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(54) **REDRAW POKER GAME**

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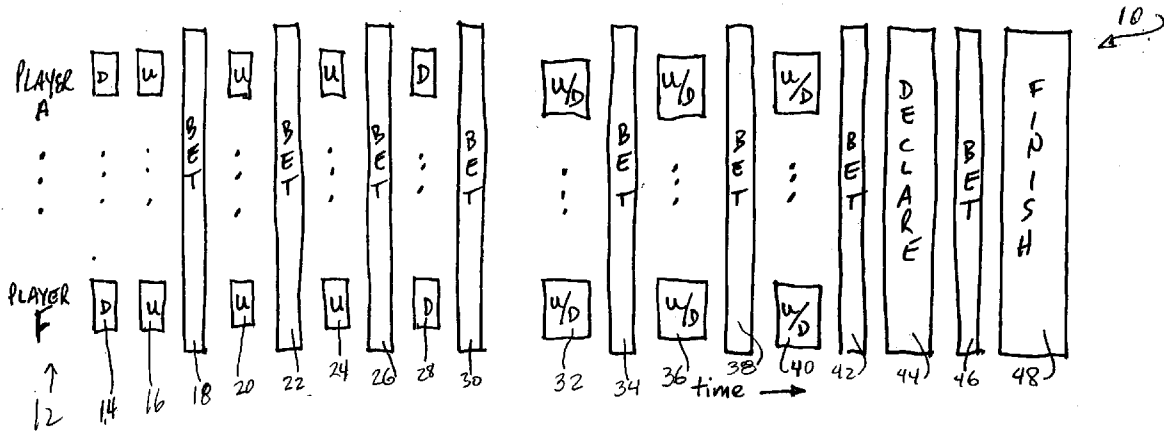
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Various poker games playable with a standard 52-card deck permit card exchanges (redraws). Some games are in a stud poker format and permit three separate rounds of buy-backs wherein each player is allowed to discard any card from his hand for a new card dealt from the deck, after paying

progressively higher exchange fees. This game may be played as high-low poker also. In a second disclosed stud poker game, the dealer deals three non-community cards to each player and three community cards, which are available to all players. Three rounds of card exchanges are permitted, one card per player per round. When played as high-low, this number of redraws affords significant opportunity for a player to hedge play between high and low and keeps many players in the game for longer periods. Also, most players exchange cards for cost and thereby further enhance the funds available for distribution. Another redraw poker game is played as five-card, high only poker. Various aspects of that game allow for payment of bonus based on the strength of the player's hand, without regard to any other hand (including the dealer's). Players can play against the house and against each other. One optional feature calls for the dealer's hand to qualify before bets against the house are settled. The dealer may be permitted card exchanges to qualify his hand. After the deal to all players and the house, play proceeds wherein each player may exchange one or more cards, together at once or in separate rounds where only one card per round may be exchanged. Each round of card redraws costs more than the previous round of redraws. One region of betting is for betting against the house, and a second region of betting is for betting against other players. The highest poker hand wins.



