

Jon Friedl:

Hello. This is Jon Friedl and you're listening to episode four of Professor Slots.

Narrator:

Jon Friedl from the Professor Slots blog reveals all his slot machine casino gambling strategies as well as tips and tricks for thriving in the casino environment. Discover how to assess casinos to pick the best near you, choose winning slot machines, and identify your gambling goals: being entertained, earning comps, winning take home cash, or combine them. Jon has won 90 taxable jackpots and a luxury car in nine months of slot playing and made a profit at slots gambling since 2013.

Jon Friedl:

Hello and thank you for joining me on Professor Slots. This episode details the second of three ways to readily increase overall baseline odds of winning to improve slot machine gambling performance through a process of choosing candidate slot machine available to slots enthusiasts. Also this week, we will examine the current conditions for slot machine casino gambling in the US territory of American Samoa. Show notes are available at professorslots.com/e4. Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe, again, that's professorslots.com/subscribe, to get my free report revealing the top seven online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

In last week's episode I detailed the first step to readily improving slot machine casino gambling performance, specifically assessing casinos for success. This week I'm detailing the second step to readily improving slot performance, which is how to choose candidate slot machines. For this episode I'll be explaining the following aspects of choosing candidate slot machines: how the odds of winning are set within a slot machine, matching a slot machine denomination and credits based on your available bankroll amount, the basics of reading a slot machine's pay table, and a simple way to use pay tables to pick the best machines and avoid the worst. I'll be talking today about choosing candidate slot machines as another way to improve your odds of winning at slot machine casino gambling.

It is not necessary to first listen to last week's episode about assessing casinos for success, but you might want to check it out soon. Choosing candidate slot machines can readily improve your gambling performance, just like assessing casinos can. Doing both creates a baseline or starting point from which to improve. I'll be discussing further improvements at length in later episodes. Basically, which casinos and slot machines you play on and with matters because not all casinos and slot machines available to you have the same odds of winning. My intent with these first podcast episodes is to help you select the best of both. By assessing all available casinos, then selecting the best available, you've already improved your odds of winning perhaps by several payout percentage points.

Once a specific casino has been determined to be currently the best of any available to you, choosing slot machines within that casino is the next step towards achieving your gambling goals. In the next episode we'll talk about the next step, identifying your gambling goals. We've walked into our best available casino based on a careful casino assessment, to now consider choosing slot machines that will most likely improve our overall odds even more, but how do we choose a good slot machine? Most people don't. They just dive right in without much of a plan. Well, we have a plan. Why do people dive right in? Frankly it's because most everyone says and thinks playing slots is all about luck. If you pick the wrong slot machine and lose money, well, they say, better luck next time.

Remember casino employees are trained to say several things just like that. If you'd won a jackpot instead, you can believe they would have said, "You're so lucky. I'll see you later when you win another jackpot." Slot attendants have a job to do, and it most certainly isn't to discourage you from playing. They could lose their job for suggesting it, even to the worst problem gambler, obviously spending money they cannot afford to lose. In fact, slot attendants are trained to encourage you to stay and continue to gamble and they're quite good at it. Why? Practice, practice, practice. It can be difficult to not be influenced by such comments, which is, I suppose, why they do it, but try not to be. You may need to practice, practice, practice this yourself.

Let's talk about two odds of winning. Slot machines are computers designed for gambling. Each slot machine is manufactured with a limited number of settings for its odds of providing a win. Usually it's around six different settings from very loose to very tight as the terminology goes. It may help to understand that slot machines actually have two odds of winning. The first odds of winning are to determine if a play, a bet, will or will not win anything. The second one is, well, how much are you going to win, what is the amount of the jackpot. Why is understanding these two types of odds important? Because winning slot machines come in all jackpot sizes. What I mean by this is winning small jackpots is still winning if you're getting enough small jackpots that your bankroll isn't shrinking.

