couple of glasses of fresh squeezed orange juice.

I started out. “Well, how did you do?”

Martin set down his glass, put on his reading glasses and pulled out his notes.

“I made \$7,692 tonight.”

I almost dropped my glass. “E gads man, what was your betting level?”

“I started with \$100 bets, and by the time we quit I was making \$500 bets.”

“That’s pretty crazy. Aren’t you supposed to be conservative?”

“Sometimes conservative is just not enough. How did you do, Greg?”

My behavior just about matched Martin’s. I had started with \$100 bets and then moved up to \$300 bets as my winnings grew.

“I made \$5,435.”

Martin's eyebrows arched. "Touché," he commented.

The Lucky Nineteen Get Full Use of the Fletcher Formula

After I got back from Vegas I gave the professor a full report. After all, his deal with me was to evaluate the system and I wanted to give him an update.

I thought he might be a little upset with me for using chips to represent his gaming theory moves, but he just chuckled and said something about Occam's razor. I asked that he meant and he said the principle that the simplest explanation is more likely the correct one. In this case, using chips to represent the system was the simplest way to make the system easy to use.

I took that to mean that I hadn't totally screwed up his well intended, but somewhat awkward to use, blackjack system and he mumbled something I didn't quite catch.

I explained to Professor C. that I had just finishing visiting a gambling expert and that he advised that I test the system some more. I asked what the professor thought about that and he said something about "reductio ad absurdum" which I took as his okay.

The next day I started contacting people I knew and asked them if they wanted to work with me on testing a blackjack system. The professor did the same, as did Martin, and by the end of the week we had 22 people who agreed to test the Fletcher Formula. By the time we were ready to start the test we were down to 19. A few months later after these nineteen players had won tens of thousands of dollars, they were calling themselves "the lucky nineteen."

The rest of the story is told in this book. You will get the same system that our nineteen players have used to make hundreds of thousands of dollars playing blackjack.

You will learn that the Fletcher Formula ultimately evolved into two different versions of the strategy.

There is the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* which uses the smallest bankroll and is easier to learn. This is the version you will use to start with just \$11 playing in \$1 games online.

And there is the *Master Player Strategy* which wins more per hour, has a lower loss rate, but requires a higher bankroll.

I look forward to having you join as a Fletcher Formula winner.

Greg Fletcher

Quick Start Guide

If you are new to casino gambling and have never played blackjack you should read this entire book in the order in which it is presented.

If you are an old hand at casino gambling and already know how to play blackjack you can concentrate on just the chapters marked with an *.

* You should read this chapter to understand how to use the strategy.

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How to Play Blackjack

Blackjack is played on a semi-circular table. The game usually has six or seven spots for the players to sit. Only the most basic of rules, such as the payoff on blackjacks, dealer drawing rules and insurance payoffs, are shown on the layout. The small plaque, usually displayed next the dealer's right hand, shows the table betting limits, such as \$5 minimum, \$500 maximum.



Objective

The objective in the casino game of blackjack is to beat the dealer. Although as many as six other players may play at your table with you, each player competes individually against the dealer. You can beat the dealer in two ways. You can have a hand total greater than the dealer's without exceeding 21. Or, the dealer can bust his hand by drawing cards to a total greater than 21. The objective is not, as is described in many casino brochures, to get as close to 21 as possible without going over (*busting*). In many hands you won't even try to get close to 21.

If either the player or the dealer has an ace and a 10-valued card as his first two cards, then this hand is called a blackjack or *natural* and is usually paid off at three to two for a player. If both the dealer and player have blackjacks, the hand is a standoff or *push*, and neither the dealer nor player wins.

If you tie the dealer with a total of 21 or less, you neither win nor lose your bet for that hand. This is called a "push." The term originated from the time when a dealer would push a player's wager out of the betting area whenever there was a tie. Now, the dealer usually "knocks" on the table in front of a push indicating that a payoff or loss was not overlooked and that instead there was a tie.

Card Values

Cards numbered 2 through 10 are valued at face value. Picture cards count as 10. An Ace equals either 11 or one, at the discretion of the player. Card suits have no meaning in blackjack.

Examples: Q, 5 = 15 10, 4 = 14
 Ace, 2 = 3 or 13 2, 3, 10, 2 = 17

Hard Hands and Soft Hands

Hands with an Ace counted as 11 are called soft hands.

Examples: Ace, 5 = 16

3, Ace, 4 = 18

Ace, 10 = 21

Ace, 2, 2, 5 = 20

A hard hand is any hand which does not have an Ace or in which the Ace is counted as one to avoid exceeding a total of 21.

Example: Ace, 6, 9 = 16

Ace, 9 = 10

6, 9 = 15

10, 9 = 19

The People

Each blackjack game is conducted by a dealer who has been trained to run the game.



Blackjack tables are grouped together in an area designated a blackjack pit. Individual blackjack tables are supervised by floor personnel, called floormen, who report to pit bosses, who are supervised by shift managers, who must answer to casino managers.

A player may enter a game by sitting down at an unoccupied chair and converting cash to chips or, if playing on credit or against money deposited with the casino, signing a casino form, called a *marker*, in exchange for chips.

Wagers

The size of your bet must conform to the table's maximum and minimum limits. This range varies and is posted at each table. Some casinos allow cash wagers played inside the betting area, but normally cash must be converted to chips before playing.

Before any cards are dealt, each player must decide on the amount of his wager and place it in the designated betting area in front of him (or her), known as the *betting box* or *spot*. If several different chips are bet, they must be neatly stacked. Different denominations of chips must be arranged with the larger-valued chips on the bottom of the stack and the lesser-valued chips on top. For example, a wager of \$70 might consist of two \$25-valued "green" chips on the bottom, with four \$5-valued "red" chips stacked neatly on top.

Chips placed beside the betting area normally indicate to the dealer that the player wishes them *colored up* or *colored down*, i.e., exchanged for chips of higher or lesser value.

If you wish to make a bet for the dealer, a common tipping practice, you may place the dealer wager between the betting area and the dealer to show that a separate bet is being made for the dealer instead of an outright tip. The dealer's bet will suffer the same fate as the player's hand: if the player's hand wins, the dealer wins the *toke* or tip as well. If the hand loses, the dealer loses his tip.

Two Different Styles of Blackjack

Two different styles of blackjack are played in casinos. Single or double deck *pitch* games are dealt directly from the dealer's hand. Games with four to eight decks of cards are dealt from a shoe rather than being held by the dealer.

Playing Procedures

The dealer will convert the player's cash or marker into chips. The usual colors for chips are:

\$1.00 = white or metal token

\$25.00 = green

\$2.50 = pink

\$100.00 = black

\$5.00 = red

\$500.00 = purple

The rules that the particular casino uses are not posted anywhere on the table. If you are in Atlantic City, every casino uses the same basic rules as set by the Casino Control Commission. In Nevada, the rules vary from casino to casino and may even be different in the same casino. The Mississippi casinos use yet a different variation of playing rules, as do most international casinos. The only way to be certain of the exact rules is to ask about the rules.

To begin a new round of play, the dealer will shuffle the cards and, after the shuffle, will ask a player to cut the deck by placing a plastic *cut card* in the deck.

The dealer finishes the cut and places the cut card in a position usually two-thirds to three-fourths from the top card. The depth of the placement is known as the *penetration*. This means that from two-thirds to three-fourths of the cards will be put into play before the dealer reshuffles.

After the shuffle, the dealer will take the top card and place it in the discard tray. This card is called the *burn card* and the procedure is called *burning a card*.

Each player who wants to wager must place a bet in the circle in front of him on the table. The dealer will deal cards starting from his left to right. Each player, as well as the dealer, will receive a card in turn until each person has two cards.

The first card dealt the dealer is placed face down so that it is not visible to the players. This is called the dealer's *hole card*. The second card dealt the dealer is dealt face up and is called the dealer's *up-card*.

When casinos deal either single or double deck games, the cards are usually dealt face down. In these games, the player is permitted to pick up his cards. In games using multiple decks dealt from a box called a *shoe*, the player's cards are dealt face up. In these games players are not permitted to touch the cards.

After all the players and the dealers have received two cards, the dealer will ask each player, starting from his left and moving clockwise to the right, if he or she wants additional cards. A player may decide to just keep the two original cards and *stand*. He may ask for as many additional cards as he wants, called taking a *hit*. He also has other options such as *surrendering*, *doubling down*, *splitting pairs*, or in some instances, *taking insurance*.

If a player's hand exceeds 21, it is an automatic loss and his wager loses. After all the players have played out the hands, the dealer will complete his hand. Players who bust in drawing to their hands will have lost their wagers prior to the dealer completing his hand. Those players who did not *bust*, or exceed a total of 21, will win or lose depending on whether their card totals exceed the dealer's hand. Ties are pushes with neither the dealer nor player winning.

Signaling a Dealer

Casino blackjack is played at a rapid pace with very little conversation between the dealer and the player. Hand signals are used by players to communicate with the dealer. The only player option which is signaled verbally by the player is surrender.

In games where the cards are dealt face up and no touching or handling of the cards is permitted, the player will signal taking a hit (drawing more cards) by making a beckoning or scratching motion with his finger on the table. If he wants to stand, he will signal the dealer by waving his hand over the cards.

To split a pair in a face up game, the player will simply place the same value wager next to (not on top of) the original wager. The dealer will separate the cards, indicating a split.

To Double down, the player will place an equivalent bet or less behind his original bet.

Usually when a player splits or doubles, he will wager an amount equal to the original bet. However, if he chooses, a player may wager less than his original bet. For example, if a player has bet \$25 and receives a pair of 7s, he may decide to split the pair into two different hands. He can wager any amount up to \$25 on his second bet. If he wanted to wager only \$10 on the second hand created by splitting, this is permissible.

In games where players hold the cards, they will signal for a hit by scratching the table with their cards. To stand, a player will place his cards under his wager.

To split a pair in a hand held game, the player places the cards face up on the table above his wager and makes his second wager by placing the chips next to the original wager.

To double down in the hand held game, the player will toss his cards face up on the table and make a wager equal to or less than his original bet by placing the chips next to the first bet.

Peeking

If the dealer's up-card is a 10-valued card or an Ace, in order to save time which would be lost by playing out all hands and then having to return additional player bets made because of the players' decisions to double down or split pairs before the dealer checked to see if he had a blackjack, most casinos require the dealer to "peek" at his hole card immediately, being careful not to allow any of the players to see the card. If the hole card provides the dealer with a blackjack, the dealer exposes it at once and quickly collects all of the losing bets around the table. If you or any of the other players also has a blackjack, it is a push.

If after peeking the dealer finds that he has no blackjack, the round continues with players exercising their normal options, including making additional wagers of splitting or doubling down.

Playing Options

The dealer must play his hand in accordance with the house rules even if he has the players beaten without drawing any more cards. The dealer must draw until he has a total of 17 to 21. In some casinos, most notably in downtown Las Vegas and northern Nevada, the dealer will hit a soft 17 (A,6) or any other soft hand totaling 17 such as A,A,5 or A,4,2. This rule is disadvantageous to the players. If the dealer does not bust, he will compare his total with each of the player totals, paying the winners and collecting bets from the losers.

Player Options

In addition to making decisions to stand or hit, players have certain other options for playing out their hands. Depending on the rules of the game played, they may split any pair, double down after receiving the first two cards, surrender if this option is offered or take insurance under certain circumstances. How these options are

exercised are major contributors as to whether a player has a successful winning strategy or not.

Pair Splitting

Virtually all casinos allow the player the option of splitting the first two cards if these cards have the same value (eg. 7,7, 10,10 Q,K).

By splitting a pair, the player is changing one initial hand into two separate hands. In order to do this, the player usually doubles his initial bet. If, after splitting, he receives another card of like value, most casinos will allow him to split again, up to a total of four splits. Of course, each split requires adding an additional wager.

A player may ask for as many draw cards (hits) as he wants on a split hand. The exception to this rule occurs with split aces. In this case, nearly every casino allows only one additional draw card to each split ace. Probably the most frustrating hand in blackjack is to split a pair of Aces and then receive another Ace, for a hand totaling 12. This outcome turns one of the most promising hands into one of the most dismal.

Splitting pairs may be advantageous to a player for two reasons. First, it offers the option of turning a weak hand into two potentially stronger ones. It is always advantageous to split an 8,8, as a hand valued at 16 is the weakest possible hand. Two hands with starting totals of 8 each are better starting hands than one hand totaling 16.

Another reason a player will split pairs is to exploit a dealer's weakness as revealed by his up-card. A hand of 9,9 will be split versus a dealer's up-card of 6. With an up-card of 6, the dealer has a potential *stiff hand*, a hand to which the dealer must draw, but which can be busted with a draw if the hole card is a 6 through 10. To take

advantage of the dealer's weakness, a player would split the 9,9 to get more money on the table.

Doubling Down

Doubling down is a valuable player option in that a player may double his wager in favorable situations. The only disadvantage to the player is that when he doubles down, he may draw only one additional card. Doubling down is used in two ways to increase the player's prospects of winning a hand. A player will double down when the dealer's up-card is weak, and the dealer has a high probability of busting. Here, the purpose of doubling is to take advantage of the dealer's weakness. A player may also decide to double down if his first two cards are so strong that he is likely to win against the dealer by beating his total outright.

Surrender

The player option of *surrender* was first seen in 1958 at the Continental Casino in Manila. After a dealer determined that he didn't have a blackjack, a player could throw in his hand after any number of cards, so long as he hadn't busted. By surrendering his hand, the player would lose only half of his original bet.

In 1978, Resorts International in Atlantic City offered players the chance to surrender after receiving the first two cards, before the dealer checked for a blackjack.

This option became known as early surrender and the version first used in Manila as late surrender.

Early surrender offered too much of an advantage to knowledgeable players and was discontinued after a short trial period. It has not been offered anywhere since.



Late surrender, which is also called conventional surrender or just "surrender," is now common in Las Vegas, Atlantic City and other gambling meccas. It now consists of giving up your hand and losing half of your wager after seeing the first two cards. Surrender is permitted only if the dealer has no blackjack.

After viewing your first two cards and the dealer's up-card, you may decide that your hand is so poor that you have little chance of winning it. At this point, casinos offering surrender will allow you to give up your card and lose half of your bet, after the dealer peeks and determines that he doesn't have a blackjack. In a shoe game, you may announce your intention to surrender by simply saying aloud, "I surrender." In a single or double-deck game dealt face down, tossing your first two card face up onto the table will signal the dealer that you are surrendering the hand.

Insurance

After dealing the first round of two cards to himself and each of the players, the dealer will momentarily stop the game if his up-card is an ace. The dealer will ask the players if they wish to take insurance.

A player may insure his hand against the prospect of the dealer having a 10-valued card as his hole card and thus a blackjack. This bet is made by placing a bet in an amount up to one-half of the original wager. A winning insurance bet pays two to one and wins if the dealer does indeed have a blackjack.

Dealers will check their hole cards by peeking at them in such a way that no players can see the cards.

Here's how insurance works. Assume that a player's wager is for \$10.00 and he is dealt a 10,10. The dealer's up-card is an Ace. Before any player has the chance to complete his hand, the dealer will ask "insurance?" To make the insurance bet, the

player would place up to \$5 in front of his original bet. Assume he makes the insurance wager and bets \$5.00. After all the insurance bets are made, the dealer will peek at his hole card. Let's assume it was a ten. The dealer will turn over the ten to show the players his blackjack. The player will lose his original \$10 wager. However, his insurance wager will win and will be paid 2 to 1, for \$10.00. The net result is that the player breaks even.

If the dealer's hole card is not a ten valued card, the insurance bet is lost and the round continues with the usual player and dealer playing options.

Back-Playing

Back-playing is much more common in international games than with games in the United States. It is especially common in locales with many Asian players such as Australian casinos.

When the tables are crowded, some casinos allow players standing behind the seated players to place additional bets in the same betting boxes. The seated players must consent to this arrangement, and the back betting player is forced to abide by any decisions the seated player makes. It is customary to politely ask a seated player if you may bet with him before attempting to make a wager.

The seated player may split or double down on a hand and the back bettor may either match his original bet accordingly, wager a lesser amount, or simply refrain from making an additional wager and abide by the results of the original hand. Allowing these outside players to play in the seated players' boxes often creates confusion, especially in situations where one player will take insurance and not the other, or in situations where one player doubles or splits and the other forgoes these options.

Disputes

If your hand signal to hit or stand is misunderstood by the dealer and you are either passed over when you wanted another card or given a card when you signaled *no cards*, you may have a dispute. If the dealer does not resolve it to your satisfaction, a floor person or pit boss will be called over to mediate a resolution.

If there is genuine doubt and the wager is small, the pit bosses tend to side with the player. In a rare case, the videotape recorded by the "eye in the sky" may be consulted. I have only seen this done once, and it was for a very large wager made by a very insistent player.

Decisions made by the casino bosses are final regarding the settlement of various playing controversies.

"No-Peek" Devices

Many casinos do not allow a dealer to peek at his hole card whenever he has a 10-valued card or an Ace showing. Instead, an electronic device is used which scans the hole card and signals the dealer. The dealer simply slides the card into this device. If the dealer has a blackjack, a tiny red light comes on signaling the hand is over. If a green light shows, there is no blackjack and the hand proceeds.

The gadget is simply a safeguard designed to protect the dealer from dealer-player collusion. Since the dealer does not see the hole card, it also protects the house from dealers who inadvertently give subconscious signals called *tells* to players, and also protects the house against players who get a look at the hole card when the dealer exposes it enough for the player to see the card. Obviously, any player who knows the value of the dealer's hole card gains an edge over the casino, and use of the no-peek device prevents this.

European Rules

In most European casinos, the dealer will not take a hole card until after all players have completed their hands. In a game played this way, if you split pairs or double down against the dealer's Ace or 10-valued card, and the dealer ends up with a blackjack, you will lose all of your wagers. This is a major disadvantage for the players.

Mid-Shoe Entry

Normally entering a game of blackjack is as simple as finding an open spot at a table and making a wager in the appropriate betting box. After finishing a hand in process, the dealer will accept the newcomer into the game for the next hand.

Some casinos, especially in Atlantic City, are requiring that players enter a game only after a shuffle. Similarly, if a seated player does not play a hand, he may not be allowed to reenter the game until after the next shuffle is finished.



These procedures are implemented to thwart card counters, who may observe a game and enter it only when the count is favorable. This technique is also known as *Wonging* after Stanford Wong who first wrote about it.

Multiple Action Blackjack

In the mid-1990s, the Tropicana casino in Atlantic City introduced a twist to the blackjack game by allowing a player to make up to three separate wagers on an upcoming hand. In this game, the dealer starts with an up-card against three consecutive player bets. The player keeps the same cards versus all three dealer's hands. The hands are played like regular blackjack hands. If a player goes bust, all

three bets are lost. Splitting, doubling and insurance are available although surrender is not. This game is not recommended for players using the Fletcher Formula.

Spanish 21

You can find a version of blackjack in Las Vegas casinos called *Spanish 21*. Upon first encounter it sounds terrific. A player's blackjack beats a dealer's blackjack. A player's 21 beats a dealer's total of 21. You can surrender half of a doubled down bet after you double if you don't like the card dealt. You can take extra hits on split Aces. There are even bonuses for special hands like 7-7-7 and five card hands totaling 21.

This sounds like a wonderful version of blackjack. The only obviously disadvantageous rules for the player are that the dealer is required to hit all soft 17s and that six decks are used. So what's not to like? *They have removed all of the 10-spots from the deck!* The Jacks, Queens and Kings remain, but the deck has been depleted of 25% of its 10-valued cards. And this is enough to turn the game into one with very negative expectations for the player. Don't play Spanish 21. It can be deadly for your bankroll!

Exposed Hole Cards

Bob Stupak's Vegas World introduced a blackjack version known as *double exposure*. Although Vegas World is gone, replaced by the Stratosphere Tower, double exposure still appears from time to time. In this version of the game, the dealer's cards are dealt face up with the hole card exposed. In exchange for knowing exactly what the dealer's first two cards total, the player loses a lot. No soft doubling is allowed. Pairs may only be split once. Players win blackjack ties but lose all other ties. Blackjacks comprised of a Jack and the Ace of Spades pay double as does a total of 21 consisting of a 6, 7 and 8 of the same suit. However, normal blackjacks

only pay even money. Like Spanish 21, this is an insidious version of blackjack and should be avoided.

Incidentally, I have had some of the best craps games in my career at Stupak's version of craps called *Crapless Craps*. In this version of the game, all of the craps numbers of 2, 3, and 12 were turned into point numbers along with the 11. I can still vividly recall a lovely lady shooter establishing such points as 2, 3, 11 and 12 and then rolling number after number without any sevens appearing before hitting her points. Although, like Double Exposure Blackjack, Crapless Craps was a sucker game, it was an enjoyable one and for a shooter who could avoid rolling sevens except on come out rolls, a true delight.

