

Outlaws - Playin' To Win (1978)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Take It Any Way You Want It* (Bill Jones, Hughie Thomasson) – 3:19 02. *Cry Some More* (Bill Jones, Hughie Thomasson) – 3:40 03. *You Are The Show* (Highie Thomasson) – 4:52 04. *You Can Have It* (Harvey Arnold) – 3:05 05. *If Dreams Came True* (Bill Jones, Robert John Lange) – 2:45 [play](#) 06. *A Real Good Feelin'* (Bill Jones) – 4:27 07. *Love At First Sight* (Highie Thomasson) – 2:46 [play](#) 08. *Falling Rain* (Freddie Salem) – 4:06 09. *Dirty City* (Iain Sutherland) – 5:26

Personnel: - Hughie Thomasson - acoustic & electric guitar, banjo, pedal steel, vocals - Bill Jones - electric guitar, vocals - Freddie Salem - guitar, vocals, slide guitar - Harvey Dalton Arnold - bass, vocals - David Dix - percussion, conga, drums - Monte Yoho - drums, percussion + - Mike Duke - keyboards - Robert John "Mutt" Lange - arranger, producer

The Outlaws' 1978 album *Playin' to Win* marked a significant change in musical direction almost certainly due, in large part, to up-and-coming producer Robert John "Mutt" Lange. The Florida-based Southern rockers had just come off the live album *Bring It Back Alive* early that year, and concert albums quite often preface a change in a band's style. Lange made *Playin' to Win* a much slicker sounding record than the Outlaws' first three studio albums. This was also the first studio album without vocalist/guitarist Henry Paul, who was directly responsible for the traditional country elements in the Outlaws' original sound. He'd been replaced by Freddie Salem on *Bring It Back Alive*. The majority of the songs were still largely contributed by vocalists/guitarists Hughie Thomasson and Billy Jones, and the guitar and vocal harmonies are still intact, but Lange's production smoothes some of the edges too much, robbing the Outlaws of a bit of their rough-hewn charm. "Take It Anyway You Want It" immediately announces the Outlaws' new, lightly polished sound. "Cry Some More" verges on bouncy pop at times, but the guitar work provides some bite. The anthem "You Are the Show" is bookended by moody guitar parts. Jones' "If Dreams Came True" is gentle and lush, and the soft percussion work is fascinating. "A Real Good Feelin'" is easygoing country/pop, and Thomasson adds pedal steel fills. Salem's dramatic ballad "Falling Rain" proves he's a fully integrated into the band. *Playin' to Win* ends with an excellent cover of the Sutherland Brothers and Quiver's "Dirty City." It starts off slyly funky and turns into a guitar workout jam. ---Bret Adams, allmusic.com

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