

PS 42: Video Poker as Skill-Based Slots | DE and DC Slots 2018

Opening

Hello! Today's episode #42 of the Professor Slots podcast discusses Can You Win at Video Poker Using Slots Strategies. Plus, in this episode I'll be covering the current state of slot machine casino gambling in the great U.S. state of Delaware and the one and only, but still great, the federal district of Washington, D.C., the District of Columbia.

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 knowledge, insights, and tools for helping you improve your slot machine gambling performance.

"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 my last episode I went over West Wendover Nevada payout returns over 100% on \$25 denomination slot machines.

Also on my last episode, I reviewed Colorado and Connecticut slot machine casino gambling 2018.

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

Call to Action #1 (add transition/bed music)

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.

Introduction to Video Poker as Skill-Based Slots

Let's get started with the first segment of the show: Can You Win at Video Poker Using Slots Strategies?

Next in this series of Q&A sessions, Paul asks an excellent question about another use in the casino for my winning slots strategies. He wants to know: Can they be applied to win at video poker?

Strictly speaking, video poker isn't my specialty. Nevertheless, how might I apply my successful slots strategies to win at video poker electronic gaming machines? Let find out!

This segment has the following sub-sections:

1. An Introduction
2. Traditional Video Poker Strategies
3. Can Identical VP Machines have Different Odds?
4. My Winning Slots Strategies, in Brief
5. Evaluating Slots Strategies for Playing Video Poker
6. A Summary

Traditional Video Poker Strategies

This podcast episode is not about traditional video poker winning strategies. Those strategies are long-standing and well known: playing each video poker game perfectly, usually learned by practicing with software, and finding the best payable available.

As I'd previously discussed in Start Here: Take Control of Your Slots Gambling from my podcast episode #2, every little bit of winning edge helps. Choosing the right machine, selecting the best available casino, and aligning your play to your gambling goals will each, individually, increase your overall odds of winning.

With this perspective in mind regarding video poker machines, I have assumed perfect play and the best possible payable. Each video poker hand not played in the way math says it should results in simply throwing away whole return percentage points. You'll need to avoid doing that!

Not playing the best payable available results in a similar lowering of the odds of winning. Sometimes this is acceptable, however. For instance, maybe your casino doesn't offer video poker machines with 9-6 odds. Or, maybe those wonderful, hard-to-find 9-6 odds are only available on \$25 denomination machines when you're not a high roller.

In any case, this episode segment assumes:

- You've scrapped together every bit of winning odds you can find.
- You've learned to play your video poker game of choice perfectly.

- The video poker machine with the best payable has been located, where “best” means:
 - The payable has the best odds of winning
 - The machine denomination and credits match your bankroll

To learn more about different games, perfect play, and paytables for video poker, several good resources are available to you. For example, these topics are well-covered by Bob Dancer, author of Million Dollar Video Poker. Another excellent resource is Robin Aubin from NE Time Gambling, who has been studying video poker for 20 years.

Can Identical VP Machines have Different Odds?

From the perspective of a long-term slots gambler, video poker can best be understood as simply being skill-based slot machines. I can only imagine this is hard for long-term video poker players to accept.

The best video poker players know that card games are not video games. For instance, there is no card counting in video games because past hands are irrelevant. Also, there is no bluffing when playing a computer.

But, it goes deeper than that. Someone who switches from poker as a table game to a video poker machine has a hard transition to make. How best to describe this difficulty? Well, consider the game of golf.

Do you like golf? Have you played a lot of it? Okay, let's say you do and have. Now, let's get you to play a video golf game. The advice I heard a video gaming expert give a golfer playing video golf was this: “Try to imagine that you're not even playing golf anymore.”

In the same way, poker is not video poker. Translating poker to a video machine created something new. It's not entirely different, as the rules are much the same. But, it's not playing with physical cards anymore and that's where the difference lies.

Maybe you've never played skill-based slot machines. When playing them, an incorrect move reduces your odds of winning. For instance, if you're playing a Space Invaders slot machine, what happens when you fire your virtual weapon and miss? Well, your overall gambling performance, your winnings, will be less.

It's the same way with video poker. Yes, certainly, play the video poker game perfectly. Also, of course, improve your overall odds of winning by playing machines with the best payable. But, don't stop there!

Some of the best card-based poker advice I'd ever heard was originally from Jimmy the Greek. He said, “Don't play the game. Play the other player.”

My best advice for video poker players? Well, it's the same advice I have for playing slots. It's this: "Don't play the computer. Play the casino." Next, I'll explain what I mean by playing the casino.

