

PS 25: Winning Strategy 2, Massachusetts Slots 2018

320-Character Description: Professor Slots Podcast Episode #25: Winning Strategy 2-Massachusetts Slots 2018. Realistic winning strategies are explained for progressive slot machines. They are so popular they can make up to 30% of the machines in a casino, like those with Major and Minor jackpots. Plus, Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling. Plus, Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling.

Opening

Hello! Today's episode #25 of the Professor Slots podcast discusses Winning Strategy 2: Progressive Slot Machines. Plus, slot machine casino gambling in the great U.S. state of Massachusetts.

Thank you for joining me for the Professor Slots podcast show. I'm Jon Friedl and this is the podcast about slot machine casino gambling. It is where I provide the knowledge, insights, and tools for helping you improve your slot machine gambling performance.

Show notes are available within most podcast Apps or at professorslots.com/e25.

"Jon Friedl from The Professor Slots Blog reveals all of his 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 9 months of slots play - and made a profit at slots gambling since 2013."

On Last Week's Episode...

In case you missed it, on last week's episode I went over the benefits of leveraging payout returns. Actual payout returns are sometimes provided by states, which is a real advantage play for slots enthusiasts playing in those states – if they use them, that is. In last week's episode, I go over how to know which state provides them, and how slots enthusiasts can use them to their advantage.

Also last week, I reviewed Maryland slot machine casino gambling, including which of Maryland's 14 gambling establishments offer slot machines. Hint: Only 6 of them do..

I hope you enjoyed listening to my last episode as much as I enjoyed making it for you.

Call To Action #1

Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Let's get started with the first segment of the show: Winning Strategy 2: Progressive Slot Machines.

Introduction to *Winning Strategy 2: Progressive Slot Machines*

This episode segment is next in a series about realistic winning strategies for slot machine casino gambling. This strategy on winning on progressive slot machines is simple, but perhaps not entirely easy, mostly due to the difficulties inherent to changing one's own playing perspective. So, keep an open mind, be patient, and learn to win.

Lately, progressive slot machines have become quite popular, with their being up to 30% of the slot machines within a casino. Have you seen those new slot machines with Major and Minor jackpots that constantly grow? Even though they are not obviously labeled as such, those are progressive slot machines.

This relatively high level of popularity drives a real and urgent need to discuss ways to play and win at progressive slots. So, I am meeting this real need of slots enthusiasts by explaining what is currently happening in the world of progressive slots. Here's how.

This segment has the following sub-sections:

1. An Introduction;
2. What are Progressive Slot Machines?;
3. How Many Progressive Slot Machines Make a Progressive Jackpot?;
4. The Casino's Business Case for Progressive Slot Machines;
5. Should You Play Progressive Slot Machines?;
6. Strategies for Winning on Progressive Slot Machines;
7. Long-Term Play: A Cautionary Tale; and
8. A Summary.

What are Progressive Slot Machines?

First up, what are progressive slot machines? A slot machine is considered progressive when a portion of the bets placed on it go towards increasing its maximum jackpot. When initialized, such as when first started or after the progressive jackpot has been won, a progressive slot machine is given an initial jackpot. This initial jackpot is not zero.

Starting with this initial jackpot, it “progressively” grows as the slot machine is played. The progressive jackpot increases by a percentage of whatever is bet. For example, a \$1 may increase the progressive jackpot by \$0.25.

Progressive slot machines also have a maximum progressive jackpot, which they cannot exceed. That is to say, the progressive jackpot must be won before or when it equals this maximum amount.

Once reset after the progressive jackpot has been won, or when initially switched on, the amount of the next winning progressive jackpot is randomly chosen. This new winning progressive jackpot is randomly chosen to be between the initial and maximum amounts mentioned.

As bets are placed on the machine and the progressive jackpot increases, it approaches the amount of this new winning progressive jackpot. When a player’s bet increases the progressive jackpot to that randomly chosen amount, that player wins the progressive slot machine jackpot. Afterwards, the process begins anew.

How Many Progressive Slot Machines Make a Progressive Jackpot?

A common misconception is that progressive slot machines always include a group of slot machines with a shared jackpot. This is simply not the case. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for a progressive jackpot to be available only on a single slot machine.