I'm going to say that again. Winning small jackpots is winning if you're getting enough of them that your bankroll isn't shrinking. Even if your bankroll is slowly depleting, the bankroll can last a lot longer with these small jackpots. That's also winning on a slot machine. This concept is called bankroll cycling, and you're looking for slot machines that cycle bankrolls. Now, I hate to be the person that crushes people's gambling dreams. If you're someone that believes in the big win, who honestly thinks winning the top jackpot is feasible then you've misunderstood how to win at playing slots. Winning the top jackpot on a slot machine is like winning the state lottery. The odds are so incredibly low it's breathtaking.

In my years of playing slot machines only once have I won the top jackpot. I won \$1,000, 4,000 credits on a quarter machine. I was lucky. No matter what your gambling goal is, be it maximum entertainment or complimentary gifts or take-home cash, winning at slot machines is all about bankroll cycling. That's what you want. That's where success lies. Now I'm going to mention a couple of things here for your information. Call them pro tips. Pro tip number one. There are certain advantage plays that can be used to win top jackpots on some types of progressive slot machines but you will need a team to do it. Pro tip number two. Winning a jackpot for 10% of the

top jackpot amount listed on the pay table is possible. I've won 10% jackpots, 10% of the maximum possible jackpot on that machine once every 30 jackpots that were worth 1% of the top jackpot. Does that make sense?

\$150,000 jackpot on a \$5, three credit maximum bet, high-limit slot machine. \$150,000 top jackpot, never won it, but I've won 10% of that, 15,000 roughly. 15,000 once every 30 1,500 jackpots. Now, some of these 1,500 jackpots were actually 2,500, and some of the 15,000 jackpots was 27,000, but it's the right number of zeroes. Another point about setting slot machine odds is how often do they get changed by the casino? There are two approaches, one for older-style casinos and then those that are newer-style casinos built or newly renovated since 2014 or so. In my experience older-style casinos physically change their slot machine odds every seven to ten days.

Physically adjusting the odds for thousands of slot machines requires a small army. Now, there's a myth about how it takes seven years for one person whose job it is to paint the San Francisco bridge. Have you heard this one? A single person repaints it from one end of the bridge to the other taking seven years to do so then starts over again. As the myth goes, this continues every seven years again, and again, and again. Now, here's a fun fact that that's a myth. The San Francisco bridge was actually only painted once, and only touch up has been required since. Now, there was a condition of corrosion, and the original paint used, a lead-based paint had to be removed and replaced with a better paint. This was done in 30 years, 1965 to 1995. Wouldn't that be something of a career?

Newer-style casinos found a way to reduce the labor costs involved with maintaining this small army of slot mechanics to manually open up each slot machine and physically change the odds once every seven to ten days. They automated the process. Operators of newer-style casinos connect all their slot machines to a central computer. They're all wired up, Wi-Fi, wires, however. They adjust the odds of winning for any slot machine they wish to change on a daily basis, or if needed several times a day. In general newer-style casinos change their odds of winning if needed whenever the machine has been idle for 15 minutes or more. I admittedly need more concrete information on this time amount, rather than unofficial conversations with casino executives I've had. The explanation I've gotten is that it's a matter of state law, based on the example of the state of Nevada. If I can research this topic better to better confirm it, I'll be sure to let you know.

To sum up this conversation on the two odds of winning, there are limited settings for establishing the odds on a slot machine. There are two types of odds. There's the odds of winning and there's the odds of how much was won. Understanding there are two types of odds is important as it helps explain bankroll cycling. Bankroll cycling is the go-to method of winning at slots. Older-style casinos physically change their odds of winning by using a small army of slot mechanics to physically adjust each machine. Newer-style casinos automated the changing of odds saving significant labor costs while gaining the ability to rapidly adjust their daily financial results. After discussing the first three steps to readily improve gambling performance, that is to say assessing casinos, choosing candidate slot machines, and identifying your gambling goals, I'll start going into more detail about further improvements to your odds of winning.

I mention this because many of them take advantage of the use of automation at newer-style casinos, so don't be overly concerned about this change in operating software at newer-style casinos, because one, every casino will eventually have this, and two, it's made slot machine play no longer entirely about luck. Skill has come into the situation, and that's what you want. Now, let's talk about matching bankrolls to denomination and credits on a slot machine. Here's my warning. Only you can decide how much bankroll you can risk gambling. I highly recommend bringing only as much money as you can safely afford to comfortably lose. Bankrolls are the amount of money, the roll of quarters, the wad of bills, the roll of cash you're prepared to spend at a casino. It's the money you've brought to the casino plus any you somehow withdraw during the casino visit if you do that.