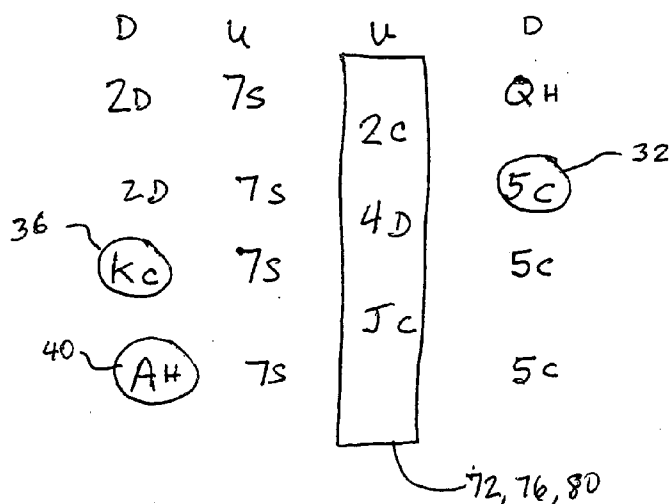


FIGURE 5

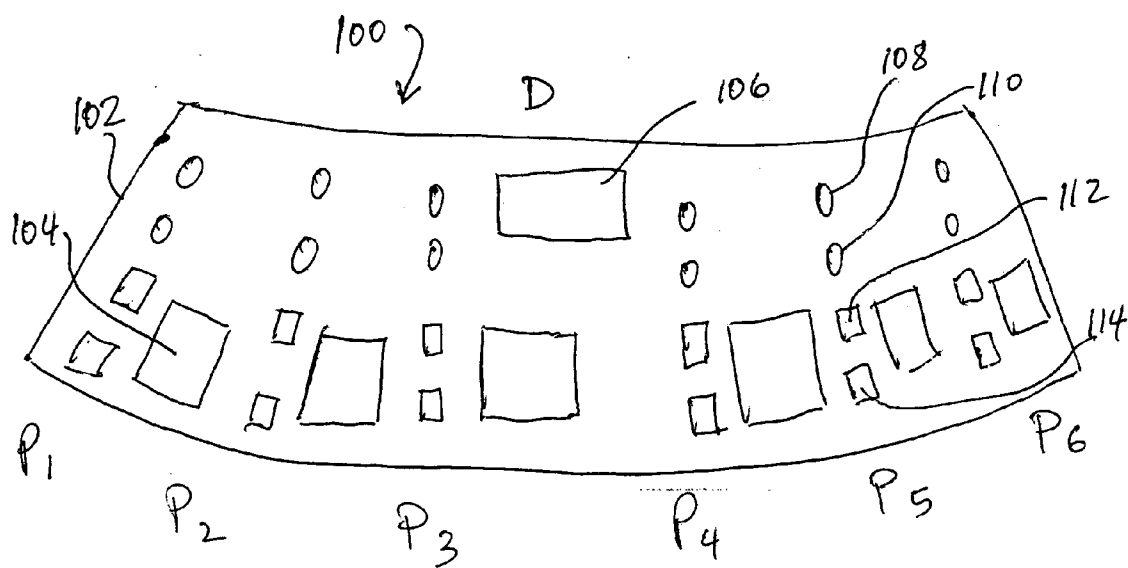


FIGURE 6

REDRAW POKER GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a poker card game playable with standard, conventional playing cards, i.e. having four suits (spades, hearts, clubs and diamonds), totaling fifty two cards per deck, sometimes known as a “bridge” or “poker” deck. The present invention in its preferred aspect concerns an improved version of poker allowing “redraws,” i.e., card exchanges.

[0002] Poker is a well-known form of gaming. Many versions of poker are played with a 52-card deck, including draw poker, stud, “Texas Hold-Em,” and more. Many of these games have a single winner, absent a tie game, with the winner being the player with the highest ranking hand.

[0003] Usually, a straight flush is the highest possible hand, and in particular the Royal Flush, comprising 10-J-Q-K-A (“A” standing for Ace), all of the same suit.

[0004] Some poker is played as a high-low game where (absent any ties) there will be two winners: the player with the highest poker hand and the one with the lowest. In such games where a “low” hand is a winner, the lowest card is generally agreed to be the Ace, which can be played high or low, and frequently both. In many games, the “perfect” low hand consists of A-2-3-4-6 provided that it is not also a flush. The players could agree alternatively that the lowest hand is A-2-3-4-5 (notwithstanding that this constitutes a straight). Generally, the lowest hand is determined by the highest card of the (usually) five cards in play. Thus, a hand consisting of A-2-3-4-8 (having at least two suits represented) is not as low as a hand consisting of 2-3-4-5-7 (likewise having at least two suits represented) even though the first hand includes a lower card (the Ace). Instead, the determination of the low is based on the highest of the cards. In this example, the “7” is lower than the “8,” and hence the second hand is the superior low hand. In some instances, two competing hands each have the same denomination highest card. In such cases, the determination of the low hand goes to the next highest card, seeking the lower of them. Thus, a 6-4-3-2-A is lower than a 6-5-3-2-A. Generally, the players agree in advance whether the lowest hand achievable is a 5-4-3-2-A (which is a straight) or a 6-4-3-2-A.