It is also entirely possible for a group of progressive slot machines to be grouped, linked, or networked together. However, the physical extent of a network of machines included in a progressive jackpot can vary widely, including:

- 1) Stand-Alone: A single slot machine which grows its own progressive jackpot only, is not networked to any other slot machines, and likely has the lowest maximum jackpot amount relative to networked progressive slot machines;
- 2) In-House: Slot machines having the same slot machine game theme within the casino and more substantial, if not life-changing, maximum jackpots;
- 3) In-Chain: Slot machines usually with the same slot machine game theme within all of the gaming venues owned by the same casino operator within states having gaming regulations that allow this;
- 4) Wide-Area: Slot machines owned independently from the casinos they are located within, and:
 - a. A maximum jackpot which is massively large, life-changing jackpot;
 - b. Each casino gets a percentage of slot machines revenue;
 - c. Having a payout return which is lowest of all other progressive slot machines due to the relatively high setup and administrative costs.

The Casino's Business Case for Progressive Slot Machines

Next up, let's talk about the casino's business case for progressive slot machines. Casinos are always trying new ways to both make money as well as providing new ideas to their patrons. This includes the whole business idea of progressive slot machines.

Some aspects of progressive slots are great for the casino business, such as being alluring to many casino patrons. Other aspects are driving changes at casinos, such as the legal difficulties with paying multi-property and multi-state progressive jackpots.

Stand-alone progressive slot machines are currently on the rise at casino properties. It can sometime be difficult to know if players will like new styles of slot machine play, such as skill-based slots (which are not doing well, by the way). But, progressive slot machines are definitely very popular. So, casinos have these.

Casinos also have in-house progressive slot machines, within certain limitations. It turns out that casinos only have in-house progressive slot machines in groups or carousels of slot machines. They simply are not spread all across the casino. Instead, I have observed that they are grouped together in a row or circle.

It's interesting that in-house, networked, progressive slot machines have this limitation. It doesn't take much inductive reasoning to figure out why. It's due to ease of installation and building infrastructure.

Yes, newer casinos physically connect all their slot machines to a central computer with its casino operating system. Older casinos physically connect the players interface to a computer database, and also maintain a limited connection to notify the slot attendant dispatcher of any slot machines showing wins.

So, the central computer operating systems used in newer casinos are apparently not yet sufficient to handle networked progressive slot machines, where I went to research this post on progressive slot machines.

Just like older casinos, newer casinos have to physically connect in-house progressive slot machines. And, running the necessary cables under floors, over ceilings, and behind walls makes life difficult for casinos. Simply put, it is more efficient and easier to place networked slot machines together.

In part, this increased efficiency is due to how often slot machines are replaced to keep up with appealing game themes. Slot machines get moved in and out of casinos a lot, and making it difficult to do so is not of interest to casinos. Difficult, and costly. For example, pulling up flooring would disrupt, well, making money on slots in the affected areas.

In-chain and wide-area networked progressive slot machines have their own issues for casinos, so these types are being seen less and less often. While life-changing progressive jackpots have traditionally been of interest to slots enthusiasts, this is somewhat a thing of the past. Nobody expects to win on them. It's, well, too much of a long shot.

Also, actually being awarded a large progressive jackpot is a lengthy, nightmarish process. So, you just won a huge, multi-casino progressive jackpot. Now you have to wait for 6 hours to get it. Stand-alone progressive slot machines are owned by the casino, and payouts are just like any other slot machine.

But, there are also progressive slot machines which are networked together outside of a casino, potentially across state lines and in coordination with other casinos as part owners of the jackpot. From the casino perspective, winners are unhappy with having long waits in a back office while this business is transacted with other casinos.

When I was researching progressive slots machines, I was talking to a slots manager about the difficulties of progressive slot machines networked outside of a single casino property. What he said aligned well with statements within the Scientific Games and IGT annual reports. He said there are liability issues.

Basically, who owns the progressive jackpot being paid? Plain and simple, this is so, so difficult from a business perspective. Suffice to say, having liability issues with being able to pay out a progressive jackpot from a networked progressive slot machines is a loss of efficiency, the winner is never happy having to wait so long to be paid, and has become a no-go territory for casinos.

In other words, for the reasons given, casinos are getting out of the business of progressive slot machines networked across several properties. Casinos are currently making adjustments to increase their stand-alone and in-house progressive slot machines while reducing or entirely eliminating their out-of-house, networked progressive slot machines.

Should You Play Progressive Slot Machines?

Next, let's talk about whether or not you should choose to play a progressive slot machine. To start, let's talk about potential strategies. There are effectively two strategies for winning at progressive slot machines:

1. Treat the progressive slot machine like a non-progressive slot machine, and try to win the smaller, non-progressive jackpots; and
2. Play progressive slot machines where the progressive jackpot is approaching its maximum value.

First, players can attempt to win jackpots of less than the maximum size on progressive slot machines using the winning strategies I have and will be discussing shortly for non-progressive style slot machines.

