

## How to Play Blackjack

### Lesson Learning Objectives (Student will be able to):

- 1) Provide some reasons why blackjack is worth learning.
- 2) Understand and execute the basic rules of Blackjack.
- 3) Understand two of the the advance moves in blackjack (splitting and doubling down) and identify when those moves are appropriate.
- 4) Play with a basic conception of general strategy in mind.

#### I. Why blackjack is worth learning.

- i. Blackjack is one of the most popular casino games in the world. (Number 3 in terms of players, number 2 in terms of tables).
- ii. The mathematical odds of winning in blackjack are some of the best of all casino games.
- iii. Unlike many other casino games, Blackjack has an element of skill. While true “card-counting” is a tedious and difficult process, just using some basic strategy can make even a layman more successful and help them have more fun.

#### II. Understand the basic rules of Blackjack.

- i. Goal is to beat the **dealer** by having a higher value hand than (s)he has.
- ii. If the value of your hand goes over 21, you **bust** and automatically lose.
- iii. All numbered cards are worth their face value (e.g. an 8 of hearts is worth a value of 8). Face cards (Jacks, Queens, and Kings) are each worth 10. An ace has a value of 11 until that evaluation would make the player bust, at which point an ace takes on the value of 1.
- iv. To signal you want to play, simply place your bet in front of you. Once all players have placed their bets, the dealer will deal out two cards to each player.
- v. After you are dealt 2 cards, you must choose to **hit** (take another card) or **stay** (not take any more cards). The player physically “hits” the table to indicate the former and waves their hand over their cards to indicate the latter.

#### III. Advanced rules: Splits and Double Downs

- i. A player may **double down** by placing another bet of equivalent value next to their initial bet. Once the player doubles down, they are given one more card and may not hit again to take another card. The player should almost always double down on any dealt hand with a value of 9, 10, or 11.
- ii. A player may **split** their two cards into two different hands. They may only do this when they are dealt a pair (two cards of the same value). The player indicates a split by placing a bet equivalent in value to their initial bet across from their initial bet. The player should generally hit on any pair of 7's or higher, excluding a pair of 10's. Depending on the house rules, a player may or may not be able to further split hands that result from an initial split.

#### IV. Play with a basic conception of general strategy in mind.

- i. **Two** simple variables will allow you maximize your winning potential: 1) the value of **your hand** and 2) the **dealer's face-up card**.

ii. Essential guide to basic strategy:

- 1) Always assume the dealer's hidden card has a value of 10 (this is because about a third of cards in the deck have a value of 10).
- 2) Generally, the player should always **stay** when they have a value of 17 or greater.
- 3) Almost always, the player will **hit** on a hand with a value of 11 or less.
- 4) If the player is dealt a hand with a value ranging from 12 to 16, they should hit if the dealer's card is 7 or higher (including aces). The player should stay if the dealer's card is between 2 and 6.

iii. Advanced basic strategy:

- 1) The player should almost always double down on any dealt hand with a value of 9, 10, or 11.
- 2) The player should generally split on any pair of 7's or higher, excluding a pair of 10's.

Topics to be covered in the next lesson: 1) Rare, advanced moves: Insurance and surrender.

2) Basic strategies with "soft" hands (ie., hands where at least one card is an ace).

3) Exceptions to general basic strategy.

4) Table etiquette.

*Thanks for your time! Good luck!*



### Blackjack Quick-Study Sheet

**Goal of game:** Beat the dealer by having a higher value hand without going over 21.

**Card Values:** Numer cards are worth their number (e.g., 8=8). Face cards (Jacks, Queens, and Kings) are each worth 10. An ace is worth either 1 or 11, whichever gives you a better hand.

**Beginning play:** You begin by placing your bet in front of you.

Once in play, there are only four moves the player may make:

- 1) **Stay** -- You take no more cards. Indicate this by waving your hand over your cards.
- 2) **Hit** -- You take another card. Indicate this by tapping the table with one or two fingers. You may hit as many times as you like.
- 3) **Double Down** -- You are given exactly **one** more card. You may not hit again. Indicate this by placing another bet of equivalent value next to your initial bet.
- 4) **Split** -- When you have a pair (e.g., two 8's), you can “split” your hand into two hands. Indicate this by placing a bet equivalent in value to your initial bet across from your initial bet.

#### **General outline of basic strategy if you are dealt a hand with... :**

a value of 8 or less, you should **hit**.

a value of 9, 10, or 11, you should **double down**.

a value of 17 or greater you should **stay**.

A value between 12 and 16, you should **hit** if the dealer has an ace showing or a card with a value of 7 or greater. Otherwise, you should **stay**.

There is even more to uncover in this exciting game, but knowing the information on this sheet will give you a solid foundation to begin with!

*Thanks for your time! Good luck!*

