

Blackjack Australia

SPECIAL REPORT NO. 3

The Most Common Basic Strategy Mistakes

The infiltration of Continuous Shuffling Machines (CSM's) into some casinos has made card counting difficult. With this in mind I feel that it is time to take a step back from card counting and focus on basic strategy. Basic strategy tells the player the best action to take in a certain situation. There is only one best action to take for a players hand based on the dealers up-card. A full set of basic strategies for the major Australian casinos can be found on the Blackjack Australia website. In Australian casinos, most players do not play perfect basic strategy. The two most common mistakes are outlined below.

Hitting or standing on 16

Nine out of ten players will stand on a total of 16 against a dealer card of 7 or more, even though the basic strategy states that the player should take another card. Whether you hit or stand on 16, the probability is you will still lose. However, when taking another card you will lose less often. The following table shows the results of hitting or standing on 16 against a dealer upcard of 7 through 10 over thousands of hands of a computer simulation. For example, over thousands of hands hitting on 16 against dealer 7 resulted in losing \$131,000 while standing in this situation resulted in losing \$151,000.

	7	8	9	10
Hit	-131,000	-144,000	-165,000	-759,000
Stand	-150,000	-165,000	-175,000	-766,000

Hitting or standing on 12 against dealer 2 or 3

This is another situation where players are standing when they should take another card. As in the above example, chances are you will lose the hand either way, but as the results of the trial below show, you will lose less often when hitting.

	2	3
Hit	-73,000	-67,000
Stand	-84,000	-73,000

Online casino warning

It is difficult to win money in the long term at online casinos. This is because you can't get an advantage from card counting, which means that you are always playing against a house edge. If you are still going to gamble online however, at least use a reputable, audited casino. You can also find a list of these casinos on the Blackjack Australia website (www.blackjack.iinet.net.au).

Contact William Swaffer at webmaster@blackjack.iinet.net.au for more information.

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