The Intelligent Gambler

Number 3, May 1995

PUBLISHER'S CORNER

Chuck Weinstock

Welcome to the third issue of ConJelCo's *The Intelligent Gambler*. In this issue we have articles by Anthony Curtis, Ken Elliott, Arnold Snyder, Lee Jones, Lenny Frome, and Bob Wilson on everything from blackjack to video poker.

Since the last issue has come out we've released the book *Winning Low-Limit Hold'em*, by Lee Jones. This book, which *Card Player* has said is "destined to become a classic" has sold so well that by the time you receive this issue it will be in it's second printing.

In this issue we're announcing *Sozobon Poker for Windows*, software to improve your play at both Texas Hold'em and Seven-Card Stud. See our special pre-publication offer elsewhere in this issue.

ConJelCo's World Wide Web site has been operational since last Summer. We are receiving over 2,000 requests for information per day, and have greatly expanded the offerings to include the *Las Vegas Advisor* Top Ten Values, and the Best Bets from *Blackjack Review*. During the 1995 *World Series of Poker* we were able to provide on-line results of the various events shortly after they ended, complete with graphics of chip position at the final table, and the final hand. We expect to expand the offerings further over the next several months. This is a free service to our customers. You can find us at:

http://www.conjelco.com

We appreciate the many positive comments we've had on prior issues of *The Intelligent Gambler*. We hope you enjoy this issue as well. ♠

DOWNTOWN BLACKJACK

Anthony Curtis

Late last year I received a call from the publisher of *Casino Player* magazine. The *Player* had just run a story naming downtown Las Vegas as having the loosest slots of any gambling area in America. It was a big feather in the cap of the downtowners. So big, in fact, that they built a major print-media and billboard advertising campaign around it. "It's official," the ads trumpeted. "Downtown is loosest for slots."

The campaign was a big hit and the downtown casino bosses wanted more. They suggested to the publisher that his magazine declare downtown most liberal for blackjack as well.

"What do you think?" the publisher asked me. "Is there a case for downtown Las Vegas being best for blackjack?"

Interesting question. The conventional wisdom has traditionally held that gambling (overall) is better downtown, but this perception hasn't carried over to blackjack. The reason is one bad rule: the dealer hits soft 17. This rule, which requires the dealer to draw a card on totals of 17 that include an ace (i.e., A,6), costs the player a sizable .2% in expected return and dominates the downtown blackjack scene (the only exception is the Golden Nugget's six-deckers). Blackjack downtown might be more relaxed and have lower limits than elsewhere, but most liberal? That claim required investigation.

Definitions

I categorize "downtown casinos" as the casinos that are located on Fremont Street (Plaza, Golden Gate, Las Vegas Club, Pioneer, Golden Nugget, Binion's Horseshoe, Four Queens, Fremont, Fitzgeralds, El Cortez, and Western) and those located one block north on Ogden (California, Lady Luck, and Gold Spike). These are the 14 casinos that are banking on the success of the Fremont Street Experience, due to open in late 1995.

While conducting this investigation, I had in mind players with skill levels ranging from rank novice (no blackjack training at all) to high intermediate (perfect basic strategy), because everyone in this group can improve results simply by playing in better games. What makes one game better than another? A lower house advantage, which is a product of the number of decks dealt and the rules. (Stanford Wong's excellent newsletter, *Current Blackjack News*, provided most

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of the data on table conditions presented below.)

Single-Deck Density

The most important consideration when looking for a good blackjack game is the number of decks dealt. Fewer is better and one is best. Downtown is a bastion of single-deck blackjack: 10 of its 14 casinos deal at least one single-deck game. Ten Las Vegas Strip casinos also deal single-deck, but that's out of a total of 33 casinos. In terms of density, downtown is superior. Directly in the heart of Glitter Gulch is the heaviest concentration of single decks anywhere in the U.S.: 69 tables at Binion's Horseshoe and the Golden Nugget combined. Nice pickin's. Reno has more casinos with single decks and Laughlin has a higher level of density, but the rules in both of these places are generally more restrictive (usually with regard to doubling down).

