

# Using club cards has no effect on jackpots

BY MARK PILARSKI

**QUESTION:** If a player uses his club card while playing slots, does it have any effect on his results? Opposite that, can the casino reward a player who does use his card with jackpots you wouldn't otherwise get if you didn't use it? — Mary Anne B.

**ANSWER:** Using a player's club card has no effect on your results. The casino doesn't compensate for the goodies it doles out for your loyal play by shorting you on jackpots or lower returns.

The random number generator doesn't care one iota Mary Anne is using a slot club card, and besides, differential



paybacks are illegal in every land-based casino in America.

Some players seem to think since they are accumulating comps on their club cards, the casino will make them pay for it with a lower return on the machine. Not a chance. Card club players are a casino's most valuable asset, and the last thing casino management wants to

do after building what it hopes is a long-term relationship is to shortchange a player.

As to your "opposite that," the slot card in and of itself rewards loyal customers. There is no casino operator in a secret location pressing a button so club card members get special jackpots. As stated above, random number generators determine winners, and anything else would be illegal.

**Q:** When playing slots, should I set limits based on the number of losing spins, or should it be based on the amount lost? — Nell F.

**A:** There are two kinds of limits when playing slots: a losing limit and a spinning limit.

Your bankroll dictates the losing limit. The spinning limit is your gambling timeline on any one particular machine. It is loss limits — the amount of money you are willing to lose — I find far more important.

When assessing any machine before playing, read the operating rules. Do you understand its true cost before inserting your first coin? Does your bankroll match up with the machines?

Say, for instance, you are a typical slot player on a three-coin, quarter machine, pushing the spin button every 10 seconds and wagering 75 cents per push. Plan on betting \$4.50 a minute, or \$270 an hour. Since the average quarter machine

returns about 92 percent over the long run, you will lose roughly \$22 for every hour of play.

A four-hour session is going to cost, on average, \$88. If you are at ease with an \$88 loss, and a bankroll of at least \$200 to carry you when the slot decides to be less charitable, then you should be fine.

As for spinning limits, a lot of players set a cutoff point and shift to another machine after a specific number of losing spins. The reason I don't find spin limits as important as loss limits is because every spin is random, hence there is no mathematical reason to switch machines after any number of winning, or losing, spins. It

doesn't matter whether a machine hasn't paid out after numerous spins, or has coughed up multiple payouts; the odds of landing a winning combination are the same on each and every whirl.

Yet I realize if a machine isn't paying after an aggravating number of losing spins, players get agitated. So by all means, switch machines. But see this as an emotional reason to move, not one based on arithmetic.

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