[0005] Moreover, just as there can be shared winners at the high end, so too there can be shared winners at the low end. As many as four players could have 6-4-3-2-A, absent “wild” cards, in a game played with the standard 52-card deck.

[0006] Poker (including stud poker) is often played with one or more community cards that are commonly known as “spit” cards. Such community cards are not wild cards, but they are available for use in the hand of every player. They are dealt by the dealer and generally placed on the card table in sight of all players. Texas Hold 'Em is one poker game that uses community cards.

[0007] Poker can also involve a “buy-back,” sometimes called a redraw or card exchange, where a player can discard a card in his hand in exchange for a new card dealt from the deck.

[0008] Typically, high-low poker games involve more wagering because the player has a chance of winning either high or low, and the increased chances to win are reflected in the wagering.

[0009] In a normal high-low poker game, a player dealt certain cards may plan (and wager) on going one way, but he may find that the further cards that become available to him do not support the planned effort. For example, in a seven card game a player dealt A-2-3 would like to receive 4-6-x-x but may instead end up with 7-9-J-K. Absent a flush, the best low found in these seven cards is a “Jack low.” The converse can happen where the player initially has high cards, wagers accordingly, and then draws low cards. Generally, both of these examples result in the player folding his hand (or losing).

[0010] Some variations of poker are played where one player can win both high and low, having a winning low hand with one five card combination and a winning high hand with a different five card combination. This contemplates a game where there are at least six cards in play for each player, as in five card stud with one community card, for example.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention has numerous aspects. In a high-low poker game according to one of its aspects and embodiments, a player has a rational motivation to stay in the game longer. As a result, the pots grow larger. The player has a viable way to change strategy in mid-hand based on the further cards that become available. This also permits a player to guide his activities toward maximizing the chances of winning in either of two directions, high or low, thus hedging the play.

[0012] Thus in a first embodiment of the invention, five cards per player are dealt to a player. Though these five cards are in play together, the player may upon payment of a prescribed fee (paid into the pot or to the dealer or “house” or a combination thereof) exchange any single one of the five cards in his hand for a new card from the deck. Preferably each player in sequence is given the chance to exchange one card at a time. Preferably three such rounds of exchanges or buy-backs are permitted. Using a standard 52-card deck, this game can be played by up to six players.

[0013] In a second embodiment, community cards are used. Preferably the dealer deals three community cards and, for each player, three non-community cards. Preferably, two cards are dealt to each player, followed by betting, followed by three rounds of dealing a community card, with betting on each round, followed by dealing the third non-community cards, followed by betting. Then, as above, each player has opportunities to exchange cards, one card per round. Preferably three redraws are permitted. The exchange of three cards, one at a time in three separate rounds, vastly improves competition and the odds of developing a superior hand.

[0014] A preferred but optional feature of the present invention is that the exchange of cards becomes progressively more expensive. Thus, exchanging a first card may cost 2 units, the second card may cost 4 units, and the third card may cost 6 or 8 units.

[0015] Another aspect of the invention permits redraw poker to be played in a gaming environment such as a casino. A “house” is represented by a dealer, and preferably the dealer competes with the players. At the outset of a game, each player places an “ante” bet and may elect to

participate in a “bonus” pot by placing a predetermined bet. The predetermined bet may be done by placing a coin or token in a specified region. That bonus aspect of the game allows a participating player to win according to a predetermined schedule if his subsequently dealt hand contains certain features, illustratively a pair, three of a kind, a straight, flush, etc. The more meritorious the poker hand a player gets, the higher the bonus that is paid to that participating player. However, if the player does not win a bonus, his bonus wager is kept by the house.