The Proof of the Pudding

Locating single-deck tables is only the first step in finding a good blackjack game. Finding good rules is the second. By taking decks and rules into consideration, it's possible to compute the casino edge against a perfect basic-strategy player. This advantage typically falls within a range of 0% (no advantage) to about 1%. What I would term a liberal blackjack game has a casino edge of only .25% (one quarter of one percent) or less. This is a low fee to pay for a gambling experience, and a slim margin to overcome for expert players seeking to gain an edge. Most players, unfortunately, don't consider rules before sitting down to play blackjack. So, to make a realistic assessment of liberalness as it applies to the majority of blackjack players, we must assume that the player will choose a table randomly and take what he gets in terms of the game's edge. It's similar to what a slot player faces when trying to choose a slot machine with a high payback percentage.

To get a handle on the average player's chances of stumbling onto a good game, we'll compare the number of tables with liberal rules in a given gambling area with the total number of tables that might be picked for play. For example, of approximately 1,100 blackjack tables (at last count) on the Las Vegas Strip, about 120 of them have an edge below our cutoff. Thus, about 11% of the games on the Strip meet our definition of liberal. In most of the other major gambling areas, the percentages are similar, in the 10%-20% range. Some are higher—Laughlin runs close to 25% liberal games (remember the single-deck density). Some are lower—Atlantic City barely registers.

The winner? Downtown Las Vegas by a rout, coming in at a whopping 40%! This means that two out of five blackjack players downtown are likely to sit down at a game with a casino edge of .25% or lower. And that's not all. As it turns out, the *only* bad thing about the downtown single-deck game is the soft-17 rule. Conclusion? If you restrict your play to single-deck only in downtown Las Vegas, you have a 100% chance of playing the best game possible.

Bragging Rights?

So, would my publisher friend be justified in adding "best blackjack" to downtown Las Vegas' "loosest slots" designation? Just to be sure, I took a look at the hold percentages for blackjack games in Nevada. The "hold" has been an embattled indicator of late, but the measurement is useful in an analysis such as this. If my conclusion about downtown was correct, the hold percentage statistics would be expected to support it. And they did: the official figures indicate that downtown casinos do indeed win a significantly lower percentage of the money tendered by gamblers at their 21 tables. Best blackjack? Downtown Las Vegas.

Why Fewer are Better

We've all heard that fewer decks are better. Here's why. As the number of decks is reduced:

- You are slightly more likely to get a natural.
- You are slightly more likely to get an untied natural.
- The favorability of proper doubling down is increased.
- The favorability of standing on stiffs vs. dealer 2-6 is increased.

The last two are related to the "effects of removal." The impact of the removal of certain consequential cards is greater when fewer decks are in play. Example: You hold 6,5 and double. One 6 and one 5, either of which would be an undesirable draw to your 11, no longer remain in the deck to be drawn. The effect of removing these cards is diminished as more decks are introduced—the 6 and 5 are two cards of 52 in a single deck, but only two of 312 in six decks.

Also important: Fewer decks usually means more shuffling, which means fewer hands played and a lower expected loss.

INTERESTING HANDS, TELLS, AND BETS ON THE RIVER

Lee Jones

A couple of nights ago, I was in a $6-$12 Hold'em game, and it went like this: I limped in late position with JT behind two callers. The button called, big blind checked, and we were off. Flop comes Jh-Td-8h. I've flopped top two pair, but this is a terrifying flop for me (both my cards are black). I could easily be drawing here, but I have to assume I have the best hand at the moment. There's a bet and call in front of me. Doing the only thing I can, I raise, hoping to scare out the gutshot draws and single big hearts. Much to my consternation, the button calls two bets cold, but two people in

front drop, and the bettor and caller both call.

The turn is a small heart. They both check to me. Should I bet? David Sklansky, standing behind me, leans over and whispers, "Check, dammit—remember it was the button that called two bets cold behind your raise. If you bet and he raises, you have to call. Furthermore, his raise will knock out the players in front, and you want them in there to give you better odds to draw at the boat." So I check. Needless to say, the button bets.

But *how* he bets is interesting. It's a full body-across-the-table, extended-arm, splash-the-chips-in bet. Mike Caro, standing behind me, leans over and whispers, "Looks strong, means weak." Everybody between the bettor and me bails. I call, knowing I'm drawing at the nuts. The river, alas, is yet *another* small heart. I check, and the button bets instantly.