My Winning Slots Strategies, in Brief

Briefly, my winning slots strategies are about recognizing patterns. For instance, casino operators may directly install a winning slot machine at a specific location in the casino. Or, winning slot machines may be indirectly determined through their choice of casino operating system.

Directly means a casino deliberately increases the odds of winning on a slot machine placed at a specific location in the casino such as a high traffic area. Whether or not the casino has chosen to do so is our task to uncover, if we can.

Indirectly means modern casinos have started using a central computer to remotely set and adjust the odds of winning on slot machines. There are several strategic approaches a casino might use to do this, each with a tactical counter-approach which I call winning slots strategies.

Not every winning slot machine strategy works at every casino. Remembering this is important. My podcast episodes on winning slots strategies have been as much about how a slots strategy works as it is about identifying whether a specific casino is susceptible to it.

Put another way, if a casino hasn't installed a winning slot machine in full view of a major walkway in their casino, to entice others to play slots after seeing someone else win, then it will be impossible for us to find it.

For your convenience, here are my winning strategies with a brief description and the podcast episode where I discuss each:

- Episode #21: How to Win at Slots at Older Casinos Built Before 2012
- Episode #23: Only Win Immediately
- Episode #25: Progressive Slot Machines
- Episode #29: Earning Complimentary Gifts
- Episode #33: Special Events Winning Advantages
- Episode #34: Reliable Holiday Patterns
- Episode #35: 3 Easy High Limit Slots Tricks
- Episode #36: Win, Walk Away, Return Later

In the next section, I'll attempt to apply each winning slot machine strategy to playing video poker. Some will work. Some may not work. So, let's examine each.

Evaluating Slots Strategies for Playing Video Poker

My first winning slots strategy is about casinos deliberately improving the odds of winning on a slot machine in full view of other casino patrons. Basically, the idea here is to entice passersby to also gamble via slots somewhere else in the casino.

So, you tell me. Are video slot machines ever visible from high traffic areas? Consider how many video poker machines a casino might have. Typically, not a lot, right? They're usually off in an area by themselves. They're not spread all over the casino.

So, having successfully employed this slots strategy, I'd say it might apply to one of the video poker machines in the video poker area. Look for a machine visible from the entryway, on the end of an aisle, or by passersby. Are there any situated like that? Test those, but carefully.

My second winning slots strategy is when casinos set up their machines to win immediately, but then don't offer any more wins if continuing to play. This slots strategy is just as cheap and easy to check on video pokers machines as it is on slots. When I've found a casino sets up their machines this way, ALL their machines are set up this way.

So, go find a penny slot machine and bet 1-cent five times in a row. Did you win? Try the next machine that's also been sitting idle for a while. Did it happen again? If this keeps happening for all kinds of slot machines, then you can expect it to happen with that casino's video poker machines.

My third winning strategy doesn't apply to video poker. Perhaps I'm wrong. Have you seen a progressive video poker machine? I know I haven't. If they do exist, or start showing up in casinos, then this slots strategy may be applicable. Until then, however, it isn't.

UPDATE – I was wrong. Upon reading my blog article for me, Paul says progressive video poker machines do exist. From his description, teams of players will play them just as my third winning strategy suggests in its entirety. That it would be a winning strategy wasn't in question. I just didn't know progressive VP machines existed yet. Thanks again, Paul!

My fourth winning slots strategy is all about earning complimentary gifts. This is a well-known strategy for video poker. As mentioned so often by video poker experts, comps are often the only way to come out ahead in video poker.

With a long-term 99% return on some video poker games, a few complimentary gifts can show a personal profit for players. Sometimes, it's the only way they can win more than they put into the machine. Because of this, casinos usually reduce the player club points earned for playing video poker relative to playing slots.

My fifth and sixth winning slots strategies are all about casinos adjusting the odds of winning during and after special events such as car giveaways, Derby Day, and holidays.

Could casinos do this? Yes, as modern casinos have central computers which adjust the odds of winning on their machines on a daily or multi-daily basis. Does your casino do it? Well, was it built in 2012 or after? If not, was it heavily renovated since 2012? Either way, that's when wiring and a central computer was, most likely, installed.

My seventh winning strategy is about optimizing profit after finding a winning strategy that works. As mentioned, some of these strategies applied to machines require a very low bankroll. Then, if such a test is positive, try it on higher denomination machines to reduce your financial risks.

My eighth winning strategy is, apparently, rare to find. However, it is the strategy I used to get to Seven Stars top-tier status in six weeks over about a dozen 3-hour sessions. It didn't help me win that car – that was the second strategy – but I was quite pleased with it.

