

COLLETON QUALITY
PAPERBACK - NO STRIP

VIDEO POKER

MANIA !!!

Three powerful
strategies are
revealed that
can help you
WIN!

Choose the one
most suited to
your type of
play.

The only book
on Video Poker
written by a
slot industry
engineer.



DWIGHT & LOUISE CREVELT

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Photo of video poker machine, courtesy of IGT, Reno, NV.

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Special thanks to John Gollehon for his patience while we researched and wrote this book.

casinos and manufacturers took a closer look at the slots and ways of making them even more attractive to the average player as well as the high rollers. Computerized slot monitoring and player tracking systems were the only logical method of identifying and rewarding those responsible for their major profit item.

Electronic Data Technologies (EDT), a subsidiary of IGT, was the innovator with its "Player Club" system.* Although Bally Manufacturing and several other manufacturers developed slot accounting systems, the EDT system with its Player Club has found worldwide acceptance in the gaming industry.

Players are invited to join the club and accumulate bonus points by inserting their club card (or cards for playing multiple machines) in the card reader slot on each machine. The reader is either a box attached to the side of the machine or a special slot built into the new machines. Accumulated bonus points can be redeemed for a variety of gifts or services and, in some casinos, for cash. Redemption values also differ greatly from club to club. A consistent point accumulation keeps

*Co-author, Dwight Crevelt, at the age of 17, worked on development of a table-game monitoring system with Gamex Industries, a pioneer in electronically controlled slots. Simultaneously, he developed the first slot monitoring system. More recently, he worked with EDT on the development of their player tracking system.

players returning frequently — more than for special drawings for a big prize during a limited promotion.

When you insert your club card into the reader or machine, the display will greet you. For instance: "Hello, Joy, glad you're here. Your point balance is 1000. Coins to next bonus point: 18." The number of coins needed to earn the next bonus point differs depending on the type of machine, denomination, place you are playing, and the point at which the previous player withdrew his card. He may have run out of money or had to leave when only a few more coins played would have earned the bonus point. The reader does not reset to the maximum coins per point when a card is removed. We have seen players hopping from machine to machine testing each reader to select those requiring only a few plays. These point chasers "can't see the forest for the trees." The bonus points are more important to them than the jackpot. They're chasing the wrong rainbow if they're looking for that pot of gold.

Most slot clubs are not exclusive with membership. You can join as many clubs at different casinos as you wish. It's not uncommon to see a player with a credit-card wallet or a key-chain full of club cards. There is no initiation fee to join. Don't worry, you'll pay later — everytime you play the machine, the casino gets its "take" —

with or without the card in the reader. One club, however, does require you to become "eligible" by winning a certain number of colored tokens that fall periodically with the coins won while playing. Guess they're trying to discourage the occasional or infrequent players. We were "turned off" by this "pseudo-exclusive" requirement.

It seems that more and more players prefer to play video poker instead of the regular slots. Due to this imbalance of "reel" slot play to video poker play, some clubs have set the number of coins needed to earn a bonus point on "reel" slots at less than that on video poker machines. In some casinos, the ratio is almost 2 to 1. Further, most of the newer slot machines seldom require more than three coins played to win the top jackpot, unlike many older machines that required four, five, six, and sometimes nine coins for the bonus jackpot. One casino has even modified its system to give players of regular slot machines extra payouts if they are using their club card.

Finally, player tracking systems enable casinos to identify the slot and video poker "high rollers." At last, these customers are being recognized and rewarded for their contributions (literally) to the industry. They are "comped," complimented that is, with free dinners, gifts, parties, and other perks — privileges formerly reserved for table-game high rollers. Club members often receive

periodic newsletters, notices of special promotions and tournaments, and coupons for discounts in casino restaurants or shops.

Now that most major casinos have slot clubs, they must compete for members. They use innovative and unique attractions to entice potential players to join their clubs, such as free bonus points and/or gifts at registration and extra bonus points on birthdays or for bringing in new members. Club cards even become the key to discounts and bonus promotions at other games such as bingo and bowling.

Some clubs offer double bonus points or other special gifts such as T-shirts, mugs, candy, and fanny packs on certain days or months; some offer occasional cash bonuses for a royal flush, provided you have your card in the reader when it hits. For instance, Sam's Town Royal Flush Club gives a bonus jacket for the first royal you hit each year and other incentives for subsequent royals. One month it was a spin on an extra cash wheel; another month it was a free T-shirt. Most of their special drawings require club registration. One drawing awarded both cash and extra bonus points which could only be collected incrementally over a two-week or 30-day period. *In the door — collect the prize — put it in the machines!* Winners didn't like this "incremental" payout of such small "daily" prizes.