

DEAL ME IN



Mark Pilarski

The Games They Play To Change Your Winning Ways

Dear Mark: I play roulette when I feel lucky, which is hardly ever, however I noticed that at one local casino where I play that if you watch real close, they change balls every time they spin the wheel. I also noticed they are different sized balls. Is this common practice, and do all the casinos do this? I have in the past seen them change the balls, but usually when they have a dealer change. What gives?

Bob M.

Any time the house is taking a beating, superstitious pit bosses do try various things to "change" your winning ways. Reversing the rotation of the wheel and/or swapping different weighted balls are a couple of things they erroneously believe will more efficiently separate you from your hard-earned money. Nah!

When I dealt roulette, before each spin, I was trained to either speed up or slow down both the wheel and ball delivery to avoid wheel clocking, and yes, occasionally I switched balls, particularly if I flicked the ball too fast and it came off the game, but rarely would a spooked pit bull ask me to exchange balls, even when we were getting clobbered.

Most rational pit bosses know that no amount of ball changing on a random non-biased wheel has anything to do with the outcome of the next spin. Each spin is an independent event, and over the long run, you can plan on your losses being 5.26%.

Apparently, Bob, where you play, superstition trumps mathematics.

Dear Mark: Is it possible for casino IT gurus to change odds remotely from the back room to cheat unsuspecting players? Inquiring minds want to know!

Diane U.

Is it possible that some geek in the bowels of a casino basement in Singapore can tinker with your payouts? Sure. With networked machines, satellite transmission, and computer programming,

absolutely anything is possible. But is it happening? Capital D - definitely not, and here's why.

Casinos reap their profits by paying winning slot machine players less than the true odds on their bets. Let me say that again: Every slot machine offered to the player is already mathematically fixed in the casino's favor. Since every coin inserted into their one-armed bandits is operating on this principle, why, Diane, should they ever bother to fleece you further?

What's more, most casinos are publicly traded companies on the NYSE, and believe me, Diane, they are not in the least bit interested in exposing their gaming licenses to loss through any inkling of cheating.

There is no more regulated business in America than gaming, with plenty of rules and regulations that would close a casino down for defrauding, or appearing to defraud, the public.

Dear Mark: The casino where I play allows players to draw to split aces. How big of an edge am I getting with this rule change?

John M.

Unlike when you split any other pair, when you split aces, normally you are only allowed to draw one card to each ace. Some casinos, like the one where you play, allow you to draw additional cards to each split ace. This player-favorable rule decreases the house's edge by 0.14%.

Gambling Wisdom of the Week:

"The good news is that in every deck of fifty-two cards there are 2,598,960 possible poker hands. The bad news is that you are going to be dealt only one of them."

~Anthony Holden

Got a question about gambling? Write to: Deal Me In, P.O. Box 1234, Traverse City, Michigan 49685 - e-mail: pilarski@markpilarski.com • To order Mark Pilarski's "Hooked on Winning" audio cassettes-laminated win cards package (\$12.95 plus \$2 S&H) call 1-800-WINNERS.

Tourism Season Starts Slowly

Businesses: From page 8

through the hard times and leave us better off when the economy rebounds."

Jack and Terri Armstrong's Cannonball Drive-in has done well, despite being on the west side of the Island at British Landing. Catering more to local residents has been making the difference, said Mr. Armstrong.

"We've made some changes to the menu, bought new equipment, and improved the building," said Mr. Armstrong, who said August is on a record pace. "We're enjoying more of the residents from the village [Harrisonville] and the east and west bluffs who are coming in for lunch."

Mr. Armstrong did say that the Cannonball's location four miles from town can be the best location in good weather, and the worst in bad weather.

"We're staying very optimistic for the rest of the summer," he said.

Bob Gale of the Butterfly House said his was one of the many businesses that have enticed consumers by expanding advertising to new areas. He further promotes his collection of butterflies and insects by using promotional tools, such as handing out magnets and wristbands.

"It used to be we didn't have to go out and get people," said Mr. Gale, a former Indian River school principal who thinks the nation's fuel prices have affected businesses more than they think. "Now we have to advertise outside our normal perimeters."

For the area's three boat lines,

fuel prices have forced the companies to cut back on the number of daily departures. Fuel price increases have subsided, for the time being, however, they are still double compared to last summer, said Arnold Line's Bob Brown.

"The summer is going as we expected," said Mr. Brown, whose company only runs its 12:30 p.m. departure to the Island and 1 p.m. departure to the mainland if needed.

Star Line cut out its 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. departures to the Island, and has cut down the number of departures from its Railroad Dock in St. Ignace, which was opened later this year. It will close earlier than last year, as well.

