## Black Knight 2000 (BK2K)

## Game Features

Dual Playfield

Black Knight 2000 is a double-level-playfield design. The ball starts out on the upper level, and can drain to the lower through the WAR lanes; from there it can drain out of play or reach the upper playfield again through the Skyway or the Lightning lane.

Skyway

The long ramp up the left side of the machine, that leads from the lower to the upper playfield. Can be lit for the Hurry-Up bonus by the WAR lanes, for the Skyway Million by the KNIGHT targets, and/or for Extra Ball by repeated loops. It also sets up the loop for Ramp-Loop Combo. Strongly- hit balls going up the Skyway will go around the Loop to the upper flipper; less-strongly-hit-balls will go down the WIN lanes, and the occasional very weak shot may drop down into the bowels of the machine, winding up in the Lightning hole, which counts as if you'd hit it normally.

KNIGHT targets

There are six drop targets in the lower playfield, arranged in two banks of three; K-N-I on the far left below the Skyway entrance, and G-H-T right in the middle. The targets are on a timer; when you first hit one, the next letter in BLACK starts flashing, with the flash rate increasing as the timer runs down; all six targets are reset when the timer expires. Clearing all six targets resets them all, spots a letter in BLACK and relights Kickback and Magna-Save. To make this easier, the two banks (K-N-I and G-H-T) are scored separately; so, for example, if you clear K-N-I before the timer expires, you are given credit for that, and even if the timer then expires, you need only clear G-H-T after that to get the BLACK letter and the relights. If you lose a ball while some targets are down, you still have credit for those targets being down at the start of your next ball, and the timer does not start until you actually hit a drop target on the new ball. Spotting the final letter in BLACK lights the Skyway for an extra 1M.

U-Turn lane

A lane whose two entrances are on either side of the G-H-T targets. Hitting this lane scores 25K (and adds to your bonus); subsequent hits score increasing values, eventually going all the way to 250K. The lane is on a timer, with the flashing rate of the U-Turn lights increasing as the timer runs down; when it runs out, the U-Turn value resets to 25K. U-Turn shots also light the Challenge Lane for the Double Knights Challenge.

Kickback

The left outlane has a kickback, which is relit by clearing the KNIGHT targets.

Magna-Save

The right outlane is protected by the Magna-Save magnet, which is positioned right above the right inlane. When Magna-Save is lit (by the KNIGHT targets), hitting the button just above the right flipper button turns on the Magna-Save magnet for five seconds; if your timing is quick enough, the magnet will snare the ball before it can make it down the outlane, hold it in place for a few seconds, then drop it down the right inlane.

Lightning Lane/Wheel

This lane is just to the right of the U-Turn lane, and is marked by the "SPIN" light. Hitting it will cause the ball to be kicked out onto the upper playfield. When the "SPIN" light is lit (it starts the game lit, goes out when the lane is hit, and is relit for a few seconds by the left inlane), hitting this lane spins the Lightning Wheel, which gives one of the following pseudo-random awards:

* Points Anything between 20K and 250K, depending on the wheel slot.
* Extra Ball, Special Pretty self-explanatory.
* Lower Drawbridge Opens up the door to the Drawbridge ramp.
* Knights Challenge Starts the Double Knights Challenge round.
* Spot RANSOM Adds a letter to RANSOM.

Challenge Lane

The lane at the far right of the lower playfield, to the right of the Lightning Lane. Hitting this lane when it's unlit earns you a derogatory remark and spits the ball out again; hitting it when it's lit (by the U-Turn lane) starts the Double Knights Challenge round.

Loop

The upper playfield is constructed so that a ball hit low and strong from the upper flipper will go all the way around the field and back to the upper flipper again. The first loop shot scores 25K (and adds to the bonus); consecutive loop shots after that score 50K, 75K, and so on. There are additional rewards for consecutive shots. Two loop shots in a row hold the bonus multiplier for the ball. Also, two loop shots in a row light Extra Ball on the Skyway for a few seconds; if you collect it, then three loop shots in a row will be required to light Extra Ball again, and so on.

WIN lanes

the three lanes just above the pop bumpers; the plunger feeds to this area. Clearing all three lanes advances the bonus multiplier, and lights RANSOM on the Drawbridge for a few seconds.

Drawbridge

the ramp on the upper playfield, which leads up to the lock area. At the start of the game, the drawbridge is closed (the door blocks the ramp); you must hit each of the three parts of the drawbridge, marked by the 1-2-3 lights (though you don't have to hit them in that order), to open the bridge. After that, shooting a ball up the Drawbridge locks it. Depending on the difficulty settings of the machine, and whether or not you've already scored a Jackpot this game, the Drawbridge may or may not close again at this point; if it does close, you'll have to hit 1-2-3 again to open it. Locking the third ball starts Multiball. (Note that many BK2K machines have a slight flaw, which causes balls to occasionally not be read when they go into the lock; to prevent this, it doesn't hurt to gently shake the machine side-to-side for a second or two when the ball enters the lock, to make sure it contacts the sensor.) For a few seconds after the WIN lanes are cleared, locking a ball in the Drawbridge spots a letter in RANSOM.