[0016] According to further aspects of the game, if the dealer’s hand does not reach a qualifying level, then one outcome results, such as the return of wagers against the house and/or antes. Preferably the dealer himself has an opportunity to redraw cards in a prescribed manner. If the dealer’s hand does qualify at the outset, or qualifies after a redraw, play against the house proceeds. Preferably each player has the opportunity to redraw (exchange) a card in a round upon payment of a predetermined fee, illustratively a specific amount or a specific percentage of his original wager. Illustratively, a second round of card exchanges is allowed, and preferably the fee for the second card exchange is greater than that for the first card exchange. Players whose hands beat the dealer’s hand win, illustratively according to a schedule. Illustratively, as between the house and the player, each player whose hand beats a dealer’s qualified hand will win even money, i.e., win an amount equal to his ante and his wager against the house. A greater or lower award can be determined. Typically this form of poker is played as a high-game only rather than high-low.

[0017] A preferred addition to this third embodiment allows players to wager against one another, regardless of their wager against the house. Illustratively a separate betting region is provided on the table for such wagering. Players may wager against other players at the table without regard to whether the dealer’s hand qualifies or beats the hand of the wagering player. Preferably, players are allowed to increase their wagers after each round of redraws. The wagers placed by the players in the aggregate constitute a “pot” to be awarded to that player having the highest poker hand at the end of play. Preferably, the house collects a fee for administering such inter-player wagering, illustratively by taking a percentage or prescribed amount out of every pot.

DESCRIPTION OF A FIRST EMBODIMENT

[0018] The first embodiment of this improved game is a five card, high-low, stud poker game allowing for three exchanges (discards and “buy-backs,” also called “redraws”) one at a time. Preferably the perfect low hand is A-2-3-4-6 where the hand is not a flush. Preferably the perfect high hand is a Royal Flush, i.e., 10-J-Q-K-A in the same suit. Preferably the cards are dealt one down, three up, and one down (the “one-three-one format”), although other up-down combinations can be adopted.

[0019] FIG. 1 is a diagram that represents the actions in the first embodiment game 10. Preferably several players, up to six in number, play the game. The sequence of play is from left to right in the figure. After players A to F are seated at 12, the dealer uses a standard 52-card deck and deals a first card 14, preferably face down, to each player. Cards 14 in FIG. 1 and other figures are marked “D” to indicate that they are face-down cards.

[0020] The dealer next deals a second card 16 to each player. Preferably such card is dealt face up, and cards 16 are marked “U” to so indicate. It will be understood, however, that cards 16 could alternatively be dealt face down.

[0021] Next, the players bet, as indicated at 18. Typically, the player with the highest face-up card 16 bets first. A player whose first two cards 14, 16 are relatively low but not numerically the same will likely plan on seeking the low hand and wager accordingly. If he holds Ace-x, where x is any card from 2 to 6, he may be optimistic about winning the low with a perfect low, and wager aggressively. Likewise, a player with a high (or other) pair may wager aggressively. Preferably aces are played as either high or low, as the player chooses, or both ways in certain circumstances, for example where one player can win both high and low.

[0022] Following betting 18, the dealer continues to deal in the fashion of five card stud, dealing third cards 20 to each player followed by betting 22, then fourth cards 24 followed by betting 26; and fifth cards 28 followed by betting 30. Preferably, cards 14 and 28 are dealt facing down and cards 16, 20, and 24 are dealt facing up, although this could be modified as desired.

[0023] After five respective cards are dealt to each player, with four rounds of wagering 18, 22, 26, and 30, the second phase of the game commences. Here, each player may discard any of his five cards, whether facing up or down, pay the prescribed cost into the pot for that first discard, and receive a fresh card 32 from the deck. If the discard was a card facing up (whether card 18, 20, or 24), the new card 32 is dealt face up. Conversely, if the discard was a card facing down (card 14 or 28), then the new card 32 is dealt face down also. In FIG. 1, cards 32 are marked “U/D” to indicate that they could be either up or down, as the case may be. One player may exchange an up card, and another may exchange a down card, as they choose. After each player has had a chance to purchase this first buy-back, a round of betting ensues at 34.