The landmark casino which replaced the old Vegas World, the Stratosphere Tower, is, at 135 stories, the tallest structure in the United States west of the Mississippi. Unfortunately, Bob Stupak is no longer a fixture of this establishment, and I for one will miss his creative and often innovative variations of casino games as well as his unending and often outlandish self promotion.

Additional Player Information

1. Before sitting down to play, check the small placard to the left of the dealer for the minimum bets on the table. Don't assume that because you have previously played at the table the table minimums are the same. The \$5 minimum table you played at this morning may have become a \$10 or \$25 minimum bet table by evening.
2. To convert your cash to chips, wait until the dealer has finished a round of play, then lay your cash on the table and tell the dealer, "Chips please." The dealer will stack your chips in front of you.

3. Wagers can only be made before the dealer starts to deal.
4. You should never touch your wager after it has been made and the dealing started. If you do, you will look like a cheater, and you may come under additional casino scrutiny.
5. Never touch your cards in a game where the cards are dealt face up.
6. Be clear with your hand signals. Your hands should be kept behind your wager except when putting down an insurance bet. Remember to use hand signals at all times rather than stating "hit" or "stand." You may say "surrender" when you are surrendering a hand.
7. You may usually play up to two hands. You must make the minimum wager on each hand.
8. If you are playing and need to take a break from the table, you may ask the dealer to hold your place. The dealer will place a plastic marker in your betting circle indicating that your place is taken. Breaks of up to fifteen minutes are acceptable. If you do take a break, take your casino chips with you!

Now, we'll move on to using the correct playing strategy. This is an important step in becoming a skilled Fletcher Formula player and taking the casinos' money! I invite you to read on, even if you think you know Basic Strategy. The Fletcher Formula's Playing Strategy is much easier to learn than typical basic strategy rules.

The Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy

There are several aspects to becoming a winning player using the Fletcher Formula. Obviously, the first thing you must do is learn how to play the game. The second is to learn the best playing strategy for each combination of cards you are dealt in a game.

Basic Strategy is a system of rules for playing against every dealer up-card in the best possible manner. The strategy differs slightly, depending on the rules the casino uses for the game and on the number of decks used in a game.

The concept of a basic playing strategy began in 1953 when Roger Baldwin and his associates did the first scientific analysis of the game of blackjack. Using hand calculators, they completed voluminous calculations and derived optional playing strategies which were published in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* in 1956.

Subsequently, Baldwin and his associates published the first book describing basic strategy, *Playing Blackjack to Win*, in 1956.

If you are interested in learning how to play perfect basic strategy for any number of decks or combination of rules, you are referred to the late Dr. Peter Griffin's *The Theory of Blackjack*.

If you are already familiar with using basic strategy, then you may want to skip most of this chapter and just learn the Blackjack Attack Playing Strategy, presented on pages 57 to 59.

The modern playing strategy was first developed by removing the three cards shown by the players first two cards and the dealer's up-card from a "computerized" deck(s) of cards. Then every possible combination of cards that can be drawn were played, with the results evaluated and tabulated to show the most efficient way to play each hand. Later, as computers became more powerful and easier to use, high speed computer simulations verified the accuracy of those earlier calculations, and a correct basic strategy of play was created. With it, the casino's edge in a typical multi-deck game falls to about 1/2%.

Without counting cards, player decisions are based on two pieces of information. You know the value of the hand dealt you and you know the value of the dealer's up-card. Suppose you are dealt a hand of 10,6 totaling 16, versus the dealers up-card of 10. Should you hit or stand? You might make this play on a hunch, but the correct answer is to hit, even though you are likely to bust. Subsequent to Baldwin's work, numerous computer studies have confirmed that even though you are likely to bust by hitting, in the long run, you will lose less money taking the hit and running the risk of busting than you will by standing against the dealer ten.

Many players reason that since the house usually wins, mimicking the dealer and always hitting a hand totaling less than 16 is a viable strategy. The casino will have an edge of 5.5% over this "mimic the dealer" strategy. Blackjack players playing on hunches may give the casinos as much as a 10% to 15% advantage.

Casino playing rules also effect the casino's advantage in blackjack. The table below summarizes the effects of different rules on the casino's advantage over the player, assuming the player always plays perfect Basic Strategy (positive signs indicate the casino advantage over the player).

Single deck	No advantage
<i>Double deck</i>	+0.35%
<i>Four decks</i>	+0.52%
<i>Six decks</i>	+0.58%
<i>Eight decks</i>	+0.61%
<i>Dealer hits soft 17</i>	+0.20%
<i>Double on 10 and 11 only</i>	+0.25%
<i>Double down after splitting</i>	-0.13%
<i>Conventional surrender</i>	-0.05%
<i>Early surrender</i>	-0.62%
<i>No splitting of pairs</i>	+0.18%

With this information, it is possible to compute the casino's advantage against a basic strategy player for each different set of rules. For example, for a four deck Las Vegas Strip casino where the dealer stands on a soft 17, where any two cards may be doubled, and with no surrender allowed, the casino advantage is the same as that for a four deck game, as shown in the previous table, of 0.52%.

Playing in Atlantic City against six decks with conventional surrender, we have:

Six deck game	+0.58%
Double down after splitting	-0.13%
Conventional surrender	<u>-0.05%</u>
Casino Advantage	+0.40%

Playing on a Mississippi dockside riverboat, we might face a two deck game with doubling after pair splitting allowed. The casino's advantage is:

Two deck game	+0.35%
Double down after splitting	<u>-0.13%</u>
Casino Advantage	+0.22%

In Northern Nevada as well as Laughlin, single deck games are available, but the dealers will hit on soft 17s and doubling down is restricted to hands totaling 10 and 11 only. The casino advantage in these games is:

Single deck	-0-
Dealer hits soft 17	+0.20%
Double on 10 and 11 only	<u>+0.25%</u>
Casino Advantage	+0.47%

TYPICAL CASINO PLAYING RULES

Las Vegas Strip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealer stands on soft 17 • Doubling allowed on any two cards • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Doubling after pair splitting • Single and multiple decks • Surrender widely available
Downtown Las Vegas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealer hits soft 17 • Doubling allowed on any two cards • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Doubling after pair splitting allowed • Many single deck games • Surrender widely available
Atlantic City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealer stands on soft 17 • Doubling allowed on any two cards • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Doubling after pair splitting allowed • Mostly 2, 6 and 8 deck games • Surrender is available in some casinos
Mississippi Gulf Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealers stands on soft 17 • Doubling permitted on any two cards • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Doubling after pair splitting allowed • Mostly 2, 6 and 8 deck games • Surrender is available in some casinos
Northern Nevada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealer hits soft 17 • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Doubling on totals of 10 and 11 only • Mostly 2, 6 and 8 deck games • Surrender is not available
International - Typical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealer stands on soft 17 • Doubling on totals of 9, 10 and 11 • Multiple pair splitting allowed • Dealer takes hole card after players finish hands • Mostly 6 and 8 deck games • Surrender is not available

The preceding chart summarizes the typical playing rules for a number of different casino locations. The blackjack games you must avoid are games in which the dealer wins all ties. This rule will give the casino more than a 9% advantage over you — an insurmountable advantage to try to overcome, even using the Fletcher Formula

These playing rules are accurate as of the date of this publication, but you are advised that casinos can change the rules, and different rules may apply when you play.

The optimal way for a player to play each hand against every possible dealer up-card was derived by playing millions of blackjack hands on a simulated basis using computers.

Because of differences in playing rules between different locales, such as the difference in the way the game is played in northern Nevada and the Las Vegas Strip, and because the number of decks used in a game can affect playing strategy, most experts present a slightly different playing strategy for each variation in rules, with adjustments for multiple decks versus single deck play.

It is far too complicated to memorize pages of different charts, trying to learn slightly different strategies for each rule variation. It is simply not necessary to take this approach to beat blackjack. Learning every possible difference in how to play your hand will, at best, improve your mathematical probability of winning by 0.03%. If you make a couple of mistakes in playing strategy, because of the complexity of the rules, these will more than negate the slight advantage learning the many variations in playing strategy gives you. For these reasons, the Fletcher Formula uses only one playing strategy, which can be used in single as well as multiple deck games, with nearly every rule variation.

We shall review the applications of this strategy under the different playing options available to the player.

As you go through the pages which follow, I will present the basic strategy in several different ways. I will also go through each part of the strategy showing the reasoning behind it and giving you clues which will help you remember the strategy. **THIS INFORMATION IS PRESENTED FOR YOUR REFERENCE ONLY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEARN IT TO WIN USING THE FLETCHER FORMULA. THE FLETCHER FORMULA'S PLAYING STRATEGY IS SHOWN ON PAGES 64-67.**

Even though different basic strategies have been developed for single deck, 2 deck, 4 deck, 6 and 8 deck games, as well for different rule variations, there is not that much difference in the strategy and the version which follows contains a complete basic strategy you can use for games in the United States.

The chart on the next page contains the complete Basic Strategy. This strategy is optimal for games with four to eight decks where the dealer stands on a *soft 17*. It is excellent for a game which allows doubling down on any *first* two cards, and allows doubling after splitting. If the dealer's up-card is a 4 and you receive a pair of 3s, you should split the 3s into two hands. If you receive an 8 on the first hand for a total of 11, you should double down on this hand where doubling after splitting is allowed.

Warning: I am presenting this information for your reference only. The playing strategy used by the Fletcher Formula is much easier to learn and use.

The strategy presented here is also optimized for games where you can re-split pairs out to four hands *except for Aces*.

Complete Basic Strategy

The DEALER is showing a:

<i>YOU have:</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T	A
5-8	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
9	H	D	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
10	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	H	H
11	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	H
12	H	H	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
13 or 14	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
15	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	G	H
16 (not 8s)	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	G	G	G
17-21	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
17 (soft)	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
18 (soft)	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H
A, 2 or A, 3	H	H	H	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A, 4 or A, 5	H	H	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A, 6	H	D	D	D	D	H	H	H	H	H
A, 7	S	D	D	D	D	S	S	H	H	H
A, 8 or A, 9	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
2, 2 or 3, 3	P	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
4, 4	H	H	H	P	P	H	H	H	H	H
6, 6	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H	H
7, 7	P	P	P	P	P	P	H	H	H	H
8, 8	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
9, 9	P	P	P	P	P	S	P	P	S	S
A, A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

H = Hit S = Stand P = sPlit D = Double Down G = Give up (surrender if allowed, otherwise Hit) T = Ten-valued card

1. Never take insurance
2. Never split 5s or Ts
3. Always hit soft hands of 17 or less when doubling is not an option.

Basic Strategy — Hitting and Standing with Hard Totals

A player with a hard hand has a hand without any Aces or a hand in which an Ace must be valued as a 1 to avoid going over 21. A player will always hit a hard hand with a total of 11 or less, as there is no single card which can bust the hand.

If a player's hard hand totals 17 through 21, he will always stand, as the risk of busting is too great to draw to these hands.

If a player's hand totals 12 to 16, the player's strategy will depend on the dealer's up-card. If the dealer shows an up-card of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6, the player is more likely to stand as these are the dealer hands with a greater chance of busting. If a dealer shows a possible pat hand with an up-card of 7, 8, 9, 10 or Ace, the player is more likely to have to draw, knowing that he faces the possibility of busting, but recognizing that the dealer's possible high total has forced him to draw and face the risk of busting.

The Fletcher Formula rules for hitting and standing are fairly simple:

- 1 If the dealer has an up-card of 7 or higher, keep hitting until you have a 17 or higher.
- 2 If the dealer shows an up-card of 4, 5 or 6, stand at 12 or better. You will only hit if your hand is 11 or lower.
- 3 If the dealer has a 2 or 3, stand at 13 or higher. You will only hit if your hand is 12 or lower.

Notice that when a player draws to a soft hand, it may become a hard hand. If the player draws to an A,7 and receives a 7, he now has A,7,7, for a total of 15. Here the Ace must be counted as having a value of 1 to avoid busting. With his soft hand converted to a hard hand, the player will now use the rules for hitting and standing for hard hands. Since his total is now 15 versus a dealer's 10, he must draw again, even though his chance of busting is high.

Doubling Down

Doubling down is a valuable player option in that a player may double his wager in favorable situations. The only disadvantage to the player is that when he doubles down, he may draw only one additional card. Doubling down is used in two ways to increase the player's prospects of winning a hand. A player will double down when the dealer's up-card is so weak and the dealer so likely to bust that the player wants to take advantage of the dealer's weakness to try to double his winnings. A player may also wish to double down if his first two cards are so strong that he is likely to win against the dealer by beating the dealer's total.

The most important thing to consider in doubling down is the high probability of drawing a 10-value card. Thus, the player will double very aggressively when his totals are hard

hands of 10 or 11, as by drawing a 10-value card his totals will become 20 and 21. With a hard 9, he will double less aggressively, as the prospect of drawing to a total of 19 does not give him as strong a hand as a 20 or 21.

The player will never double on hard hands of 12 or more as drawing a 10-value card will bust his hand.

The ten factor affects doubling against the dealer stiffs. The player will double very aggressively against the dealer up-cards of 4, 5, or 6 as the dealer's probability of busting is high.

In contrast to doubling with the hard totals of 9, 10, and 11, where the player expects to beat the dealer's total, with soft hands he will double with the expectation of exploiting a dealer's stiff hand, and doubling his winnings when the dealer busts. Consequently, the player will double certain soft hands only against the dealer's stiffs of 3 to 6.

Soft hands of A,2 and A,3 are the weakest soft hands for doubling, and they will be doubled only against a dealer's weakest cards of 5 and 6.

Soft hands of A,4 and A,5 are slightly stronger candidates for doubling in a multiple deck game, and the player will double these hands when the dealer shows an up-card of 4, 5, or 6.

A,6 and A,7 are the best soft hands for doubling. Because of the high probability of drawing a ten, these hands have a good chance of becoming 17 and 18 respectively. The player will double these hands against any dealer up-cards of 3, 4, 5, or 6.

A,8 totaling 19, and A,9 totaling 20, are powerful totals in themselves. They will never be doubled as the risk of destroying a good hand is greater than the possibility of improving the profit picture by doubling.

The Doubling Rules for the Fletcher Formula are very simple:

Only double down on hands totaling 10 or 11 versus a dealer's up-card of 4, 5 or 6.

Splitting Pairs

Virtually all casinos allow the player the option of splitting pairs. In Nevada, pairs may generally be split and re-split (if a like-valued card is dealt to a pair already split), up to a total of four hands. In Atlantic City, pairs may be split only once, although a split pair may be doubled down, an option which is not offered in most Nevada casinos.

Splitting pairs may be advantageous to the player for two reasons. First, it offers the option of turning a weak hand into two potentially stronger ones. It is always advantageous for a player to split an 8,8, as a 16 total is the weakest possible hand. Two hands with starting totals of 8 each have a good possibility of becoming hands totaling 18 each.

Another reason a player will split pairs is to exploit a dealer's weakness as revealed by his up-card. A pair of 9s will be split versus a dealer's up-cards of 2 to 9, except for 7. The reason is that in each of these cases, the dealer most likely has a weaker hand than the hands the player is likely to be dealt by splitting his 9s. As in this situation, when the dealer shows a weaker up-card, the player will split his pair in order to double the amount of money bet.

Millions of computer simulated hands have shown that the real reason to split pairs in accordance with the Fletcher Formula's Playing Strategy is that this move will produce superior profits.

Some pairs will never be split. Pairs consisting of 10,10, and 5,5, will never be split regardless of the dealer's up-card. The reason should be self evident. In each of these situations, the card total dealt is powerful enough that the player has more to lose by

splitting than he is likely to gain. A 10,10 totals 20 which gives the player a high likelihood of winning. Likewise, a 5,5, for a total of 10, is an excellent starting hand, while two 5s split may give totals of 15, which are stiff hands.

These are the pair splitting rules used by the Fletcher Formula:

- Split pairs of 2s, 3s and 7s versus a dealer up-card of 2 to 7.
- Split pairs of 4s against dealer up-cards of 5 and 6.
- Split 6s against dealer up-cards of 3 to 6.
- Split 9s against dealer up-cards of 2 to 9 except for 7.
- Always split aces and 8s

Insurance

The insurance bet is an additional bet only on whether the dealer has a natural. Since the Ace is already showing, the player is wagering on whether the dealer's hole card is a ten.

Making the insurance bet does not increase or decrease the chance of winning the main bet. It is strictly a side bet and the main bet will be played to its completion regardless of the outcome of the insurance wager. If the dealer has a blackjack, then insurance pays 2 to 1. If the dealer doesn't have a ten as his down card, and therefore a blackjack, then the insurance bet loses.

It is possible to compute the disadvantage of the insurance bet. If the player is not counting cards and has no knowledge of the card played, then he can assume that the remaining cards are in the same proportion as a full deck. With tens, jacks, queens and kings all valued at 10, the proportion of 10-valued cards compared to non 10-valued cards is: 16 ten valued cards/52 total cards or 4/13. Thus the chance of winning the insurance bet is 4/13. The chance that the dealer's hole card is not a ten is computed as:
36 non ten valued cards/52 total cards, or 9/13

The expected value of an insurance wager is calculated by adding the probabilities of the outcomes multiplied by the payoffs, for:

$$\text{Expected Value of Insurance} = 4/13(2) + 9/13(-1) = -1/13 \text{ or } -7.7\%.$$

Here is the rule for Insurance for the Fletcher Formula:

Never take insurance.

Surrender and Early Surrender

Surrender, sometimes called "conventional surrender," and early surrender are options not available to the player in most blackjack games.

Early surrender was offered in the early days of Atlantic City blackjack and has not been available for years. With early surrender, a player can choose the option of surrendering half of his wager before the dealer checks to see if he has a blackjack. This option significantly reduces the house advantage. The following chart shows how to correctly use the early surrender option.

EARLY SURRENDER

Dealer Up-card	Surrender (Hard Totals)
<i>A</i>	5-7
<i>10</i>	14-16
<i>9</i>	16*
<i>* Split 8,8 instead of surrender.</i>	

With conventional surrender, the player may surrender and thereby lose half of his wager only after the dealer has ascertained that he does not have a blackjack. With conventional surrender, the surrender option is removed from the player if the dealer has a blackjack, and for this reason is not as advantageous to the player as early surrender. The chart below shows the correct strategies for conventional surrender.

CONVENTIONAL SURRENDER

Dealer Up-card		Surrender (Hard Totals)
<u>Single Deck</u>	<u>Multi Deck</u>	
10, A	9, 10, A	16*
10	10	15
10	-	7 7

**Split 8,8 instead of surrender.*

There is no provision for Surrender in the Fletcher Formula.

Review of the Complete Basic Strategy

If you haven't done so already, take a look at the Fletcher Formula's Playing Strategy on pages 57 to 59. Let's review the reasoning behind each decision shown in the table line by line.

Player's Hand is a 5-8

The smallest two-card total you can have is a 5 if we exclude a pair of 2s which are covered further down the chart. If you want to count an A,A as a 2, then you've got me on this, but you would normally think of this hand as a 12. At any rate, you can't possibly bust by hitting any hands totaling 5 to 8, and you can usually improve your position by taking any card. You will note that none of these totals is strong enough to warrant doubling down. Even though you may be tempted, don't double on an 8 when the dealer shows a 6.

Player's Hand is a 10 or 11

Next to an outright blackjack, these are the best possible starting hands you can get. While the usual Basic Strategy calls for a number of doubling situations when you hold a 10, with the Fletcher Formula we will double only versus a dealer up-card of 4, 5 or 6.

Player's Hand is a 12

A hand of 12 is basically a losing hand as are the hands totaling from 13 to 16. No matter what you do with these hands, you are most likely to lose the hand. These are the hands where your best plays are designed to minimize losses.

The basic strategy for your stiff hands is to stand against a dealer's stiff hands. The dealer will bust on hands showing a 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 up about 40% of the time, which means you will win 40% of your stiff hands by just standing.

The exceptions to this rule occurs when the dealer is showing a 2 or 3 up and you have a 12. With a 2 or 3 up, the dealer is not as weak as when he shows a 4, 5 or 6, which are the only times you do better with a 12. So, with dealer up-cards of 2 or 3, you will hit. Otherwise, stand versus the dealer stiffs.

Player's Hand is a 13 or 14

A hand totaling 13 or 14 is not a wonderful hand to start with. You will stand against any of the dealer's stiffs of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Understand that you will lose most of these hands, but you will reduce the number of times you lose by standing rather than hitting versus the dealer stiff. Of course, if the dealer shows a potential *pat hand* with a 7, 8, 9, 10 or Ace up, you must take a chance and hit.

