Other lotteries have found many frequent winners involved in ticket theft, money laundering and even money laundering, but Florida’s Lottery doesn’t have a clue.
10 MOST PROLIFIC WINNERS

Here are the most prolific winners The Post found after analyzing Florida Lottery data between 2003 and August 2013. They’re ranked by how often they cashed in winning tickets. How did they win so much? Experts say it had to be more than luck. Red flags for the lottery to pay attention to: winning tickets bought across many dates at many stores; sudden winning streaks; jobs at convenience stores.

- 1. Louis Tillman Johnson Pompano Beach
  WINS: 252 OVER 196 DIFFERENT DATES
  Amount won: $75,011
  Minimum spending: $2.07 million*
  Response: None. The Kwik Stop has changed hands since Johnson last worked there. Johnson, 68, said he’s never won a really big ticket, but he has a gambling problem, he said. He denied cashing in tickets for people, he said.

- 2. Jacqueline Antionetta Barnes Riviera Beach
  WINS: 143 OVER 95 DIFFERENT DATES
  Amount won: $49,456
  Minimum spending: $9,206
  Response: None. The Kwik Stop has changed hands since Barnes last worked there. Barnes, 68, said she’s never won a really big ticket.

  WINS: 216 ACROSS 127 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $313,500
  Minimum spending: $3.38 million*
  Response: None. Thakker attributes his wins to luck and scratch playing scratch-off tickets. Lottery officials and experts said the trick was nonsense—nobody knows where the scratch-off winners are, noteven the lotteries.

- 5. Jose Mario Campos Pires Lantana
  WINS: 111 OVER 54 DIFFERENT DATES
  Amount won: $34,386
  Minimum spending: $2.01 million*
  Response: Campos Pires, who sold his store last year, didn’t believe he won so often over the past 10 years but thought he might have won that big prize. He said he played between $10 and $15 per week for almost $13,000 over the decade, and he’d won some smaller amounts, but nothing near the minimum estimated spending of $2.01 million. “I’m a scumbag,” he said. He denied cashing in tickets for customers.

- 6. Ritin I. Lalaji Port St. Lucie
  WINS: 134 OVER 90 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $128,187
  Minimum spending: $1.57 million*
  Response: None. Lalaji has managed several places that sell lottery tickets, including the now-closed G&V Discount Beverage & Food in Fort Pierce, where Shukla won 30 times. Won at 58 different stores, mostly in Treasure Coast; no wins between 1993 and June 2010, when her husband owned the store. Kirkpatrick did not respond to requests for comment.

- 7. Sherry Diane Monestine Lantana
  WINS: 99 OVER 65 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $265,477
  Minimum spending: $785,450
  Red flags: Monestine had won once between 1993 and June 2010, when her husband owned the store. Her wins were due to luck. “I’m a very lucky woman, I always have been.”

- 8. Nidia E. Kirkpatrick Port Saint Lucie
  WINS: 83 OVER 68 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $255,477
  Minimum spending: $174,400
  Red flags: None. Unlike the other winners, there is a slim chance that Kirkpatrick could have actually made money. There are no signs she works for a store, and almost all of her wins are in the Play 4, which she won 78 times.

- 9. Abdourauf F. Hammad Miami
  WINS: 82 OVER 65 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $278,904
  Minimum spending: $1.23 million*
  Response: None. Hammad has owned or worked at several stores in Miami, claims wins from several. He’s won at 49 different stores, 31 different games, including top prizes in Fantasy 5 and a $2 Monopoly scratch-off.

- 10. Vipul K. Shukla Fort Pierce
  WINS: 80 OVER 65 DIFFERENT STORES
  Amount won: $306,035
  Minimum spending: $1.94 million*
  Response: Shukla has managed several places that sell lottery tickets, including the now-closed G&D Discount Beverage & Food in Fort Pierce, where Shukla won 30 times. Won at 58 different stores, mostly in Treasure Coast; no wins between 1993 and June 2010, when her husband owned the store. Shukla first said his wins were “all random,” but when asked if he was cashing in tickets for people, he said he had: “I did do that, but that was a long time ago,” he said. He has won as much as 2013. Shukla declined to comment further, saying he could be in trouble.

Source: Florida Lottery; Palm Beach Post research

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- Top 10 prolific winners
- What games did they win?
- Store breakup: See scratch-off winnings at stores near you.

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COLOR/FINAL
Florida's most prolific winner lives here

He’s won 55 different games from 69 different stores, totaling more than $7,000,000. If he really won all that, he says, he wouldn’t still be driving the Ford pickup sitting on his lawn. HIS STORY, A17

People who owe taxes, child support or have their wages garnished would have an incentive to have someone else cash the ticket for them, typically for a fee.