[0024] Following this, there are two more rounds of buy-backs. In the preferred way of playing, each round of redraws is followed by a round of betting. Thus, a second round of redraws provides cards 36, and betting 38 occurs. This is followed by a third round of redraws (providing cards 40) and betting 42. The game could be modified to have fewer opportunities for betting, if that were desired.

[0025] The next step is a “declare” step 44 where each player simultaneously publicly declares his intention to compete for the high hand or for the low hand. This is preferably followed by another round of betting 46, followed by revealing the hands and declaring the winners at step 48.

[0026] An attraction of this particular poker game is that a player can receive as many as eight playing cards, but he does not possess more than five of them at any single time. A mediocre hand can develop into a highly competitive one, keeping the player in the game. A player who is dealt a four-flush will have three chances to convert the hand to a five-card flush. Further, certain hands may be played in both directions for a time, with a decision being postponed as to whether to play high or to play low, thereby hedging the play.

[0027] FIG. 2 serves to illustrate some of the strategy and advantages of this game. This is a matrix that is read from

top to bottom. Except for the top row (comprising Ds and Us), the five indicia across each row indicate the holding of the card player at each relevant time. The top row of **FIG. 2** indicates the up or down aspect of the cards indicated beneath the letters "D" (down) and "U" (up). The top row thus comprises the letters D-U-U-U-D, denoting the format of one down card, then three up cards, then one down card. The second row shows a set or hand **50** of the first five cards dealt to this player, in this case 5-5-6-J-K. Though the pair of 5's is seen in **FIG. 2**, the pair is concealed from the other players since the first "5" is a down card. Such hand **50** has good prospects for both high and low and can be wagered aggressively. Opponents see only a "5-6-J" which is promising as either a low hand or a high hand. Hence, they could not conclude that the player holding hand **50** is necessarily competing with them.

[0028] For a first discard and buy-back **32**, the player would most likely discard the fourth card **24**, i.e. the face-up Jack. The reasons for this are to fill in the straight, seek a third "5" or try to improve the low end of the hand. Also, the player keeps the King concealed. Hence the player discards the Jack and illustratively is dealt a "7," as card **32**. Thus, the next row in **FIG. 2** shows the now-current hand **52** as 5-5-6-7-K. The "7" is shown with a circle around it to indicate that it is the newly-drawn card. This hand **52** is still competitive on both the high and the low ends, since with two more draws, the player could develop a full house (drawing a 5-6 or 5-7), a straight (drawing a 4-8 or a 8-9), or low cards (A-2). Here again, the exposed cards of hand **52** are 5-6-7, which is a possible low or a possible high. Hence, opponents do not yet identify this player as a definite competitor yet and keep wagering.

[0029] For the second discard and buy-back **36**, the player would most likely discard the concealed King. Unless the two other 5's are shown face up in competitor's hands, the possibility exists of drawing a third "5," so it would be unwise to discard the hidden "5" at this time. With two more draws available, the player could try to pair up the King by discarding the "6" but this would generally reveal that the player either (a) is not-pursuing a low hand or a straight, or (b) has a "6" as a down card. In addition, the player might draw a card that develops a low hand. In this way, the player can hedge by discarding a card that allows him to benefit from either certain low cards that will make the hand high or low. Hence, the player's decision to discard the King in this example is relatively easy. Illustratively, upon discarding the King, the player draws a face-down "4." The resulting hand **54** now consists of 5-5-6-7-4.

[0030] With the 5-6-7 still showing, the other players still don't know whether the player of hand **54** is going high or low. Those who are going low may decide that the player is going high and vice versa.

