

Can a Roulette System Work?

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It's been proved many times that roulette systems don't work, Einstein is known to have said: "No one can possibly win at roulette unless he steals money from the table while the croupier isn't looking." So naturally I felt the need to try it myself, here's what happened.

The roulette system was something we came across just after we'd decided to buy the television we couldn't afford. Having decided to approach making the £400 we needed for it in a sensible manner, naturally our first move was to type "how to make money quickly" into Google. In general most of the pages which were returned either made their money by selling you a system (very simple) or through an affiliate program.

One of the most common systems was what's known as the martingale system. It works as follows:

- You bet £1 on red or black on a roulette table.
- If you win then you bet £1 again
- If you lose then you double your bet and so-on until you win when you start again at £1

The idea of the system is that because you double your bet each time, when you eventually win, you will make back all of your lost bets plus £1 and so-on.

Now neither of us believed that this system would work, but just to prove it we tested it with coin tosses, two hundred imaginary pounds, a five pound starting bet and a target of three hundred imaginary dollars. Surprisingly it worked. However with a coin you have a 50% chance of winning any given toss, on a European roulette table you have about a 47% chance of getting a given colour, we assumed this must be why it worked.

With this in mind we signed up to an online casino which had fake money tables, and played the same game on there, once again it consistently

won.

At this point I began to get what might be described as obsessed with the problem because I knew that mathematically no system could provide a guaranteed consistent, long term win in a game with a less than or equal to 50% chance of winning. The flaw in the system that I knew about is that a roulette table usually has a five hundred pound maximum bet on it so starting at £1, If you lost ten times in a row, you would be able to go no higher and would have made a huge loss (it would take five hundred and seventeen straight wins without this happening for you to recoup this happening once, therefore the odds of getting one colour ten times in a row would have to be less than 1 in 517 or 0.193% for the system to be consistently profitable). In actual fact the odds are much higher than this, something in the region of a 1.4% chance.

Still, it had worked on the play money tables so I decided to try and simulate it over a thousand plays (up to your target or bust) using a simple excel simulator (tutorial coming soon on how to make excel spreadsheets which simulate and graph any probability based situation). Once the simulation was finished I set it off running a thousand plays, using various starting balances and targets and without fail it made a profit.

On that basis I decided to put my money where my mouth was, transferred forty of my hard earned pounds to the casino I'd been using for play money and had a go.

To my even greater surprise it seemed to be working, I limited myself to twenty pounds per day, (which would cover my rent) and at the end of the first day I was, as expected, twenty pounds up. The system doesn't exactly take any brain power to play so I played a few spins in a slightly slow seminar one day. Part way through a play I was tinkering with the simulator, just cleaning up bits of code. I was a little concerned (terrified) to notice that I'd forgotten to take the original bet away whenever a win occurred, so you were in effect getting your original bet back plus two pounds instead of your original bet plus one pound. Having changed this and started the simulation running, the graph looked exactly like a cartoon company going bust graph; an unwavering downward slope.

Luckily at that point I was around £40 up giving me a total of £80 on my initial £40 investment, so after a brief argument with the casino company about play count limits on withdrawals (watch out for this) I withdrew all of my funds and quit while I was ahead.

That pretty much sums up why this system doesn't work, for a much better

mathematical explanation of why this and other betting systems don't work, combined with very in depth simulations, try this page: <http://wizardofodds.com/gambling/bettingsystems.html>

I'd love to say that at this point I gave up on trying to make money my own way and got a job, I didn't. [Click Here](#) to read my blog on learning to trade the FOREX markets, it's nothing like playing roulette, much more fun....