What to do? I have a couple of friends, Paul and Michael, both *very* strong players, who would fairly quickly lay down my hand at this point. As they would correctly point out, I'm almost assuredly beaten. The most likely thing I'm going to get shown is a single big heart— he was semi-bluffing the turn, and got there on the river.

But I keep thinking that something smells funny. There's not enough deliberation, and if he had a hand like a set or a straight, he would *have* to think a little before betting when that fourth heart hit. So I call. And he has T8 - no hearts. He flopped bottom two pair, and I win a fairly big pot. David Sklansky, standing behind me, does a little jig, and says, "See—folding there would have been a *catastrophe*."

The next day at lunch, I described the hand to Roy Hashimoto. As usual, he quickly pointed out a mistake in my play: "If you had that read on him when he bet the turn, you should have check-raised him." OK, so that would have been a better play—what's your point?

However, that's not the ultimate point I want to make about this hand. It's about betting and calling on the end. The player whom I had beaten for that pot later turned to me and said, "I figured if you could stay in after that third heart hit, you probably had me beat—my only hope of winning was to bet on the river." And he was absolutely right.

At the same lunch with Roy, I was praising myself for calling—and thus avoid the catastrophe of giving up 9-10 big bets for fear of giving up one. And Roy pointed out that *sometimes* betting in that situation has exactly the same effect: you're giving up one bet in the hopes of saving a 9-10 bet pot. He was pointing out that if you check down a weak hand on the river when your opponent would have folded his (slightly stronger) hand, you have suffered a very similar catastrophe.

My opponent in the hand I described above *very* nearly won the whole pot, by dint of his position and willingness to bet when that terrifying fourth heart hit. If he can get me to lay down my hand one time in ten, he's ahead.

This is *not* a suggestion that you bet at every board when you have no chance to win on the river, but it is something to think about the next time you're in such a situation.

CALCULATING THE HOUSE ADVANTAGE

Ken Elliott

The "house advantage", "vig.", "house p.c.", "p.c.", etc. are terms generally used to describe how unfavorable a bet is to the player. You'll read books that use these figures to measure how "good" a given craps bet is in relationship to other craps bets, and even among different casino games (e.g., a bet in American Roulette has a 5.26% house p.c.). You may not know how this is calculated or what it exactly is measuring. Even if you do, you might also be surprised at how some of the numbers are arrived at; in this issue we'll attempt to clear that up.

The p.c. is most commonly calculated by taking the expected net loss on the bet (since we're talking about craps, all such expectations are negative; that is, in favor of the house), divide it by the total amount you bet (called the bet handle), which will give you the percentage of the bet handle that you're expected to lose.

One way to calculate the expected net loss is strictly for math weenies, and involves something known as the *expected value* of a bet. For complex betting situations, it's usually the quickest way to do things—if you're comfortable with math. The expected value is merely what you can expect to win or lose over the long run for a particular bet. The idea is to calculate the probability of each outcome, and then multiply that probability by the amount won or lost for that outcome. When you add up all of the outcomes, you have the expected value. Let's use the place 6 bet as an example. There are two possible outcomes; the first is that a six is rolled before a seven, in which case you win $7 (on a $6 bet); the second is that a seven is rolled before a 6, in which case you lose your $6 bet. The probability that a 6 is rolled before a 7 is 5/11, while the probability that a 7 is rolled before a 6 is 6/11. So to calculate the expected value, it's (5/11 x $7) + (6/11 x -$6) which is -$.09. This means you stand to lose (on average, in the long run) nine cents on every decision for a $6 place 6 bet. Remember that the house p.c. is the expected value divided by the bet handle, so this would be -.09/6 = -.01515, or 1.515% in favor of the casino.

The second way to do it is to list out all of the possible outcomes of your bet to get around those fractions in the previous example; this way is usually easier to understand, too. Let's use the place 6 bet (for $6) again as our example. There are 11 ways this bet could be resolved. On 5 of them (because there are 5 ways to make a 6), you'll make a 6 before a 7, and you'll win $7 (on a $6 bet). On the other 6 (because there are 6 ways to

make a 7), you'll lose your $6 bet. The net loss is (6 x $6) (your losses) - (5 x $7) (your wins); a net loss of $1. The total amount you've bet (your *bet handle*), is $66 (11 x $6), so the p.c. is $1 / $66 =.01515..., or about 1.515% of your handle. Same answer, different ways of calculating it.

