

## 3.2. WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD CARD COUNTERS?

By Frank Scoblete



*Alene Paone is the CEO of Paone Press, which sells gaming books and tapes at discount prices. She also writes for [www.scoblete.com](http://www.scoblete.com). Her husband, Frank Scoblete, is the #1 best-selling gaming author in America and the author of *Best Blackjack*. Frank's books and tapes have sold over a million copies. For a free brochure call: 1-800-944-0406 or write: Paone Press, Box 610, Lynbrook, NY 11563. His web sites are [www.goldentouchcraps.com](http://www.goldentouchcraps.com) and [www.scoblete.com](http://www.scoblete.com). Frank along with Henry Tamburin will be teaching the Golden Touch Blackjack course featuring Speed Count in cities throughout the US. For details go to [www.goldentouchblackjack.com](http://www.goldentouchblackjack.com).*

**(Editors Note: The following article was written for Casino Ops Magazine, a casino industry publication. It was handed out at the Casino Ops Convention at The Regent Las Vegas in June 2000 for all the high-powered casino industry people who were attending to read. As Frank Scoblete put it: "By all indications, the article had the anticipated impact on the executives who make the decisions -- which is to say, none at all! Ah, well.")**

Twelve years ago when Merik learned to count cards, he unknowingly played in a casino that had a reputation for precipitously barring card counters. "I was playing one hand of \$10 but when the count warranted it, I bet two hands of \$25. I had been playing for about 15 minutes on the first day of a five-day trip." At the table with Merik was another player, Chou, who bet \$1,000 per hand. Both men played Basic Strategy. Merik continues: "A truly high count developed and I pushed my two \$25 bets into the betting circles. Chou bet \$1,000. The pit boss leaped into action and pushed my two bets back to me saying: 'No more blackjack for you, buddy!'" From the cage Merik could watch the table he had left. Chou was playing heads up against the dealer in a very high count and he was winning his hands. In fact, his last two rounds were blackjacks. Did that pit boss help or hurt his casino?

Without question, the pit boss had actually hurt his casino even though he thought he had helped it. Stopping Merik from playing two \$25 hands in that high count allowed Chou to have more rounds with \$1,000 bets up. Had Merik played his two hands, the number of rounds would have been decreased dramatically as would the total action during a time when the casino was particularly vulnerable. Chou played six rounds at \$1,000 each; he put into action \$6,000. The count gave him approximately a three-percent edge during that stretch -- a winning expectation of \$180 for Chou and an expected loss of \$180 for the casino. Had Merik been allowed to play, approximately three rounds would have been played with the action totaling \$3,150 -- by contrast a \$94.50 expectation for the "table" and a \$94.50 loss for the casino.

But that pit boss hurt his casino even more. Merik states: "When I got back to my room, I informed my wife and the two couples we were with that I was going to another hotel." So the six of them moved to a different hotel -- Merik and his wife; Morty, the craps player