1-in-2-trillion chance... That’s like picking one star out of 50 galaxies, convincing your friend you guess the same star on the first try.

The lottery isn’t designed to produce frequent winners. For every $100 spent on the lottery, on average only $64 goes back to winners, a rate far worse than most casino games. You can walk away from a blackjack table with more money than you started with; it’s next to impossible to do that playing the lottery.

The lottery isn’t designed to produce someone so rich they have to buy 1,050 tickets everyday for six years to have just a 1 percent chance of winning so often, he says. It seems pretty inconceivable that anyone would have an incentive to do that. It’s not worth it.

Jeffrey Rosenthal is a University of Toronto professor and the author of Strike by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities. He was instrumental in the investigation that led to multiple arrests of Canadian clerks who were selling tickets on the side. Rosenthal came to the same conclusion as Garibaldi: You can’t really make a living off the lottery.

"If you bought just one ticket..." he said. "You can see why they’ve got to have someone there to collect their winnings. If you’re going to a district office, they’ll be noticed and report you. Immigrants also can be coerced, for fear that by going to a district office, they’ll be arrested and deported.

Ticket brokers, known as "fixers" or "middle men," are scarce for the industry. The Massachusetts audit found that these people earned in more than $1.6 million in tickets in that state’s lottery in the past year. When reached by phone, he told us he’d heard a lot, but didn’t believe he’d ever do as well as they say they did by playing the game. He said, "I don’t bet on the lotto. I just see it as a social game, a way to make a living."

"It seems plausible that someone would do that, but not for me," he said. "I’m not a rich man."

Lottery odds designed to be poor

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Managing retail clerks: Florida's Lottery. No. 2 in North America, lags in some best practices for security:

- **Retailers** track all retail employees, who aren't allowed to play at their own store. California and Florida ask whether workers have been reptile species.
- Florida does neither.

Frequent winners: California is by far the biggest winner, with more than $2.7 billion in unclaimed prizes. Florida is also on the list. Federal authorities arrested three men in California for selling lottery tickets.

- **Lottery officials** say that some of the tickets were purchased from retailers who suspected fraud.

- **Winners** of the two games are eligible to claim prizes of $100 or more.

- **Florida** is one of the states that allows players to claim their prizes directly.

- **California** requires players to claim their prizes in person.

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The chances of winning $600 or more across all of the lottery’s sales of scratch-off tickets among North American lotteries.

25 percent
The amount of the federal lottery tax taken on winnings above $600. That doesn’t include income tax.

$63 million Florida Lottery winnings that went unclaimed last year.

‘Nobody’s that lucky’
Louis Tillman Johnson, on his 252 lottery wins. He believes someone else is cashing in tickets using his name.

13,000
The number of places where you can buy Florida Lottery tickets.

$2.41 million
The minimum one person would have to spend to match Joe Mario Campos Pires’ 111 lottery wins worth $343,686.

1 in 8,747
The chances of winning $600 or more across all of the lottery’s sales of scratch-off games.

6-1-7-2
Play 4 numbers that won the most (in that order). It has won 7 times since 1991 for a total payout of $2,163,150 in winnings.

Top winner: ‘I’ve never won’
Louis Tillman Johnson says he owes the IRS $50,000 in taxes.

NO. 1: The Florida Lottery’s rank in sales of scratch-off tickets among North American lotteries. Publix is the top seller of Florida Lottery tickets.

68.4 percent
The percentage of lottery tickets worth $600 or more sold from Florida mom-and-pop stores among the 200 most prolific winners.

44.6 percent
The percentage of all $600 plus lottery tickets sold from Florida mom-and-pop stores.


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Lottery odds: To win, you'd have to be a loser

By Lawrence Mower
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

The odds of winning the top prize in Florida's Play 4 are one in 10,000, the same as your chances of ever being struck by lightning.

So how did one person win it 168 times, collecting more than $2 million in 15 months?

Jeffrey Rosenthal, a professor at Emory University and associate director of the Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics at UCLA, calculated that the man could have won something "mathematically possible.

On its surface, he might seem like the luckiest person in the history of the Florida Lottery. He hasn't been a mathematician. He didn't call it impossible. He put it this way:

"It's possible, it's just utterly improbable," he said. "Quantum mechanics tells us all sorts of insane, unimaginable things could happen..."
Sherry Monestime of Lantana has won $286,938.*

She’s cashed in 99 tickets for 25 different games between 2007 and 2013.

Most of her winning tickets were bought in Palm Beach County stores; 40 of them are pictured here.

ONE OF PALM BEACH COUNTY’S AMAZING WINNERS

1 woman, 55 stores, over $285,000

* Her winnings from tickets worth $600 or more. The Florida Lottery does not track winnings below $600.