That seems clear enough. But now, what about the don't pass bet? Since the don't pass bet 'bars' the 12 (that is, counts it as a push), it's gets a little muddy as to what we should say the p.c. is, because it depends on what we define as an "outcome".

First, let's calculate it in the "conventional" way; that is, the way it's calculated in most books. To do this, we'll look at a cycle of 1980 come-outs (we use 1980 because then we can have an even number of decisions for every point total, and eliminate the need to talk in fractions of a roll or fractions of a decision; this just means we're doing things the second of the two ways we mentioned).

In 1980 come-outs, we'll have the following for the don't pass bet:

On points of 4 and 10, 2/3 of the time we'll seven out. Likewise, we'll seven out 3/5 of the time on 5 and 9, and 6/11 of the time on the 6 and 8. This is expressed above in the # of "wins" column. Notice that the 12, since it's a push, neither wins nor loses.

Now, calculating it like the books do, suppose we're betting $1 on the don't pass line. We're going to win 949 times, for a win of $949. However, we're going to lose 976 times, for a loss of $976. Since the 12s "don't count", we pretend like we never bet on them (actually, we pretend that we let the bet we made on the don't pass ride until we got a win or a loss on it, so it winds up in one of the other categories), and our total amount bet is $1925 (1980 - 55 for the 12s), and the p.c. is the familiar 1.402% in the house's favor.

But, another way of looking at it is as follows. Suppose the you viewed a "decision" as a bet either winning, losing, or pushing. Then you'd see from the above that we would not take out the 55 rolls for the 12, and instead we would view the money bet there as being part of the bet handle. The total amount wagered would be $1980, and so the p.c. calculated in this way is 1.364%, about .04 of a percent less than was calculated in the other way.

So, which way is the "right" way? The answer is...there is no right way; both

Possible Decisions in 1980 Come-out Rolls

Number	# on Come-Out	# of "Wins"	# of "Losses"
2	55	55	0
3	110	110	0
4	165	110	55
5	220	132	88
6	275	150	125
7	330	0	330
8	275	150	125
9	220	132	88
10	165	110	55
11	110	0	110
12	55	0	0
Totals:	1980	949	976

ways are correct, but the numbers are describing different things. You'll note that the important thing, the net loss (which is ultimately what we care about when we belly up to the craps table) is the same in both cases: $27. Just the way the bet handle is figured has change.

Taking this a step further, we can now see that this produces difficulties if bets are made, and then taken down before they are resolved. Since the p.c.s given in books are calculated based on the assumption that a bet, once made, is going to ride until it is resolved, if your betting behavior does not conform to this, your actual results may differ from what is predicted by the books. For instance, if you go up to a table, place the 6 for one roll, and then walk away (win, lose, or no decision), the house p.c. for that method of playing is .463%! However, nobody plays that way; it's just a game we're playing with numbers.

So what is the point of all this? Basically, you need to be sure you understand how the numbers are calculated when evaluating claims. If someone is trying to sell you a system that claims to have, for instance, "Place bets with lower vig than double odds", they are almost certainly just manipulating numbers. The other point is if you're using computer simulations to arrive at numbers for the house p.c., in an attempt to compare these numbers with other, "well known", numbers, you need to know how the simulator is calculating the numbers so that you don't end up comparing apples to oranges. In the *CrapSim* version 2.0's *SysSim* product, a "decision" on the don't pass bet includes a push. This means that SysSim "counts" the amount bet on the don't pass line every time you make a bet, not just when a decision occurs. Again, this makes no difference to your bottom line; it is just useful to know if you're going to

try to compare one bet or system to another using the house advantage.

SERIOUS QUESTIONS FROM A SEMI-SERIOUS STUDENT

Arnold Snyder

Q: I am a beginning semi-serious blackjack student. I have studied basic strategy and practiced with a double deck. After three months of this, I have played four times in a casino, about two to three hours each time, and have had good results. A winner, but not a big winner, because I do not bet big money ($20 to $30 a hand on a progressive money management system).

I have two main questions you may be able to help me with:

1. *What is your position concerning trends and charting tables before play?*
2. *How do you feel about not doubling against a dealer's upcard of 2 when your first two cards total 9, 10, or 11?*

A: Let's take question #2 first.

