

Frisko Eddie's Revenge: The Return

A series by Balboa Ron Schweikert

(In last month's episode, after Eddie had rebuffed Lil's attempts to seduce him, Shelli paid a visit to Lil in her room. The two women, unknown to Eddie, set the record straight about the relationships.)

Eddie was really happy over the fact that (so he thought) Shelli knew nothing about his meeting with Lil. Shelli, on the other hand, was overjoyed, knowing that she had won two rounds in a row! She had Lil's verbal affidavit that there was absolutely nothing going on between her and Eddie -- and she had Eddie fooled into thinking that she knew nothing about Lil's propped tete-a-tete with him in her room...and that she trusted him "without question." She knew that everything would come out in the open soon; but for now, she was on top of the world!

Shelli hadn't been in Reno since she was much younger, and really didn't know much about the city. They had discussed a possible plan for when they arrived, so after saying "hi" to a few of the players and workers that were there that early, they went to the main entrance of the hotel to catch a cab. Shelli figured that might be best, as they had both planned to have a few drinks. They had several hours before the Pro-Am event sale, and Eddie wanted to do a "bit" of gambling.

They had no trouble getting underway, as a cab was waiting for them right outside the door. Eddie told the driver that they were going to the Silver Legacy Hotel/Casino. It was only a short drive and when they pulled into the main entrance, Shelli said: "Wow! This really looks like a class act, honey!" It was a class act indeed. The hotel was only a couple years old and it was huge -- even by Las Vegas Strip standards!

They stopped at the first bar and ordered. Then, with drinks in hand, checked the casino out. In the center of one section was something pretty spectacular. There was a huge mock-up of an operational silver mine with a sky-dome roof. After looking it over for a moment or two, the whole thing came even more to life, with a dazzling lazer light and stereo music display. Shelli was really impressed.

After looking around a little more, they finally found the spot for their real purpose for being there. Eddie checked things out and then selected a seat at a \$25 minimum bet blackjack table. He sat at the far left seat, which is called "third base." There was only one other player at the table -- a rather pretty Oriental lady, and she was seated directly across from Eddie in the "first base" seat. She had some pretty good stacks of black (\$100) and green (\$25) "checks" (or chips) in front of her. As Eddie placed ten \$100 bills in front of the dealer, he asked if it would be alright if Shelli sat next to him as an "observer." The dealer said it would

be fine as long as the table didn't start to fill up. Shelli knew most of the basic strategy of the game, but she was by no means a "hustler."

Now Eddie had studied and tried out several different blackjack "systems," including the world's best card counter, Kenny Austin, and a whole list of other published systems. Although he wasn't a professional, he was a pretty fair "card counter" and had a thorough knowledge of the strategy of the game. One time, he was even made an offer (through some guy he had met) to join a group of gamblers who practiced what is called "Shuffle-Tracking." That's where a team takes over the whole table, when multiple decks (usually four) are being used, and they're dealt out of a "shoe." It's a technique where they all work together to count, or "track" the cards. Eddie turned down the offer without giving it a second thought. He figured it would be pretty hard to live comfortably....if his knee-caps suddenly came up missing!

The play began. Eddie started by using a very simple system of Basic Strategy, coupled with an uncomplicated Money Management system, i.e., he started with the minimum \$25 bet, and each time he won, he increased his bet by one "check" or chip. When he lost, he went back to the original bet and started all over again. This was a type of play many non-professionals use because it's very simple, and you can relax while you're playing. Eddie appeared to be doing just that. He was chatting with Shelli, the dealer, the lady on the other end of the table, and was very laid back. He was also very cordial when he got the inevitable visit from the "Pit Boss" who shook hands and acted very friendly. Shortly after he got Eddie's full name, the chit-chat ended and he went right over to the private phone line in the pit and had Eddie checked out.

They were using two decks on Eddie's table, and although he appeared to be very carefree, he was actually keeping a very close watch on how "rich" (a large number of tens and face cards left in the deck) or "poor" (mostly low counting cards -- below 10, but not counting the eights) were left to be dealt. Eddie was doing pretty good with his amateur system and after 20 minutes or so was ahead several hundred dollars. He was really waiting for the right moment, though, when it was time to jack up the bet and give them a good hit or two -- and then run.

Eddie finally felt that the moment had arrived. The deck was over half-way dealt out, and it looked pretty good. He had six \$25 chips in the circle -- and then, just prior to the deal -- replaced them with five black chips. With this change in his wager to \$500, the

dealer was compelled to holler out: "money plays" to the pit boss. He took a glance at the table and hollered back: "deal." That she did, and the hand was on.