Player's Hand is a 15

If surrender is allowed, here's a chance to use it. Surrender your 15 versus a dealer exposed card of 10. I know that it goes against the grain to give up half of your wager without a fight, but it has been proven that hitting a 15 versus a 10 results in a higher loss than just giving up one-half of the bet. If surrender is not offered, then hit the hand.

Player's Hand is a 16

This is another thrilling total to start a round with. If you can surrender, then by all means give up this hand if the dealer shows a 9, T or Ace. This is the worst possible starting hand, and you shouldn't expect to win with it. If surrender is not available, bite the bullet and take a hit versus a dealer's potential pat hand with an exposed card of 7, 8, 9, 10 or Ace. If the dealer has a stiff, you will stand with this hand. A hand totaling 16 versus a dealer's 10 is a close call, and I will have some more to say about this situation in a few pages.

Player's Hand is a 17 to 21

These are considered "pat hands" and the rule is simple. Never hit a pat hand versus any dealer up-card. You will only win with a 17 if the dealer breaks; otherwise, you are hoping for a tie at best. However, your chance of busting is greater if you hit a 17 than your odds of winning if you stand with the hand.

Player's Hand is a soft 17

If your first two cards consist of A,6, for a total of 17, you will double down versus a dealer up-card of 3 through 6. A dealer's 2 is not quite weak enough to double on, so you will hit if the dealer shows a 2.

Many players are reluctant to hit an A,6 when the dealer shows a 6. They reason that since they have the dealer beaten with a 17, they'd be better off to stand. If you stand, your odds are about even that you will beat the dealer's hand; however, if you hit, your odds improve to about 9 to 7. By taking one more card, you go from an even-money proposition to becoming a 9 to 7 favorite. And, when you double down, you have the chance to get twice the amount wagered when the odds favor your winning.

If your first two cards are other than an A,6 and you draw to a soft 17, the opportunity to double down is gone. With a soft 17, you will always hit as there is no card which can bust this hand. You will always hit a soft 17 because this is basically a weak hand. If you stand, you will beat the dealer only if he busts; otherwise, the best you can hope is to tie him. Any hand totaling 17 is a poor hand, but you will rarely hurt yourself by hitting when it is a soft total.

Player's Hand is a Soft 18

The soft 18 is one of the hands players routinely misplay. The correct way to play this hand is to hit when the dealer shows an up-card of 9, T or A and stand otherwise. If you consider the Ten Factor, this makes sense as a dealer hand with up-cards of 9, T or A will tend towards totals of 19, 20 and 21, and you must hit your soft 18 for a chance to improve it.

On the other side of the coin, if the dealer shows a 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7, you probably have it beaten with a hand totaling 18. It makes sense to stand in these cases.

Although some players may feel that a hand totaling 18 is strong enough to stand on, even against the dealer up-card of 9, T and A, it is worth the gamble to hit until you either bust or get a pat hand.

Player has an A,2 or A,3

These are basically weak hands which you will hit against any dealer up-cards except 5 and 6.

Player has an A,4 or A,5

These are slightly better starting hands than an A,2 or A,3 as soft 15s and 16s tend to become higher totals than soft 13s and 14s.

Player has an A,6

Remember, you will never stand with a soft 17. However, an A,6 gives you the opportunity to get more money down when the odds favor you. As with a starting two-card hand of 9, the 2, sometimes called the "dealer's Ace," provides the dealer with too many ways of making a pat hand and you will not risk doubling against it. When the dealer shows a 2, hit the A,6 as you will versus the other dealer up-cards of 7, 8, 9, T or A.

Player has an A,7

This is one of the trickier hands to play correctly. I commonly see players misplay this hand. However, this is a hand you want to learn to play correctly as doing so will put extra dollars in your pocket for the effort.

If the "dealer's ace" of 2 shows, we will stand. If a dealer has either a 7 or 8 showing, we will also stand. A soft 18 beats the dealer's potential 17 when he shows a 7, and we will stand versus the 8 as we can tie the dealer's potential 18 and the risk of hitting is too great in this situation.

If the dealer show a 9, T or A, he probably has us beaten if we stand. Therefore we will hit the soft 18 and continue to hit until we either bust or get a pat hand. Standing with such a soft hand versus the dealer's strongest cards is a common playing error.

Player has an A,8 or A,9

What's not to love about these hands? With the strong starting totals of 19 and 20, all you do is sit back and wait for the dealer to play out his hand, as the odds gods favor you when you start with these totals.

Player has a 2,2 or 3,3

Just as they do for the dealer, hands starting with 2s and 3s tend to make strong hands for the player. If the dealer shows a 2 to 7, you will split these hands. Splitting even against the dealer's 2 makes sense because of the strong possibility that you will draw to two-card totals of 9, 10 or 11, giving you the chance to double down. Splitting against the dealer 7 is not as obvious as splitting against his stiffs, but a dealer 7 is a fairly weak hand. The dealer will tend to make a pat hand of 17, while you, starting with a 2 or 3, enjoy the possibilities of additional splitting or doubling opportunities with a good chance of beating the dealer's total.

A dealer's up-card of 8, 9, T or A is too formidable and you will hit rather than split against these up-cards.

Player has a 4, 4

The possible gain from splitting when the dealer shows a 5 or 6 is just great enough to make this the correct play rather than hitting from a total of 8.

Player has a 6,6

This is one of my least favorite starting hands. No matter what you do, you are likely to lose with a 6,6, so our strategy calls for making the best of it. If the dealer shows a 5 or 6, we will split the pair of 6s and hope we draw a 3, 4 or 5 giving us a decent starting total and

the possibility of doubling down versus the dealer's stiff hand. I often will lose one hand and win or tie with the other when splitting 6s.

If the dealer shows a 7, 8, 9, T or A, bite the bullet, hit the hand and hope for the best.

Player has a 7,7

This hand is almost as bad as a pair of 6s. When you split a pair of 7s, you will tend towards getting two hands totaling 17 — which are winners only if the dealer busts. Here we will split the pair when the dealer shows an up-card of 2 through 7.

Player has an 8,8

Trust me. It is a lot more fun when a dealer turns over his 8 up-card and has another 8 in the hole than when you are dealt a pair of 8s. This is the worst possible total you can start with. The correct strategy is to always split a pair of 8s even if surrender is available. There is one exception to the splitting rule. If you are playing internationally where the dealer does not take a hole card until the players have played out their hands, just surrender your 16 against a dealer T or A if surrender is allowed.

Getting a 16 against a 10 is the worst possible blackjack situation. Hitting the 16, you will win three times out of thirteen. However, if you split the 8,8 into two hands starting with 8 each, you will lose less in the long run than just hitting the 16.

Player has a 9,9

You will split a pair of 9s against any of the dealer's stiff hands of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. This is obviously a good move as you will want to get more money wagered when the dealer is most likely to bust, and splitting this hand accomplishes that. If the dealer shows a 7, you will stand as your hand totaling 18 is likely to beat a dealer's hand tending towards a total of 17. The correct strategy is to split the pair versus a dealer's 8 or 9 and stand if a dealer shows a T or A. Splitting hands against a dealer's T or A is not likely to beat the dealer, so standing with your original pair of 9s is the right move. Splitting the pair against the

dealer's 8 also seems logical as the split 9s will gravitate towards two hands totaling 19, beating anything up to a dealer's 9.

Splitting the pair of 9s against the dealer's 9 is a close call, but it is the right move. There is always the possibility of drawing a 2 as the second card on each 9, setting up ideal doubling situations.

Player has an A,A

The best starting hand you can have in blackjack, other than a blackjack, is a hand totaling 11. Splitting a pair of Aces changes one mediocre hand totaling 2 or 12 into two starter hands totaling 11 each and is therefore always the right move, even against a dealer's Ace. The only exception to always splitting a pair of Aces is when playing against European rules where the dealer does not take a hole card until all player options are exhausted. Here, as with splitting a pair of 8s, you will change the main rule and just hit the pair of Aces when the dealer shows an Ace. The risk of losing your split bets is too great and, as we have seen earlier, a hand totaling 2 is not such a bad beginning total.

Player has a 5,5 or a 10, 10

You will never split pairs of 5s or 10s under any circumstances. You are always better off doubling the pair of 5s against dealer cards of 9 or less.

Unless you are a card counter, it never makes sense to split a pair of 10s totaling 20, a hand too powerful to split.

Playing Correctly is Still no Guarantee of Winning

Now that you have seen an explanation of the Fletcher Formula's correct playing strategy, you may feel like you know what to expect in a blackjack game. If you double down on an 11 versus a dealer's 4, you should win, right?

While the playing rules I have given you are the correct ones, on individual hands anything can happen. Assume your first two cards are 9,2, for a starting total of 11. The dealer's up-card is a 6, his worst possible up-card. You just wagered \$100, a large bet for you, and now you sigh with relief as you have the dealer backed into a corner. You place another hundred dollar wager on the table signaling the dealer you want to double down.

You watch in disbelief as you are dealt an Ace for a total of 12, while the dealer turns over his hole card revealing a 10,6 and then draws a 5 for a perfect 21. "What the hell happened here?" you might mutter. "This hand should have been a slam dunk win!"

You are supposed to win this hand. In fact, the odds are 2 to 1 in your favor! You should have won two out of three bets. Well, in the long run you will, but you just lost that one bet in three. It has to happen. This is the nature of gambling. Even when you have an edge, there is never any guarantee you will win any particular bet.

Have you ever hit a 16 and beat the dealer's 10-valued up-card? Of course you have. The odds are 10 to 3 against you winning this hand, but you still have a chance of winning some of the time. Most of us tend to think of low probability wins like this one as due to skill, while dealer wins of low probability plays as bad luck or even deceit.

The truth is, luck can run either way in any given hand. The key to long term success is to play each hand optimally using the correct Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy. The table below lists some of the most common hands and your odds of winning.

Odds of Player Hands Winning

<i>Hands</i>	<i>Player's Odds</i>
<i>20 versus dealer 8</i>	8 to 1 favorite
<i>20 versus dealer 4</i>	5 to 1 favorite
<i>19 versus dealer 10</i>	8 to 7 favorite
<i>19 versus dealer 3</i>	5 to 2 favorite
<i>18 versus dealer 10</i>	7 to 5 underdog
<i>18 versus dealer 5</i>	8 to 5 favorite
<i>17 versus dealer 9</i>	5 to 2 underdog
<i>17 versus dealer 7</i>	5 to 4 underdog
<i>17 versus dealer 2</i>	4 to 3 underdog
<i>16 versus dealer 10</i>	10 to 3 underdog
<i>15 versus dealer 10</i>	3 to 1 underdog
<i>15 versus dealer 2</i>	9 to 5 underdog
<i>12 versus dealer 5</i>	7 to 5 underdog
<i>11 versus dealer 6</i>	2 to 1 favorite
<i>10 versus dealer 2</i>	3 to 2 favorite
<i>A,5 versus dealer 3</i>	even money
<i>A,3 versus dealer 5</i>	9 to 7 favorite

The Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy

The Playing Strategy you will use for the **Fletcher Formula** reduces the number of times that you will double down or split pairs. This is done in the interest of controlling the size of your wagers and further limiting the times that you will be called on to wager more on a hand. Once we cover the **Fletcher Formula's** Betting System, you will better understand when this is done.

At any rate, in using this “simplified playing strategy” very little in playing effectiveness is lost, while a great deal is gained in money management.

A Summary of the Blackjack Attack Playing Strategy

Rule 1. If the dealer has an up-card of 7 or higher, keeping hitting until you have a hard hand of 17 or higher.

Rule 2. If the dealer shows an up-card of 4, 5 or 6, stand at a hard hand of 12 or better. You will only hit if your hand is 11 or lower.

Rule 3. If the dealer has a 2 or 3, stand at a hard hand of 13 or higher. You will only hit if your hand is 12 or lower.

Rule 4. Only double down on 10 or 11 versus a dealer up-card of 4, 5 or 6.

Rule 5. Splits are handled as follows:

- Split pairs of 2s, 3s and 7s versus a dealer up-card of 2 to 7.
- Split pairs of 4s against dealer up-cards of 5 and 6.
- Split 6s against dealer up-cards of 3 to 6.
- Split 9s against dealer up-cards of 2 to 9 except for when dealer shows a 7.
- Always split aces and 8s

Rule 6. Never take insurance.

Learning the Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy

For your convenience, a "pocket size" version of the Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy is presented on the next page. You may make a photocopy of this chart and carry it in your pocket while you are learning basic strategy. This way, you can pull the chart out and study it for a few moments at a time. Most persons learn better by exposing themselves over and over to the same information for short time periods rather than by

trying to spend a large amount of time memorizing everything in one session. The pocket card will be a handy reference tool for you.

After you have become very familiar with the playing strategy, you should try writing it down from memory. Another good learning tool is to create a set of index cards. The cards should have the dealer up-card and the player cards on one side and the correct play on the reverse.

Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy Pocket Card

<p style="text-align: center;">Fletcher Formula</p> <p><u>Splitting:</u> A,A 8,8 vs All dealer hands 9,9 vs 2-9 except 7 6,6 vs 3-6 4,4 vs 5-6 2s, 3s and 7s vs 2-7</p> <p><u>Doubling Down:</u> 11, 10 vs. 4, 5, 6</p> <p><u>Hitting & Standing:</u> Hard 11 or lower always hit Hard 17 or higher always stand Hard 12-16 stand vs dealer 4,5, or 6 Hard 13-16 stand vs dealer 2 or 3</p> <p><u>Insurance</u> Never take insurance.</p>
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Once you have the cards prepared, you can go through them looking at the dealer up-card and player cards and then describe the strategy. Put the cards you answered correctly aside and spend more time reviewing the cards you missed until you are able to give the correct answer for every playing option.

You can also practice with a deck of cards. I learned basic strategy many years ago practicing with cards. Deal one card as the dealer's up-card and two as the player cards. Decide on the correct strategy. If you are not sure, check the strategy card above.

Blackjack Myths and Player Errors

Many gamblers focus on events which have no bearing on the real outcome of a game. Gambling does many things to people. It changes otherwise rational people into somewhat irrational, superstition-ridden players. Superstition tends to generate myths. Two of the most common ones which come instantly to mind are the belief shared by craps players that if one die flies off the table during the shooter's roll, a seven will show on the next roll. It is easy to see how this superstition turned into a bona fide belief. Since a seven appears once every six dice rolls anyway, it is easy to remember the times it appeared immediately after one of the dice left the table.

The second gambling myth, which is very common, is the belief that the order of cards in blackjack is affected by the players errors; hence, you should avoid a table of amateurs, since they make the most playing mistakes.

Gambling is full of myths and if you want to become a serious, winning blackjack player, you need to forget the myths and instead focus on the concepts which really can affect your ability to win or lose the game.

The Negative Expectancy

There is a widespread belief that many gamblers adhere to. How many times have you seen a gambler start out making \$5 or \$10 bets. Then, after losing four or five bets in a row, he will raise his bets to \$25 or even \$50. Why does he do this? Many players feel like they are due to win a bet.

If the bettor continues to follow this line of reasoning, he may end up losing all of his gambling bankroll in short order because the hoped for string of winning bets never showed.

Many experts like to use examples like this to disparage any types of betting progressions, smugly opting that they all must fail because it is impossible to predict

the outcome of the next decision in a casino game. The experts will point out that having lost four or five bets in a row is no guarantee that you will win the next bet or even one of the next four or five bets.

There are many different ways that it can be proven that previous decisions in games of chance like craps, roulette and baccarat have no bearing on the outcome of future decisions. Even card counters would argue that in blackjack a loss of four or five consecutive decisions does not increase the probability of winning unless the dealer has used an abundance of low-valued cards leaving the unplayed cards with a surplus of high cards. This condition tends to favor the player and could influence the outcome of future hands.

The experts' argument can be boiled down to a simple statement: If you are a gambler and consistently raise your bets after losses, hoping that fate will intervene and give you a winning streak to counter the losses, you will be doomed to lose.

This statement, when made by proponents of card counting, is considered a *quid pro quo* type of damning statement against any type of betting system other than card counting ever having any chance of winning at blackjack. These experts believe that it is impossible to win consistently over the long-term against any games of chance where the house has an edge over the player.

The expert argument then concludes with the reasoning that the only way that blackjack can be beaten is by learning to count cards.

The premise that the player's negative expectancy must always catch up with him and cause him to lose is based on the player playing nonstop until infinity. Players don't play that way. Our focus is on short-term play using the player's options of leaving a table with winnings intact, or stopping play under certain circumstances.

Let's assume that losing four bets in a row at blackjack is a sign that this particular table may be too tough for us to beat. We could opt to simply walk away and look for a different table. We may not chose to act the way our critics chose to portray us. We may decide to quit rather than fight a decidedly negative trend.

On the other hand, after a couple of losing bets, we may decide to raise our wager using the reasonable expectation that most trends in blackjack are short lived, and raising our bet after a losing wager may be one of the smartest moves we can make if we want to win consistently.

One of my favorite examples refuting the experts' claim that games with negative player expectancies can't be overcome was given by Frank Barstow in *Beat the Casino*. He presented an example of using a simple arithmetic betting system to win at a game offering the opportunity to wager on even-money bets. He used craps for his example, but he just as easily could have used roulette, baccarat or even blackjack. However, using blackjack for a test of wagering on even-money bets is a little less clear because of the effect of doubling down and splitting pairs on the amount wagered.

Here's the system. You will start wagering \$1, betting only on the pass line at craps. After each bet, you will raise the next bet by \$1 regardless of whether you have won or lost the previous bet. You will stop each game when you have a profit.

Barstow picked an extreme case to test this betting strategy. He found a sequence of craps decisions starting with only four pass line decisions in the first 27 decisions. He had to continue wagering for some time, eventually investing almost \$13,000 in wagers, with his bets reaching \$160 before he won.

He concludes with the observation that in a trial of 500 or more decisions, it would be virtually impossible to lose using this progression. I wouldn't go so far as to state that it would be virtually impossible to lose, as even this progression could run into

the house limits on the maximum size bet allowed, and therefore, not be allowed to continue.

The point here is that a progression can be used to over-come games with negative expectancies and win on a consistent basis.

There are other strategies with better risk-reward ratios than this "foolproof system." Interestingly, this "increase each bet by \$1" system was being sold some years ago as a "foolproof" way to win at Blackjack.

Don't Change the Order of Cards

Many players object to a new player joining a blackjack game in the middle of a shoe. I have been asked to please wait until the next shuffle before beginning to play. The player's request that I stand by until a new shuffle is based on the superstition that the order of cards in this particular round of 200 to 300 cards has been set and that my entry will disrupt the order of cards.

Winning players are more likely to be concerned about keeping the order of cards than losing ones. Losing players may very well welcome my entry, hoping that I will change the order of cards for the better.

There is no substance to this belief. Even expert card counters have no idea whether the next card will be favorable or unfavorable to them. They only know that the remaining undealt cards may be neutral, may favor the dealer, or may be favorable to the player. Having this information still gives no clue as to what the next card, or even the next two or three cards might be.

Let's take a little test here. If the dealer spreads out the undealt cards in a fan shape face down and offers to let you pick your next card, do you think that you could do better than merely accepting the next card normally dealt? Unless you are

clairvoyant, it is not likely that your guess would improve your odds of winning. Why, then would it make any difference whether another player joins the table.

If a new player joins the table and changes the order of cards, might not it work against the dealer instead of the players? The answer is that there is no basis in fact for believing one way or the other.

If you want to believe that your luck, karma, or fate is tied up in the order of cards, then you have to consider that my joining a game may very well be part of this plan, and that by objecting to my entry, you are setting up the very series of events which will cause you to lose.

Many casinos today, especially in Atlantic City, are posting signs on the tables reading "No Mid-shoe Entry." This, in effect, bars you or me from entering a game before the next shuffle. You are most likely to see these signs at higher stake games. Superstitious players believe that this rule was implemented to protect the seated players against new players taking *their cards*, and changing the order of cards.

The casino bosses have probably justified this rule to pacify their high rollers, but this rule also has the effect of preventing card counters from standing back and counting and then "Wonging in" or jumping in when the count is favorable to the players.

Casinos enacting this rule have little to lose as they can thwart a card counting strategy while placating some of their higher betting players.

Bad Players at the Table Can Hurt You

Imagine that you are seated at a table with three other players at the last spot at the



table, at third base. The dealer's up-card is a 3. The three other players have stood with a 13, 16 and 14. Two of the three players have monster bets out. Now all eyes are on you. You are trying to remember the correct basic strategy rule.