Might you find that this winning strategy works for video poker? Well, it's very casino dependent. I found it at the brand-new Horseshoe Cincinnati in the same year that the nearby Belterra Park finished their extensive renovations.

As I mentioned, this one is rare. But, incredibly valuable if your casino has it. Do I suspect any casinos having this winning strategy in place? Yes, I do. Without having tried it myself, and just looking at the business tension as it were, I suspect MGM Springfield is employing it.

Why? Because they are trying to build a reputation in southern New England where every resident has a casino within a 2-hours drive. Frankly, to penetrate that market they need to do something special. And, this is indeed special. This approach worked very well for Horseshoe Cincinnati as, not long after, they were purchased by Jack Casino.

But, this final winning strategy comes with a strong warning. If MGM Springfield has set itself to do this, to forevermore have billboards honestly saying they have the best slots and most jackpots, then take this warning to heart.

Enjoy your wins in the first year, as they'll come easy. Enjoy your wins in the second year of the MGM Springfield being open as those, too, will still be easy. Not as easy, but still easy compared to everywhere else.

What you should watch out for, however, is the third year of it being open. MGM Springfield has a budget for construction as well as establishing itself. In the third year, casinos doing this drop their payout returns to the going-forward norm. Put another way, they'll be wanting all that lost money back from you.

So, if you can't adjust your gaming and think the wins will just keep on coming, you'll be in for a world of hurt. Just remember to trim back your gaming machine betting at MGM Springfield at the beginning of 2020. You can thank me later.

Summary of Win at Video Poker

In summary, video poker is skill-based slots. To have the best odds of winning, you'll need to be skilled at playing whatever poker game is on the machine. You'll also need to play the machines with the best paytables. But, a serious student of video poker already knows both of those and more.

However, there's more to video poker than perfect play, earning comps, and paytables. Winning slots strategies can also take advantage of how casino operators have set up their video poker machines.

In this episode segment, I've tried to apply eight winning slots strategies to video poker. All but two of them are still quite possible for video poker machines. This assumes a casino has set their regular slot machines to behave in ways that one or another of these winning strategies are indeed applicable.

A special thanks goes out to Paul for asking this question about applying slots strategies to video poker. I've enjoyed our conversations on this and other slots topics.

Call to Action #2 (add transition/bed music)

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.

Introduction

Up next is the second segment of the show on slot machine casino gambling. Here, I provide a brief overview of the current state of gambling in two U.S. states, territories, or federal district emphasizing, by far, anything of interest to slot machine casino gamblers.

Up first is Delaware slot machine casino gambling 2018. Here goes!

Delaware has three pari-mutual racetrack racinos offering video lottery terminal style slot machines controlled by the Delaware lottery. Besides slots, these VLT-style machines also offer video poker, video keno, and video blackjack.

Online slots are also available from Delaware's casinos, but playing online can only be done if at least 21 years of age as well as being physically located in the state of Delaware.

There are no tribal casinos in Delaware, due to having no federally recognized American Indian tribes.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in Delaware

The minimum legal gambling age in Delaware depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: 21.
- Poker Rooms: 18/21.
- Bingo: 18.
- Lottery: 18.
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: 18.

Delaware law defines a slot machine, in part, as a gambling device which “may eject something of value.” Therefore, Delaware’s VLT gaming machines pay out in cash.

All three Delaware casinos are open 24 hours. However, they are closed on the Easter and Christmas holidays.

The minimum bet in Delaware's casinos is \$0.01. The maximum bet is \$2,500.

Notably, the Delaware Lottery has a policy of winner privacy. As slot machines fall under their jurisdiction, they will never release the names of winners for promotional purposes, unless the winner specifies otherwise.

If you are interested in any of several details of Delaware’s gaming regulations, the Delaware Lottery publicly offers its Video Lottery & Table Game Regulations.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in Delaware

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 Delaware, it is legal to privately own slot machines which are 25 years or older.

Gaming Control Board in Delaware

The gaming control board in Delaware is the Delaware Lottery, providing gaming regulations for VLT-style gaming machines and table games.

However, enforcement of the Delaware Lottery’s gaming regulations is provided by the State of Delaware’s Division of Gaming Enforcement.

Casinos in Delaware

In this section, I'll discuss Delaware gambling establishments.

As usual, a complete list of casinos along with links to their websites, assuming they've set one up, is available on my website blog article for this state at professorslots.com/DE.

There are three non-tribal casinos in Delaware. The largest casino is Dover Downs Hotel & Casino in Dover, currently having 2,177 gaming machines and 41 table games.

The second largest casino in Delaware is Harrington Raceway & Casino in Harrington, having 1,787 gaming machines and over 30 table games.