[0031] For the third and final discard and redraw **40**, the player would probably discard the hidden "5" since a full house is no longer possible but the player can still achieve either a straight or a low hand. If he draws an "8," as indicated in the next row for hand **56**, then he has a straight and can bet accordingly. If he draws an Ace rather than an "8," as represented by hand **58**, then the player has A-4-5-6-7, which is a competitive and bet-worthy low hand.

[0032] **FIG. 3** shows another possibility for hand **50**. In the first buy-back, the Jack is discarded and another King is

dealt, resulting in hand **60**, which is now 5-5-6-K-K. Neither pair is showing. In this instance, the player has two more draws to fill in the Full House. Hence, on the second buy-back, the player discards the "6" and illustratively draws a (useless) "10" as shown in hand **62**. On the third buy-back, the player discards the "10" and illustratively draws another "5." Thus, hand **64** is a Full House, which is relatively strong.

[0033] A flush is a valid high hand in game **10**. The examples given have not considered suit denominations, and a player may of course choose cards to discard on the basis of seeking a flush as a high hand. This often presents a further way that a player can hedge his hand, given a core of cards in the same suit from which to proceed. For example, a player may hold a mixture of low and high cards, at least two of which have to be in the same suit (because there are only four suits and this is a five-card game). The discard may be an "off-suit" card where the player keeps the two cards of the same suit and tries to redraw more of them to fill the Flush. At some point after one or two rounds of exchanges, it may be prudent to abandon that plan and try to develop the low hand or some high hand other than a flush. With the three card exchanges, the opportunity exists to pursue this hedge strategy, and players are inclined to call bets more frequently and to pay for card exchanges.

[0034] Thus, each player has multiple opportunities for winning and is inclined to stay in the game longer. Also, the pot grows larger through both betting and the revenue from the card redraws. Generally, every player staying in the game can improve his hand and thus purchases all three exchanges (unless he attains the ideal hand before then or fears worsening a now-competitive hand). The game is more satisfying than a simple high-low game based on five-card stud with one or even two community cards. The game is superior to games such as draw poker where three cards can be discarded and drawn at once. Such a procedure rules out the possibility of switching from high to low or vice versa, and often precludes hedging. The total amount wagered by the players and spent for redraws is larger, and the game is much more enticing. This game can be played also without any face-up cards.

DESCRIPTION OF A SECOND EMBODIMENT

[0035] A limitation of the first embodiment is that with a standard 52-card deck, no more than six players can play. (Seven players receiving five cards each and three redraws each would require 56 cards.) A second embodiment allows more than six players to play, through the use of community cards. Each community card is available to every player who has not folded his hand.

[0036] The second preferred embodiment is represented by and described with reference to **FIG. 4**, which represents a game **70** where up to eight players A to H may be seated at step **12**. Generally, events that are the same in the first and second embodiments are given the reference numerals. Thus, the dealer begins by dealing each player two respective cards **14, 16**. Preferably one of them is a down card, as indicated at **14**, and one is dealt face up as indicated at **16**. The players next bet, as shown at **18**.

[0037] Unlike the first embodiment, which has no community cards, in game **70** the dealer now exposes a set of community cards. In game **70**, the next three cards are

community cards, dealt one at a time, with a round of betting preferably following the deal of each community card. Thus, the dealer deals a first community card **72**, and betting **74** follows. He then deals a second community card **76**, and betting **78** follows. The dealer now deals a third community card **80**, and another round of betting **82** occurs.

[0038] Each player now has access to five cards—two in the hand (cards **14**, **16**) and three community cards (**72**, **76**, **80**) in the center.

[0039] The rest of the game is as described for game **10**, resuming with dealing a face-down card **28** to each remaining player. At this point, a player has six cards and thus has the opportunity to compete for both the high and the low hands. Players next bet at **30**.