"Should I hit or stand with a 12 against the dealer's 3." You are aware of the pressure. You finally decide to stand (the correct basic strategy is to hit until you have a total of at least 13). The dealer turns over his hole card revealing a 10 for a total of 13. Next he draws a 8 for a perfect 21. Everyone at the table groans. If you had followed basic strategy, you would have hit and gotten the 8. The first card dealt on the next round is a Jack. This would have been the dealer's bust card if you had taken a hit instead of standing.

Two of the players make some pointed comments to you about learning how to play and leave the table. The third player remains, seething. Meekly, you decide to leave the table after the next round of cards is dealt.

Has this ever happened to you? Many players are convinced that if a player misplays his hand the other players are hurt. This becomes especially obvious if the player is in the hot seat at third base, making the last hitting or standing decision before the dealer completes his hand.

If the other players disagree with the third baseman's play, they often make their objections known, sometimes loudly and crudely. Have you ever been one of the accusers in this type of display?

What if you were the one who stood with a 12 versus a dealer 3? Obviously, the table is expecting you to take a hit. Does your decision really have any effect on the next card? What if the dealer suddenly reached into the deck and reversed the next two undealt cards? What should you do now? Does this have any affect on your decision? The other players are still watching you, hoping that your decision will be the one that gives the dealer the bust card. But what should you do now?

The truth of the matter is that you should play your hand in the best way possible for yourself. You can never know when the next card will be the dealer's bust card or will make his hand. The feeling that bad players somehow hurt good players is another superstition. A player's error is just as likely to help another player as is his playing perfect basic strategy.

Don't worry about playing with bad players. Sometimes they improve the game and at other times their mistakes may hurt you. It all averages out.

If you are on third base? Just shrug off any heat you get from other players. For various reasons, I prefer to play in the first seat at the table, called *first base*, or in one of the middle chairs. However, I usually have more choices because I play at tables with \$100 or higher minimum wagers. If you are playing at \$5 or \$10 minimum wager tables, you may face more crowded conditions and be forced to sit at third base. My advice is to use the correct Power Blackjack Basic Strategy, which, as you will see in a few chapters, will sometimes vary from basic strategy. If the other players don't like your play, they can play elsewhere. You can take some satisfaction in that it is usually players who are losing themselves who make the most noise, and you can observe your own stacks of chips won, smile at the losers, and just shrug your shoulders. The proof is in the pudding as they say.

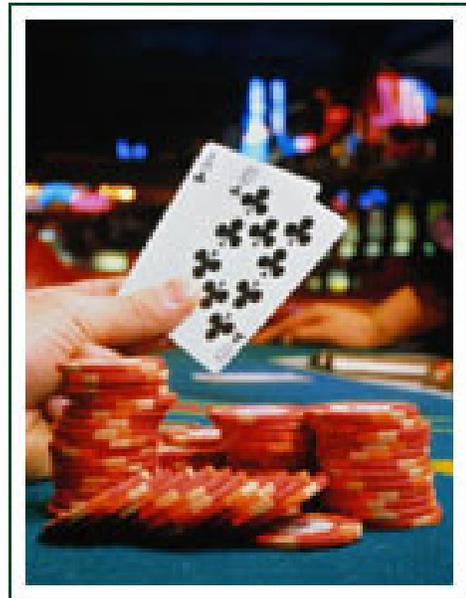
Insure a Good Hand?

In general, the only relevant factor in deciding whether or not to take insurance is the probability that the dealer has a 10-valued hole card with the Ace showing.

Insurance is only a proposition or side bet, and should be considered a totally separate event from the cards dealt the player.

For a non card counter, the general rule is to never take insurance. Many players, and even casino personnel, will advise you to insure a hand with a high total such as 20, but not a low totalled hand such as one totaling 6. This really makes no sense at all. In fact, insuring a 20, when you just took two tens out of circulation (assuming you don't have an A,9), would be the worst time to take insurance, since you just reduced the probability that the dealer has a 10-valued card in the hole.

If you are dealt a blackjack and the dealer has an Ace as his up-card, he will ask you if you want "even money." Many players will accept this proposition without realizing that this is the same as insuring the blackjack. Consider three players each receiving a blackjack with \$10 bets up with the dealer showing an Ace up. The dealer offers insurance and the first player accepts, putting a five dollar chip in the insurance betting area of the table. The second player says "I'll take even money," while the third player declines the wager.



The dealer turns over his hole card and has a 9 — not a blackjack. The first player, who took insurance loses his insurance bet of \$5 but is paid \$15 for the blackjack, netting \$10. The second player, who took even money, gets \$10. Only player three, who refused insurance, receives \$15 as full pay for the blackjack. The first and second players received \$10 each, showing that there is no difference between insuring a blackjack and taking even money.

In general, the insurance rule for the Fletcher Formula is simple. The rule for playing the Fletcher Formula is: **don't take insurance unless you have a blackjack and the dealer shows an ace as his up-card.**

Doubling Down for Less Money

When you double down, you don't have to match your original bet when you decide to "double." Instead you can make a wager for a lesser amount.

Players may decide to double for less whenever they are either unsure whether they should double, or even if they know doubling is the correct procedure, but they are concerned about the size of the bet required, usually because the original bet is large compared to the size of their average bets.

You will want to remember that the doubling situations recommended as part of the Blackjack Attack Playing Strategy are based on doubling for the full amount allowed, an amount equal to your original bet. If you decide not to double down for the full amount, you are better to take a hit rather than doubling for a lesser amount.

Commonly Misplayed Hands

Playing some hands correctly seems to defy common sense or they are at least more difficult for players to play correctly than others. I have listed some of the hands I have observed other players having the most difficulty playing correctly.

Player has a 12 vs. a dealer's 3. Many players who have learned basic strategy can't remember whether to hit or stand on this hand. They remember that a dealer showing a 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 has a potential stiff hand, but they can't quite remember whether to hit or stand in this situation. So they stand. The correct move is to hit against a dealer's 2 or 3 until you have at least a 13. Here, the correct move is to hit.

Player has a 16 vs. a 7. Most players recognize that you have no choice but to hit this stiff hand against a dealer's 9 or 10. But when the dealer is only showing a 7, many players wimp out and stand with a 16. This is actually "bass ackwards" as my Dad used to say.

You have a better chance hitting a 16 versus a dealer's 7 than a high card such as 9 or 10. Hitting against the higher cards, if you avoid busting, you are still likely to lose if you catch a 2 or a 3. Against a 7, that same deuce may turn you into a winner!

Player has a 3,3,A vs. a dealer's 4, 5 or 6. Wow, a 17 against a dealer's worst stiff cards. Time to stand, no? Actually I just threw another soft 17 at you but with several cards. Dealers should call out both totals when you have a soft hand. This hand is a 7 or a 17. Most likely the dealer will only announce a 17 and you, seeing the dealer's stiff card will stand. But this would be the wrong move. With a multi-card soft 17, you no longer have the opportunity to double against a dealer's 3 to 6, so you will hit. As you will recall, you will always hit a soft 17 as there is no single card which can bust you, and 17 is a very weak hand to stand on.

Player has a 9,9 vs. a dealer's 9. Are you tempted to stand with a hard 18? If you do, you will only win four times out of ten. But a player's 9 versus a dealer's 9 is almost an even money bet. It may go against your better instinct, but the correct move is to split the pair of 9s versus the dealer 9.

Player has 8,8 vs. a dealer's 10. This is blackjack's worst possible hand. You may be tempted to surrender the hand where surrender is offered, but the correct strategy is to split the pair of 8s. Even though you'll have to put more money down to split the pair, over the long term splitting loses less than half the money as hitting the 16 against the 10. Another way of stating this, is that even though this is a losing hand, you will lose less in the long run by splitting instead of either hitting or standing.

Fletcher Formula Basic Betting

The Fletcher Formula utilizes a totally automatic betting strategy.

Unlike card counting, which requires that you constantly calculate the size of your bets, with the Fletcher Formula you never have to worry about how much to increase the size of your wagers as card conditions change.

It has some characteristics of betting progressions, but it is not a betting progression. Betting progressions have fixed rules about increasing or decreasing the size of your wagers following wins or losses while the Fletcher Formula does not.

For example, if you use a Martingale type of betting progression, you will start with a small bet and double it after every loss. The theory of this strategy is that whenever you eventually win a wager, you will win the amount of your original betting unit.

Here is an example of a Martingale betting series: 1 2 4 8 16 32 64 128 256 and so on.

These types of betting progressions produce frequent wins with occasional very large losses.

Unlike a Martingale Progression, Fletcher Formula Betting does not use a fixed betting progression.

In addition, Fletcher Formula Betting has a built-in money management system. If you follow the rules you really can't get in too much trouble even when you lose.

And, as we will see, you will win a lot more frequently than you will lose using this strategy.

The Fletcher Formula's basic betting series consists of three bets which always start at the same size.

The starting series of three bets is called a Level 1 Betting Series.

With Level 1 betting, each starting wager is equal to the size of your smallest bet.

If you are a \$1 bettor, your starting bets will consist of three bets of \$1 each.

If you are a \$5 bettor, your Level-1 bets will be three \$5 bets.

And so on.

For our examples we will use \$10 base bets. This is a large enough base bet that you can use it in most land-based blackjack games. And, if you are thinking of online play you can mentally reduce our examples of \$10 bets to \$1 Base bets, a common size bet for online blackjack play.

To get started playing you will always set up three Level-1 bets in a row in front of you. If you are playing online you can write down the amounts. If you are playing in a casino you can use chips to represent the bets.

As a \$10 bettor your three starting bets will look like this –
\$10 \$10 \$10

You will use these chips to make your wagers.

Here are the basic rules for betting using these bets.

1. Always wager from left to right. If a bet is lost, do not replace it. For reference purposes we will refer to the chips by location as Spots 1, 2 and 3. We will show the chips used for a wager in **bold**.

Examples:

1. Wager the chips in Spot 1 and lose.

Bets before the wager:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	10	10

Bets after losing the wager:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips		10	10

2. After losing the first wager, we bet the chips in Spot 2 and lose. After losing this bet, we have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips			10

3. After losing the second wager, we bet the chips in Spot 3 and lose. After losing this bet, we have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips			

At this point we have lost all three of the bets in the series. Whenever this happens we will set up a new Series of bets called Level-2 bets. For \$10 base betting, the Level-2 bets will consist of three \$20 bets like this:

Level-2 Bets

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	20	20	20

We will make the Level-2 bets in the same manner, wagering from left to right.

Before we move up to Level-2 bets, lets go back to Level-1 and see what happens when we win a wager.

Let's start with the beginning set of bets for Level-1 bets and wager the chips in Spot 1 as follows:

1. Here are our bets before making the wager:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	10	10

We start out wagering the chips in Spot 1. If we win the bet will we add our winnings to the chips in Spot 2.

After we add the winning chips, the betting series will look like this:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	20	10

2. We make our next wager using the chips in the left hand spot, which is Spot 1 in this case. Let's assume we win

After the win we notice that Spot 2 already has had winning chips added to it. Since we have already added a win to Spot 2 we will add this win to Spot 3. So after winning this wager and adding the amount won to Spot 3 we have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	20	20

3. Let's continue to bet. We wager the chips in Spot 1 again and win yet again. Since we already have added wins to Spots 2 and 3, we will add this win to Spot 1.

After we add the chips to Spot 1, our bets look like this:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	20	20	20

4. Let's continue this example.

Since we have chips in Spot 1 we wager these chips next, betting \$20. Let's assume we lose.

After a loss we don't replace the lost chips and our betting series looks like this:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips		20	20

1. There are no chips in Spot 1 so we use the chips in Spot 2 to make the next bet. We bet \$20 and win. After a win, if we have empty spots we will replenish them. We will replenish the chips in Spot 1. After replenishing Spot 1, our betting series will look like:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	20	20	20

I am sure that you had no trouble following these examples. The basic betting rules are:

Rule 1. Set up chips in Spots 1, 2 and 3 representing bets to be made.

Rule 2 Always wager using chips from left to right. If there are chips in Spot 1, use these chips to make a bet. If there are no chips in Spot 1, wager the chips in Spot 2. If there are no chips in Spot 2 wager the chips in Spot 3.

Rule 3. If a bet is lost do not replace the lost chips.

Rule 4. As bets are won add winnings to Spot 2 first, then Spot 3 and finally to Spot 1.

Rule 5. If there is an empty spot and you win, replenish the chips in the empty spot.

Rule 6. If all chips in Level-1 are lost, move up to Level-2 next.

We need to add a couple of more rules to handle bets and payoffs unique to blackjack

Rule 7. If you win a blackjack, only add the amount of the base bet to the betting series. For example, if you bet \$10 and receive \$15 for a blackjack, only add \$10 to the betting series. The extra \$5 is placed with the remainder of your chips called your *Reserve Chips*.

Rule 8. If you need to make a split or doubled bet you can borrow the extra chips from your Reserve. If you lose the bet do not remove more than the single unit taken from the spot. For example, you make a Spot 1 bet of \$10 and decide to double down. You will borrow the extra \$10 from the Reserve Chips and wager \$20. If you lose the bet, you will only remove the original \$10 bet from the betting series.

Rule 9. If you win a doubled or split bet only add the winnings for a single bet to the betting series. For example, you bet \$10 from Spot 1, double the bet and win \$20. You will only add \$10 of the winnings to the betting series. You will return \$10 of your win to your Reserve.

You will find that generally you will win more often than you lose when you split or double so that borrowing and then replenishing your reserve will usually be to your benefit

Let's take a look at a series of bets where we have a mixture of wins and losses and see how we apply the rules:

We'll start with the beginning set of Level-1 bets and wager the chips in Spot 1 as follows:

1. Here are our bets before making the first wager:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	10	10

We will wager the chips in Spot 1. Assume that we win the bet. We will add the amount won to Spot 2, so that we have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	20	10

2. We wager the chips in Spot 1 for the next bet and lose. After the loss, we have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips		20	10

3. We wager the chips in Spot 2 of \$20 and win. After this win we will first replenish the lost chips of \$10 in Spot 1. This gives us:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	20	10

Since we won \$20 for the last bet we still have \$10 left of our win. In this case we revert to the order of adding winnings to our Spots. Since we already have added winnings to Spot 2 we add the remaining \$10 to Spot 3. After distributing our \$20 win, with \$10 going to Spot 1 and \$10 going to Spot 3, we will have:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	20	20

Sample Game Using Level-1 Bets

Let's take a look at a sample game using Level-1 Bets of \$10 each.

Here is an explanation for each column:

- This is for reference only and shows the number of the round of play

Bets Before Round - This shows how the Level-1 bet appears before making any bets for the round. The chips used for the bet are shown in **bold**. For example before we bet in Round 1 our bets are **10 10 10**. We make our wager using the chips in Spot 1, shown in **bold**.

Wager Made – This is the amount of the wager(s) made for each round. The amount of the original bet placed before the deal starts is called a Regular bet and shown as R. The wager of R-10 shown on the first round indicates a \$10 Regular bet. Additional bets made on the same round of play are designated S for Split and D for Doubled.

Total Bet – This the total amount bet on a round. In Round 2 we doubled our original bet. The bets are shown as R-10 and D-10 for Regular and Doubled amounts. The total amount bet was \$20.

Outcome – This shows the results of the round of betting, where W = a win, L= a loss and P = a push. In Round 1 where we lost, we show the loss as L-10.

Amount Won or Lost for Round – Here we show the total amount won or lost for the round of play. In Round 2 we doubled our regular bet of \$10 and won with a net win of +20 for the round.

Running Total - Here we keep tabs of where we stand after each round of play. For example, after losing \$10 in Round 1 our Running Total is -10.

Sample Game 1

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push

Bold = Amount used for bet

#	Bets Before Round	Wager Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
2	10 10	R-10 D-10	20	W-20	+20	+10
3	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+20
4	10 20 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	+10
5	20 10	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+30
6	10 20 20	R-10	10	L-10	-10	+20
7	20 20	R-20 S-20	40	P	-	+20
8	20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+40
9	20 20 20					

Let's go through this series of bets one round at a time.

Round 1. We set up our Level 1 bets as 10 10 10 and wager the chips in Spot 1. We make a Regular wager of 10 which loses.

Round 2. Following the loss in Round 1 there are no chips in Spot 1. We wager the chips in Spot 2. We are dealt a hand requiring doubling. We borrow the extra \$10 needed to double the bet from our Reserve Chips. We win the bet of \$20. We return the \$10 borrowed to our Reserve Chips and replenish Spot 1 so that our original bets are restored.

Round 3. We wager the chips in Spot 1 and win. We add the amount won to Spot 2.

Round 4. We wager the chips in Spot 1, betting \$10 and lose the bet.

Round 5. We have no chips in Spot 1, having lost them in the last round of betting. We bet the chips in Spot 2 and win. With a win of \$20 we add \$10 to

Spot 3 and replace the lost \$10 in Spot 1.

Round 6. We wager the \$10 in chips in Spot 1. We lose the bet.

Round 7. Since we have lost the chips in Spot 1 we wager the \$20 in Spot 2. We are dealt a pair of 8s which we split. We borrow \$20 from our Reserve Chips to make the bet. We push on the bet, winning one split pair and losing the other. We return the \$20 borrowed to our Reserve Chips and restore the betting series to its position before we made the bet.

Round 8. We wager the chips in Spot 2 of \$20 and win. With this win we first restore the amount lost in Spot 1 of \$10. This leaves us \$10 of winnings left to distribute. Since Spots 2 and 3 already have previous wins added to them we place the remainder of our win in Spot 1. We now have bets of 20 20 20.

Adding Levels 2 and 3 to the Betting System

So far we have only used Level 1 bets. The complete betting system uses bets in three levels.

For a \$10 bettor the starting position for each level will be as follows:

Level 1 Bets

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	10	10

Level 2 Bets

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	20	20	20

Level 3 Bets

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	40	40	40

These bets can also be shown in a matrix as follows:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1 bets	10	10	10
Level 2 bets	20	20	20
Level 3 bets	40	40	40

Rule 10. Whenever we lose all of the bets at a Level we will move up to the next higher level of bets. If we lose all of the bets in Level 1, we will continue to play, setting the bets in Level 2. If we also lose the bets in Level 2, we will set up the bets in Level 3 and continue to play.

When we move from one level to another we will add another rule:

There will be a maximum of four wins at any level. If we win four bets at Level 2 we will drop back to making Level 1 bets. If we win four bets at Level 3, we will drop back to Level 2.

If we win four bets in Level 1, we will restore the series to its original position as if we were just starting a game.

Rule 11. We will play until we reach or exceed a Profit Goal equal to five times the size of our Base Bet. Using \$10 Base Bets we will look for a Profit of $5 \times 10 = \$50$. Once we reach our Profit Goal we will call the game completed and quit playing.

Rule 12. We will use this rules when we recover from a losing position. If we are losing and the game has lasted longer than 15 rounds of play, we may decide to settle for recovering most of our loss and not continue to play for a full win. For example, lets assume we have a loss for the game of -50 . We are at Level 2 and win three bets in a row giving us a net win of $+10$. At this point we will have played for 18 rounds and we may decide to settle for a win of $+10$ rather than continuing to play.

The best way to illustrate the system is to go through a game. The next chapter has several sample games using all of the betting levels.

Sample Games Using Three Levels of Betting

Tracking three levels of bets is not much more difficult than tracking bets at one level. However, we will now need to keep Rule 10 in mind and limit the number of wins at any betting level to a total of four wins.

Here is an explanation of the format used for tracking games:

- This is for reference only and shows the number of the round of play

Level – This is the Betting Level, where 1, 2 and 3 represent the three levels.

Wins at Level – We keep track of the number of wins at each level. We can use chips to represent a win with a chip added to our stack for each additional win. Each row shows the number of wins after the round of play.

Bets Before Rounds - This shows how the Level-1 bet appears before making any bets for the round. The chips used for the bet are shown in **bold**. For example before we bet in Round 1 our bets are **10** 10 10. We make our wager using the chips in Spot 1, shown in **bold**.

Wager Made – This is the amount of the wager(s) made for each round. The amount of the original bet placed before the deal starts is called a Regular bet and shown as R. The wager of R-10 shown on the first round indicates a \$10 Regular bet. Additional bets made on the same round of play are designated **S** for Split and **D** for Doubled.

Total Bet – This is the total amount bet on a round. In Round 3 we doubled our original bet. The bets are shown as R-10 and D-10 for Regular and Doubled amounts. The total amount bet was \$20.

Outcome – This shows the results of the round of betting, where W = a win, L = a loss and P = a push. In Round 1 where we lost, we show the loss as L-10.

Amount Won or Lost for Round – Here we show the total amount won or lost for the round of play. In Round 2 we doubled our regular bet of \$10 and won with a net win of +20 for the round.

Running Total - Here we keep tabs on where we stand after each round of play. For example, after losing \$10 in Round 1 our Running Total is –10.