Non-Tribal Casinos in Delaware

The three racinos in Delaware are:

- Delaware Park Racetrack and Slots in Wilmington, located 37 miles southwest of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Dover Downs Hotel & Casino in Dover, located 53 miles south of Wilmington.
- Harrington Raceway & Casino in Harrington, located 25 miles south of Dover at the Delaware State Fairgrounds.

American Indian Casinos in Delaware

There are no tribal casinos in Delaware as this state has no federally recognized tribes.

Other Gambling Establishments in Delaware

Delaware is also one of the few states where sports betting is legal at its three casinos, legally established in 2009. Such betting is limited to multiple games at professional and college sporting events.

To help Delaware compete with casinos in neighboring states, table games were legally approved in 2010. All of Delaware's racinos offer craps, blackjack, and roulette. However, multiple other table games may be offered, but exactly which depends upon the specific location.

As an alternative to enjoying *Delaware slot machine casino gambling*, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state.

Delaware is bordered by:

- North: Pennsylvania
- Northeast: New Jersey
- South & West: Maryland

To visit any of my articles on these U.S. states, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. For example, my Pennsylvania slots article is available at ProfessorSlots.com/PA.

Payout Returns in Delaware

As video lottery terminals, Delaware's slot machines are legally required to have payout returns between 87% and 95%.

While other gaming websites state otherwise, Delaware's Gaming Regulations Section 3.6: Licensing of Agents, Business Plans clearly states that the lower payout return limit of 87% is an annual average rather than a per wager requirement for each slot machine.

This is further collaborated by Delaware Code 29 Del. C. §4805(a)(15), which further seems to state the 95% maximum payout return is also an annual average for each slot machine.

However, both are clear it is possible for games to have a payout return greater than 95% with approval from the Director of the Delaware Lottery. It is not known how often this approval is given.

What this means is straightforward. Delaware casinos do not directly control the odds of winning on their VLT-style slot machines. Those odds are controlled by the Delaware Lottery.

However, by working with the Delaware Lottery, it is possible to provide a business plan to the Director to receive approval to increase theoretical payout returns to be greater than otherwise allowed. Potentially, this includes over 100%.

What I wonder about is this: How often does the Director approve exceeding the maximum payout return and on which slot machines has this been done?

Actual payout return statistics are publicly available on the Delaware Lottery's Video Lottery Monthly Proceeds and Distributions webpage.

However, each casino's actual monthly payout return will need to be calculated by dividing "Amount Won" by "Amount Played" for that month.

For the month of July 2018, actual payout returns statistics by casino were:

- Delaware Park Racetrack and Slots: 92.16%.
- Dover Downs Hotel & Casino: 92.64%.
- Harrington Raceway & Casino: 91.88%.

Summary of Delaware Slots 2018

In summary, *Delaware slot machine casino gambling* consists of three casinos with pari-mutuel wagering of dog or horse racing including simulcast. These racinos also currently offer 6,218 video lottery terminal style gaming machines having video slots, video blackjack, video poker, and video keno.

Delaware's VLT-style slot machines have minimum and maximum legal limits on theoretical payout returns. Per slot machine on an average annual basis, the minimum payout return is 87%, while the maximum payout return is 95%.

The maximum payout return can be increased with approval from the Director of the Delaware Lottery, but how often this is done is uncertain.

Notably, the Delaware Lottery has a policy of winner privacy, including for slot machine jackpot winners, unless the winner specifies otherwise.

Annual Progress in *Delaware Slot Machine Casino Gambling*

Over the last year, little change has been seen in Delaware casinos, and specifically with regards to their slots offerings as well as gaming regulations. However, the total number of slot machines in the state decreased by 17% from 7,520 to 6,218 gaming machines.

Call to Action #3 (add transition/bed music)

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Introduction

Up next is the second state, territory, or federal district comprising this episode segment: District of Columbia Slot Machine Casino Gambling 2018. Here goes!

District of Columbia slots does not exist. This U.S. federal district has no casinos and therefore no slot machines. However, the nearby states of Maryland and Virginia offer several casinos.

While formally named the District of Columbia, it is more commonly referred to as Washington, DC, the capital of the United States. It covers 68 square miles, of which 7 square miles is water.

Relevant Legal Statutes on Gambling in District of Columbia

The minimum legal gambling age in the District of Columbia depends upon the gambling activity:

- Land-Based Casinos: n/a.
- Poker Rooms: n/a.
- Bingo: 18.
- Lottery: 18.
- Pari-Mutuel Wagering: n/a.

