

Grandmother, 90, denied £27.6m jackpot payout after casino blamed computer glitch

The software was programmed to allow a bonus of up to £6,500, but investigators couldn't work out how the multi-million bonus message had occurred

By Sarah Ridley, 28 April 2015

Mirror.co.uk



A 90-year-old grandmother who thought she'd won £27.6m (\$41.8m) on a penny slot machine has been denied the jackpot payout - after the casino blamed a computer glitch.

Pauline McKee pocketed just £1.20 (\$1.85) while playing the Miss Kitty game but a message appeared on screen saying she had also won the £27.6m (\$41.8m) bonus.

When the casino refused to pay out, Ms McKee tried to sue but her case was eventually thrown out due to a computer malfunction.

The grandmother-of-13, who was playing at the Isle Casino Hotel Waterloo in Iowa, told the Chicago Tribune: "I had my doubts from the start, because that's a lot of money for a penny machine.

"I was hoping to help my children out financially, but it wasn't meant to be."

The casino argued that the on-screen rules clearly indicated that "malfunction voids all pays and plays".

At the time of the dispute, the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC) secured the machine and carried out an investigation, sending the hardware and software to an independent testing laboratory.

The investigators found that the software was programmed to allow a bonus of up to £6,500 (\$10,000), but they couldn't work how the multi-million bonus message had occurred.

The machine's maker, Aristocrat Technologies, said it had been aware of this type of error in the display and suggested "component degradation over time may increase the susceptibility to this rare occurrence".

The company had alerted casinos to the glitch in 2010 and recommended that they disable the bonus facility as a precautionary measure, but the casino had not done this.

The IRGC concluded that the bonus display was "not valid" and that "the slot machine game malfunctioned."

Ms McKee, from Illinois, sued the casino in 2012 claiming breach of contract and consumer fraud but the Iowa Supreme Court sided with the casino in 2013.

The case dragged on when Ms McKee's lawyers argued that the IRGC had no jurisdiction in disputes between casinos and their patrons.

They also questioned whether the machine had really "malfunctioned", as the IRGC had concluded, and whether she had really entered into a contract when playing the game.

There have been similar cases in the US involving erroneous bonus displays.

In 2009, a player "won" a bonus of £650,000 (\$1m) that had appeared on screen, only for a Mississippi court to throw out the claim.

In this case, the game rules limited payouts to £5,200 (\$8,000).

The doughty Ms McKee saw her case finally rejected by the Iowa Supreme Court on last week on April 24.

Grandmother, 90, denied \$41.8m casino payout after judge rules bonus was a computer glitch

Pauline McKee was playing the Miss Kitty game when a message appeared telling her she had won of \$41,797,550.16

By Heather Saul, 28 April 2015

Independent.co.uk



A 90-year-old grandmother has been denied a \$41.8m (£27.3m) casino jackpot payout after a judge ruled the award was a computer glitch.

Pauline McKee, from Illinois, was playing the Miss Kitty game at the Isle Casino Hotel Waterloo and won 185 credits, the equivalent of \$1.85, the BBC reports.

However, the game displayed a message on the screen telling her she had also won a bonus of \$41,797,550.16 – a message the casino claimed was the machine malfunctioning.

Ms McKee took the casino to court when they refused to pay out on the basis that on-screen rules stated that "malfunction voids all pays and plays".

Meanwhile, the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC) sent the machine's software and hardware to an independent laboratory for testing.

The lab determined that the software program was designed to award bonus payments of up to \$10,000. It could not establish how the machine had issued a multi-million pound bonus message but determined that the bonus display was "not valid".

Aristocrat Technologies, the manufacturer of the machine, said it had alerted casinos to the glitch and recommended that they disable the bonus feature as a precautionary measure. It appeared that the casino Ms McKee visited did not do this.

Ms McKee sued the casino in 2012 for breach of contract and consumer fraud, but her suit was finally rejected on 24 April 2015.

"I had my doubts from the start, because that's a lot of money for a penny machine," she told the *Chicago Tribune* after the ruling.

"I was hoping to help my children out financially, but it wasn't meant to be."