WAR lanes

the three rollover lanes just to the left of the upper playfield's flipper. If the ball actually goes through one of these lanes, it drains to the lower playfield; however, in practice, the ball often rattles around the entrance to one of these lanes, triggering the sensor, then bounces back out into the upper playfield again. Clearing the WAR lanes lights Hurry-Up on the Skyway; during Double Knights Challenge, clearing the WAR lanes scores 1 million.

Last Chance

On the final ball of the game, if exactly two balls are in the lock, the outlanes light for Last Chance. Losing a ball down the outlane immediately kicks the two locked balls into play. This can only be used once per player per game.

## Special Scoring Modes

Hurry-Up

This is indicated by the Hurry-Up light on the Skyway. It's lit by clearing the WAR lanes on the upper playfield. The Hurry-Up value starts at 200K, stays there for a second or two, then counts down by 10K intervals to 0; hitting the Skyway awards the Hurry-Up value. Even if the value is very low, it's still worth collecting it, because if you do, the next Hurry-Up starts at 500K, then 750K, then 1M, then 1.5M.

Double Knights Challenge

This is indicated by the green light on the Challenge lane to the right of the lower playfield. It's lit by making U-Turns, and started by hitting the Challenge lane. This is a 2-ball multiball (so it's unavailable when there are two balls already in the lock); another ball is served to the plunger, and the ball in the Challenge lane is ejected as soon as the second ball hits a playfield switch. The Drawbridge closes at the start of Double Knights Challenge, and will not open during it. During the Challenge, clearing the WAR lanes scores 1M. When a ball drains, you return to normal play, but the Drawbridge is still closed.

Multiball

This is started by locking the third ball up the Drawbridge; note that in a multi-player game, the game doesn't distinguish among balls locked by different players, so whoever locks the third ball gets the multiball, and the players who locked the other two balls are out of luck. The object of Multiball is to shoot a ball up the Drawbridge to score the Jackpot. Depending on the difficulty settings of the machine, and whether or not you have already scored a Jackpot, you may or may not have to open the Drawbridge by hitting 1-2-3 first. I can't remember whether or not you can collect multiple Jackpots during one Multiball; if you can, you must reopen the Drawbridge between Jackpots, and the Jackpot value resets to 1M each time it is collected (it has a maximum value of 4M).

King's Ransom

The six letters in R-A-N-S-O-M are displayed on the backglass. Shooting a ball up the Drawbridge within a few seconds after clearing the WIN lanes, or hitting Spot RANSOM on the Lightning Wheel, lights an additional letter in RANSOM. Lit RANSOM letters carry over from game to game; I can't remember whether they carry over from player to player in a multi-player game. Lighting the final letter in RANSOM awards the King's Ransom. The bonus multiplier goes to its maximum (5x) and is held. For twenty seconds, all three balls are in play, balls are fed back to the plunger as fast as they drain, Jackpot is lit, clearing the WAR lanes score 1M, all U-Turns score 250K, and the Skyway scores 1M and an extra ball the first time it is hit.

## Strategy

The simplest strategy for BK2K can be summed up in four words: avoid the lower playfield. Most of the big points are on the upper playfield, and while the ball is on the upper playfield, you can't lose it!

The most important shot to learn is the Skyway. You should practice it to the point where you can nearly always one-touch a ball draining off the upper playfield right back up into the Skyway off the right flipper, preferably without trapping it first. This one shot will make your score skyrocket, since it prevents draining and sets you up for big points from Hurry-Up and extra balls galore from the Loop.

On the upper playfield, learn to make Loop shots; they're the key to extra balls, and with practice you can also learn to drop the ball into the WIN lanes to light Ransom. When Hurry-Up or Extra Ball lights on the Skyway, don't be afraid to let the ball drain to the lower playfield to collect it; once you've practiced the Skyway shot sufficiently, the reward is well worth the minor risk. Also, it's vital to learn the art of nudging the ball around the WAR lanes; a good player can nearly always make the ball dribble its way across the tops of the lanes to the upper flipper, keeping it on the upper playfield, and probably getting credit for at least one of the lanes in the process, even on a machine with pretty tight tilt settings.

During Multiballs, you pretty well have no choice but to learn to deal with the lower playfield. The Challenge Lane will hold onto a ball going into it for about ten seconds before letting it go, which is a good way of getting a ball out of the way. Also, don't forget the Lightning Lane; even if it's not lit, it still gets the ball back to the upper playfield. Multiballs are also a good time to shoot for the KNIGHT targets, if you need to relight the Kickback or Magna-Save; with all the balls bouncing around, you'll hit your share of drop targets anyway. I recommend \_not\_ shooting at the drop targets unless you need to relight something; every time you clear them, the timer accelerates, so it gets that much harder to clear them when you actually need them. And the bonus for completing BLACK is pretty paltry; you can get much greater rewards by concentrating on the upper playfield and making your Hurry-Ups.

During King's Ransom, concentrate on making the Skyway and Drawbridge shots at least once each, since that's where the big points are. Don't mess up your shots with the balls already on the playfield just to plunge a new ball in (unless you're going to use the new ball to shoot for the Jackpot); in particular, if a ball pops into the plunger lane with less than five seconds left in King's Ransom, and you're confident that you're not going to lose one of the balls in play in the next few seconds, leave it there! It's effectively an extra ball; when King's Ransom ends, just leave the other ball in the plunger lane, and plunge it out when you finally lose the last ball in play.