

Table Games Protection Series #1



Roulette Game Protection-Part One

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One fact I'll bet most of you didn't know: The most cheated casino game across the world, with the exception of Asia, is roulette, not baccarat. So much so, that I'd say in North and South American casinos, it is easily cheated more than all the other table games combined. In Europe, roulette cheating probably accounts for 90% of all cheating. So, let's begin this roulette protection lesson with why roulette is so appetizing to casino cheats at all levels.

When I ask the question at training seminars why roulette is the most cheated game, the responses I usually get are: because there are so many hands on the layout during the betting; there are so many different ways to bet; there's less supervision on roulette than the other games; the dealers sometimes take their eyes off the layout when they shouldn't; dealers make more mistakes dealing roulette than on the other games....

Although some of these answers have some validity, none address the overwhelming reason why roulette is the most cheated game from the outside without dealer help.

What is that reason? Ok, I ask you this: If you imagine each table game in progress, what is the one thing about the roulette layout that is unique? Think about the positioning of the dealer. Think about the positioning of the players. Think about the size of the table.

DO YOU SEE IT NOW?

The largest table game in terms of size is by far craps, right? But craps has three, sometimes four employees on the game, depending on jurisdiction: the two base dealers, the stickman and sometimes the box man. Therefore, no player is more than three and a half feet away from one of those employees and there are three sets of eyes watching different parts of the action every moment.

Now look at the blackjack table in the same light. It's a relatively small table in comparison to a craps table. Yes, there is only one dealer, but that dealer is right on top of the bets and can see them during the entire deal of the game.

Now let's look at baccarat. In today's casino world there are very few of the old and elegant large baccarat tables that seated fourteen players or more and had three dealers on the game. Today's mini and medi-baccarat tables are more or less the same size as blackjack tables with one dealer who has a constant view of all the bets.

Finally, let's go back to the roulette table. If you include the wheel itself, it is the second largest game after craps. But here's the key difference and it's twofold: The game itself only has one dealer (sometimes two in casinos that don't have the chipper machines), and that dealer is the farthest away from the most distant player than the equivalent at all other table games. This means that if you take the dealer's position and you travel down to the end of the layout to the players positioned at the bottom corner of the table farthest from the dealer, you are looking at a distance of around six feet. That distance between a dealer and a player only exists at the roulette table. And that is the main reason why roulette is cheated far more than any other game. And the angle between the dealer and that most distant player is also the best as far as facilitating cheating goes.

So, if you take the bet most distant from the roulette dealer, it would be the last bet at the very bottom of the table, the column boxes. Think about that for a second. Now think back to my Savannah roulette move, widely considered the best chip manipulation move of all-time by many people in the Game Protection industry. Where did I mainly perform this cheat move? Of course, on the column boxes.

There are other key factors that make roulette so cheatable, such as so many hands being all over the layout which can create distractions and confuse the dealer, dealers having to take their eyes off the layout more than in the other games, but the major factor is the distance and the angle between the dealer and the players at the bottom of the layout.

Now we're ready to take a tour through roulette game protection. First question: What is the most important aspect of roulette protection? The answer is a no-brainer if you have knowledge of roulette and cheating. And that answer is casing the layout, far more important than worrying about players' hands being on the layout when they shouldn't be.

The statement I am going to make in the next sentence will make lots of you think I am a pompous idiot, but nevertheless, I am going to state it: In my forty-five years in and around casinos, during which I must have seen at least twenty thousand roulette dealers dealing the game, I have never, and I mean NEVER, seen one single dealer properly deal one spin, let alone a whole forty-minute tour on their game. Did you hear that? I will repeat it: I have never seen one dealer, regardless if they had one day or thirty years of experience, deal even one spin completely correct..

WHAT THE HELL AM I TALKING ABOUT IT?

Well, of course I'm talking about dealing roulette properly from a game protection standpoint. The problem is casing the layout. I have never seen a roulette dealer, besides those I've trained, correctly case a roulette layout. The reason dealers worldwide don't properly case roulette layouts is not because they are lazy or uncommitted to their jobs. That has really nothing to do with it. The reason is that they've never been trained how to properly case the roulette layout and that's because the trainers who trained their trainers had never been properly trained how to case these layouts. I will explain how to properly case the roulette layout in just a minute.

I will tell you this now, however: proper casing of layouts prevents more than ninety percent of all chip manipulation cheating, not only at roulette but at all the games. In fact, had proper casing of roulette layouts taken place when I was doing the Savannah move, I would NOT have been doing the Savannah move. What does that mean? Simply that the move would have been stopped in its tracks had dealers cased properly. Not only would the move have failed, it never would have been paid once, not one single time.

And in further emphasis of this point, I will tell you this without being facetious: If I owned a casino and the cheats wanted to come, I would say, "Bring 'em on; let 'em cheat me. I don't care. As long as my dealers are casing the bets on their tables, really casing them, let there be a cheats' festival at my casino. I am saying this because the MOST important element of game protection, especially at but not limited to roulette, is casing the layouts. It's more important than safeguarding against people's hands being on the layout when they're not supposed to, more important than worrying about pastposting and pinching, more important than worrying about dealers turning their heads too often from the layout, more important than anything. Don't forget that!