Bankroll amounts quite literally determine which slot machines you can play, but there's more to this than understanding that \$100 bankroll allows you to make one bet on a one credit, 100 denomination slot machine with very little chance of winning. Whatever bankroll you have limits which slot machines can be played but also how much they can be played. Just to make sure that we all understand, for those that don't know, slot machines have a denomination. This can be a penny, a quarter, a dollar, \$5, \$10, \$100. I've seen some with \$500 and I skipped over nickels and dimes. These are denominations of slot machines, and some slot machines are even adjustable. You can choose out of a range of denominations when you sit down. You can also choose the number of credits.

Now, there are \$100 bill, \$100 denomination slot machines that only allow one credit, but might have a quarter machine that allows three credits, one, two, or three credits, maximum of three credits. You might have maximum of four credits or five. That's a typical number for a quarter machine. Now, a penny machine, you could have 200, 250, 300, 350 maximum number of credits and you can pick any number in between a one cent bet, a two cent bet, all the way up to the \$2 bet for 200 credits, or the \$3 bet for 300 credits. It's a range of values, but penny machines are the ones that have the most amount of credits, and most of the others have relatively lower numbers, not always quite true, but it is generally what you see.

The cost of the bet is the denomination of the machine times the credits selected. The cost of a bet for a \$1 denomination machine for five credits is a \$5 bet. A quarter denomination machine for three credits is a 75 cent bet. A penny denomination machine, a penny slot for 300 credits is a \$3 bet. By the way, the wins on jackpots just to make sure again that for those that don't know, to win at slots we need and want bankroll cycling. Put another way, to win at slots the machine has to run for a while before winning can occur. Not will occur, but more likely will occur.

Yes, wins can happen at the first press of the bet button, but usually they need to be played for a while. How long do they need to be played? Well about 100 to 120 bets is a good amount of play. This will determine if you're sitting at a winning or breakeven slot machine, and if it isn't going well for the first 20 bets or so you still have enough left over if you stop playing as soon as you notice that it's not performing well enough, and then you can try again in another candidate slot machine. Again, determine how much bankroll you have available to comfortably spend. You'll need to know that amount. Next, take that amount and divide it by 120 bets. If you have a bankroll of \$60, you divide it by 120. That's now 50 cents per bet.

If you have a bankroll of \$120 and you divide it by 120 bets, then what you're looking for is to have \$1 per bet. If your bankroll is \$1,200 and you divide it by 120 bets that's \$10 per bet, and that's what you want to limit yourself to in order to have 100 or 120 bets possible. You get the idea. Knowing how much money is spent per bet allows you to match your bankroll amount to a specific slot machine. A bank roll of \$60 means you have 50 cents per bet, and this would match a quarter denomination, two credit slot machine. You can even have more than 120 bets if you choose one credits on that two credit machine. Another possibility would be a penny denomination, a penny slot up to 50 credits.

A couple of more examples here. If you have a bankroll of \$120, that's \$1 per bet. That's a quarter machine for up to four credits. That's a penny slot up to 100 credits. Now, if you have a bankroll of \$1,200 that means that you are looking for \$10 per bet, and that would match many slot machines. This increases the number of candidate slot machines that you would be able to find. For example, this would include a \$10 denomination, one credit slot machine, a \$5 denomination, two credit slot machine, a \$1 denomination, up to five credit or ten credit if you can find one slot machine, a quarter denomination up to 40 credit slot machine. Usually stop around five credits for quarter machines. On a penny slot that would be 1,000 credits per bet. You might not find one with that many credits.