Doubling down on totals of 10 or 11 vs. a dealer 2 are very strong basic strategy plays, regardless of the number of decks in play. You should always double down on these hands vs. a dealer deuce. If you were a card counter, it would take a very extreme negative count, i.e., a very large proportion of the tens would have to be depleted before you would not double down on these hands.

Doubling down on 9 vs. 2, on the other hand, is a borderline basic strategy decision. Technically, in a single-deck game, correct basic strategy is to double down. With two or more decks in play, correct basic strategy is to not double down (just hit). A card counter would usually double down on 9 vs. 2 with any plus count, but would not double down with any minus count.

Since you are not a card counter, my advice would be to generally follow basic strategy. Double down in single-deck games, but not in multiple-deck games. In your case, however, another factor plays into this decision. You say that you vary your bets according to a "progressive money management system." This means that at times you will have a large bet on the table when you do not actually have an advantage over the house. Because 9 vs. 2 is such a borderline double down decision, I would advise you not to double down on 9 vs. 2 whenever you have a substantial bet on the table—regardless of the number of decks in play. Since you are already risking more of your bankroll than you should be risking, it would not be wise to double your bet, risking even more money, despite what basic strategy might call for.

A few years ago, Joel Friedman presented an important mathematical paper to the gambling community on "risk adverse" strategies, in which he showed that even card counters should violate the "technically correct" doubling and splitting strategies if the amount of money already bet on a hand exceeds the optimum bet based on the "Kelly Criterion."

Ultimately, as you might suspect, my advice to you would be to give up the progressive betting systems—which will only lead to negative expectation in the long run—and learn to count cards.

Which brings us to your first question—my "position" concerning "trends" and "charting tables" before playing.

My position is that these methods are often fun, and can lend excitement to the game, but as methods of attempting to get an edge at blackjack, they are a lot of baloney. These are the same methods that have been used by craps players and roulette players for eons—just like progressive betting systems—they don't do a thing.

Blackjack is the one casino game in which a smart player can beat the house with an intelligent strategy, yet many intelligent players persist in following these nonsensical methods. Of course, I can't really blame the players for this. There are so many system sellers out there peddling this garbage, knowing that most players are not competent enough with the mathematics of gambling to see through the illogic.

Probably the biggest single fallacy among amateur gamblers, both recreational gamblers and diehard compulsives, is that "trends" lend themselves to prediction at the gaming tables. Almost everyone—except the serious pros—believes that tables get "hot" and "cold," and that the way to make money gambling is to find the "hot" tables and ride them to riches.

We've all seen winning and losing streaks that seem phenomenal, but the fact is that no one can predict when such streaks will start or stop. Casinos, of course, would be broke if winning were easy. Unscrupulous system sellers feed off of this public misperception, however, by offering methods of determining just when the "trend" is indicative of a winning (or losing) streak, so that the system player may jump in and out at just the right times.

Don't waste your time or money with these types of systems, no matter how logical or intelligent they sound. If you like using progressive betting systems at the blackjack tables, and you stick to a fairly solid basic strategy game, you'll hold your own, provided you don't overbet your bankroll. If you enjoy seeking out "hot" tables based on various factors that help you to identify these games, fine. Many people find this type of play exciting. But don't delude yourself into thinking that this is what the real gambling pros are doing. It's not. This type of play can be very dangerous to anyone who tends to get carried away with the action on the tables. Keep your cool, and don't blow the rent money on a dream.

RANDOM NUMBER GENERATORS

Lenny Frome

There have been two events recently involving people busting KENO for big

money by virtue of their very astute observations or their specialized knowledge. These have been played up heavily by the news media, which generally opposes gaming (but greedily accepts ads), as somehow inferring that games using "random-number-generators" (RNG) are suspect. The inference is drawn that if these RNG's are man-made, and can be beaten by mere mortals, then they must be biased to favor the house.

The fact that very little is known about RNG, because much of the science has been wrapped up in military secrecy because of their application in cryptography, favors its critics.

Surprisingly, there is no such thing as a true random number generator, i.e. an electronic device which over the long term, outputs a "flat distribution", i.e., an equal frequency of every number in a way that is totally unpredictable. What we have are pseudo-random devices, but from the player's point of view all that matters is that they provide an honest game.

