



IOWA GAMBLING TREATMENT PROGRAM

# GAMBLING MYTHS

SEE IF YOU KNOW THE TRUTH  
ABOUT GAMBLING.



**No judging. Just helping.**

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# CAN YOU SPOT THE MYTHS?

Chances are, you have strong beliefs about gambling. Maybe it's how to beat the house. Which games have the best odds. Or even a system that "can't lose." But how much of what you know about gambling is actually true? Before you place another bet, test yourself and find out if you know what's fact about gambling. And what's myth.



**"CASINOS LOOSEN THE SLOT MACHINES AT THE ENTRANCE TO ATTRACT PLAYERS."**

**FACT:** This is an urban myth. All modern slot machines are state-of-the-art and controlled by sophisticated computer chips that are programmed according to state law, local custom and the basic bet size.

**"DON'T WORRY ABOUT LOSING STREAKS. IF YOU PLAY LONG ENOUGH, YOU'LL WIN YOUR MONEY BACK."**

**FACT:** In gambling, time is not on your side. The odds are set up so the longer you play, the more likely you will lose by an amount called the house advantage. It's simple math and it always favors the gaming industry.

**"I JUST KNOW THE WEEK I DON'T PLAY THE LOTTERY, MY NUMBERS WILL WIN."**

**FACT:** Lotteries are the worst expected value of any legal wager— with an average 50-percent house advantage. So if you want to skip buying a ticket for a week (or more), you won't be missing anything.

**“CRAPS HAS THE BEST ODDS IN THE HOUSE.”**

**FACT:** Craps also has some of the worst bets in the casino. Field bets, individual number bets and Hardways can seriously damage your bankroll and your weekend. Avoid those bets and you can make your money last longer. Because with even the best odds in the house, the casino is favored to win.

**“RED HAS WON 10 TIMES IN A ROW IN ROULETTE. I’M GOING TO BET IT ALL ON BLACK.”**

**FACT:** Runs are attractive psychologically. But from a mathematical standpoint, they’re just another run of random events. You cannot predict when runs will begin or end. Each spin of the wheel has the same probability no matter what came up in the previous spin. Or the previous 10.

**“I WATCH A TABLE AND ONLY PLAY WHEN THE DEALER IS COLD.”**

**FACT:** There are streaks that appear to be a pattern. A dealer seems cold. The dice seem hot. A slot hits a bunch of winners. You want to believe you’ve found some sort of system you can win with. But you haven’t. In truth, there are no rhythms to gambling. They are random, unpredictable events which don’t affect any future results.

**“I ALWAYS WIN WHEN I WEAR MY LUCKY T-SHIRT.”**

**FACT:** People want to believe in lucky charms. And sometimes they seem to work. Unfortunately, more often, they don’t. It’s an illusion. But not a bad one as long as it doesn’t lead you to make bets you can’t afford. Gamble with your head. Not over it.

**“A BAD BLACKJACK PLAYER CAN MAKE EVERYBODY AT THE TABLE LOSE.”**

**FACT:** The cards are dealt in random order. Your odds are mathematically the same no matter what other players do.



“IF A SLOT HASN’T HIT A JACKPOT IN A LONG TIME, IT’S DUE.”

**FACT:** Slots don’t have a memory. The probability of a jackpot is exactly the same on every spin.

“SKILLED PLAYERS CAN CONTROL WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE.”

**FACT:** A gambler’s skill level has no affect on games of chance. But understanding the game and the odds can help you play smarter.

# DON'T BELIEVE THE MYTHS.

The house builds a mathematical advantage into every bet (see the chart below). In the long run they win, you lose. Which is fine, as long as you realize that gambling is like other forms of entertainment. The more you play, the more you pay. So budget an amount you can afford to “spend” on gambling—and then stick to the plan. Don’t pull out more from an ATM to try to win your losses back. That’s when people get in trouble and gambling stops being fun.

	House Advantage:	For every \$100 bet, the player can expect to lose:
<b>BACCARAT</b>		
Player/Banker	1.1% – 1.2%	\$1.10 – 1.20
Tie	14.4%	\$14.40
<b>BLACKJACK</b>		
	0.5% – 1.5%	50¢ – \$1.50
<b>CRAPS</b>		
Pass/Don't Pass	1.4%	\$1.40
Prop Bets	10% – 16.7%	\$10 – \$16.70
<b>KENO &amp; SPORTS</b>		
Keno 1-15 Spots	25% – 30%	\$25 – \$30
Video Keno	8% – 15%	\$8 – \$15
Sports Betting (Bet \$11/Win \$10)	4.5%	\$4.50
<b>ROULETTE</b>		
Single Zero	2.7%	\$2.70
Double Zero	5.3%	\$5.30
<b>REELS</b>		
Nickel Slots	7% – 12%	\$7 – \$12
Quarter Slots	5% – 10%	\$5 – \$10
Dollar Slots	2.5% – 6%	\$2.50 – \$6
<b>VIDEO POKER</b>		
	0.5% – 5%	50¢ – \$5

NOTE: For games with strategic decisions (e.g., blackjack, video poker), an “average player” strategy is assumed. For games in which rule/pay variations exist, a typical offering is assumed although an operator may, subject to governmental requirements, provide for a greater or lower house advantage. For further reference information, visit [1800betsoff.org/myths](http://1800betsoff.org/myths).