"We're only getting 20 to 30 people on a boat on all those trips, and when you have three boat lines going, it's not enough to cover the fuel prices," said Star Line General Manager Tom Pfeiffelmann. "If fuel comes down another dollar, then we might make some headway, but I think there is just too many boats for too few people."

Mr. Pfeiffelmann is hoping for a good turnout for the Labor Day weekend, similar to the crowd that came through during the Fourth of July. He believes a trend has formed this summer where most travelers are only making plans to travel during holidays.

He said Memorial Day weekend was also good.

Mr. Pfeiffelmann is hoping that is an indication that Labor Day weekend will be good for all Island businesses.

"I think it's looking good for Labor Day," he said.

MICH-CAN STATEWIDE AD NETWORK

ADOPTION
ADOPT - AFFECTION, ADORING LOVE and security await your child. Let us help each other. We're here for you. Tammy and Andre 1-800-420-9806. Expenses paid.

FORECLOSED HOME AUCTION MICHIGAN
statewide. 850+ Homes must be sold. Free brochure. 800-279-5075

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
ALL CASH CANDY ROUTE. Do you earn up to \$800/day? Your own local candy route. Includes 30 Machines and Candy. All for \$9,995. Call 1-888-744-4651.
REACH 3.1 MILLION Michigan readers with a 2 x 2 display ad for only \$999. Contact this newspaper for details.

EMPLOYMENT
ABLE TO TRAVEL: Hiring eight people, no experience necessary, transportation & lodging furnished, expense paid training. Work/travel entire U.S. Start immediately. www.protekchemical.com. Call 1-877-936-7468

DRIVER: DON'T JUST START your career, start it right! Company sponsored CDL training in 3 weeks. Must be 21. Have CDL? Tuition reimbursement! CRST. 866-917-2778.
DRIVER - \$5K SIGN-ON BONUS for experienced teams. Dry van & temp. control. Solo Lanes also available. O/Os & CDL-A Grads welcome. Call Covenant (866) 684-2519. EOE.
DRIVERS: \$1,000+ WEEKLY Sign-on Bonus. 35-41 cpm. Earn over \$1,000 weekly! Excellent benefits. Need CDL-A & 3 mos recent OTR. 800-635-8669
INSURANCE INSPECTORS - Field work throughout all counties of Michigan. Independent contractor/part-time. Insurance background preferred. Digital camera and High-Speed Internet access required. info@mirre-ports.com

PLACE YOUR STATEWIDE AD HERE! \$299 buys a 25-word classified ad offering over 1.6 million circulation and 3.6 million readers. Contact this newspaper for details.
MORTON SALT IS SEEKING Mechanics and electricians in New Iberia, Louisiana. Candidates must have industrial experience and/or education to equal that of a journeyman. A relocation allowance is available. For instructions to apply, call Charles: 337-867-2168. EEO M/F/D/V NOW AVAILABLE! 2008 Post Office jobs. \$18-\$20/Hr. No experience. Paid training. Fed benefits, vacations. Call 1-800-910-9941 Today. Ref #M108

POST OFFICE NOW HIRING. Avg. \$20/hr./\$57K/yr. Federal benefits. OT. Placed by AdSource, not USPS who hires. 1-866-616-7015. Free req.
RECEIVE QUALITY TRAINING to become a professional Class A CDL driver, 21 and older. Call the Transportation Technology Center at 1-800-362-2793 x1964, ask for Jamie.

WOOD TRUCKING, INC./MCT. Great New Career! Job Guaranteed on completion of Free 3 week CDL-A Training. 1 year commitment required. 1-800-621-4878

FINANCIAL SERVICES
****BEST HOME LOANS**** Land Contract and Mortgage Payoffs, Home-Improvements, Debt Consolidation, Taxes.

Houses, Doublewides, Mobiles, Any reason. Any credit! 1-800-246-8100
Anytime! United Mortgage Services. www.ums-mortgage.com
DR. DANIELS AND SON Real Estate Loans. Cash for land contracts. \$10,000 to \$500,000 - Fast funding, free consultation. 800-837-6166. 248-335-6166. allan@danielsandson.com

FOR SALE
PIONEER DELUXE POLE BUILDINGS - 1' side overhang, 1" fiberglass roof insulation, Galvalume steel, 14 colors, ACQ treated lumber. Licensed and insured, call for quotes. 1-800-292-0679

MISCELLANEOUS
AIRLINES ARE HIRING - Train for high paying Aviation Maintenance Career. FAA approved program. Financial aid if qualified - Job placement assistance. Call Aviation Institute of Maintenance (888) 349-5387.
DONATE VEHICLE: RECEIVE \$1,000 grocery coupons, your choice. Noah's Arc, no kill animal shelters. Advance veterinary treatments. Free towing, IRS tax deduction. Non-runners. 1-866-912-GIVE

Timber Harvesting Provides a Certain Measure of Control

By Bill Cook
Upper Peninsula Extension Forester

Michigan forests represent a mind-boggling range of diversity. Levels of diversity vary in time and across the landscape. Disturbance is a crucial component of diversity, and timber harvest provides a measure of control of where and how disturbance occurs.