They can be thought of as a stack of billions of dishes, each bearing a number (which the computer will convert to a card in Video Poker, or a KENO number, or a combination of symbols in a reel-slot.) Ideally, each number would be completely independent of any other, but such a condition is not possible to create.

Instead, each number is created using the previous number in some way. As a very crude example, if two ten-digit numbers are multiplied together, then the middle ten digits of the product can be used as a new number. In turn, that number when multiplied by itself creates a new product from which the middle ten digits is gleaned, etc. Early machines did use such a "middle digits" method, but far more sophisticated RNG's are available today. Generally they use a string of binary digits, fed back on itself after specific groups of digits are added or subtracted in AND/NOR circuitry. With a 64 bit machine a stack of 2^{63} numbers can be generated, but here again the stack is predictable once we know the starting (seed) point or where the process has advanced to.

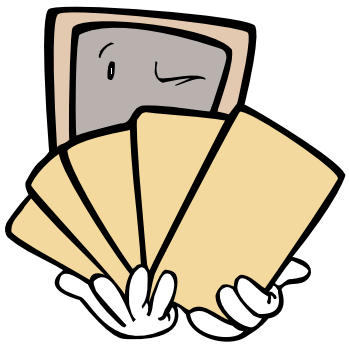
In the first KENO-busting case, a Canadian player observed that every morning the KENO numbers were the same as the previous morning. The casino was mistakenly resetting the stack to the initial number by shutting off the equipment every night. This equipment was not provided with a means to keep running continually, nor with a "seed-generator" to start it up in a different place in the stack the next morning. He won $600,000 in a couple of days picking.

In the second instance, a former employee of the Nevada Gaming Control Board, was allegedly using privileged information about the RNG and its seeding, along with a laptop computer, to figure out where the RNG was in its cycle. On ten tickets, one came in for $100,000.

Neither of these incidents should cast any doubts in the minds of players about the integrity of the game. Of course Video Poker is the most up-front game, since the pay table which is required by law to be posted, combined with the natural stats of the card game itself, makes the payback calculable.

KENO is also calculable, but with paybacks ranging from 75% to 85% the chance of winning session are minuscule.

With Reel-Slots the players are entirely at the mercy of the machine, the casino, and Lady Luck. It wouldn't make any difference what kind of RNG was inside, because the computer literally determines the odds.



The bottom line is that Video Poker players should disregard the inferences that reporters are injecting into these cases.

SOZOBON POKER FOR WINDOWS

Chuck Weinstock

The latest addition to the ConJelCo product line is new software for serious poker players to help them improve their game. *Sozobon Poker for Windows* is a poker simulator that plays both Texas Hold'em and Seven Card Stud. The program simulates live play in both ring games and tournaments providing realistic practice for serious poker players. All facets of the interface may be customized including game speed, screen colors, window size, and sound effects. The program can be played conveniently using either mouse or keyboard.

You can create your own custom configurations by setting: table size from 2 to 12 players (8 for stud); ante, bring-in, and bet amounts; rake percentage and cap; one or two blinds (for hold'em); and the type of bring-in for stud. You can also create your own tournaments and set the pace at which the bet amounts double.

The computer players can be configured in terms of their general looseness and tendency to bluff. You can configure each player specifically or the tendencies of the player population as a whole. The computer players can be configured to track the betting patterns of their opponents (including you) and adjust to overly tight or loose play.

The program provides several learning tools to improve your memory of the pot size and dead cards (in stud). A hand evaluator estimates your chances of making various hands based on your cards and the cards on the board (in hold'em) or your opponents' up cards (in stud).

Sozobon Poker for Windows requires Windows 3.1 or higher and includes extensive online help. Context-sensitive help is provided in all configuration windows.

Sozobon Poker for Windows will be ready for shipment in June, 1995. It will retail for $49.95 and will come with a

3.5” disk (free exchange for a 5.25” disk) and a printed manual.

As a thank you to you, our regular customers, we’re making a special pre-publication offer for *Sozoban Poker for Windows*. If you order the software prior to June 30, 1995, you can purchase it for the reduced price of $44.95 plus the usual shipping and handling charges. See the catalog for ordering information. ♠

THE WINNING SESSION

Chuck Weinstock

One issue of the ConJelCo Catalog looks pretty much like another, so we’ll use this section to call your attention to some of the items that have been added to the catalog since the last edition of *The Intelligent Gambler*. There are lots of new products in this issue. In addition to *Sozoban Poker for Windows*, announced above, we have new items in almost every category.

