

CHAPTER 21 AND THE WINNER IS...

Many people who gamble find themselves in a Catch-22 situation. They cannot afford to lose money, yet they love to play Blackjack or feed slot machines regardless of the outcome. Unfortunately, these games exist solely for the purpose of gambling, so in order for fans of the games to partake in them, they must throw away their money.

Fans of the games face other problems when it comes to participating in their sports. Blackjack players cannot play if other players aren't available since the game needs at least two players. Fortunately for them, they at least can play anywhere as long as the people are willing and they have a deck of cards. Pity the poor slot machine feeders who can only find their machines within a locality with legalized gambling. Any other slot machines they are likely to come across are toys and banks used to store money.

For those of you who love to gamble but hate to lose money; or those who want to play but don't have a partner or access to a casino; there are videogames of chance available for the VCS.

BLACKJACK (ATARI/SEARS)



Blackjack was one of the first cartridges available for the VCS. In this version of the popular game, up to three players can compete against the computer dealer.

Each player begins with two hundred 'dollars' and can bet between one and twenty-five dollars at a time. You are automatically removed from the game if you run out of money or if you accumulate one thousand dollars.

The computer deals the cards to each player in vertical rows while its own cards are dealt horizontally at the top of the screen. Once the initial cards have been dealt each player then de-

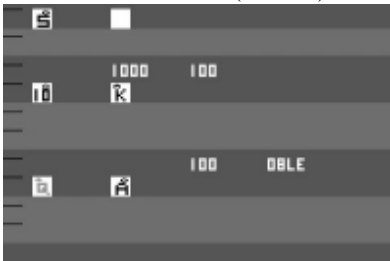
cides in turn whether to hit (draw more cards) or stick with the ones they have. The object is to accumulate cards whose total value come as close to twenty-one without going over. If you go over you automatically lose. Once all the players have had a chance to hit or stick, the computer dealer then takes its turn. Unlike the players, the dealer doesn't have a choice whether to hit or stick. The computer must automatically take a hit if its cards total less than sixteen. If they equal seventeen or more the dealer must stick.

By adjusting the right difficulty switch, you can alter the rules of the game. When the switch is in the A position the dealer must take a hit on a soft seventeen (A=1) and stay on a hard seventeen (A=11). You won't lose if you tie with the dealer and you can only double down (doubling your bet and drawing only one card) if your first two cards equal ten or eleven. Finally, you aren't allowed more than

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four hits. When the right difficulty switch is in the B position the following rules apply: the dealer must stick on all seventeens but will win on all ties. You can double down no matter what your first two cards add up to and you automatically win if you hit four times without going over. The *Blackjack* cartridge doesn't offer the player the ability to split (splitting your two initial cards into two separate hands) or to take insurance (allowing the player to receive one half of his bet if the dealer has Blackjack) limiting the players in their options. This has been rectified on the *Casino* cartridge.

CASINO (ATARI) POKER PLUS (SEARS)



Casino features three games: "Blackjack," "Stud Poker," and "Poker Solitaire." One advantage this version of Blackjack has over the previous one is that up to four people can play at once instead of three. Each player's hand is spread out horizontally across the screen with the dealer's hand dealt at the very top of the playfield.

As in *Blackjack* the position of the right difficulty switch affects the game play. When the right difficulty switch is in the B position the dealer will stick on all eighteens and hard seventeens (A=11). In addition, you automatically win if you take the maximum number of hits without busting.

The maximum number of hits is three or eight depending upon the number of people in the game. When the switch is in the A position the computer dealer must stick on all seventeens and players can only win by beating the dealer, not by taking a maximum number of hits.

You may double down no matter what your first two cards add up to. Although splitting is permitted, it can only be done if there are less than three players in the game. Insurance can also be bought if the dealer's open card is an ace.

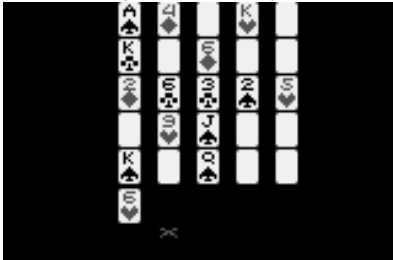
Each player begins with one thousand "dollars" and may bet anything between twenty and two hundred dollars (in ten dollar increments) at a time. If you have less than twenty dollars remaining, you must bet whatever you have left. As before, you are automatically removed from the game if you run out of money or if you break the bank by winning ten thousand dollars.

"Stud Poker" may also be played by up to four players. As in "Blackjack" you play against the computer dealer. By adjusting the difficulty switches you may choose to have the dealer's or the players' first card face up or down. The object of the game is to try and get a better poker hand than the dealer. You do not compete against your fellow players. Each card is dealt one at a time to each player and you get to bet after every card. You are also given the option to drop out each time. After five cards have been dealt to each player, all the cards are revealed. The players who have a better hand than the dealer will win what they have bet, while those with a worse hand will lose.

ABC TO THE VCS

"Poker Solitaire" is for one player only. In this game you are dealt 25 cards, one at a time, which must be placed face up anywhere on a 5x5 grid. The result after all 25 cards are down is twelve possible poker hands. The computer will then give you a score based upon your twelve hands. The object is to get as many good poker hands as possible.

POKER SQUARES (HOMEBREW)



Poker Squares is essentially the same game as the "Poker Solitaire" variation of *Casino*. You place down 25 cards, one at a time, on a 5x5 grid. Your goal is to make the 12 best poker hands out of the five horizontal, five vertical, and two diagonal rows. There is also an option to turn off the diagonal rows and only create ten poker hands.

SLOT MACHINE (ATARI) SLOTS (SEARS)



Unlike a real slot machine, the one

portrayed in the cartridge version features wheels with symbols such as cars, kitchen sets and TV sets. Despite the difference in symbols from actual machines, the payoffs are basically the same.

In *Slot Machine* one or two players may play either "Jackpot" or "Payoff" games. In "Jackpot" the wheels only consist of single, double, or triple bars and blank spaces. The wheels in "Payoff" feature six different symbols.

Both games may be played two different ways. If you play "center pay line," then you can only collect if a winning combination appears in the center window. The more you bet, the more you can win. In the "up to 5 pay lines" games, each additional 'coin' bet allows you one additional pay line (up to five). For instance, if you bet two coins then you can collect if a winning combination appears in the top line or in the center line. If five coins are bet then you get five lines (three horizontal and two diagonal). Each player begins with twenty-five coins and may bet up to five coins each spin. Coins are bet by pressing the red firing button. After bets have been made, pressing the joystick in any direction causes the wheels to spin. The amount won depends upon the winning combination. The game ends when a player has run out of coins. If you wish to continue, then press the "game reset" switch. The player who was ahead will receive twenty-five additional coins to those he had remaining from the previous game. The player who ran out of coins will also receive twenty-five coins.