Yet in spite of this crystal clear reality, most of US game protection is completely ignorant of this simple fact. The proof in the pudding is the following article written about the Savannah move by Bill Zender. Zender is quite a valuable asset to the game protection industry, and I am not minimizing him in any way. Yet this is what he wrote about the Savannah move:



The "Savannah" move is about the most ingenious cheating technique I have ever heard about. Designed by Richard Marcus and another cheater, the Savannah (named after their favorite exotic dancer) not only allowed them to ply their trade under the watchful "eye" of surveillance, but it also allowed them to use our technology to support the "legitimacy" of their cheating move.



Prevention and Detection Tips for Surveillance:

Unfortunately, there is no way to defend against this pinch move. The Savannah move is about as invisible as a cheating move can get. As a floor supervisor or surveillance operator, you would have to get real lucky to catch this. REAL lucky. The best suggestion for preventing this type of cheating move is to focus on all columns and outside payouts that occur when high denomination chips just happen to materialize out of thin air.

When I read this I almost died! And then told myself maybe I ought to get into game protection training. Did you read what he wrote? Indefensible...Pay attention to chips that materialize out of thin air. That Zender could not offer any game protection advice on how to prevent this move is by no fault of his own. He is a great trainer respected by most a lot more than I am. But if you don't have REAL experience with the mechanics and psychology that go into brilliant cheat moves, you cannot have the ability to look at a layout and see its vulnerabilities through a cheat's eyes. That, I must say, is what separates me from all the other game protection trainers/consultants out there. I can teach you to see table games layouts from an ultra game-protection perspective.

The truth is that the Savannah move is probably the easiest devastating casino move to protect against and prevent. How do you protect against Savannah and other moves that take advantage of the same game protection fault? I will teach you in a second, as I teach everyone at my training seminars. But first, know this: the Savannah move is still being done today. I get calls from people in surveillance and game protection telling me about how someone just did the move in their casinos. The most worrisome of those calls was when I got one from a surveillance director telling me that someone tried the Savannah for \$2,000 twice on consecutive weekends. The call was from a surveillance director whose staff I had trained just six weeks prior.

So after already sensing the answer, I asked him anyway, "You guys caught it, right, and you didn't pay it?"

He said, "No, we paid it." Then added, "Both times."

I said, "What!" He repeated it, then I asked, "Didn't I train you guys six weeks ago and show you how easy it is to defend against that move?" He acknowledged that I did, and I did indeed. "You saw how easy it is to prevent, right?" He acknowledged that as well. "So why did you guys pay it?" His answer was as startling as it was true. He said simply as if in resignation, "You know how casinos are."

So, how easy it is to stop the Savannah move? Well, no doubt the easiest move in my lifetime arsenal to stop! It's called CASING THE LAYOUT! Yes, the one thing I never saw any roulette dealer not trained by me do correctly anywhere in the world. The difference between how roulette dealers worldwide case roulette layouts and how I teach dealers to do it is a difference of less than one second. That's it.

And here it is: Just before the dealer waves off the betting, as the ball is nearing its final revolutions, the dealer must take one step to the left, or toward the bottom of the layout, only moving one foot in the process, and bend slightly downward to verify all the bets on that bottom rim covering the column bets and the third-dozen box. This is to make sure the dealer can see the bottom chip of all those outside bets. It takes less than a second for the dealer to complete that task, and by doing so, it is impossible for anyone to hide a high-denomination chip underneath another chip by jutting the top chip outward toward the dealer. If the dealer does not make that slight leftward movement, there is NO WAY possible for the dealer to see the color of a chip the cheat has deliberately placed underneath another chip with the intention of hiding it. That's because of the angle between the key bottom bets and the dealer's position at the top, which the dealer never exits. The only way the dealer can cut off that angle is by moving closer to that farthest point on the layout.

When I demonstrate this at training seminars by placing a two-chip bet on each of the three columns, two of the bets being two red \$5 chips, the third a purple \$500 chip underneath a red chip, the red chip ever so slightly jutting out so that the dealer cannot see the purple underneath, the attendees are quite impressed when I ask them to occupy the dealer's position and tell me what they see. Of course they can see there is a bottom chip in the bet containing the \$500 chip but they cannot see that it is a \$500 chip.

So, as you can see, the Savannah move is completely defensible by a dealer just taking the extra split second to check those bottom bets. Then when he does and calls out the presence of the \$500 bet to the pit, the cheat can no longer pull it out when it loses because the dealer and the pit both know it was there. Just imagine, had one dealer, just one, made that tiny little extra effort to identify that bet, Savannah would have just remained the name of a hot-looking stripper rather than that of perhaps the best cheating move ever.

WOW!

So here it is in a nutshell. The most important thing in game protection for protecting your layouts, not only in roulette but as well in all the games, is making sure the dealers know the value of all the bets on their layouts, not depending on surveillance to determine that when a problem arises.

THAT SIMPLE!

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