

Martin J. Silverthorne

A Beginners Guide to Online Casino Bonuses

PLAY 1 TO 5 COINS	1	2	3	4	5
Royal Flush	250	500	750	1000	4000
Straight Flush	50	100	150	200	250
4 of a Kind	25	50	75	100	125
Full House	9	18	27	36	45
Flush	6	12	18	24	30
Straight	4	8	12	16	20
3 of a Kind	3	6	9	12	15
2 Pair	2	4	6	8	10
Jacks or Better	1	2	3	4	5

CLICK ON CARDS TO HOLD

5 HOLD 3 6 5 HOLD 5 HOLD

25¢

CREDITS WON 000000000

COINS PLAYED 5

BET ONE DRAW BET MAX

MALFUNCTION VOIDS ALL PLAYS AND PAYS

Practice



SILVERTHORNE
PUBLICATIONS

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848 N. Rainbow Blvd, Suite 601

Las Vegas, Nevada 89107

United States of America

www.silverthornepublications.com

Published in the United States of America

Introduction

Casino games are designed to give the house a small advantage so that a typical player loses money over time. By using one of our winning strategies you can gain an edge over the casino.

Many online casinos offer sign-up bonuses and other promotions that give the player a much larger edge. Bonuses can be used to shift the house even further in your favor and even become a significant part of your winnings.

Online Casinos versus Brick & Mortar Casinos

Online casinos allow you to play casino games for real money on your computer. The larger software groups offer a similar game selection to what you would find in a brick and mortar casino -- blackjack, roulette, craps, video poker, slots, etc. However, there are some important differences.

Some online casinos offer live dealers via webcam, but for the most part game outcomes are determined via a computer dealer and random number generator, rather than live dealers. This generally makes play faster. With some online casino software, it is possible to play more than 1000 hands of blackjack per hour. Some casinos offer automated hand selection with optimal strategy or automated play. Previous play is usually available for review. Fairness is a concern, as you must trust the behind the scenes random number generator. The larger casinos regularly hire an outside auditor to test their games and review win/loss results to verify random play. These audit results are available to the public.

Deposits and withdrawals differ significantly between online and B&M casinos. At a B&M casino, it is fairly easy to purchase or cash in chips. At an online casino, you may need to use a 3rd party eWallet system to transfer money. Withdrawals usually are not instant. It typically takes a few days for a withdrawal to be received in your eWallet account. The two most common reasons for this delay are security/fraud checks and a reverse-withdrawal period (period in which you can cancel your withdrawal).

Bonuses and comps also differ between online and B&M casinos. Online casinos do not comp you for meals or room upgrades. Instead they give financial bonuses. Bonuses usually require wagering a certain amount before they can be cashed in. All wagers are tracked as you play.

A casino is more than just games. Online casinos do not offer the same atmosphere as a brick and mortar casino. You won't see and hear others hitting jackpots; there will not be

friends cheering you on; there will not be sexy women offering you free drinks; there will not be live music/events; and there will not be amazing physical structures, like at Vegas. Online casinos will never replace live casinos; but they do offer a convenient, fun, and potentially profitable way to play at home.

Types of Bonuses

There are many types of sign on bonuses. The simplest is a *cashable bonus* with a straight forward wagering requirement. For example, Golden Palace offers a 300% sign on bonus with a 20x (bonus+deposit) wagering requirement. With a \$100 deposit, the player would receive a \$300 bonus and have a \$8000 wagering requirement. This \$8000 wagering requirement can be done in 8000 \$1 bets, 800 \$10 bets, 80 \$100 bets, or any other combination. A player is expected to lose an average of ~0.5% of their wager playing blackjack, so expected loss over the \$8000 wagering is described earlier is $\$8000 \times 0.5\% = \40 . This leaves \$260 of the \$300 bonus as cashable profit. The blackjack page goes into more detail about game strategy and selecting an appropriate bet size.

A *"sticky" bonus* also has a wagering requirement. However, unlike cashable bonuses, a sticky bonus can never be withdrawn. It can only be used to place wagers. You generally play your cash balance first. If your cash balance drops to zero, you can continue playing using the sticky bonus.

Most Microgaming casinos use the *"Clearplay"* bonus system. Under traditional implementation, you can play all casino games and withdraw your winnings at any time, whether you have met the wagering requirements on the bonus or not. Wagering requirements are increased for blackjack, so there are different strategies and recommended games than with typical cashable bonuses. See the Clearplay bonus page for more detailed information.

Free Play bonuses are also unique to Microgaming. After signing up at the casino, you are given money to play the casino games without making a deposit. Your free play winnings are credited as a bonus with your first deposit.

Before Signing Up

Before taking a bonus, I recommend reading the full terms & conditions (T&C) associated with that bonus. If you cannot find a link to the terms on the casino's webpage, ask a support rep for assistance. While reading the T&C, confirm the terms of the bonus; confirm that your country is not banned from playing at the casino and does not have increased wagering requirements from the default; and if you are under 21, confirm that the casino allows players who are 18-20.

Deposits and Withdrawals

There are many money transfer options including credit cards, direct transfers to your bank account, and eWallets. I recommend getting a 3rd party eWallet to simplify transactions and reduce withdrawal delays. For non-US residents, the three main options are Neteller, Click2Pay, and MoneyBookers. They all have their own strengths and weaknesses. Neteller seems to be the most common choice.

Fair Play

Most online casinos are reputable.. Game outcomes are selected through a random number generator, and the casinos will pay winnings within a reasonable time frame.