Sample Game 2

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

Bold = Amount used for bet

Profit Goal = \$50

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	1	0	10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
2	1	1	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
3	1		10 10 10	R-10, D-10	20	L-20	-20	-20
4	1	2	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-10
5	1	3	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
6	1		10 20 10	R-10	10	P	-	-0-
7	1		10 20 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
8	1	4	20 10	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+10
9	1	1	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-BJ-15	+15	+25
10	1	2	10 20 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+35
11	1		10 20 20	R-10	10	L-10	-10	+25
12	1		20 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	+5
13	1		20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-15
14	2	1	20 20 20	R-20, D-20	40	W-40	+40	+25
15	2	2	20 40 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+45
16	2		20 40 40	R-20	20	L-20	-20	+25
17	2		40 40	R-40	40	W-40	+40	+65

A round by round explanation of this game follows:

Round 1. We set up our Level 1 bets of 10 10 10 and wager the chips in Spot 1. We make a regular bet of 10 (no splits or doubling) and lose the bet. We record a loss for the round of -10 and a Running Total of -10.

Round 2. We now have chips left in Spots 2 and 3. We use the chips in Spot 2 to make a bet of 10 and win. We record the win in the third column “Wins at Level” as our first win at this level of play.

Round 3. Since we won the last bet we replace the lost chips in Spot 1. Our Betting Series is now restored to its original position. We use the chips in Spot 1 to make the wager. We receive a doubling hand and borrow \$10 from the Reserve Chips. We lose the bet.

Round 4. We have chips in Spots 2 and 3 only. Even though we lost \$20 on the previous bet we only remove the original bet of \$10 from Spot 1. We make a new wager using the chips in Spot 2 and win. We record the win and see that we now have 2 wins for this betting level.

Round 5. Our bets have been restored to their original positions. We make a bet using the chips in Spot 1 and win. We record win number 3 for this betting level and place our win on top of the Spot 2 chips.

Round 6. We wager \$10 from Spot 1 and push.

Round 7. We wager \$10 from Spot 1 and lose the bet.

Round 8. Having lost our chips in Spot 1 we are left with Spot 2 and Spot 3 bets. We make a \$20 bet using Spot 2 chips and win. With this win our Running Total is at +10. We record the 4th win for this level. With four wins we have completed all of the bets we will make for this level. We set up new Level 1 bets for the next round of betting.

Round 9. We start with a new set of Level 1 bets. We bet the chips in Spot 1 and receive a blackjack, giving us a \$15 win. We add \$10 of the win to Spot 2 and place the extra \$5 with our Reserve Chips.

Round 10. We use the chips in Spot 1 for the wager, betting \$10 and winning. We place the winning chips on top of the Spot 3 chips. We record our second win.

Round 11. We make a wager using the chips in Spot 1 and lose.

Round 12. There are no chips in Spot 1. We wager, using the Spot 2 chips of \$20 and lose the bet.

Round 13. We only have chips in Spot 3. We wager these chips, making a \$20 bet and lose. With this loss we have lose all of the bets at this level, so we will move up one level for the next round.

Round 14. We set up the chips for Level 2 betting. Our starting position is 20 20 20. We wager the chips in spot 1 and decide to double down. We borrow \$20 from the Reserve Chips and double the bet, with a total of \$40 wagered. We win the bet. We return the borrowed chips to our reserve leaving \$20 to place on top of the Spot 2 chips. We also record our first win at this level.

Round 15. We wager the chips in Spot 1, making a bet of \$20 which wins. We add the winnings to Spot 3.

Round 16. We wager Spot 1's chips of \$20 and lose.

Round 17. Since Spot 1's chips were lost on the last round we wager Spot 2's \$40 and win the bet. With this win our Running Total hits +65, greater than our Profit Goal of \$50 for this level of betting. We call the game completed, cash in and depart from the table.

Sample Game 2 was not typical. We can usually hit our Profit Goal making Level 1 and Level 2 bets. I presented this game to show all three levels of bets used in one game.

Sample Game 3

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

Bold = Amount used for bet

Profit Goal = \$50

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	1	1	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+10
2	1	2	10 20 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+20
3	1	3	10 20 20	R-10	10	W-BJ-15	+15	+35
4	1	4	20 20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+55

Sample Game 3 was short, sweet and profitable. Let's review the rounds of play:

Round 1. We start the game with the set up of three stacks of chips in Spots 1, 2 and 3. We use the chips in Spot 1 to make a wager which wins. We record the win in the **Wins at Level** column. We add the winnings to Spot 2.

Round 2. We wager \$10, using the chips in Spot 1. We win the bet and record the win in the **Wins at Level** column. We add the winnings to Spot 3.

Round 3. We wager Spot 1's chips of \$10 and receive a blackjack. We take the bonus chip of \$5 and place it in our Reserve Chips. We add \$10 of the win to Spot 1 and record our third win in the **Wins at Level** column.

Round 4. We wager Spot 1's \$20 in chips and win. We check our winnings and see that we are up +55. Since we have reached or exceeded our profit goal we call the game complete.

It is surprising how many games can be wrapped up very quickly like the previous game. With such a quick win you may want to continue playing. To continue

playing you will remove your winnings from your reserve chips so that you are back to the original level of bankroll. Then you start over, with the usual set up for starting a game.

If you are playing online you cannot remove your win. In this case you should keep track of your original buy-in so that if you do have a losing game, you don't "over wager" and end up losing your win from the previous game.

Sample Game 4

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

Bold = Amount used for bet

Profit Goal = \$50

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	1	1	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+10
2	1	2	10 20 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+20
3	1	3	10 20 20	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+30
4	1		20 20 20	R-20	20	P	-	+30
5	1		20 20 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	+10
6	1	4	20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+30
7	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	+20
8	1	1	10 10	R-10	10	W-BH-15	+15	+35
9	1	2	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+45
10	1		10 20 10	R-10, D-10	20	W-20	+20	+65

Like Sample Game 3, we stay at Level 1 bets throughout the game in Sample Game 4. You should be able to follow our actions in this game. We stopped this game as soon as we hit or exceeded our Profit Goal of \$50.

Sample Game 5

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

Bold = Amount used for bet

Profit Goal = \$50

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	1	1	10 10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	+10
2	1		10 20 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-0-
3	1		20 10	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-20
4	1	2	10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-10
5	1	3	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
6	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
7	1	4	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
8	1	0	10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
9	1		10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-20
10	1	1	10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-10
11	1	2	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
12	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
13	1		10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-20
14	1	3	10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-10
15	1		10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-20
16	1		10	R-10, D-10	10	P	-	-20
17	1		10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-30
18	2	1	20 20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	-10
19	2	2	20 40 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+10
20	2	3	20 40 40	R-20	20	W-20	+20	+30
21	2	4	40 40 40	R-40	40	W-40	+40	+70

Sample Game 5 lasted a little longer than the previous two sample games, but it turns out that it was worth the extra play as we ended up winning \$70.

Let's go through some highlights of this game.

On rounds 1 through 7 we played at Level 1 using the original set up. By Round 7 we hit our fourth win indicating that we would set up a new Betting Series for the next round of bets.

We set up new Level 1 bets in Round 8 and starting tracking wins for this betting series. Unfortunately we couldn't reach our Profit Goal with the betting series and in Round 17 we lost our last bet.

Having lost a series of Level 1 bets in Round 17, in Round 18 we set up Level 2 bets of 20 20 20. When we set up the Level 2 bets we had a net loss of -30. We had four consecutive winning bets and called the game completed in Round 21 when our winnings reached +70.

Sample Game 5 illustrates how important it is to follow up the loss of a betting series with bets one level higher. In this case our timing was excellent as we went on a winning streak with the Level 2 bets and not only recouped our losses but quickly turned a losing game into a nice win!

Sample Game 6

R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split

W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

Bold = Amount used for bet

Profit Goal = \$50

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1	1	0	10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
2	1	1	10 10	R-10	10	W-10	+10	-0-
3	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	P	-	-0-
4	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	P	-	-0-
5	1		10 10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-10
6	1		10 10	R-10	10	L-10	-10	-20
7	1		10	R-10, S-10	20	L-20	-20	-40
8	2	0	20 20 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-60
9	2	1	20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	-40
10	2	2	20 20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	-20
11	2		20 40 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-40
12	2		40 20	R-40	40	L-40	-40	-80
13	2	3	20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	-60
14	2	4	20 20	R-20	20	W-20	+20	-40
15	2	0	20 20 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-60
16	2		20 20	R-20	20	P	-	-60
17	2		20 20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-80
18	2		20	R-20	20	P	-	-80
19	2		20	R-20	20	L-20	-20	-100
20	3	1	40 40 40	R-40	40	W-40	+40	-60
21	3	2	40 80 40	R-40	40	W-40	+40	-20
22	3		40 80 80	R-40	40	L-40	-40	-60
23	3	3	80 80	R-80	80	W-80	+80	+20
24	3	4	80 80 80	R-80	80	W-80	+80	+100

Sample Game 6 turned out to be a terrific game. However, we definitely had to earn our money to win this one.

We played with our first set up of Level 1 bets on Rounds 1 through 7. On Round 7 we lost the last bet in our first set up. Before starting Round 8 we set up Level 2 bets and continued to bet.

In Rounds 8 through 14 we had four wins at Level 2. However, after our fourth win in Round 14 we still had a net loss for the game of -40. We decided to set up Level 2 bets again. If we had lost Level 2 we would have gone to Level 3 next. However, in this case since we actually won four bets at Level 2 but didn't increase our profits, we decided to set up a new series of Level 2 bets.

We set up a new Level 2 betting series for Round 15. By round 19 we had lost this series and we set up Level 3 bets starting with Round 20.

Round 20 through 24 pulled our chestnuts out of the fire, so to say. Round 24 was critical. We won an \$80 bet and stopped after winning the wager with a game win of +100.

After we had played over 100 games, we decided that it would be possible to play this system using the full three levels of bets or use a shortened version where we would stop at two betting levels.

We Develop Two Versions of the Fletcher Formula

There are really two different ways you can play of the Fletcher Formula

You can play it as we have presented with three betting levels. This is the original version which we named the *Master Player Strategy*. We also developed and tested an alternative version called the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

The betting rules are the same for each strategy. However, three full levels of bets are used for the *Master Player Strategy* while only two levels of bets are used for the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

Let compare the two different strategies for \$10 base betting.

The *Master Player Strategy* will use three levels of bets as follows:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1 bets	10	10	10
Level 2 bets	20	20	20
Level 3 bets	40	40	40

The buy-in required to use this strategy is the sum of all the bets in the matrix plus one additional Level 3 bet for Reserve Chips.

The total bankroll needed for this strategy is five times the amount of the buy-in.

Thus, a \$10 bettor using the Master Player Strategy will need the following bankroll:

Buy-in Bankroll (used for a single game)

Level 1 bets of \$30 + Level 2 bets of \$60 + Level 3 bets of \$120 + one Extra Level 3 bet = \$250

Total Bankroll (needed for long-term play)

Buy-in Bankroll of $\$250 \times 5 = \1250 .

Thus a \$10 bettor will need a total bankroll of \$1250 to play at this level and will start each game by buying in for \$250.

With the ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*** you will use only two levels of bets as follows:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1 bets	10	10	10
Level 2 bets	20	20	20

The buy-in required to use this strategy is the sum of all the bets in the matrix plus one additional Level 2 bet for Reserve Chips.

The total bankroll needed for this strategy is five times the amount of the buy-in.

Thus, a \$10 bettor using the ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*** will need the following bankroll:

Buy-in Bankroll (used for a single game)

Level 1 bets of \$30 + Level 2 bets of \$60 + one Extra Level 2 bet of \$20 = \$110

Total Bankroll (needed for long-term play)

Buy-in Bankroll of $\$110 \times 5 = \550

We can make the following preliminary comments on each of these strategies.

1. The bankroll requirements of \$250 per game for the *Master Player Strategy* are 2.27 times greater than the bankroll needed of \$110 per game for the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.
2. We can predict that the *Master Player Strategy* will have a higher win rate than the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

The next chapter summarizes the results of long-term testing of each strategy.

Testing Both Versions of the Fletcher Formula

We tested both versions of the Fletcher Formula against a variety of blackjack games.

We avoided games with the European no-hole card rules but played against just about every other version.

We played in both land-based and online casinos and against single deck, double deck and many six and eight deck games.

We played in games all over the United States as well as some games in Canada.

We played in the UK as well as in Australia.

Online we played in a total of 17 different online casinos.

I will present the results of play for each system separately and then compare the results of the two systems.

We will start with the original three level *Master Player Strategy* first.

Master Player Strategy Testing

Our games were played using base bets ranging from \$1 (for online games) to \$100 in land-based games.

To facilitate comparison of different levels of play, we have converted the results of play to the equivalent of using \$10 base bets

Here is a summary of the parameters used for testing the Master Player Strategy using \$10 Base Bets:

Betting Levels Used:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1 bets	10	10	10
Level 2 bets	20	20	20
Level 3 bets	40	40	40

Buy-in (Game Bankroll) = \$250

Total Bankroll = \$1250

Profit Goal per Game (5 x Base Bet) = \$50

We played a total of 3,503 games using the *Maser Player Strategy*. The results are summarized in the following table:

**Summary of Games Played Using the Master Player Strategy
with \$10 Base Bets**

Total Games	3503
Games Won	3164
Games Lost	339
Win Rate	90.32%
Total Rounds	52093
Net Won	\$128,820
Average Winnings per round of play	\$2.473
$\$128,820 / 52093 =$	
Total Won excluding losing games	\$177,410
Number of Winning Games	3164
Average Winnings per winning game	\$56.07
Average Win for All Games	\$36.77
Average Loss per losing game	\$143.33
Average Length of a Game (Rounds of Play)	14.87
Average Time Length of Game in Minutes:	
Land-based game (played at 80 rounds per hour)	11.15 minutes
Online Game (played at 350 rounds per hour)	2.55 minutes

We won 3,164 games out of 3,503 games played for an average win rate of 90.32% of the games played.

These games comprised 52,093 rounds of play and we won a net \$128,820.

The average winnings per round of play were \$2.473. This is a net figure, net of losing games.

We won an average net amount of \$56.07 for winning games. Our average net win for all games, where we deduct losing games, was \$36.77 per game.

The average length of a game was just 14.87 rounds of play per game. This is a very fast winning system.

At 80 rounds per hour in a land-based game, the average time to complete a game would be 11.15 minutes.

In faster online games, where we assume an average rate of play of 200 rounds per hour, we would complete the average game in just 2.55 minutes.

The length of a game is based on the amount of time to reach our Profit Goal, lose all of the bets in the betting series or in rare cases to call a game completed short of reaching the Profit Goal because it was becoming too lengthy.

Let's take a look at how we fared using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* next.

Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy Testing

As with the *Master Player Strategy* we played in a variety of different casinos including both land-based and online casinos.

To facilitate comparison of different levels of play we have converted the results of play to the equivalent of using \$10 base bets

Here is a summary of the parameters used for testing the Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy using \$10 Base Bets:

Betting Levels Used:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1 bets	10	10	10
Level 2 bets	20	20	20

Buy-in (Game Bankroll) = \$110

Total Bankroll = \$550

Profit Goal per Game (5 x Base Bet) = \$50

We played a total of 2,883 games using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

The results are summarized in the following table:

**Summary of Games Played Using the
Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy
With \$10 Base Bets**

Total Games	2883
Games Won	2232
Games Lost	651
Win Rate	77.42%
Total Rounds	39,525
Net Won	\$67,890
Average Winnings per round of play \$67,890/39,525	\$1.7176
Total Won excluding losing games	\$124,155
Number of Winning Games	2232
Average Winnings per winning game	\$55.63
Average Win for All Games	\$23.55
Average Loss per losing game	\$86.43
Average Length of a Game (Rounds of Play)	13.71
Average Time Length of Game in Minutes:	
Land-based game (played at 80 rounds per hour)	10.28 minutes
Online Game (played at 350 rounds per hour)	2.36 minutes

Let's see how we did using this strategy –

We won 2232 games out of 2,883 played for a net win rate of 77.42%

These games comprised 39,525 rounds of play and we won a net \$124,155, which is net of losing games.

Our average win was \$23.55 per game, which is net of losing games. If we look at winning games only, we compute an average win of \$55.63 per winning game.

The average length of a game was 13.71 rounds of play per game. The length of a game is the time it took, on the average to reach or exceed our Profit Goal, to lose the game outright or to call a lengthy game completed.

The games played using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* were even faster than the games played using the *Master Player Strategy*.

At 80 rounds per hour in a land-based game the average time to complete a game would be 10.28 minutes.

In faster online games, where we assume an average rate of play of 200 rounds per hour, we would complete the average game in just 2.36 minutes.

The length of a game is based on the amount of time to reach our Profit Goal, lose all of the bets in the betting series or in rare cases to call a game completed short of reaching the Profit Goal because it was becoming too lengthy.

Comparison of the Master Player and Maximum Return Blackjack Strategies

The table below compares some of the key statistics for the *Master Player* and *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategies*:

Comparison of Testing of Master Player and Maximum Return Blackjack Strategies

	Master Player Strategy	Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy
Total Games	3503	2883
Games Won	3164	2232
Games Lost	339	651
Win Rate	90.32%	77.42%
Total Rounds	52093	39,525
Net Won	\$128,820	\$67,890
Average Winnings per round of play	\$2.473	\$1.7176
Total Won excluding losing games	\$177,410	\$124,155
Number of Winning Games	3164	2232
Average Winnings per winning game	\$56.07	\$55.63
Average Win for All Games	\$36.77	\$23.55
Average Loss per losing game	\$143.33	\$86.43
Average Length of a Game (Rounds of Play)	14.87	13.71
Average Time Length of Game in Minutes:		
Land-based game (played at 80 rounds per hour)	11.15 minutes	10.28 minutes
Online Game (played at 200 rounds per hour)	2.55 minutes	2.36 minutes

A cursory comparison tells us that the *Master Player Strategy* has a higher win rate, winning 90.32% of its games, while the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* only won 77.42% of its games.

If we only look at win rates we might conclude that the *Master Player Strategy* is more profitable. Or, we might conclude that with the higher win rate is a safer strategy.

We could also compare the average amounts won per game, with the *Master Player Strategy* winning an average of \$36.77 after deducting losing games, while the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* only managed an average net win of \$23.55 per game. Once again, at least superficially, this points to the *Master Player Strategy* as being the better one.

To fairly compare these strategies we need to consider the amount of money needed to play each variation of The Fletcher Formula and then compare the net winnings to the amount risked per game.

I call this type of comparison a *Bang for the Buck* comparison.

Let's compare our winnings per hour in land-based games for \$10 base bets:

	Master Player Strategy	Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy
Total Bankroll	\$1250	\$550
Net Winnings per hour at 80 rounds per hour	\$197.84	\$137.44
Return on Money Risked:	$\$197.84 / \$1250.00 =$	$\$137.44 / \$550.00 =$
Winnings per hour/ Total Bankroll	15.83%	24.50%

Using the *Master Player Strategy* we will win a return of 15.83% on our Total Bankroll every hour we play. This amount is net of losses

If we use the ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*** we will have a net return of 24.50% on our Total Bankroll per hour played.

This comparison is valid because the amounts won are based on net winnings, that is, the amount you would expect to win after deducting losses.

Since we are comparing net to net figures, the fact that the ***Master Player Strategy*** wins more often is irrelevant.

Here is another way of comparing the strategies –

Let's compare the size of the bankrolls and then see how winnings stack up for each system.

<i>Master Player Strategy</i>	<i>Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy</i>
\$1250 Total Bankroll	\$550 Total Bankroll
$\$1250 / \$550 = 2.27$ times	

We can see that using the ***Master Player Strategy*** requires a bankroll 2.27 times the size of the bankroll needed as a ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*** player.

However, the winnings for the ***Master Player Strategy*** are not 2.27 times that of the ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy***.

If we multiply the hour win rate for the ***Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*** x 2.27, we have –

$\$137.44 \times 2.27 = \311.99 an hour

However, the *Master Player Strategy*'s hourly win for \$10 base betting is \$197.84 per hour, far less than the amount which would be won using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* if it won at an equivalent rate.

The conclusion is inescapable –

You will get more “bang for the buck” using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

It clearly enjoys the advantage with its lower bankroll requirements. While the buy-in is \$110 for \$10 betting, it is only \$11 for \$1 betting, which is a common betting level for many online casinos.

If the online casino offers a 10% bonus you can deposit ten bucks, add the casino's \$1 bonus and be ready to start playing online!

Bankroll Requirements, Win Rates and Profit Goals

As we have seen in the last two chapters there are two distinct strategies for playing *The Fletcher Formula* –

The *Master Player Strategy* and the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

Each of these strategies has its advantages and disadvantages.