Given the diversity of Michigan forest types, it is not surprising that a range of forest management and timber harvest systems have been developed that employ inherent ecological characteristics of those forest types as guidelines.

There are three major groups of timber harvest practices: Clearcutting, shelterwood, and selection systems. While each are different, and are applied to specific forest types, they have three things in common. One, they provide wood fiber for thousands of everyday products. Two, they establish environmental conditions that encourage the natural regeneration of the forest. Three, they enhance the ecological, economic, and social values of the future forest.

Selection harvesting may be the most misunderstood system, and is certainly the most complex. When stands of trees become overly dense, forest health risks increase. Removing the higher risk trees and leaving the trees with higher potential improves the quality and character of the forest.

The partially opened canopy allows enough light to accelerate individual tree health and vigor, and allows seedlings to grow. The young trees eventually replace the older trees, as the older trees either die or are harvested.

The "catch" with the selection system lies in the ability of tree seedlings to tolerate shade conditions on the forest floor. It should be no wonder that some tree species will grow in the shade, and others will not. For those shade-tolerant tree species, forms of selection management work well.

The "dark side" of selection management is when the wrong trees are "selected" for harvest. High-grading, diameter-limit cutting, and other unscrupulous practices can do serious damage to a forest. Secondly, selectively harvesting a forest type that cannot regenerate under the residual shade conditions can also inflict damage.

Clearcutting is the solution to forest types whose seedlings or sprouts require full sunlight. Seeds and buds respond well to the warmed ground. The abundance of light produces excellent growth, some of the fastest we have. Species such as aspen,

paper birch, and jack pine require full sunlight.

The "catch" with clearcutting is appreciating how nature did clearcutting before there were people to wield chainsaws and harvest processors. Wildfire, wind, insect outbreaks, and floods were common ways nature employed to level large tracts of Michigan forest to allow sun-loving forests to regenerate.

With our tremendous dependency upon forests, the losses from these natural events are typically regarded as negative and something to avoid, if possible. Clearcutting is an economic and ecologically viable way to reduce the negative effects of natural catastrophes, at the same time accommodating the ecological requirements of these kinds of forest types.

The shelterwood system lies somewhere in between the visual extremes of clearcutting and selection management. The parent forest is removed in several stages, with each stage successively establishing optimum environmental conditions for tree regeneration and then nursing the regeneration along to a point where the remaining parent forest can be harvested. Red oaks and white pine stands will often benefit from shelterwood harvesting.

Forest management and timber harvest systems use a very deep reservoir of forest research and experience. Practices are well-grounded in the applied ecological sciences, despite how some might appear to the casual observer.

The notion that tree cutting is "bad" has become a culturally ingrained misconception. Wood is a renewable natural resource, providing an edge over any other raw material. The harvesting and processing of wood products also incurs the least amount of negative environmental impact, by any measure.

All trees die. Using some of them to supply our needs is a good thing. In the United States, each person uses about nine to 10 pounds of wood per day. Yet, in Michigan we have huge amounts of forest growth, among the greatest accumulation in the nation. Forest-based industries provide markets for wood products, which expand forest management opportunities. These industries have become especially important in our rural areas.

Managed forests provide for healthier forests and produce more of all the values we want from forests. Many environmentally-conscious groups somehow twist forest harvest into a negative enterprise. There are many great environmental causes to choose from these days, but opposing tree cutting is just not one of them.

Get It Fast!

Subscribe to the Online Edition of The St. Ignace News.

Get the same paper, in PDF format that looks just like the printed version

and in HTML format that can be read and enjoyed, each story at a time.

And the best part - it's usually available to read on Tuesday night, sometimes before the printed version is even on the press. We'll even let you know via e-mail when it's ready! Subscribe online 24/7 using your credit card. Or phone 906-643-9150 Monday thru Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A great last minute gift, too!
Just \$35 for a whole year.
www.stignaceneews.com

At your fingertips!
News, Sports, Social Events, School Activities and Much More!

Subscribe to **The St. Ignace News** and receive **52** informative issues

\$42 IN COUNTY
Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties

\$52 OUT OF COUNTY

\$49 SEASONAL RESIDENTS

\$35 ONLINE

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Mail remittance to:
The St. Ignace News
P.O. Box 277
St. Ignace MI 49781

The St. Ignace News
Print Shop Advantage

Friendly Service
Expert Design & Editing
Quick Turn-around
Economical Pricing

The St. Ignace News
359 Reagon Street
Saint Ignace, Michigan 49781
(906) 643-9150
sales@stignaceneews.com