

# New video poker to be unveiled at G2E

## New game has Hold'em twist to it



### Winning Strategies

by Elliot Frome

Gaming to introduce Headstart Hold'em Video Poker. For proper disclosure, I will admit that I am biased as I had a hand in developing the game with John. This game has been shown to a variety of executives at gaming companies and casinos, and I've been amazed to see how virtually all of them have gotten excited about the game.

Headstart Hold'em is a combination of video poker and Texas Hold'em. To begin each hand, the same five 2-card starter hands are dealt. These pre-determined pocket cards are A/K offsuit (Big

Slick), J/Q suited (Royal Couple), 8/9 suited (Diamond Girl), Pair 5s (Speed Limit) and 2/7 offsuit (Mr. Lucky).

Before the first three community cards (the flop), the player must wager an equal amount on each of the 5-card starter hands. Once the flop is dealt, the fun begins.

You must now decide which hands to raise and which ones to fold. If you raise a hand, you have to make a second wager equal to the original wager for that hand. Raising a hand will cause the payable for that hand to double.

You can raise any or all of the hands. Once you've decided which hands to raise, the final two community cards are dealt. If you have raised the hand that winds up having the highest poker rank AND is at least trips or better, you win

the amount on the payable. So, in essence, each of the 5-card starter hands are playing against each other and you have to figure out which one is going to win after the flop.

It sounds easy, but there are no sure things in Headstart Hold'em. The flop might be a 10-J-Q, giving Big Slick a straight and the Royal Couple is now two pair. But, you never know if the last two cards might be the last two 5s, resulting in Speed Limit racing home to victory. Or maybe the last two cards will help complete a flush for Royal Couple or Diamond Girl.

Playing each hand is almost like watching the final table at the World Series of Poker. You never know who is going to win until the last community card is turned over.

Kodiak Gaming has taken this version of video poker to new levels with sparkling graphics and animation. Listen to the characters banter back and forth as the hand unfolds. One of the drawbacks of video poker has always been that it is one of the least social games in the casino. Now, you'll feel like you're in the middle of the action. On a multi-player platform, several people can wager on the same hand and you may find that the banter starts between the live players as well.

For those of you who simply haven't taken my advice and taken up video poker, there is a second version of Headstart Hold'em that is targeted for the keno parlor. Live keno has pretty much run its course in casinos. Imagine, instead

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## Headstart video poker

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of staring at 20 numbers coming up on a board, you're watching a hand of Texas Hold'em unfold. In this version, there is no raising or folding, you just wager on which character will win the hand. Like in real poker, just when you think you've got no shot, you get lucky on the river. With Headstart Hold'em Keno, you can play poker while eating in the coffee shop or sitting at the bar.

To add to the excitement, both games also offer a 3-Card Flop Bonus sidebet. Since it is based on the remaining 42-card deck, the distribution of hands is a bit different than 3-Card Poker. As such, the payouts are a bit different too.

So, if you're going to the Global Gaming Expo, I strongly recommend you stop by Kodiak Gaming's booth # 2099 and check it out live. If you can't make it to the show, you'll have to wait until it hits the casino floor, likely in early 2008.

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