If you want to win more often and have a larger bankroll you may prefer the *Master Player Strategy*.

If you want to leverage a smaller bankroll and don't care about more frequent losses because you are strictly focused on net winnings, you may opt to use the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*.

You may also choose to start out with the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* because of its lower bankroll requirements. You can get started online in a \$1 game with an \$11 buy-in.

As your profits grow you may prefer using the *Master Player Strategy*.

In this chapter we will discuss bankroll requirements, expected hourly win rates at different levels of play and talk more about *Profit Goals*.

The table below shows the *Buy-Ins, Total Bankroll, Profit Goals* and *Win Rates* for play in land-based and online games.

Fletcher Formula – Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy Summary of Bankroll, Profit Goals and Win Rates

Minimum Bet	Buy-in	Total Bankroll	Profit Goal	Average Won/Round	Land-based Hourly Winnings (80 rounds per hour)	Online Hourly Winnings (350 rounds per hour)
\$1	\$11	\$55	\$5	\$0.17176	\$13.74	\$86.56
\$2	\$22	\$110	\$10	\$0.3432	\$27.48	\$173.11
\$3	\$33	\$165	\$15	\$0.5153	\$41.22	\$259.67
\$5	\$55	\$275	\$25	\$0.859	\$68.70	\$432.78
\$10	\$110	\$550	\$50	\$1.7176	\$137.41	\$865.55
\$15	\$165	\$825	\$75	\$2.5764	\$206.11	\$1298.34
\$20	\$220	\$1100	\$100	\$3.4352	\$274.48	\$1731.12
\$25	\$275	\$1375	\$125	\$4.294	\$343.52	\$2163.88
\$35	\$385	\$1925	\$175	\$6.0116	\$480.93	\$3031.00
\$50	\$550	\$2750	\$250	\$8.588	\$687.04	\$4327.40
\$75	\$825	\$4125	\$375	\$12.882	\$1030.56	\$6491.64
\$100	\$1110	\$5500	\$500	\$17.176	\$1374.10	\$8655.50
\$200	\$2220	\$11,000	\$1000	\$34.352	\$2748.16	NA
\$300	\$3330	\$16,500	\$1500	\$51.528	\$4122.24	NA
\$400	\$4440	\$22,000	\$2000	\$68.704	\$5496.32	NA
\$500	\$5550	\$27,500	\$2500	\$85.880	\$6870.40	NA

You can get started as a \$1 player in numerous online casinos with a buy-in of \$11. With online bonuses of ten percent being common, you will be able to deposit just \$10 and receive a \$1 bonus with many online casinos.

As a \$1 better you will win an average of \$0.17176 per round of play. This is a net amount with the effect of losing games deducted.

As a \$1 bettor playing online you can expect to average about \$86 an hour.

Three hours play at this level will net you over \$250! When you consider that a total bankroll of \$55 is all that is required to play at this level you can appreciate how strong these winnings are.

Five dollars is a realistic minimum bet for many land-based blackjack games. Using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* you can play at this level with only a \$55 buy-in and a total bankroll of only \$275. This puts \$5 betting within anyone's league. If you have refused to play blackjack claiming that the bankroll requirements are too high, you will have to put that excuse to rest.

As a \$5 bettor in a land-based game you will pull in average net winnings of \$68.70 an hour.

While this isn't bad, you will want to move up to \$25, \$50 or \$100 play as soon as possible.

As a \$100 player you will need a total bankroll of only \$5500. While this may be out of your league now, you can easily win enough using this strategy to build your bankroll to this level.

As a \$100 bettor, playing in a land-based game, you will average net winnings of \$1374.10 an hour. Better yet, you can play in one of the online casinos offering these levels of play and with the low bet spread of 1 to 4 (bets ranging from \$100 to \$400 for a \$100 player using the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*) you can pull in a very respectable \$3,435 an hour!

Let's talk about *Profit Goals*. At each level of play you will adhere to the rules for using Profit Goals. The basic rule is that as soon as you reach or exceed the Profit Goal for that level of play you will call the game completed.

All of our winnings were derived by strictly adhering to these Profit Goals. If you are a \$1 bettor you must stick to a Profit Goal of \$5 per game. Even though your games will be very short, especially when you are playing online, you should call the game completed and quit playing after hitting a Profit Goal.

With the online games lasting less than minutes you can continue playing after hitting each Profit Goal. However, you must set up your chips in the starting position and treat your play as a new game.

Let's take a look at the *Master Player Strategy* next. The next table shows the bankroll levels, profit goals and hourly winnings for the *Master Player Strategy*

Fletcher Formula – Master Player Strategy Summary of Bankroll, Profit Goals and Win Rates

Minimum Bet	Buy-in	Total Bankroll	Profit Goal	Average Won/Round	Land-based Hourly Winnings (80 rounds per hour)	Online Hourly Winnings (350 rounds per hour)
\$1	\$25	\$125	\$5	.2473	\$19.78	\$86.56
\$2	\$50	\$250	\$10	.4946	\$39.57	\$173.11
\$3	\$75	\$375	\$15	.7419	\$59.35	\$259.67
\$5	\$125	\$625	\$25	1.2365	\$98.92	\$432.78
\$10	\$250	\$1250	\$50	2.473	\$197.84	\$865.55
\$15	\$375	\$1875	\$75	3.710	\$296.76	\$1298.34
\$20	\$500	\$2500	\$100	4.946	\$395.68	\$1731.12
\$25	\$625	\$3125	\$125	6.1825	\$494.75	\$2163.88
\$35	\$875	\$4375	\$175	8.66	\$692.44	\$3031.00
\$50	\$1250	\$6250	\$250	12.364	\$989.20	\$4327.40
\$75	\$1875	\$9375	\$375	18.55	\$1484.25	\$6491.64
\$100	\$2500	\$12500	\$500	24.73	\$1978.40	\$8655.50
\$200	\$5000	\$25000	\$1000	49.46	\$3956.80	NA
\$300	\$7500	\$37500	\$1500	74.19	\$5935.20	NA
\$400	\$10000	\$50000	\$2000	98.92	\$7913.60	NA
\$500	\$12500	\$60000	\$2500	123.65	\$9992.00	NA

A \$10 bettor using the *Master Player Strategy* will fare very well. He will get a lot of bang for the buck with a \$250 buy-in.

A ten-dollar bettor playing in land-based games can expect to net almost \$200 an hour. Online returns are really spectacular, hitting \$865 an hour.

Remember that these amounts are based on thousands of real games played and that the net average hourly win rates are net amounts with losses deducted.

Twenty-five dollar play is the most popular level of play for *Master Players* and it is easy to see why.

With a buy-in of just \$625 it is easy to become a \$25 bettor with this strategy.

Playing in a land-based casino you will make about \$500 an hour. If you ever wanted the ultimate system for weekend play, this is it.

As a *Master Player* you can play blackjack for six hours on a weekend, net \$3,000, pay for your entire trip, and still bring back a nice profit.

Once you get serious you will want to think about becoming a black chip player. Most Fletcher Formula players who reach this level prefer using the *Master Player Strategy*. It may be because of its lower loss rate or it may feel more solid to buy in for higher amounts. For whatever reason, the *Master Player Strategy* is the preferred one for \$100 bettors.

The rewards are great for \$100 betting. If you use \$100 base bets you will win \$1978 in a land-based game. This is a great level for professional play. As a \$100 bettor, the casinos will cater to you and shower you will comps. And your winnings will be very high.

As a \$100 base bettor, if you play blackjack 20 hours a week you will net \$10,000 a week!

This is definitely the big time.

However, with the low spread requirements, you can easily move up to making \$250 base bets, even in casinos with \$2000 limits on bets.

As a \$250 base bettor, your winnings will average \$4,945 an hour!

For the next few chapters we will digress from the system itself and talk about skilful play, discipline and control when you play, casino etiquette and casino comps. This is essential knowledge that you will want to master as part of becoming a skilful, winning Fletcher Formula player!

Skilful Play

There are a number of decisions you can make in becoming a successful Fletcher Formula player. For example, you must decide where to play and whether you will tip or not.

You will also need to make decisions on setting up and using a casino credit line as well as having your play rated. How you handle these situations can have a great bearing on your long-term success as a winning gambler.

Picking where you play

Your first choice in deciding to become a blackjack winner is deciding where to play. I rate casinos on several different aspects. My first concern is whether the casino offers games that I find playable.

Every casino sets minimum and maximum bets for its table games. Typical minimum and maximum bets for blackjack games offered by small casinos might be \$5 minimum bets and \$500 maximum bets. These limits will be acceptable for 90% of the players using the Fletcher Formula. But a few players may require higher betting limits.

A more typical problem faces players in casinos which set minimum bets too high. Some East Coast casinos set their minimum blackjack bets at \$10.

Many casinos will change their minimum wagers depending on the time of day and day of the week. Minimum bets are raised in the evenings and on weekends. If you are an Atlantic City player looking for tables with lower minimum bets, you will find more blackjack tables with lower minimums if you play during the week instead of on weekends.

Besides table limits, I also consider the atmosphere of a casino. I absolutely refuse to play in casinos with rude dealers. I can tolerate slow dealers, dealers still in training and dealers who don't talk much. But I refuse to put up with dealers who make sarcastic remarks to other players or criticize my play. Life is too short. Change tables or, if necessary, change casinos.

Fortunately, casino employees are reasonable people and problematic dealers are not seen too often.

Some casinos have other annoying quirks. Can you tolerate a lot of smoke? Some casinos have poor ventilation systems so that a dull cloud of smoke seems to permeate the casino area. If this bothers you, don't play there.

Other casinos are dirty or have crowded, uncomfortable playing conditions. For several years there was a casino less than ten minutes from my house where I absolutely refused to play because the place resembled a dump (it has been updated and is now acceptable).

These are choices you must make. If you play in Las Vegas, you have just about every choice you can imagine available. If you want to play in a real players' joint, try Binion's Horseshoe downtown. Would you like some real elegance? You'll like the Venetian or Bellagio's.

One thing I don't do is discuss my system while I play. Some dealers will comment on it; most don't. You may get questions from other players. If you decide to discuss your system, keep it simple. You might state that you like to raise bets when you are winning, but sometimes you raise them after a loss as well.

If you start talking about the system, you will undoubtedly lose your concentration. In addition, it is almost a given that if you are trying to demonstrate the system to

someone, you are going to have a loss. Call it bad luck or bad karma, but you can believe that discussing the system while you are playing is not a good idea.

Tipping

If you don't like to tip, most international play will suit you fine. Most casinos in Asia, Europe and Commonwealth countries like England, Australia and New Zealand forbid tipping the dealers.

In the U.S., you really have no choice but to tip. Many players refuse to tip, arguing that tips come right off their bottom line. I can't argue with the logic, but I will question the results of a no-tipping policy.

I personally have a great deal of respect for most casino personnel and especially dealers. I enjoy tipping them in exchange for good service, and once it is established that I am a "George" (slang for a good tipper), the level of service increases appreciably.

When I tip, I never just give the dealer the tip. I only tip by making bets for the dealer.

I tip by making a bet for the dealers if I have been winning. If I continue to win I will make another bet for the dealer about every twenty to thirty rounds of play.

Act like a gambler

Play like a loser. If you are in a prolonged winning streak, don't rub it in the casino's face by continuing to play at the same table. If you do, make sure that you consistently make the kinds of moves which will throw the pit off. But your best ploy is not to overstay your welcome, especially if you are winning a bundle.

If you have a nice win and a floor person comments on it, you can casually mention that you dropped a bundle at craps last night and you are still not close to even. But don't do this if you never play craps. Make your story plausible.

Hide Chips

As a winning player, you will want to look for ways to disguise the amount you are winning. The easiest way to do this is to pocket chips.

This is harder to accomplish if you are playing alone, and is easiest to accomplish if you have a playing partner.

How to Survive and Prosper as a Professional Gambler, published by Silverthorne Publications, has some excellent suggestions on chip hiding routines. With a female accomplice, it is easy to slip chips to her and let her hide them in her purse.

Sometimes my wife carries a shopping bag with her, which is a great place to stash chips and offers additional cover to help us look like a pair of happy, typical tourists.

If you are a black chip player, you are better off hiding green chips, as the bosses are more concerned with watching your stack of black chips. If you commonly wager \$500 or more, then you can get away with hiding \$100 chips, but don't try to stash the \$500 chips as the bosses may catch on.

Play for Cash or on Credit?

There are many advantages to establishing credit with several casinos. Once you have established credit, it is there any time you want to use it. You don't have to carry cash, arrange for wire transfers or try to talk casinos into cashing checks. You generally will not be able to even cash a cashier's check in a casino until it has been

verified. If you show up on a Saturday hoping to cash a cashier's check, you will be out of luck until your bank reopens on Monday and can verify the check.

Another advantage to establishing credit is that when you use casino credit, you get to sign markers at the table. You will look like a gambler, since most gamblers who play with black chips have casino credit lines.

I'll let you in on a dirty secret. Casinos are not in the business of loaning money to gamblers, at least not now. If you have a bad gambling habit and a weak bank account, your local friendly loan shark is more likely to accommodate you than your not-so-friendly casino.

When you establish a credit line, the casino is agreeing to advance you no more than the average balance in your checking account for the last six months.

Your creditworthiness has nothing to do with getting casino credit. These guys don't care whether you are employed, just filed for bankruptcy or are dodging your other creditors. Casino credit is based on how much bread you keep in your checking account.

Do you feel a little better about the high rollers signing the markers? They are signing magnetically coded checks which can be run through their checking accounts. Normally markers are not handled this way as the casino prefers to be paid by check, but if necessary, the casino markers can and will be deposited by the casino and will be presented for payment at your bank just like any other check you have written.

If you are a black chip player, casino credit is almost mandatory unless you want to carry a large amount of cash with you, which I don't recommend. If you know where you will be playing, you can arrange to have cash deposited with the casino cashier and sign markers against your own *front money* on deposit with the casino.

Rated Players

Once you start playing with green or black chips, you are going to be asked by a floor person if you want to be rated. Many novice gamblers resent the intrusion of a floor person and answer evasively or even negatively. This is a big mistake. By rating your play, the casino is evaluating your ability to receive comps or freebies from the casino. Comps can really add to your bottom line and can be very profitable once you learn to play the comp game. Another reason to become rated is that being rated and receiving comps from the casino is what gamblers normally do. And you want to look like just another gambler.

Even if you are a low to mid-range player and want to get *full RFB*, which stands for Room, Food and Beverages comped, there are many casinos which will accommodate you.

Using casino comps, you can travel just about anywhere and get full VIP treatment. Many casinos will even pay your airfare. But you have to know how to work the system to maximize these benefits. I suggest that you learn how to get the maximum amount of comps and let a casino pay for all of your gambling excursions.

As a Fletcher Formula player, you are in the perfect position to get and benefit from comps. No matter what your level of play, you can increase your enjoyment and profits by availing yourself of casino comps.

Learn to play another casino game

I highly recommend that you learn to play at least one other table game besides blackjack. My number one choice of the game to learn is craps.

Craps is still a favorite game of many high rollers. Just by making pass line bets with double odds you can play almost even with the house. If you add a winning

strategy on top of learning craps, such as the unique betting system revealed in the *Power Craps Strategy*, then you are on the way to having a second casino game you can beat.

Craps, using the *Power Craps Strategy*, is an excellent game for using hit and run tactics. If you have been playing blackjack and are tired of concentrating on your wagers, craps may give you just the break you need. This can't hurt your reputation with the casino. Because many high rollers now favor craps, you will enhance your appearance as a high roller when you add this game to your repertoire. By mixing a little craps play in with your blackjack play, you will look more and more like another gambler to the casino bosses.

You may be surprised how well you do at craps. On a typical casino visit, I usually make almost as much money playing craps as I do playing blackjack. Silverthorne Publications is the premier publisher for winning craps systems. You can check out the **Power Craps Strategy** at www.silverthornepublications.com/PowerCraps

And so, you are almost ready to start beating the casinos, but . . .

You are almost ready to take on the casinos. I have presented a complete strategy which has been proven to win against casino blackjack. Perhaps you have been practicing the Fletcher Formula. You have figured out how to put together your bankroll. However, the greatest battle still awaits you. The casinos have even more powerful weapons at their disposal than the house edge. They are masters at a whole number of psychological traps set to ensnare you, with the end goal of relieving you of as much of your money as they can in the shortest and most pleasant way possible. Let's take a look at the casino's battery of weapons and see what you can do about them.

Discipline and Control

At this point, you should have a good understanding about how to use the Fletcher Formula to win money at blackjack. You should know when to bet, how much to wager, and when to quit. You know about how your bankroll determines the size of your wagers and about using game bankrolls. You should have some definite ideas about how you want to interact with casino personnel. You have learned some ways to improve playing conditions by interacting with and tipping the dealer. You also have been introduced to the idea of playing on casino credit and playing for comps.

Now you have to deal with the largest obstacle to your success. The greatest single threat to your success is not the casino personnel. It is not a bad run at the tables. It is not the risk of consecutive losses eating up your bankroll. It is not the wine, the women, and the atmosphere. The greatest single threat to your playing career will be you. Surprised? Read on.

Self Control

Ultimately, success at casino gambling, business, romance or life, for that matter, largely depends on self-control. Winning at gambling is all about self-control. It is about controlling the amount of money used for gambling. It's about reducing losses. It's about limiting the amount of money used for any session of play. And ultimately, it's about walking out the door a winner.

Gamblers are a lot like fishermen. They like to talk about the one that got away. How many times have you been in a casino winning and ended up leaving a net loser? In the real world, the only wins that count are the ones you go home with.

Actually, it is no great feat to get ahead playing blackjack. Probably over 75% of all blackjack players are ahead sometime in their play. But do they walk out the door winners? No. Probably close to 95% of all blackjack players end up losing money.

The typical casino hold is about 20% for a blackjack table. *Hold* is a term referring to the amount the casino keeps as its win out of the money dropped at the table — e.g. the *drop*. If you buy in for a hundred dollars, and play for thirty minutes and leave with \$85, you have lost \$15 out of \$100. Your contribution to the drop was \$100 and your loss gave the casino a hold rate of 15%.

Winning at gambling is first about controlling yourself. It is about accepting responsibilities for your own actions. In the long run, you don't win because you were lucky, and you don't lose because you had a string of bad luck. Using *The Fletcher Formula* will help you create your own luck. Used properly, you will be able to play at an advantage over the casino and be a net winner.

If you think about the times you were ahead in a casino and ended up giving it all back plus whatever additional cash you scrounged, who is to blame? The casino? The game? The house edge?

Don't get angry with me for pointing this out. What is wrong with setting aside your winnings when you are ahead? And what is wrong with limiting your losses when you hit a losing streak? And what is wrong with leaving a losing table?

I hope you answered "nothing." Doing these things requires self-control. They are easy to think about doing but may be much harder to actually accomplish. I am a former smoker. I always thought I could quit smoking when I wanted to. But I failed to quit a number of times. When I finally quit, I realized how difficult the process really was. It was easy to think about quitting smoking but doing it was quite challenging. Now that I have quit, I am out of the woods, right? Well, not quite. I believe that smoking is much like a drug addiction, and as a former addict, I am never cured. I am only one cigarette away from becoming a smoker again. Control in a casino may require much the same discipline as that of a reformed smoker. Having a large monetary loss only requires a temporary loss of control.

Trust me, winning is habit forming. Losing, especially at a game like blackjack when you know you are using a winning strategy, is tough. Some professional gamblers, especially traditional blackjack card counters, will lose for months at a time. I am not sure that I could continue to play blackjack under those circumstances.

The documented losing streaks for *The Fletcher Formula Strategy* tend to be fairly short. If you play blackjack regularly using this strategy, it is highly unlikely that you will ever encounter two back-to-back losing casino visits. But it can happen.

Once you are in a losing streak, you will be hard pressed to continue with your set game plan. You will begin to question everything about the strategy. You may feel like the dealer has it in for you. You will start to think that no matter how you wager, your bets will lose. When your larger bets lose, you will begin to question the betting strategy.

Trends are a dominant factor in gambling. Every blackjack table has streaks. If you are in a winning streak, you may begin to feel omnipotent. However, when a losing streak hits, you may start to question every aspect of your playing strategy.

Perhaps the best thing you can do whenever you encounter losing tables is to first change tables. Your next option is to quit playing blackjack for a time. Depending on your feelings, you should either quit gambling altogether during your break, or if you are still in the mood to play, switch casino games. I have found on many occasions that a switch of games was exactly what I needed to improve my mood.

Many players seem to become chained to a particular table at some point in their play. This may be fine when the table is winning, but could spell disaster during a prolonged losing spell.