Note that it isn't necessary to bet each time as much as your bankroll divided by 120. You can actually bet far less if you want to, but exceeding that cost per bet means losing the means to make enough bets to allow slot machines to play long enough for you to learn if they cycle bankrolls. To sum up this discussion of matching bankrolls to slot machine denominations and credits. Bankrolls are the amount of money you have for comfortably spending at a casino. Bankrolls limit both machines to play as well as how much they can be played. To win at slots we need and want bankroll cycling. Being able to make 120 bets with your bankroll allows the player to learn if bankroll cycling is happening and if it is not to stop playing that slot machine and still have enough left over for another.

Divide your bankroll by 120 bets, match this cost per bet to available slot machine denominations and credits. It is okay to bet less than this but not okay to bet more, and then don't make all 120 bets without evaluating your progress. Certainly be careful initially, perhaps making as few as 20 bets to determine if it happens to be a bad machine. Again, trust your instincts. You're going to need to listen and trust your instincts on whether or not you have a bad machine. If it's performing poorly, if it's a tight slot machine it won't pay out anything at all in those 20 bets. This can and does happen. Quick decisions are necessary here, so limited betting gives a clue to its performance yet still it leaves enough to gamble with on another machine if it isn't, assuming you stop playing as soon as you notice it's not performing well enough.

You have to make your own decision on what is not performing well enough and what that means. Again, if it's not paying out anything after 20 bets, maybe sooner, seriously consider stopping play on that particular slot machine. Let's move on to reading a slot machine's pay table. When choosing a slot machine to play, it's important to review its pay table before choosing to play it. Most people don't of course. It's not necessary, being merely important to picking a good slot machine. Frankly, the casino industry gains an advantage over players that

don't read slot machine pay tables. For example, the layout and structure of a pay table can be crazy complicated. I think this is sometimes done intentionally. Don't be misled however.

I want to make the distinction that while it is important to read a pay table, and I'll explain why, for our purposes it isn't important to fully understand it. Yes, there may be some winning advantage involved with making good choices while playing a slot machine based on the instructions located in the pay table, but that's not what I'm talking about. What we are trying to do, what I want to explain is we are reading the pay table to determine if it's a good, or, likely of far greater importance, if it is bad so we can subsequently avoid it. I'll explain this shortly. Located somewhere on the slot machine is one or more tables, rows, and columns, and numbers and symbols. They show the amount of credits won if a specific combination of reel symbols appear in the pay line after a bet is made by the player and the reels stop moving.

As an aside, I'm using a number of slot machine gambling terms. In a few episodes I'll be going over all the most common terms so that you understand, so that everybody understands some of these terms that I'm using about pay lines and reel symbols, but that will be for later. To continue, this pay table is often surrounded by notes regarding the meaning of special reel symbols and game instructions during any possible bonus rounds, it explains what's the meaning of wild symbols and some other reel symbols, special reel symbols. Again, yes, understanding the pay table may help to make correct decisions when playing a specific slot machine, but as I've explained that's not what we are after here.

Nevertheless, I'll take a moment to explain a standard kind of pay table. In general pay tables are usually pretty obviously located. However, sometimes a special game rules button needs to be pressed before they can be viewed. Sometimes they're in two different locations, above the console or below the console, where one is about some higher jackpots and the other is about more common jackpots. Sometimes there are multiple pages or multiple screens, and you might have to scroll through them with a touchscreen. The main table is set up to have several combinations of reel symbols side-by-side.

To the right of each of these possible reel combinations would be the amount won if one or more credits are bet. The top of the table has the reel combinations necessary to win the highest possible jackpot, with that jackpot amount, usually but not always expressed in credits, being shown in the column beneath the number of credits bet. On progressive machines, by the way, there is no number. It just says progressive and you have to look elsewhere for the currently active progressive jackpot amount. That's the main area of a pay table and what we will most be interested in shortly.

Another general comment to make about pay tables is how incomplete they are. Even if highly summarized, pay tables don't usually show all possible jackpot amounts. Every reel combination for every possible jackpot is simply not shown. Special reel symbols are often defined alongside the pay table. Reel combinations are often combined for common jackpot amounts, plus if there's a bonus round and that important information is often on or near the pay table. A common example of this is a small note somewhere that maximum credits must be bet for a bonus round to be possible, meaning additional game features may not activate unless

maximum credits are bet. It can sometimes be difficult or impossible to determine this from confusing pay tables.