In the past, I have stated there is usually little to be gained by doing so. However, further research has helped correct this prior point-of-view. My prior reasoning has been that players of progressive slot machines are paying for the experience of playing that type of slot machine. I had assumed there is an associated price, a real monetary cost.

So, I had thought, the odds of winning non-progressive jackpots on a progressive slot machine were reduced to have the player pay some or all of this cost. This turns out to not quite be the actual case.

My prior view was incomplete, and not entirely proven out by real data. In fact, the opposite is clearly true for at least one state, and therefore reasonably true for all states. But, there is also some truth to what I had previously believed.

I had previously believed that all progressive slot machines had low payout returns. This is partially still true, but only for progressive slot machines with a truly massive wide-area network of machines. These are the progressive games having a multi-million dollar progressive jackpot.

This is clearly seen in payout return statistics of Las Vegas's Strip area. There, according to state gaming commission, the highest payout return is the \$1 denomination, non-Megabucks slot machines. The lowest payout returns are the Megabucks progressive slot machines with a \$1 denomination.

But, the refinement to my previous understanding relates to the consistently relatively high actual payout returns for progressive slot machines with relatively small networks and therefore non-huge progressive jackpots. These are simply the facts.

These available facts are from, naturally, publicly available payout return statistics from a U.S. state government. Take a look at the actual payout return statistics for Mississippi. The Mississippi Gaming Commission separates out monthly payout returns by slot machine denominations. Several states do this, as reported in *Benefits of Slot Machine Payout Returns*.

However, what is special about the Mississippi Gaming Commission monthly Win Percentage report is, not only do they separate out payout returns by slot machine denomination, they also separate them out by whether or not the slot machine is progressive.

Here's what's interesting: The average payout return for progressive slot machines of a particular denomination are significantly better than non-progressive machines of the

same denomination. This shown in the January 2018 report for all denominations having progressive slot machines, separately shown across all 3 gaming regions of Mississippi.

Let me repeat that. In Mississippi, all actual payout returns within all three regions as well as all denomination for progressive slots are higher than non-progressive slots. That's pretty convincing data.

Given this single state-wide example, I am now willing to revise my previously low opinion of progressive slot machines. I now say it is reasonable to assume all progressive machines have better payout returns than non-progressive slot machines.

As I have previously discussed, improved payout returns come from several sources, and starting with the highest baseline amount is accomplished by careful selection of both casino and slot machine. A progressive slot machine should be considered to have a relatively higher payout return relative to slot machines of the same denomination.

Simply put, based on Mississippi stats, and all other considerations and strategies aside, playing a progressive slot machine is likely to add 1% to 2% of payout return percentage to your baseline odds of winning. Just, remember to avoid progressive slot machines with truly large, even life-changing, progressive jackpots. Those typically have the lowest odds of winning.

Strategies for Winning on Progressive Slot Machines

Now, let us consider a strategy specific for winning on progressive slot machines, rather than just if they should be played at all. In general, winning the maximum jackpot on a slot machine is a truly rare event. Unless a specific strategy is being employed, a slots player should more-or-less ignore this possibility as nothing other than a once-in-a-lifetime event.

But, the key here is “unless a specific strategy is being employed.” Earlier, I stated:

“As bets are placed on the machine and the progressive jackpot increases, it approaches the amount of this new winning progressive jackpot. When a player's bet increases the progressive jackpot to that randomly chosen amount, that player wins the progressive slot machine jackpot.”

This is the key to winning the progressive jackpot on a progressive slot machine: Play it when it approaches the maximum progressive jackpot allowed, when it must pay out. Advantage players makes sure they are playing a progressive slot machine as it approaches the set maximum limit, pushing it towards and over to win.

Winning Strategy 2, Massachusetts Slot Machine Casino Gambling

There's really only one problem with this strategy. What's the maximum limit? For stand-alone progressive slot machines, it's fairly easy to figure out. Simply look at the progressive jackpot amounts on progressive slot machines at your casino.

How much do they never go under? How much do they never go over? Those are the initial and maximum progressive jackpot amounts, respectively. Based on observations at my local casinos, a quarter machine might reset at \$1,000 and reach its maximum at \$1,200.

You can observe progressive slot machines yourself, and should if you want to make the most of this strategy. What you want to watch for is someone winning a progressive jackpot on what I describe elsewhere as a candidate slot machine. That's how you determine the reset or initial progressive jackpot. This initial jackpot provides a useful clue to the maximum progressive jackpot.