While losing is tough, winning may be even tougher for some people. Many players subconsciously feel that gambling winnings are "ill begotten gains." Many times people raised with a strong work ethic cannot adjust to the reality that winning at gambling requires a great deal of effort too. Gambling winnings may not seem real or may even seem shameful. Many people feel guilty when they win. For these people, walking out with some of the casino's money doesn't feel right.

Gamblers never cease to amaze me. Gambling falls into some special category of human behavior that escapes the normal rules we usually live by. People change their behavior dramatically in casinos. Consummate misers can't wait to throw their money away in casinos. People who clip coupons every week to save ten bucks on groceries think nothing of dropping a hundred, five hundred or even a thousand in a casino.

Discipline is all about the ability to develop a winning plan. Control is about being able to follow it.

Ego Needs

We all share a need for recognition. We like to talk about our triumphs. Once you become a successful, consistent winner at blackjack, you are going to feel the need to talk about it occasionally.

You need to curb the urge to discuss the fact that you are a winner, especially while you are in a casino. If you have a big win at the craps table, feel free to comment on your success. The casino is not concerned with craps winners, because they do not believe that anyone can gain an advantage over them in this game, at least not without cheating.

Obviously, you should never discuss your blackjack winnings with any casino employees. Your goal is to look as much like another losing gambler as possible.

Casinos don't like winners, and you are much more likely to get the royal treatment if you look like another losing gambler.

Occasionally, outside of the casino, I have been asked about how my strategies work. When I first learned to beat the casinos, I was quite enthusiastic and wanted to share my enthusiasm with other people. The typical reaction when I have revealed that I have a winning blackjack system is total disbelief. I am simply not believed. My best advice is to act like the vast majority of casino patrons who don't have a clue as to how to win.

Play the Part

I have given a number of suggestions about looking like a gambler. Everyone has his (or her) own style, and I am not suggesting that you disguise yourself physically or change your identity. However, individuals who look serious, never drink, never tip, or don't talk to dealers or floor personnel do not look like gamblers and will not get the full benefit of casino generosity, including comps.

I have tried to give you as much ammunition as I can, but you can add your own finishing touches. Using casino credit is a must if you are a black chip player. You simply don't want to walk around with ten thousand dollars or more on your person. Not only are you literally risking your life should a mugger decide to target you, but you could run afoul of U.S. laws if you leave the country with more than \$10,000 in cash on you and don't declare it. Using the casino's credit and signing markers will make you look much more like a gambler, and it actually is a very convenient way to play.

You should also play for comps. Once you are playing with black chips, you will have comps offered to you and you might as well enjoy them. Even mid-range gamblers and low rollers can avail themselves of substantial comps.

The Casino is Not Your Enemy

The dealers, floor persons, cocktail waitresses, pit bosses, shift bosses and casino hosts are not your enemy. While pit bosses often scrutinize the play of high rollers, they are just doing their jobs. Many of the casino employees are actually rooting for you to win. We have discussed how to get a dealer on your side by being friendly and using your tips advantageously. But your floor person is not against your winning. As long as you are not perceived as a threat to the casino's bankroll and are not engaged in behavior the casino objects to, e.g. card counting, you are free to win occasionally. Just don't rub it in their faces.

Floor persons are the primary decision-makers on the amount of comps you get, and I always chat with the nearest floor person. Starting a conversation is easy. Once you are a credit player, you will interact with the floor person as soon as you buy in, by signing a marker. After establishing some rapport with a floor person, I will occasionally ask him or her for advice on certain blackjack wagers. It is always better to down play just how knowledgeable you are. Most floor persons enjoy helping players and like to show off their own expertise.

In dealing with all casino personnel, your goal is to always be a polite, friendly person who likes the casino, enjoys talking to pit personnel, is impressed by the floor person's tremendous knowledge of blackjack, makes large wagers and doesn't quite know how to play blackjack correctly. This act will buy you a tremendous amount of unrestricted playing time, and your comp rate should go up exponentially. You are the perfect player from the casino's viewpoint, and the casino bosses will be willing to pay to ensure that you play in their casino.

Things to Avoid

There are some things I just won't tolerate when I play blackjack. Top on my list of "the things I like least" are rude dealers. If a dealer starts making comments about my play, or is rude to other players, my advice is to just leave.

You don't need this kind of aggravation. If you have a bad feeling about the table, trust your instincts and leave.

Drinking

You've been waiting for this part, haven't you? I have yet to read a book on gambling where the author does not admonish the reader not to drink. Professional blackjack players, I guess, are too engrossed in observing the game to even lift a glass to their beleaguered lips. If they do manage a drink, it has to be Evian water. For the bosses and for most players, having a drink while you play is part of the fun. Gamblers do it for sure. And you want to look like a gambler, right?

I generally have a few drinks while I gamble. I also drink straight orange juice, coffee, iced tea and even ice water at the tables.

Drinking something alcoholic at the craps table is one more signal to the pit that you are not a threat. I generally go slow on the alcoholic drinks and time my drinks. In general, the fact that you are a blackjack player will go a long way towards enhancing your reputation as a gambler.

Superstitions

Superstitions really have no effect on the outcome of cards or dice or little balls spinning around inside of larger wheels or do they? Most gamblers and many pit personnel are superstitious. Gambling itself seems to breed superstitions.

What happens is that we remember certain events that occurred prior to, or in connection with other events, and we assume that there is a causal relationship between two seemingly unrelated occurrences.

The dice game is rife with superstitions. Lady shooters are lucky, as are virgin shooters, who have never rolled the dice before. If a die or the dice fly off the table, many old pros call their odds, place and buy bets off on the next roll, as everyone knows that sevens come after the dice fall on the floor.

Blackjack players have their own superstitions. Many of these concern upsetting the natural order of the cards. If you have been playing one hand of blackjack and suddenly spread to two hands, the other players may become unglued at the move. Likewise playing a hand differently than they would have can cause a barrage of negative comments.

Poker players may wear their lucky hats, and where would a slots player be without her lucky charm bracelet?

Many casino bosses have lucky and unlucky dealers. A craps crew which loses too much money may find itself fired, or at least broken up and the members rotated into different crews. If a blackjack player is winning too much money, a boss may bring in a lucky dealer. In the good old days when Vegas was mobbed up, the lucky dealer may well have been dealing seconds, with a real reason behind the luck. In this day of corporation controlled casinos, a cheating dealer is unlikely, as a casino is not willing to risk its license over one winning player. However, many bosses believe certain dealers are lucky for the house, just as other dealers are unlucky. If a boss decides a dealer is unlucky, the hapless dealer is not likely to have a fruitful career with that casino.

Because gamblers and bosses are superstitious, it makes sense for you to at least appear to be superstitious too. If you lose, it is because the table is too cold, or in the alternative, if you win, you are on a hot streak. Hot and cold streaks do occur, and it doesn't hurt to play them up.

In addition to enhancing your conversation with bosses, you can use your superstitions to influence dealers as well. More than once I have told a dealer that I feel that the next wheel spin will be lucky and placed a larger bet when the floor person was watching.

Use superstitions to justify certain plays when you are talking to the bosses. Just don't get caught up in believing too many casino superstitions yourself. Your lucky hat is not likely to have been responsible for your last win, nor is a particular casino necessarily unlucky.

I will admit that I partially subscribe to the "unlucky casino syndrome." There are some casinos where I never seem to do well. I have no rational explanation for this. However, since I tend to play in Las Vegas where dozens of casinos vie for my attention, I can easily avoid the casinos that are unlucky for me.

Moving Up Your Betting Levels

If you devote much time to blackjack using Fletcher Formula at some point you will want to increase the size of base bets — jumping from a betting series with a \$10 Base Bet to a higher level, for example. Many players find that an emotional adjustment is required to make these moves.

The size of the wagers required may intimidate them to the extent that they feel compelled to modify the Fletcher Formula.

Of course, you must adhere to all of the requirements I have described before you decide to increase the size of your base wagers. You never want to over-bet your bankroll, and you should only increase the size of your wagers when your bankroll is large enough to justify it. If you are undercapitalized, then you clearly are out of your league to jump from green chip to black chip play.

However, once you have built the prerequisite bankroll, you should be able to increase the size of your wagers. To acclimate yourself to making larger wagers, try moving in steps. You might increase from being a \$10 Base Bet bettor to using \$20 wagers as your starting point.

Probably your biggest hurdle will be moving up to black \$100 chip play. You will receive a great deal more attention from the casino than when you were a red chip or green chip player. Most of the attention will be positive. When you play with black chips, you automatically join an exclusive club with significant casino comps to be made available. However, your play will also be under greater scrutiny, and this bothers many players.

In addition to being showered with comps, you will also find that black chip play has other privileges. It is usually much easier to find uncrowded tables as a black chip player.

I suggest that you start wagering at a comfortable level for you. Your comfort level may be as a \$10, \$20 or a \$50 player. Stay at this level until you have thoroughly mastered, not only the technical side of playing correctly, but the emotional side of dealing with players, bosses and dealers. When you are ready, both psychologically and with adequate bankroll, try moving up just one step and then playing at this level for a while. Continue to hone your casino people skills at each new level and don't forget to look and act the part. Black chip players do act differently than nickel chip players.

The Casino As Your New Office

Walking up to a blackjack tables the first time can be an intimidating experience. If you have not played much, you will not fully understand the roles of the dealer, the floor person, the pit boss, the other casino personnel, and the eye-in-the-sky cameras following your every move.

If you are unfamiliar with casino surroundings, you may want to progress into your new role as a winning blackjack player on a step-by-step basis.

You can first play using a lower level of play. This is an excellent approach, and you will win plenty of money using this approach. The best way to practice playing blackjack and using the Fletcher Formula is to play online in “practice mode” where you can play at your own pace and refer to this manual as often as you like.

Once you feel very comfortable playing blackjack, you can gradually increase your betting level, using casino profits to build your bankroll. It may take a number of trips before you feel confident enough to move up to higher-level play.

Only after you have completely mastered the Fletcher Formula should you consider moving up to black chip status. At this point, you should feel that the casino is your new office, and the casino personnel are your fellow workers.

Remember that the casino is not your enemy. The primary functions of modern casino personnel, including bosses, are to make sure the casino patrons have a good enough experience that they will become repeat customers.

Once you become known in a casino, you will find yourself interacting with the casino personnel even more. Dealers will welcome you by name. Cocktail waitresses will remember your favorite drink. Bosses will invite you to coffee. A casino host will work with you to make sure that you get all of the comps to which you are entitled.

Once you sense that everyone in the casino is genuinely rooting for you to win, you will know that you have done your job well.

In order to reach this level, there is no substitute for putting in your hours. You will need to demonstrate that you are not only friendly, but reliable, honest and consistent in your fair treatment of all you encounter.

Too many players complain to bosses, dealers and anyone else who works in the casino. Grumpy players are all too common, and you want to make sure that you don't present this face to your "fellow workers." If you are tired or grumpy, don't play. It is important to take breaks frequently and use the time to relax. You should be at your peak emotionally when you play, and this includes having a positive mental attitude and interacting with players and casino personnel on a friendly and helpful basis.

Eventually the casino will recognize you as congenial, reliable and dependable. And, if you decide to make playing blackjack your new profession, your relationship with your new associates will serve as the foundation for your new business.

Casino Comps

Whether you chose to become a rated player at the casino table games, join a slot club or both, once you get into the system, you can start getting your share of comps. There are a number of tried and proven ways to multiply the number of comps you get. Here are some pointers.

Chose a primary casino and then play there.

A basic premise of the whole comp system is to reward loyal players. Casinos offer comps to lure new players to their casino and to make sure that their current customers remain their customers. If you think you have it tough trying to use the comp system to your advantage, just think what the casinos are up against with new competition springing up every day.

If you are a whale, you can ignore my advice. Just plan on either bringing or setting up a credit line of \$100,000 or larger, and wherever you decide to land will be glad to comp you. If you are in the million-dollar plus range, the casino will not only comp you, but anyone else you chose to bring with you. They'll even charter a 737 and fly in as many of your friends as you want to bring along.

If you are not quite in this range, then it will pay to find a primary casino and reward it with your patronage. A player with as little as \$1,000 can get RFB treatment in some of the downtown casinos in Las Vegas. A player with a \$2,500 bankroll will have an even greater choice of hotel casinos. Move up to the \$5,000 to \$10,000 range, and a whole other batch of casinos become available.

But, in order to get noticed and adequately comped with a bankroll from \$1,000 to \$10,000, you have to be willing to reward a casino with your playing time.

A friend of mine visits Las Vegas about ten times a year. He usually takes \$5,000 to \$10,000 and manages to lose between half and three quarters of it per trip. I won't comment on his approach to gambling. Quite frankly, it stinks. Anyway, the subject is comps.

Believe it or not, he doesn't get any. He stays at a different casino every trip. I think he believes the constant changes might improve his luck. This is not necessarily bad, if he would play at the casino where he stays. He invariably changes casinos every hour or two and ends up playing in ten to twelve different establishments over the course of two or three days.

Because of the size of his buy-ins, he is constantly asked if he wants to be rated. He always declines. He confesses that he doesn't want the casinos to know how much he is losing. I think that he is trying to kid himself about his losses.

I have explained the comp system to him. As long as he is losing, he might as well have the casinos kick in \$750 to \$1,000 per trip. This money is there for the asking if he would only pick a primary casino and give it a reasonable amount of play.

I can't convince him to change his ways. But, maybe I can influence you.

There are many other benefits to playing more in a primary casino. The first benefit is the application of the old saw, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

The casino will accelerate the rewards offered you the more you play. Some casinos formalize this process and actually accelerate the comps to slot club members as their total number of points increases. Many casinos offer more and more free rooms and entertainment the more you patronize them.

The key to maximizing your benefits from this whole process is to find a casino that matches your needs and then start playing there. If you have picked correctly, your loyalty will be well rewarded.

Join a slot club and/or get a VIP card.

The start of getting comps is to be into the casino comp system. If you bet \$25,000 a hand, the host will find you. If you bet \$5 to \$25 a pop, you have to get the casino's attention. And the easiest way to do this is with a little piece of plastic which looks just like a credit card.

Once you have a card, getting comped will become part of your routine. The first thing you will do as a machine player is to insert your club card in the card reader.

When you sit down at a craps, roulette or a blackjack table you will present your VIP card when you buy in.

Your card will go down with your cash at the blackjack table when you lay five hundred in front of the dealer and tell him, "Chips please."

Once you have the cards and use them, all of your play will count towards something.

Get to know your casino host.

The casino host or the slot host will be your key to getting the most comps in most casinos.

If you are a member of the casino's slot club, you will get nearly all of your comps by asking the casino slot host. Many times comps for food, rooms, shows and merchandise are built right into the slot club payoffs. If you have just joined a slot club, try giving them some play for an hour or two and then asking the slot host for a buffet comp.

My experience with comps from playing slots or video poker is that the slot hosts are much more likely to be generous with comps than the personnel at the slot club booths. If you want brochures on the slot clubs or general information on the slot club, talk to the clerks at the booth. If you want a particular comp, ask the slot host.

Casino hosts, catering to the table game players, are at the top of the casino pecking order for granting comps. Their top priority is to cultivate new customers and to keep the current customers happy.

The casino hostesses are the persons working for VIP Services who help you check in, arrange your limo service, make dinner and show reservations and so forth.

The hostesses will handle most of your scheduling and reservation needs. The casino hosts are the people you need to talk to to arrange RFB and airfare reimbursement.

You can meet a casino host a number of ways. One way is to call a casino before coming and ask to speak to a host. This is a good way to ask about the casino's comp policy and to tell the host that you are interested in playing there.

If you are playing with front money, you should meet your host after depositing your money with the cage but before you begin play.

If you are a cash player and make a large enough buy-in, you may have a chance to meet a host when the casino sets you up with a VIP card.

After you have played in a casino, you can make reservations through the casino host. Making a reservation through a host who knows you is a good way to get a room even if the front desk claims that no rooms are available. Casinos always reserve a block of rooms for their best customers, and a casino host can get you a room when a reservation clerk can't.

I recommend taking a little time to develop a relationship with a host. Part of developing a relationship is consistency. If you make one casino your primary casino and visit several times a year, it will be easier to become known to a host than if he only sees you every other year.

If you are using a casino credit line, the host will introduce himself to you. With front money or cash, you will want to make a point of meeting the host.

Treat your host with respect and nurture the relationship. He can shower you with all kinds of freebies, including gifts, food, a free room and VIP treatment. And he is paid to do this. For your part, you have to convince your host that your action is sufficient to justify the comps you want. And being a nice person won't hurt either.

Be a nice person.

Or have I said that? You can get enormous leverage out of maintaining friendly relationships with the people who work in casinos.

Start with the dealers and cocktail waitresses. These people have a couple of the hardest jobs in the casino and are at the bottom of the casino hierarchy. A smile and a reasonable tipping policy will do wonders to get these folks on your side. I believe that creating a positive atmosphere starts with how you act towards the casino personnel. A positive atmosphere is conducive to winning as well as to getting your fair share of comps.

You might look at it this way. If you are a grump, the dealer will probably reciprocate. This is contagious behavior, and soon the whole table will act the same way. The pit personnel not only will not be impressed with your play, they probably will be put off by the whole scene at your table. Not only will your rating likely suffer, you won't have nearly as much fun.

You can't always control how dealers and other customers act. If I join a table where no one is talking, and the dealer barely grunts when spoken to, I will make my departure very quickly. Usually a few cheerful words followed by a toke for the dealer will turn the atmosphere around. However, if this fails, you can't be faulted for not trying. Life is too short to play under miserable conditions. It is always better to change tables than to continue to play with an out of sorts crew and crabby complaining customers. Under these conditions, you should just leave.

Visit the casino at off times.

I nearly always schedule my casino trips for the middle of the week. I will typically arrive on a Monday afternoon and stay until Thursday afternoon. The benefits of visiting during the week are many. If there are any drawbacks to avoiding the weekend crowds, I haven't found them.

I don't like waiting and I hate lines. By timing my visits to the middle of the week, I can usually walk into any coffee shop, make reservations for a gourmet restaurant just about any time I chose and get show tickets to the shows I want to see.

If you want to really reduce the size of the crowds, travel in the middle of the week during off season. Las Vegas is slower during the middle of summer when it is hot and in the late fall and early winter when it's colder. The slowest time in Vegas is usually between Thanksgiving and Christmas. But watch out for conventions. The Comdex is usually in town in November. Then it's impossible to get a room (unless you are a rated player or belong to a slot club).

If you like to visit Atlantic City, try visiting during the middle of the week in the dead of winter. You'll not only avoid the larger crowds, but you'll find that the minimum wagers on many tables have been reduced.

Visiting during an off time is also an excellent way to get noticed for purposes of getting rated and getting your comp career off to a roaring start.

With fewer players to contend with, a host or a floor person is easier to meet and to visit with. Also, during slow times, casinos tend to be more generous with comps. After all, they are more likely to have a slew of vacant rooms just waiting to be given away to qualified players on a Wednesday night in December.

Ask for comps.

If you play \$10,000 a hand at baccarat, you do not have to ask for comps. The casino will shower you with them. If you are like the rest of us wagering anywhere from \$5 to several hundred a hand, you need to ask for comps.

Slot players have the more systematic approach as the card readers on the machines are tied into a centralized computer system, and comps are based on points. If you are a slots or video poker player, getting a comp is pretty straight forward with this system.

Table game players have to deal more with people. And unless you are a whale, a boss will almost never offer you a comp unless you have just won big in a smaller casino which watches every loss. Facing a player who might walk out with their money in hand, some casinos will start throwing comps at the player. But most of the time, even rated players can play and play and never be offered a comp unless they ask for it.

My advice? Always ask for the comp. I have given you several examples of how to do it.

Maximize your comps.

Anyone who follows the steps I have described can get comps. Your first step is to pick your primary casino and give it most of your business. Before you pick your casino you want to make sure that the casino has a reasonable comp policy and that

it has beatable games. You should also like the casino as you will be receiving a lot of invitations there once you get into their comp system.

After picking your primary casino, you need to join its slot club and get a VIP card. I usually do both. Some casinos, like Rio in Las Vegas, combine rating slot, video poker and table players on one card. Others track machine and table action separately. However, it usually pays to join the slot club, even if you are mostly a table game player.

In many ways, slot club players have an advantage over the table game players. Their rating is automatic, they don't have to get the attention of some boss. By joining the slot club, they start receiving mailing from the casino. I have received offers of free rooms from casinos where I had never played a slot machine, but had joined their slot club.

If you are just establishing your rating and want to get a room on a crowded weekend, your slot club membership can be invaluable. After the reservation clerk tells you there are no rooms available, tell her you are a member of the slot club or ask to speak to a slot host. Chances are, the casino will find a room for you.