Blackjack

We’ve added four new blackjack products (one book and three software packages) to the catalog in the last several months. The book is an old classic, Ken Uston’s *Million Dollar Blackjack*. The late author writes in a lively style and entertains with tales of his exploits in the casino as he teaches the Uston Ace-Five Count, the Simple and Advanced Plus-Minus Count, and the Uston Advanced Point Count.

The new software products include *Tournament Blackjack*, *Casino Verite Blackjack*, and the *Universal Blackjack Engine*. Stanford Wong’s exciting new software *Tournament Blackjack*. With this software, which runs under Windows, you can learn expert tournament strategy. *Tournament Blackjack* is an excellent companion to the author’s book, *Casino Tournament Strategy.*

Casino Verite Blackjack by QFIT, is perhaps the most realistic casino game on the market. It is fully configurable to the rules (including strange ones) found in hundreds of casinos around the world and supports most of the techniques developed by card counters over the years, including Wonging, peeking, spooking, etc. The graphics in this software are amazing, and there is even sound support (for the Microsoft Sound System) so you can give it verbal commands (e.g., “hit”.)

John Imming’s *Universal Blackjack Engine* is the ultimate in blackjack simulation software for the serious student of the game. You can simulate complex betting patterns such as Kelly betting. You can specify the shuffle to be used. You can define your own special rules. UBE will also generate a complete set of strategy tables for any count that you give it.

Craps

The big news at ConJelCo this Winter was the release of *Ken Elliott’s CrapSim Professional* and *Ken Elliott’s CrapSim Interactive*. We went into full details on these products last issue, but in case you missed it, *CrapSim Professional* now has improved graphics and simulation capabilities.

For those not interested in strategy simulations we’ve made the interactive portion of *CrapSim Professional* available separately, as *CrapSim Interactive*, at a reduced price.

Poker

Poker tournaments are hot, and we’ve added new books and software on the subject. We’ll cover the books first.

Shane Smith’s *Poker Tournament Tips from the Pros* is a collection of advice from theorists, professionals and others. Tom McEvoy’s *Tournament Poker* is an excellent look at each of the games played in the World Series of Poker held at Binion’s each year, and how to win them. In another excellent book on the subject, *the Secret To Winning Big In Tournament Poker*, Ken Buntjer teaches the eight stages of tournament action, and how to use your knowledge of your opponents to beat them.

Tournament poker is addressed in several software packages, in addition to our *Sozoban Poker for Windows*. Wilson Software has just released *Tournament Texas Hold’em*, *Tournament Omaha High*, and *Tournament Omaha High-Low Split*. Each of these packages allow you to practice tournament strategy, setting your own tournament rules. You can simulate everything from a single table satellite, to a 300+ person championship event.

Other poker products added to the catalog include our own *Winning Low-Limit Hold’em* (covered in detail in the last issue of *the Intelligent Gambler*), *JV’s Pro Poker Playbook* by *Card Player* columnist John Vorhaus, *Caro’s Power Poker Seminar*, a video tape by Mike Caro, and *Chinese Poker: 13 Card Pai Gow Poker* (book and software) by Don Smolen. Incidently, chinese poker is the newest game to be offered in the World Series of Poker.

Video Poker

The video poker expert Lenny Frome has collaborated on an introductory instructional video tape, *Winning at Video Poker.*

Other Gambling

We’ve added two guidebooks to the catalog. The *1995 Casino/Resort Riverboat & Fun book Guide* lists every casino in the United States. The *1995 Card Players Travel Guide* does the same for poker rooms.

Caribbean Stud Poker fans can play to their hearts content with Masque’s new software which is a part of their *Five Game Super Pak*.

Richard Epstein’s *The Theory of Gambling and Statistical Logic* has been available for years in a hardcover version costing over $50.00. A new edition has just come out in paperback with new material and at a much more reasonable price.

Finally, we’ve added a racing title to the catalog. *Efficiency of Racetrack Betting Markets*, by Hausch, Lo, and Ziemba is a collection of academic papers on the subject of horse racing. ♠