Further observations of players winning progressive jackpots on your candidate slot machines will also help you determine how large the maximum progressive jackpot might be. Eventually, you'll have a reasonable guess for the maximum jackpot.

Once you do have that reasonable guess, only play that progressive slot machine when it is closest to its best-guess maximum jackpot and furthest from the initial jackpot. Remember, the progressive jackpot can be won anywhere between the initial and maximum jackpots, but it is "due for a win" when it gets closer to the maximum jackpot. That's your advantage play.

This strategy can also be applied to non-stand-alone progressive slot machines. However, doing so will require a team of 2 or more people. Networked progressive slot machines located within a casino are currently being grouped together by casinos, as discussed, so having someone at each is quite possible.

The strategy here is to have someone sitting at each of these networked slot machines when the maximum progressive jackpot is being approached, then play those machines until the progressive jackpot is driven over the maximum jackpot.

There are a couple of logistics concerns to watch out for, of course. First, these should be people you both trust and have an agreement with to share the jackpot. Who is going to pay the taxes on the jackpot, assuming it is over \$1,200? In other words, whose name will be on the W-2G? Keep in mind, agreement or not, the actual winner doesn't legally have to share any winnings unless they choose to do so.

Second, you could just have a single person playing one of the networked slot machines, while everyone else at the other machines are not playing. But, this will look suspicious to the casino, and should be avoided, given the lengthy time it will take for one person to add enough money to sufficiently drive up the progressive jackpot.

Third, the highest value progressive jackpots are on the greatest number of networked progressive slot machines. Winning a \$4 million progressive jackpot would mean having a very large team located at several casinos, probably across several states.

Given the inherent difficulties, such as large cash investment and team management as well as travel costs, it is perhaps more reasonable to try this strategy on a smaller bank of networked progressive slot machines.

If you don't have a team available, or your team is fewer than the progressive machines networked together, try being the only people playing them. You'll still win if the other machines are sitting idle. However, this may require visiting the casino at odd hours when attendance is at a minimum.

Even then, a stranger could still swoop in at near the last moment to potentially win and take your investment of time and money. On the other hand, maybe you're the stranger doing the swooping? Either way, it is something to watch for, or plan to implement or avoid, with this strategy.

Long-Term Play: A Cautionary Tale

I was recently told a story by an entertainment slots gambler about his brother-in-law winning a top progressive jackpot for \$375,000 after 15 years of playing that and similar high limit progressive slot machines. I was initially impressed, perhaps because of the fervor with which he told the story. But then, I got to thinking about the math.

If \$375,000 was a total gross salary for 15 years of work for a job, it'd be an annual gross pay of \$24,000. That would be a full-time job at a rate of \$12.50 per hour, which at this time is more than any U.S. state's minimum hourly wage.

While I didn't get a chance to ask this during the conversation itself, later I wondered how much this brother-in-law spent on gambling per year. As a reminder for both of us, an upcoming episode will be about how to and the value of keeping good gambling records.

How much did this individual with the \$375,000 progressive jackpot spend gambling on the progressive slot machine each year? If he lost \$25,000 per year in gambling losses, he only broke even over 15 years. Of course, this does not include any income taxes on his progressive jackpot.

Let's say his overall tax rate was 25%, and his gambling losses in the year of the progressive jackpot was insignificant compared to \$375,000. In this case, his winnings after paying income taxes was just over \$280,000. Over 15 years, that is \$18,750

Was this "winner" either breaking even over the long run, or losing money? How much profit, annual revenue minus annual gambling losses, had he actually gotten? One hopes that he at least broke even after 15 years of effort.

Summary of *Winning Strategy 2: Progressive Slot Machines*

In summary, *Winning Strategy 2: Progressive Slot Machines* provides the necessary background understanding to subsequently apply the provided realistic strategy for winning on progressive slots. I first identified what a progressive slot machine is, then helped you to identify networked progressive slot machines.

This was followed by the usual question always to be asked about slot machines, which was to identify what is known about actual payout returns for this type of slot machine. Mississippi's Gaming Commission was very helpful with this.

I next went over the strategy for winning at progressive slot machines, making use of the advantage play available due to progressive slots having a minimum jackpot at reset as well as maximum progressive jackpot which it cannot exceed. I also talked about how to best go about teaming up to apply this strategy on small networks of progressive slot machines.

I concluded with a cautionary tale about winning a big progressive jackpot after many years of attempting to do so, and how the annual cost may well exceed, in total, what might eventually be won with a single large jackpot.

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Remember to visit professorslots.com/subscribe to get my Free Report Revealing ... The top 7 online resources for improving your gambling performance, including the one I've used as a top-tier slot machine casino gambler.