District of Columbia lottery players must be 18 years of age or older, but a person under 18 may receive a lottery ticket as a gift and be paid a lottery prize.

Slot Machine Private Ownership in District of Columbia

Regarding slot machine private ownership, it is legal to own slot machines manufactured prior to 1952, if intended for exhibition or private use by the owner, and not used for gambling purposes.

Gaming Control Boards in District of Columbia

The District of Columbia does not have gaming commissions for racing, sports betting, or casinos. However, its Office of Lottery and Charitable Games provides gaming regulations for both of these activities. It identifies its Mission as:

“To provide revenue-generating entertainment through the sales of innovative lottery products and promotions that directly benefits the residents and the economic vitality of the District of Columbia.”

The District of Columbia legalized its Lottery in 1982. The DC Lottery pays out more than 50% of annual sales in prize money, totaling \$3 billion since 1982.

Over the last 30 years, the Charitable Games Division has approved over 3,000 licenses, resulting in “more than \$123 million for food, education, housing, health care, and other basic needs and services for residents of the District of Columbia.”

Casinos in District of Columbia

No casinos exist in the District of Columbia.

Non-Tribal Casinos in District of Columbia

No commercial non-tribal casinos exist in the District of Columbia.

American Indian Casinos in District of Columbia

The District of Columbia does not have any federally-recognized American Indian tribes.

Other Gambling Establishments in District of Columbia

As an alternative to enjoying *District of Columbia slot machine casino gambling*, consider exploring casino options in a nearby state.

The District of Columbia is bordered by:

- Northeast, Northwest, & Southeast: Maryland
- Southwest: Virginia

To visit any of my articles on these U.S. states, simply visit ProfessorSlots.com followed by its two-letter designation. For example, my Maryland slots article is available at ProfessorSlots.com/MD.

Payout Returns in District of Columbia

There are no casinos in the District of Columbia, and therefore no theoretical or actual payout returns.

Summary to District of Columbia Slots 2018

In summary, Due to having no casinos, *District of Columbia slot machine casino gambling* does not exist in the nation's capital of Washington, D.C..

However, relatively nearby casinos are available in the bordering states of Maryland and Virginia.

Annual Progress in District of Columbia *Slot Machine Casino Gambling*

Over the last year, there has been no changes to District of Columbia slot machine casino gambling. However, Washington, DC is the home of the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled earlier in 2018 that sports betting is no longer banned at the federal level.

Call to Action #4 (add transition/bed music) [Optional]

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.

Podcast Interviews [Optional]

I'd like to welcome new listeners to the show, thanks to other gambling podcasts I've either been on or otherwise interviewed by.

First, thanks to Vito at Cousin Vito's Casino Podcast for airing my complimentary gift for him and his listeners. Here it is for you, as well.

Have you ever had difficulty with the touchscreen on a modern slot machine? When selecting one button with your finger, does some other button elsewhere on the screen get selected instead? This can be very frustrating if you're, say, trying to enter your pin number for your players club card. Well, let's remove that frustration forevermore, shall we?

Here's what you do. Don't use your finger. I can explain why, but it's not important. What you need to do is use a bit of metal to lightly touch the screen. How about the tip of your car key? Or, touch it with your ring or the metal tip of your pen. Whatever metal you use, exactly where you touch is selected. And just like that, poof, there's no more frustration. If only winning at slots were that easy, yes?

On the Next Episode of Professor Slots

Part I of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast is currently unknown. I was thinking I might jump back to reviewing the annual reports of the other slot machine manufacturers to see if they have any useful information on the latest and greatest central computer casino operating systems.

To ask a question which might end up as a blog article or on a podcast episode, email it to jon@professorslots.com where Jon is spelled J-O-N or by calling 937-696-0086 to leave a 3-minute or less voicemail. Casino trip reports about slots are also appreciated.

Part II of the next episode of the Professor Slots podcast more brief overviews of the current state of gambling in two U.S. states, territories, or federal district. Next time, I'll be talking to you about the great U.S. states of Florida and Georgia.

Closing (closing music)

That's the end of another great episode of the Professor Slots podcast. Thanks so much for listening!

Show notes for this episode are now available within most podcast Apps, but are also available on my website at professorslots.com/e42.

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.

320-character description:

Video poker is skill-based slots. To win at video poker has always meant perfect play and the best paytables. Now, try applying my winning slots strategies as they can also take advantage of how casino operators have set up their video poker machines. Plus, Delaware and District of Columbia slot machine casino gambling 2018.

156-character description:

Video poker is perfect play and paytables but as skill-based slots means trying out my slots strategies. Plus, Delaware and District of Columbia slots 2018.