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# Vegas Casinos Cry Uncle, Change Rules

Exclusive to The Times from a Staff Writer

LAS VEGAS — Casinos here cried uncle Wednesday.

Operators of this gaming mecca's tables admitted they have been feeling the squeeze of the computer age.

In an unprecedented action, the casinos announced a change in the rules of Twenty-One, also called Blackjack, to improve the house percentage.

They admitted that bright young mathematicians with computer-like minds have been beating dealers under time-honored rules which

can be counted on to fleece the suckers.

The rule changes, which will be citywide, were announced after a war council by members of the Las Vegas Resort Hotel Assn., attended also by kibitzers from Reno.

Effective immediately, players of Twenty-One will be allowed to go down for double only on 11. That is, if they have a 7 down and a 4 up, they may turn the

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## NEW VEGAS RULES

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seven up and take one card, winning or losing double the original bet.

Players can't split aces any more. They can still split any other pair.

It was understood the changes were made to offset gains made by players who count all cards played and, using computer techniques, calculate the odds of the remaining cards.

### Thorn in Side

Gabriel Vogliotti, executive secretary of the casino group, said the shrinking of the odds for the player would merely eliminate some of the "fringe benefits" of the game.

It was known the industry here has been smarting from the activities of Edward O. Thorp, 31-year-old New Mexico State University mathematician, who said in a national magazine article recently that he had been

cheated and barred from the casinos.

Thorp, a UCLA graduate, has published a book on his system for winning at Twenty-One.

It was reported Thorp had managed to reduce the house percentage to zero. The casino operators also were disturbed by a recent demonstration, during a convention of computer technicians, in which a machine beat the house at Twenty-One.

# Vegas Casinos Change Game To Cope With Aggie Professor

Santa Fe New Mexican  
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LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — Rules are made to be broken but banks at casinos are not.

Following that philosophy, Las Vegas casinos have moved to stop something they saw was in the cards:

The chance that players could get a four per cent edge on the house, instead of the house having a five per cent edge on the player.

Casino operators have changed their blackjack, or 21, rules, but not because of professional gamblers or the occasional player who seems to have a head of four-leaf clovers instead of hair.

They changed their rules because of a New Mexico State University mathematician, Edward O. Thorp, who approached

the game as a mathematical challenge and conquered it. He didn't stop there either—he wrote a book about it.

In his book, "Beat The Dealer," Thorp outlines in layman's terms the pattern for calculating the odds on the game so players can get a 52-48 percentage in their favor. The normal percentage is about 52½-47½ in the house's favor.

Thorp's system rests on the player's ability to count the cards that have been dealt and figure out how many of what size cards haven't been dealt out.

Nevada Gaming Control Board member W. E. (Butch) Leyppoldt said the new changes had state approval.

Gabriel Vogliotti, executive

secretary of the Resort Hotel Association, said, "it became evident that quite a few people arriving here in Nevada have read the book and are serious students of his system."

The game's object is for a player to get cards totaling as near to 21 as possible, but not get more than 21.

The casinos didn't fiddle with the basic game, but did change rules to make it harder for a person to double his bet when most of the so-called important cards remain undealt. The changes Wednesday are effective citywide.

A player now is able to double his bet only when his first two cards total eleven, or when they are a pair of anything but aces.

Aces are considered the most two cards total eleven, or when "important cards," because their value is either 11 or one, and together with one or two cards with a value of 10 they total 21—right on the money.

"In the last 15 years there hasn't been one plane that landed without at least one person in possession of a system," Vogliotti said. "This guy is the first in Las Vegas history to have a system that works."

## 'System' Upsets The System

By CY RYAN  
United Press International  
CARSON CITY — A so-called "winning system" at blackjack, developed by a New Mexico college professor, appears to have upset the multi-million Nevada gambling industry somewhat.

Since Life magazine ran a story on the system and troubles of Dr. Edward O. Thorp last week, these events have transpired in Nevada.

—Edward A. Olsen, chair-

man of the State Gaming Control Board, issued the agency's first public statement in reply to any story in a national publication concerning Nevada gambling. Olsen said Thorp's system was "sophomoric" and added that the professor's charges that he was cheated in Nevada casinos were nothing but the result of a "vivid imagination."

—Sophomoric or not, Las Vegas casinos agreed Wednesday to change the rules of blackjack or 21 to

give the house a better percentage. The Resort Hotel Association, following a "war council," agreed players will be allowed to go down for double only on 11. Aces can't be split any more, but any other pair can still be split.

Thorp may not be able to take all the credit. In a recent demonstration in Las Vegas during a convention of computer technicians, a machine beat the house at the card game.

But the 31-year-old New

Mexico State University mathematician deserves a good share of the praise or blame—depending whether you're a casino owner or a player.

Thorp developed his sophisticated "count-down system" with the help of a computer. He contends that he could win thousands in Nevada gambling halls if he could be assured that crooked dealers would not

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