Show notes for this episode are now available within most podcast Apps, but are also available on my website at professorslots.com/e25.

Up next is the second segment of the show: Massachusetts Slot Machine Casino Gambling.

Introduction

In this episode segment, I provide a brief overview of the current state of gambling in a U.S. state, U.S. territory, or U.S. federal district emphasizing, by far, anything of interest to slot machine casino gamblers.

Winning Strategy 2, Massachusetts Slot Machine Casino Gambling

Here goes.

Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling currently consists of a slot parlor and a cruise ship. The slot parlor, which includes harness racing, is Plainridge Park Casino located in Plainville. The cruise ship is Dawn from Norwegian Cruise Lines, on which gambling is allowed while in international waters.

However, the immediate future of Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling is bright. In late 2011, a bill was approved by the Governor allowing the creation of three land-based casino resort licenses. Two of these three licenses have been awarded, and casino resorts are under construction in Springfield and Everett.

These two casino resorts with licenses are expected to open in late 2018 (MGM Springfield) and late 2019 (Wynn Everett).

Further, a tribal casino resort is currently planned but various lawsuits may yet prevent it from being completed.

Other gambling establishments not offering any gaming machines include Suffolk Downs in East Boston with live thoroughbred races on two tracks and country-wide simulcast as well as Raynham Park in Raynham with simulcast and off-track betting for both horse and dog races. Both sites include pari-mutuel wagering.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling

The minimum legal age for gambling is 18 years old.

Non-tribal land-based casinos are legally limited by state law to a maximum of three resort casinos and one slot parlor. None of these resort casinos have yet opened, although license have been approved for two of them.

Massachusetts three non-tribal casino resorts are legally required by state law to be located in different regions of the state:

- Region A - Eastern Massachusetts: License awarded to Wynn Resorts for the Wynn Everett Casino Resort, expected to open in late 2019.
- Region B - Western Massachusetts: License awarded to MGM Resorts for MGM Springfield, expected to open in late 2018.
- Region C - Southeastern Massachusetts: License has not yet been awarded.

Massachusetts state gaming regulations require gaming machines to have a minimum payback percentage of at least 80%.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe have signed a state-tribal gaming compact governing tribal gaming in Southeastern Massachusetts, which includes Bristol, Plymouth, Nantucket, Dukes, and Barnstable counties. This compact was subsequently approved, as required, by the U.S. Department of Interior.

Slot Machine Private Ownership

Next up is a usually short statement about slot machine private ownership, which I have included in case you live in this U.S. state and are considering owning a slot machine. Here it is:

In Massachusetts, it is legal to privately own a slot machine if it is 30 years old or older.

State Gaming Commission

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission states that its mission is "to create a fair, transparent, and participatory process for implementing the expanded gaming law."

On November 22, 2011, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed the Expanded Gaming Act legislation into law.

Gambling Establishments

The slot parlor is Plainridge Park Casino, a harness race track or racino, which opened in mid-2015. It is located in Plainville. The payback percentage of gaming machines at Plainridge Park Casino was 92.23% from mid-2016 through mid-2017.

A tribal casino named First Light Resort & Casino has been planned by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe to be located near Taunton. However, progress on this casino resort has been the subject of lawsuits. As a consequence, construction is currently on hold. It is uncertain whether the casino will be allowed to be completed.

Summary

In summary, Massachusetts slot machine casino gambling currently consists of the slot parlor Plainridge Park Casino with 1,250 gaming machines and the cruise ship NCL Dawn with 199 gaming machines.

In late 2018, the MGM Springfield Casino Resort is expected to open in Springfield. In late 2019, the Wynn Boston Harbor Resort is expected to open in Everett. State law allows for three land-based casino resort licenses, with the third such license not yet having been awarded.

Further, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federally-recognized Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe have negotiated a state-tribal compact subsequently approved at the federal level. However, construction of the resultant tribal casino planned for Taunton is currently on hold due to legal issues.

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On the Next Episode of Professor Slots

Part I of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast has yet to be determined.

Part II of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast is another brief overview of the current state of gambling in a U.S. State, Territory, or Federal District. This time, I'll be talking to you about the great U.S. State of Michigan.

Closing

That's the end of another great episode of the Professor Slots podcast. Thanks so much for listening! Show notes for this episode can be found within most podcast Apps or at professorslots.com/e25.

I plan to have the next episode come out very soon for you, where I'll have more amazing content for the show.

Until the next episode: Have fun, be safe, and make good choices! Bye.