Getting to know the casino personal is critical. The more the casino personnel know and like you, the more comps are likely to flow your way. This is even true for slot players with their automated rating system. A slot host can easily "bump up" your comp from a buffet for two to a coffee shop comp for two, even if your rating is not quite there.

With table players, interacting with the pit personnel is critical. A boss can make or break you in terms of your rating. If your average wager is \$25, your goal is to be

rated as at least a \$50 to \$75 player. It is not enough to increase your wagers when the boss is looking, you need to be a nice person.

Playing with front money gives the casino a real shot at beating you. When you deposit the money in the cage, the casino knows that they have a shot at winning all of your front money. If you are willing to risk \$10,000, this will open the door to full RFB at most establishments.

When you play with front money, be sure to put it all in play. If you deposit \$10,000, draw markers for the full ten grand. This doesn't mean you should lose the money. If you look like a loser and the casino sees that you have put all of your front money into play, your rating will increase.

Remember to look like a loser. You can save your bragging for when you get home. Appear to lose, but lose gracefully. Dealers and bosses hear players gripe about losing every day. Look like a loser but don't complain.

If you run into a fantastic winning streak, don't worry about disguising the fact that you are a winner. The bosses will know that you are winning. If you try to hide enough chips to turn a big win into a loss, they'll know. When you have a big win, act like a winner. Go ahead and tip a little more. If you are playing craps, shouting is not out of line. I have had some of my best comps come out of big wins as casinos hate to see winners walk out the door with their money.

Summary of the Comps Game

Once you know how to play the comps game, you will be able to milk the casinos for every dime your action entitles you to. I have given you some pointers on how to get a quarter's worth of comps for a dime's worth of action.

When you combine getting the maximum number of comps with the Fletcher Formula you are in the best position to maximize your profits from casino gambling.

If you at least break even, then the comps you receive constitute a profit for your play. If you are able to win money at the casino games, then your profit will be even greater.

Casino Etiquette

If you know how to dine in a fine restaurant without making a scene, or automatically open doors for others and say thanks when someone holds open a door for you, you will probably not have any trouble knowing how to conduct yourself in a casino. I normally don't think much about etiquette until I see some jerk raising hell with a dealer about his losses, or chewing out a cocktail waitress for taking too long with an order. Then I have to wonder how the concept of manners has escaped him completely.

I said *him*, because boorish, obnoxious behavior nearly always comes from males, with very few females managing to become the perfect asses that males seem to delight in being.

Casinos seem to attract a higher than normal number of persons with a need to blow off at some unfortunate casino employee. The times I have somehow gotten in the middle of these disputes, I nearly always take the side of the dealer or floor person, especially if a male patron is unjustifiably berating a female employee for no reason other than he has poor control over his gambling, managed to lose much more than that should have, and is now looking for a scape goat.

For most persons who visit casinos, etiquette is simply a matter of common courtesy. It's okay to get a little wild in a casino. These are supposed to be places of fun, and drinking a little too much may be part of the entertainment. But for a successful Fletcher Formula player, the rules are not quite the same. The casino is your place of employment and drinking should be limited. It goes without saying, courteous behavior should be practiced at all times.

At all casino table games, the rules of etiquette are pretty simple. Treat the dealers and other players with respect and avoid being loud, pushy or belligerent. If you

get into a disagreement with a dealer, stay calm and be gracious even if the dealer really is wrong. It does not make sense to win an argument over a single payoff.

Here are some guidelines for casino play.

1. When you have finished playing, you can ask the dealer to color you up before leaving the table.
2. Watch your own bets at all times. Blackjack bets are easy to track as you handle the bets yourself and place them directly in front of you.
3. Don't force your way into a crowded table. If the table is crowded ask the nearest player if he minds if you join them.
4. Don't slow down the game by constantly asking the dealer basic questions about how the game is played or how bets are made. There are hundreds of books on how to play blackjack including this one. You should learn the correct payoffs for the bets you will be making.
5. Try to be discrete about your wins and losses. No one really cares to know how much you are winning, and it doesn't do you any good to advertise that you are a consistent winner.
6. While playing, conduct yourself courteously at all times. If you drink, refrain from overdoing it and never get drunk. You will need to stay alert to correctly make the wagers required by the Fletcher Formula and contrary to the opinion of some drunks, alcohol does not make you think clearer.
7. Toke the dealers. Dealers call tips "tokens" as in a token of appreciation. Many players don't realize that dealers are not paid much more than minimum wage. Blackjack dealers try very hard to please the public. Most dealers want the

players to win and have a good time. They know that if the players enjoy themselves and win, they will get toked. I always toke the dealers. If I win more I will toke them more, but even if I lose, I will make several bets for the dealer. This is not only the right thing to do but will pay you off in spades if you do it consistently. Even floor personnel know who the tippers are, and my experience has been that if you tip, you will be more than repaid by hard working dealers, who will watch out for your bets and by casino complimentaries, controlled by and large by pit personnel who rate your play.

Keeping Records

Along with all of the new habits I am asking you to form, I am going to add one more. I want you to start keeping written records of how you do playing blackjack. Actually, you want to keep a written record of all of your gambling, but since this book is about how to win at blackjack, we'll just focus on this game.

There are a couple of reasons you will want to keep records. One is to honestly measure how well (or how badly) you are doing. Most players wince at this suggestion. They know that they have been long-term losers.

I am going to ask you to be honest and start writing down how you actually do. You don't have to show this to anyone else. But, aren't you at least a little curious about your blackjack wins and losses?

Another reason I am suggesting that you start keeping written records is that you will eventually need them for income tax reporting. I'll tell you more about this later.

I have given you a couple of good reasons to start keeping written records of your gambling. They are –

First, to honestly measure how well (or badly) you are doing, and

Second, to have a record for income tax reporting.

How you set up your records is up to you. You may want to purchase a small notebook which fits in your pocket or purse. I like to keep records on individual sheets of standard size 8.5" x 11" accounting paper. I usually carry one sheet with me, neatly folded in my pocket. After each session of play, I will update the information I like to record on the piece of paper. Eventually, after I have returned home, the sheet will be filed in a loose-leaf notebook.

Whatever system you use is fine; just make sure that you use some kind of recording system.

Before I start a gambling excursion, I like to record some basic information about what I plan to do. This information will outline my strategy and would look like this:

Location	Las Vegas
Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy	
Profit Goal	\$5,000
Blackjack Bankroll	\$5,500
Base Bet Size	\$100
Game Buy-in	\$1110
Days of Play	2 days
Number of Sessions	5-6 a day
Target Profit per Game	\$500
Loss Limit per Game	Buy-in of \$1110

The results of each session should be recorded as soon as possible after finishing play. The following information should be recorded:

Location: (City, casino, etc.)

Date and Time Played

Table Number.

Base Bet Size

Won (Lost): Amount that you won or lost for the session.

Total Won (Lost): A running total of the amount you have won or lost.

Your actual record might look like the record shown below:

Location	Date & Time	Table No.	Base Bet Size	Amount Won (Lost)	Cumulative Won
LV – Golden Nugget	11-2-10 10 to 11 AM	6	\$100	+550	+550
LV – Golden Nugget	11-2-10 11 to 11:30 AM	12	\$100	+600	+1150
LV – Orleans	11-2-10 2:10 to 2:40 PM	12	\$100	+440	+1590
LV – Orleans	11-2-10 3:30 to 4:10 PM	14	\$100	+620	+2210
LV - Orleans	11-2-10 5-20 to 5:50 PM	7	\$100	+500	+2710
LV-Binions	11-3-10 10 to 11 AM	9	\$100	+550	\$3260
LV-Binions	11-3-10 11 to 12 PM	8	\$100	\$680	\$3940
LV-Main Street Stat	11-3-10 4-4:30	16	\$100	\$800	\$4740
LV-Golden Nugget	11-3-10 9-10 PM	6	\$100	\$550	\$5290
Stop – Trip profit objective reached.					

For US players the basic rules for gambling are that all gambling winnings should be reported on your tax returns as other income. Gambling losses are deductible only to the extent that you report gambling winnings and then only as an itemized deduction. Home ownership with the attendant home mortgage interest is usually the deductible expense which allows people to itemize their deductions. If you don't own a home, or if your home mortgage interest is too low, or you have paid off your mortgage, you may not have enough expenses to itemize deductions. This could mean that you end up reporting gambling winnings as income but are not allowed to deduct gambling losses.

As a practical matter, most folks ignore their gambling wins and losses when filling out their tax returns because all they have is losses, and they couldn't document them if their lives depended on it. Because of the skill you now have with the ***Fletcher Formula Blackjack Strategy*** you are more likely than ever to have reportable gambling income.

The easiest way to meet the IRS guidelines for documentation is to keep a daily record of blackjack play, as well as invoices, receipts and other documentation from your trip. File this information in an envelope, a file folder or a notebook.



It's time to pull together everything we have learned. The next chapters review all the betting rules and playing strategy for the Fletcher Formula.

Summary of the Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy

1. If the dealer has an up-card of 7 or higher, keeping hitting until you have a hard hand of 17 or higher.

2. If the dealer shows an up-card of 4, 5 or 6, stand at a hard hand of 12 or better. You will only hit if your hand is 11 or lower.

3. If the dealer has a 2 or 3, stand at a hard hand of 13 or higher. You will only hit if your hand is 12 or lower.

4. Soft Hand – Hitting and Standing Rules:

Soft 17. Always hit it

Soft 18. Stand on any dealer up-card of 2 to 8. Otherwise, hit it.

Soft 19 and 20. Always stand.

5. Only double down as follows:

11 vs a dealer 2-9

10 vs a dealer 4-7

9 vs a dealer 5-6

6. Splits are handled as follows:

- Split pairs of 2s, 3s and 7s versus a dealer up-card of 2 to 7.
- Split pairs of 4s against dealer up-cards of 5 and 6.
- Split 6s against dealer up-cards of 3 to 6.
- Split 9s against dealer up-cards of 2 to 9 except for when dealer shows a 7.

- Always split aces and 8s

7. Never take insurance.

Fletcher Formula Playing Strategy Pocket Card

Fletcher Formula

Splitting:

A,A 8,8 vs All dealer hands
9,9 vs 2-9 except 7
6,6 vs 3-6
4,4 vs 5-6
2s, 3s and 7s vs 2-7

Doubling Down:

11, 10 vs. 4, 5, 6

Hitting & Standing:

Hard 11 or lower always hit
Hard 17 or higher always stand
Hard 12-16 stand vs dealer 4,5, or 6
Hard 13-16 stand vs dealer 2 or 3

Insurance

Never take insurance.

Review of the Fletcher Formula

In this strategy two to three levels of bets are used.

The *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* uses two levels of three bets each, while the *Master Player Strategy* uses three levels of three bets each.

Regardless of which strategy you decide to use you need to know the betting rules for each level of bets.

The basic betting rules are:

1. Before starting to play, set up chips representing bets you will make in three spots, which we call Spots 1, 2 and 3 for reference. As a \$10 bettor you will start with Level-1 bets which are always equal to the size of your minimum bets called Base Bets.
2. Your chips will consist of two groups. You will have the *Betting Series* starting with chips in three spots in front of you to be used for betting. The remainder of your buy-in will be kept to the side. We refer to all chips not in the Betting Series as *Reserve Chips*.
3. As a \$10 bettor you will set up your Level-1 bets as follows:

Spots	1	2	3
Chips	10	10	10

4. You will always wager from left to right. If there are chips in Spot 1 you will wager using these chips. If the Spot 1 chips have been lost, you will wager using

the Spot 2 chips. If the chips in spots 1 and 2 have both been lost, wager using the chips in spot 3.

5. If chips are lost do not replace the lost chips with other chips. Continue using the betting series with the chips that are left.

6. If all of the chips in the betting series are lost, you will move up to the next larger betting series. If the betting series that was lost is the highest for the system version you are using then you have lost the game.

7. Game Losses: *The Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy* uses betting Levels 1 and 2. If you lose the chips in Level 2, you have lost the game.

The Master Player Strategy uses betting Levels 1, 2 and 3. If you lose the chips in Level 3, you have lost the game.

8. After wins, empty spots are replenished using chips from the win. For example, if Spot 1 is empty and you win a Spot 2 wager, you will replenish the lost chips in Spot 1.

9. After all Spots have chips in them any winnings will be added to the Spots in the following order:

First add a win to Spot 2.

If Spot 2 already has winnings added to it, add the winning chips to Spot 3.

If Spots 2 and 3 already have wins added to them, add a win to Spot 1.

10. If you win a blackjack, only add the amount of the regular bet to the betting series. For example, if you bet \$10 and win \$15 with a blackjack, only \$10 of the

win will be added to the betting series. The bonus amount of \$5 will be returned to the Reserve chips.

11. If you are called on to double down or split a hand you will borrow the extra chips from the **Reserve Chips**. If you lose a doubled or split bet only remove the amount of the original or regular bet from the Betting Series. For example, if you make a Spot 1 bet of \$10 and then borrow \$10 to double down and lose the bet, you will only remove the regular bet of \$10 from the Betting Series.

12. If you win a blackjack, or a doubled or split bet, any excess winnings are returned to the Reserve Chips.

13. The Betting Series are managed according to specific rules. You should study the Sample Games and then practice playing using cards, blackjack software or play in practice mode in an online casino to make sure that you understand how to handle the Betting Series.

14. Every game is governed by a Profit Goal for that level of play. Profit Goals are equal to five times the size of the base bet. As a \$10 bettor you will play with a \$50 Profit Goal.

15. You should terminate a game as soon as your **Total Win** for the game reaches or exceeds your Profit Goal. If you want to continue playing instead of departing the table you should remove your winning chips from the table. You can then start a new game with a new Level-1 Betting Series.

16. The maximum amount any level of bets will be increased, following wins, is two times the original wagers. Thus, Level-1 bets originally set at \$10 each may increase to \$20 each. However, you will never increase the wagers higher than this.

17. Whenever we lose all of the bets at a Level we will move up to the next higher level of bets. If we lose all of the bets in Level 1, we will continue to play, using the bets in Level 2. If we also lose the bets in Level 2, we will set up the bets in Level 3 and continue to play.

When we move from one level to another we will add another rule:

There will be a maximum of four wins at any level. If we win four bets at Level 2 we will drop back to making Level 1 bets. If we win four bets at Level 3, we will drop back to Level 2.

If we win four bets in Level 1, we will restore the series to its original position as if we were just starting a game.

18. We will play until we reach or exceed a Profit Goal equal to five times the size of our Base Bet. Using \$10 Base Bets we will look for a Profit of $5 \times 10 = \$50$. Once we reach our Profit Goal we will call the game completed and quit playing.

19. We may decide to stop a game short of reaching our Profit Goal. This rule is used when we have recovered from a losing position. If we losing and the game has lasted longer than 15 rounds of play we may decide to settle for recovering most of our loss and not continue to play for a full win. For example, lets assume we have a loss for the game of -50 . We are at Level 2 and win three bets in a row giving us a net win of $+10$. At this point we will have played for 18 rounds and we may decide to settle for a win of $+10$ rather than continuing to play.

Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy

Only two Levels of Betting Series are used with this strategy. For a \$10 bettor, the Betting Series are:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1	10	10	10
Level 2	20	20	20

The table below summarizes the *Bankroll Requirements, Profit Goals and Win Rates* for the *Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy*:

Fletcher Formula – Maximum Return Blackjack Strategy Summary of Bankroll, Profit Goals and Win Rates

Minimum Bet	Buy-in	Total Bankroll	Profit Goal	Average Won/Round	Land-based Hourly Winnings (80 rounds per hour)	Online Hourly Winnings (350 rounds per hour)
\$1	\$11	\$55	\$5	\$0.17176	\$13.74	\$60.13
\$2	\$22	\$110	\$10	\$0.3432	\$27.48	\$120.26
\$3	\$33	\$165	\$15	\$0.5153	\$41.22	\$180.39
\$5	\$55	\$275	\$25	\$0.859	\$68.70	\$300.65
\$10	\$110	\$550	\$50	\$1.7176	\$137.41	\$601.30
\$15	\$165	\$825	\$75	\$2.5764	\$206.11	\$901.95
\$20	\$220	\$1100	\$100	\$3.4352	\$274.48	\$1202.32
\$25	\$275	\$1375	\$125	\$4.294	\$343.52	\$1503.25
\$35	\$385	\$1925	\$175	\$6.0116	\$480.93	\$2104.06
\$50	\$550	\$2750	\$250	\$8.588	\$687.04	\$3000.65
\$75	\$825	\$4125	\$375	\$12.882	\$1030.56	\$4509.75
\$100	\$1110	\$5500	\$500	\$17.176	\$1374.10	\$6013.00
\$200	\$2220	\$11,000	\$1000	\$34.352	\$2748.16	NA
\$300	\$3330	\$16,500	\$1500	\$51.528	\$4122.24	NA
\$400	\$4440	\$22,000	\$2000	\$68.704	\$5496.32	NA
\$500	\$5550	\$27,500	\$2500	\$85.880	\$6870.40	NA

Master Player Strategy

Three Levels of Betting Series are used with this strategy. For a \$10 bettor, the Betting Series are:

Spots	1	2	3
Level 1	10	10	10
Level 2	20	20	20
Level 3	40	40	40

The table below summarizes the *Bankroll Requirements, Profit Goals* and *Win Rates* for the *Master Player Strategy*:

Fletcher Formula – Master Player Strategy Summary of Bankroll, Profit Goals and Win Rates

Minimum Bet	Buy-in	Total Bankroll	Profit Goal	Average Won/Round	Land-based Hourly Winnings (80 rounds per hour)	Online Hourly Winnings (350 rounds per hour)
\$1	\$25	\$125	\$5	.2473	\$19.78	\$86.56
\$2	\$50	\$250	\$10	.4946	\$39.57	\$173.11
\$3	\$75	\$375	\$15	07419	\$59.35	\$259.67
\$5	\$125	\$625	\$25	\$1.2365	\$98.92	\$432.78
\$10	\$250	\$1250	\$50	\$2.473	\$197.84	\$865.55
\$15	\$375	\$1875	\$75	\$3.710	\$296.76	\$1298.34
\$20	\$500	\$2500	\$100	\$4.946	\$395.68	\$1731.12
\$25	\$625	\$3125	\$125	\$6.1825	\$494.75	\$2163.88
\$35	\$875	\$4375	\$175	\$8.66	\$692.44	\$3031.00
\$50	\$1250	\$6250	\$250	\$12.364	\$989.20	\$4327.40
\$75	\$1875	\$9375	\$375	\$18.55	\$1484.25	\$6491.64
\$100	\$2500	\$12500	\$500	\$24.73	\$1978.40	\$8655.50
\$200	\$5000	\$25000	\$1000	\$49.46	\$3956.80	NA
\$300	\$7500	\$37500	\$1500	\$74.19	\$5935.20	NA
\$400	\$10000	\$50000	\$2000	\$98.92	\$7913.60	NA
\$500	\$12500	\$60000	\$2500	\$123.65	\$9992.00	NA

Tracking Your Play

It is remarkably easy to track your play using *The Fletcher Formula*.

There are two basic methods – the chip tracking method and the *Fletcher Formula Bet Tracker*.

Using the Chip Tracking Method

Using chips to keep track of *The Fletcher Formula* is the method you will want to use when you play in land-based games.

When you first start you will convert your cash to chips. You will set up your chips in two general groups.

Reserve Chips on the left

And, *Playing Chips* on the right.

If you were a \$10 player using the *Maximum Return Blackjack System*, you would buy-in for \$110 and immediately set up two groups of chips as follows:

Reserve Chips

\$80 reserve chips stacked by color, with smaller valued chips on top

Betting Chips

\$30, set up in three spots of 10 10 10

This is all you have to do to track the system.

You will use the *Betting Chips* to determine the size of each bet, per the system.

The *Reserve Chips* may be used to double or split hands. Excess, such as the bonus chips for a blackjack or a doubled or split pair win will be returned to the Reserve Chips.

You will also have to keep track of your winnings. If you keep your Reserve Chips stacked by color you will be able to quickly determine your profits in any game. Don't worry if you are off by a minimum valued chip when you count up profits. If you can play reasonably accurately you will be close enough to hitting the correct profit goals.

Using the Fletcher Formula Bet Tracker

When you play online it is awkward to use chips to track your play. I prefer to use the *Fletcher Formula Bet Tracker*, set up like the Sample Games presented in this book. A blank Fletcher Formula Bet Tracker is presented on the next page. You can print as many copies of this form as you like.

Fletcher Formula Bet Tracker

Casino _____ Date _____ Time Played _____ Profit Goal _____
 R= regular bet, D= doubled bet, S = split W=win, L=Lost, P=Push, BJ=Blackjack

#	Level	Wins at Level	Bets Before Round	Wager(s) Made	Total Bet	Outcome	Amount Won or Lost for Round	Running Total
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
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