Again, this is often deliberate, but again for our purposes all this extra information is unnecessary to determining what is or is not a good slot machine. In many ways the entire pay table is a distraction, but the maximum jackpot amount shown in the top row of the pay table is what we are after. Here is how to use it. I call this next section the goodness ratio, or how to avoid the worst slot machines. Often the best way to improve the odds of winning via slot machine casino gambling is to avoid playing slot machines with terrible odds of winning. We've already discussed the two odds of winning, one, whether or not you win, and two, the amount of the win. This section is entirely devoted to the second one, the amount of the win.

First and foremost understand when choosing slot machines that there are indeed slot machines at a casino with terrible odds of winning. By simply avoiding them whenever possible on average you'll improve your gambling performance. Sometimes this is not enough. I've met and spoken with slot enthusiasts who are winning lots of jackpots, however, on some days they were losing just as much as on the days they won. For them I pointed out that their greatest area of potential improvement wasn't winning more but rather losing less. Let's learn to avoid the worst slot machines. For now let's learn to lose less.

Not selecting terrible slot machines will at the same time also allow us to find non-terrible slot machines, or as I like to call them candidate slot machines. Finding these candidate slot machines will raise your odds again, and each time we raise our odds like this we're pushing up our payout percentage to be closer and closer to achieving our gambling goals, whatever they may be. To select candidate slot machines we need two numbers. We need the maximum jackpot and the number of credits bet to win that maximum jackpot. This maximum jackpot would be on the top row of the slot machine's pay table, at the top of which would be the number of credits required to win that jackpot. Those are the two numbers that we need.

What we do is we take that maximum jackpot and we divide it by the credits required to win it. If you have a maximum jackpot of 2,000 credits and it required two credits to win it, we would divide 2,000 by two. Note that sometimes the maximum jackpot is not provided in credits, but rather in currency. If that's true then you'll also need to divide that number by not just the credits but also the denomination of the machine. If that was a \$2,000 maximum jackpot, and that was a \$1 denomination machine, and it was a two credit bet, \$2,000 divided by \$1 is 2,000 credits, divided by two credits would be 1,000. I call this the goodness ratio. Calculate this goodness ratio for several slot machines.

Note slot machines having the highest goodness ratio. These are good slot machines. Those with particularly low goodness ratios when compared to others are to be avoided at all costs. These are bad slot machines. Your candidate slot machines are a combination of two things that we've discussed. First, you must match your bankroll to the credit and denominations of that machine so that you have at least 120 possible bets. Second, you must have a high goodness ratio when compared to other slot machines or at least not a low goodness ratio. The goodness ratio tells us how worthwhile a specific slot machine is to play relative to others. Any slot machine can be compared to any other slot machine.

You can compare a \$100 denomination slot machine to a penny slot using this number. Again, it's the maximum jackpot in credits, so if it's in dollars you need to divide it by the denomination of the machine. This number of credits for the maximum jackpot is divided by the number of credits bet to achieve it and this is going to be a number, and this number can tell you how good a machine is and it could be a penny slot, quarter slot, dollar slot, \$10 slot, \$5 slot, whatever. This combination of slot machine gambling rules selects candidate slot machines that offer both a chance of winning while also offering a chance to win on average the best possible jackpot amount.

Note that I'm providing a simple calculation I hope most people can perform. I'm not explaining this in a complicated way that might be more confusing than helpful. What I've tried to do is build a simple tool that anyone can use in an often hectic casino environment. Now, if there are people who are interested in the statistical underpinnings of what this goodness ratio is really doing, please let me know, and if enough people are interested I'll explain it more deeply at another time. In summary, after available casinos have been assessed and one specific one chosen, it's time to select candidate slot machines at that casino most likely to result in a relatively higher value win.

The size of your available bankroll, whatever it is, is an important factor in this selection process. The bankroll size needs to be matched to the slot machine's denomination and number of credits, with the intent of having at least 120 possible bets. I've also discussed how the odds of winning are calculated twice by the slot machine, first to determine if you've won, and again to determine how much you've won. Another important aspect discussed was the basics of reading a slot machine's pay table. Finally, we talked about the goodness ratio to help select candidate slot machines along with slot machines matched to an available bankroll. The goodness ratio was also discussed as a means to learn which slots to avoid.