Now, the gal on first base was really sharp. When she checked her hand, she commented: "Whew -- finally!" as she looked at the dealer while dipping her hand slightly, showing a pair of tens before she buried them under her chips in the circle. The dealer's "up" card was a six -- which was excellent! Everything was going right on schedule, until Eddie squeezed his two cards apart. He was looking at a pair of eights! The two hands in blackjack that "almost" always had to be "split" were aces and eights.

Eddie followed form and placed the two cards face-up in front of him, along with another stack of five black chips behind the second one. He wasn't too concerned at this juncture, because he actually had a pretty good "proposition" bet going with that six the dealer was showing. The dealer touched his two cards then and rearranged the chips slightly as she said: "You splitting?" It was merely a formality and Eddie replied: "Yup." Shelli's eyes got a little wide when she saw the next card. It was another eight! The dealer had a slight smile on her face as she said: "Well, now, are we splitting again?" Eddie replied: "Let's do it," as he put up another five chips. A few passers-by had stopped now to watch the action as the dealer rearranged the three eights. Shelli had her hand on Eddie's leg and she squeezed his calf really hard when the next card came up. It was another eight!

Even the dealer shook her head a little now as she smilingly said: "Are we going all the way?" Eddie said: "Do I have a choice? Let's go." He only had two black chips left, so he made up the remaining \$300 with the green ones. He was sitting with four eights showing, and \$2,000 on the table! A small crowd had now gathered to watch the outcome of this very unusual hand of cards. The dealer said: "O.K., we're rollin'."

The first card out was a jack. Eddie felt comfortable with the 18 against the dealer's six up card and waved his hand horizontally to indicate he would stay with that hand. The second card was a king. Eddie had a little smile on his face now as he waved his hand for the dealer to go to the next card. Shelli's grip on his leg loosened a bit when the third card came up; it was another king! Eddie thoughtfully hesitated for just a second, then waved the dealer on to the fourth and last eight. The card came up a ten! He was sitting on four 18 count "pat" hands against a six showing. The Pit Boss was standing by now and even one of the cocktail waitresses had stopped to watch the action -- and they don't stop for anything!

Then a strange thing happened. The dealer naturally assumed that Eddie would "stand," so she began to reach down one hand to reveal her "hole," or

down card. Suddenly Eddie said: "Hold it!" Shelli's grip on his leg tightened again, as she excitedly whispered into his ear: "Hold it! Hold it for what? Have you lost your mind?!" The dealer (and everyone else present) gave Eddie and each other puzzled looks.

The dealer had a hint of a smile on her face as she lifted her free hand back up on the deck and said: "O.K. what do you want to do?" There was perfect silence around that table -- as they all waited for Eddie's response. Then everyone got a real "rush" when Eddie looked directly into her eyes, pointed his index finger at his last hand -- and calmly replied: "I want a card...hit the eighteen."

-- TO BE CONTINUED --

Has Eddie made the right decision? How will he and Shelli fare in the Pro-Am event that's coming up? What about the rest of the events on the schedule? Will Eddie and Shelli follow through on their plans to be married in Reno? Don't miss the next episode!

Upcoming Events (cont. from Page 5)

For further information, contact Dave at McCabe's, 517i-754-3621, or John at The Shuffleboard Federation, 248-380-9300.

Texas

HANDICAP TOURNEY AT TAZ COUNTRY, AUSTIN, FEB. 19-21

Taz Country, Three Points Shopping Center, Austin (1406 F.M. 1825, Pflugerville) will host a handicap tournament on Feb. 19-21. Events will include an open draw on Friday at 8 p.m., \$30 entry fee, single elimination, no sale; a bring partner on Saturday, starting at 1 p.m., \$50 per person entry, double elimination (team minimum of 1 point, 4 point maximum); and an A-B-C draw on Sunday, 1 p.m., \$30 per person entry, double elimination. There will be sales for the bring partner and A-B-C draw.

Taz Country has four boards and will serve food on Saturday. Special drink prices during the tournament. Suggested lodging: Baymont Inn, Round Rock, 512-246-2800, or Motel 6, North Austin, 512-333-6161.

For information regarding the tournament and handicap system, contact Ron or Debbie Bowers at 512-835-7256 or 512-459-1264.

MORE TEXAS UPCOMING EVENTS ON NEXT PAGE.....