



## The 2 Greatest BJ Games & Casino Boondoggles in History:

*By Joe Centrone 9/17/2021*



I'm going to tell you about about the 2 Greatest BJ games that I've ever encountered. For those of you that are active on gambling forums you may wonder why you've probably never heard of these games. That's because the really great opportunities that come along are never discussed in these forums. The reason being that the players know that one post about a great game would burn the game out quickly and severely limit their own profit making opportunities.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest BJ game was at a major casino in NJ that decided to put a side bet on a BJ game that they were using on the internet in other countries. This was long before internet gaming was legal in the US. The bet was called Slingo and the main bet was simply whether your first 2 cards would both be red or black. The bet paid 3 to 1. When I first read about this in the local paper I thought I must be missing something. The math for this game was so simple a middle school child could have figured it out. For those of you that are mathematically challenged let me explain. There are only 4 possible outcomes for the colors for the first 2 cards. Both black, both red, red/black, or black/red. So if you bet on both cards being black you will lose 3 times and win once. So you would lose 3 times out of 4 and win 3 units the fourth time. Making this a game with no house edge. Now technically the house did have an edge, since when you bet on black, for example, and receive black for your first card, which of course happens 50% of the time. In an 8 deck shoe you now have a 207 chance out of 415 cards left to receive another black. So, the house did have a very small edge, but it had to be the smallest edge for any side bet in history! But this wasn't even close to the worse part. It was also the easiest game to count (and beat) in the history of blackjack. It should have been obvious to anyone that knew anything about BJ that all you had to do was count all red cards as +1 and black cards as -1. Anytime you had a *running* of +2 or higher there was enough surplus black to give the player an advantage, PLUS anytime the count was -2 or lower the same thing would happen for the red bet. You could have done the math on the back of a cocktail napkin, no computer skills needed! Since the max bet was only \$50 or \$100 (I don't recall exactly), a player could just bet the max in all advantageous counts, assuming you had even a modest bankroll. So you had an advantage with BOTH positive and negative counts, no need for a true count, no money management needed, and starting with an extremely small house edge. It was a every amateur counter's dream come true. But this wasn't even the best slingo bet! They also a 3 different side bets which paid various odds for your first 2 cards being 17, 18, or 19. With my simulator I had I found that with specific counts the player would often have a often have a HUGE advantage over the house. The expected win for the player was much higher than even the the color bets! Though only those that had the right simulator and knew had to use it would benefit. I don't know if anyone actually counted these bets, but they could have probably played unencumbered because the casino would not know the custom counts for these bets, so they would have had no way of telling if the player was counting. Surprisingly,

this game lasted many months! Unfortunately, because of my position in the business at the time, as well as being well known at this casino, I couldn't taken advantage of it. Though admittedly I couldn't resist sneaking in with my GF a few times to show off my skills.

But the above isn't even close to the biggest Boondoggle I ever witnessed. **As far as I can tell, this game has NEVER been talked about on the internet before.** Yet, this had to be the greatest BJ game in the history of casinos! This was at a major casino in Vegas. Now, I rarely go to casinos when it's not business related, such as giving a demo of my games. So it was the most bizarre coincidence that one night I took my GF to a few casinos so she could get some slot promos. While at one casino, while she played slots for her promo, I decided to check out what type of BJ games they had for my business. It was then I spotted a small placard on a few games for a BJ promo. I read it quickly and it said something about BJ paying 6 to 5 for the promo period. So I asked a floor person how is a BJ paying 6 to 5 considered a promo? He said, "oh you don't understand, Blackjack doesn't pay 6 to 5 (it paid 3 to 2), every WINING BJ HAND PAYS 6 TO 5!" I was in a state of shock! I couldn't believe a casino would put in such a game. So I kept re-reading the placard on the game to see what the catch was. The floor was right, but there was some restrictions, Doubles and splits paid even money, though I think the first split may have been 6 to 5. The max bet was \$100 and the promo was only available on a few tables during day shift (I think it was 11 to 6pm or 10 to 5pm). Amazingly the promo was starting the next morning! Now, to be clear, this wasn't back in the 70's or 80's, this was in the 2000's. When I got home that night I calculated my advantage was a whopping 7% with just playing Basic Strat. I withdrew thousands from the bank and got there early the next morning to be sure to get a seat. To my surprise both games were empty while the dealers were opening the tables. I quickly asked the floor if I could play 2 hands and amazingly he let me. I played 2 x 100 for the rest of the day. There were usually seats available on both games and I was able to jump to the game which had the least players throughout most of the day. I won a good amount. The next day was quite different, word started spreading and the games filled up early. With a weird mix of players playing \$100 a hand and playing quickly and players playing \$10 with no clue what they had wandered onto, and slowing up the game with their decision making in the process. They also no longer allowed me to play 2 hands. As the promo time was nearing the end of the day, many casino suits started congregating in the pit and pointing to the promo games. I knew the jig was probably up and the greatest BJ game in history was probably over. Sure enough, the next morning when I arrived the promo signs had been taken down. BTW, the second day I actually *lost* money, but still netted a good amount for the 2 days.

So what is the point of these stories? Just because someone is a casino exec doesn't mean he knows the first thing about the mathematics of the table games. Not only didn't the casino execs that decided to put the 6 to 5 game in not know the first thing about math, after all how can you give a bonus of 20% on winning hands on a game that only had a HE of about 1/2% and not realize that the players would have a huge advantage? If that is not bad enough the game was almost certainly illegal. You see in NV if you want to modify an existing game you have to have the changes analyzed by an approved company like GLI and apply for the rule change

when the math is completed. There is no way they did this because a game which gives the player an advantage is illegal in NV. So they broke the law on 2 fronts, they never applied for the rule change and they offered a game with a negative HE.

Now, these are only the games that I happened to find out about. The game in NJ I had read about in the paper so many people must have known about it. But the game in Vegas I just happened to be there just before it started and I'm someone that does not visit casinos often. So I must wonder how many other opportunities there may have been over the years where only the leg work of visiting casinos often would have revealed. Since, as I said earlier, the really great opportunities are almost never revealed in internet forums.