Let's talk about next steps. For help with assessing casinos within your area via online resources, selecting your best slot machines and identifying your individual slots-related gambling goals I'm now offering personal coaching. It is my hope that these podcasts and the articles on my website, professorslots.com will be sufficient for this need, but I decided that if you do have questions I should make myself somewhat available. For those interested please see my personal coaching website at professorslots.com/coaching. I only have a few openings available most weeks and this is a strictly limited opportunity. First come, first served. That's everything I wanted to say for now about choosing candidate slot machines.

Before going on to the next segment of this episode, I wanted to remind everyone that the next podcast episode will include the third and final step to readily improving your baseline slot machine casino gambling performance: identifying your gambling goals. In that next episode I'll talk about the most common goals of slot enthusiasts including entertainment, complimentary gifts and take-home money, as well as offer some insight into if your current habits hint at what they are, how and why to focus on one particular type of gambling goal, and if bankroll sizes really matter. Show notes for this episode are available on my website at professorslots.com/e4, where you will find an embedded audio player, full transcript, downloadable audio file, a place to leave comments about the show, a link to my Google Play and iTunes pages to leave a rating or review or to subscribe, and my social media sites for sharing.

Again, show notes for this episode for those interested can be found on my website at professorslots.com/e4. Let's talk about the US territory of American Samoa relative to slot machine casino gambling. This week's US state, US territory or federal district for which we were looking at slot machine casino gambling is American Samoa. American Samoa is a US territory. American Samoa is a US territory located in the South Pacific. The entire US territory consists of seven islands and atolls. Its largest island is Tutuila, having the capital of Pago Pago. The 2010 census showed a total population of just over 55,000 people, and the total land area is slightly less than 77 square miles.

A little bit of history here. In 1878 the US signed a treaty to establish a naval station in Pago Pago Harbor. In 1899 an agreement with Germany divided Samoa, with the US taking the eastern islands. By 1904 the eastern islands had all been ceded to the US and formally accepted by the US Congress in 1929. Similar to Alaska, and here's the bad news, American Samoa slot machine casino gambling does not exist. There are no land-based casinos, although visiting cruise ships may have their own casinos. My research into American Samoa's legal statutes relative to casino gambling showed that they have none. The legal status for the private ownership of slot machines in American Samoa is unknown. There appears to be no laws for or against private ownership.

As you might expect from what I've already said, American Samoa has not established a state gaming commission. In this section here for gambling establishments, there are no gambling establishments on the seven islands and atolls that comprises American Samoa. When I originally published this information on American Samoa earlier this year on my blog, a follower of my Instagram account commented that they had grown up on American Samoa, and they were kind enough to inform me that American Samoa residents do like to play cards in the hotel lobbies in Pago Pago, which is the full extent of gambling there. In summary, the US territory of American Samoa lies in the heart of the Pacific Ocean, about halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand.

There are no land-based casinos and hence no slot machine casino gambling, with the possible exception of visiting cruise ships that may offer casino-style slots, likely only when traveling in international waters. On the next episode of Professor Slots, part one of episode five will be identifying your gambling goals. I'll talk about does bankroll size matter. I'll ask if you gambling goal is to maximize entertainment value, is it earning complimentary gifts, is it take-home money, and then I'll have a summary. Part two of episode five will be about Arizona slot machine casino gambling. I'll, again, have an introduction, I'll discuss relevant legal statutes on gambling. I'll talk about slot machine private ownership, the state gaming commission, and they do have one, all of the gambling establishments, and then a summary.

That's the end of another great episode of the Professor Slots Podcast. Show notes for this episode can be found at professorslots.com/e4, that's professorslots.com/e4. I plan to have the next episode out very soon for you, where I'll have amazing content for the show. If you are someone who wants better success at slot machine casino gambling, please subscribe to the show and if you have a moment head on over to iTunes and leave a rating and review. That would help so much. Until the next episode, have fun, be safe, and make good choices. Bye.