[0040] Next come three rounds of discards and redraws, each involving a further wagering opportunity, in exactly the same fashion as explained with reference to game **10**. That is, the players can discard and draw cards **32**, **36**, and **40** in succession, with betting after each round of exchanging. Such betting is represented at steps **34**, **38**, and **42**. As in game **10**, next the players declare at **44** whether they are wagering for high or low, although in this game **70** they can seek both high and low since each player has six cards from which to select the most advantageous five. One group of five cards may be played low while another group of five cards may be played high.

[0041] Allowing for the three community cards, forty nine cards are left in the deck. Assuming each player stays in the hand and takes every discard and redraw opportunity, he will have had six cards other than the community cards. Hence, this game can be played with up to eight players. (Eight players at six cards apiece require 48 cards plus the three community cards, totaling 51 cards used for the game.)

[0042] An advantage of this game is that a player sees three community cards and can immediately determine the best low hand feasible since the community cards do not change. For example, if the community cards are 6-7-Q, then the best low would be A-2-3-6-7 and thus a player holding A-2-3 is assured of winning at least a portion of the pot by having a combined hand of A-2-3-6-7. If the community cards were 2-6-7, then the best non-community cards to hold for the low would be A-3-4, yielding a combined hand of A-2-3-4-6, which is generally regarded as the “perfect” low hand (so long as it is not a flush).

[0043] A fuller example is explained with reference to FIG. 5. The three community cards **72**, **76**, and **80** are indicated within a vertically-oriented rectangle. Illustratively they are a “2” of clubs (2C), a “4” of diamonds (4D), and a Jack of clubs (JC). Those three cards cannot be changed. The non-community cards dealt to one player are, illustratively, a diamond “2” (2D), a spade “7” (7S), and a heart Queen (QH). Thus, the player at this time has 2-2-4-7-J-Q, i.e., one pair, two clubs, and a “Queen low.” (Any combination of high cards is lower than a pair of 2’s.)

[0044] For the first card exchange, the player would most likely discard the Queen, since there are opportunities to build on the pair and to build a low hand. On the other hand, if everyone else has low cards, for strategic reasons the player might want to keep the Queen and discard a low card to see whether a high can develop. Assume that the Queen is discarded and new card **32** is a club “5.” At this point,

including the community cards, the player has 2C-2D-4D-5C-7S-JC; that is, he has three clubs, a possible “7” low, and a possible straight.

[0045] For the second discard and redraw, the player illustratively discards the face-down diamond “2” (that is, card **14**). The reason is that holding the pair of twos is not as advantageous as seeking the club Flush or a good low. Assume that the second buy-back card **36** is the King of clubs. At this point, the player now holds 2C-4D-5C-7S-JC-KC; the player has, counting the community cards, four clubs and four cards to a low hand (2C-4D-5C-7S). He has one card exchange available.

[0046] The third discard is more difficult to choose. The player should consider the other competitor’s cards that are showing, any discards the player recalls, the player’s sense of which way the competitors are going, and what their cards and betting indicate about the quality of their hands and the potential of their hands. In this case, the player has four clubs, leaving nine other clubs available to fill out the club flush. On the other hand, to fill out a low hand, the player could employ an Ace, “3” or “6.” Drawing a “3” for example would give the player a 7-5-4-3-2. There are twelve such desirable cards. The player must now subtract from that number the ones of those cards that he has seen face-up in the competitor’s hands. Also he must factor into the situation the direction which others seem to be heading. The risk of trying to get a club flush is that the player has to discard the 7S and has nothing beyond a King-high hand unless he draws a club or pairs up. Assume that the player elects after deliberation to go for the low hand. He discards his King of clubs, and draws an Ace of hearts illustratively as card **40**, as shown in FIG. 5. Now the player holds (including the community cards) a low consisting of 7-5-4-2-A. This may or may not be sufficient to prevail on the low.

[0047] In the redraws, the dealer gives the new card to the player up or down, corresponding to whether the discard was up or down. In a further variation, a player could pay extra to discard an up card and receive a down card.

[0048] In this community card version of the game, the player also has the opportunity to hedge his play on going high and/or low by appropriate discards from the hand. The player can seek to match up low cards to make a high hand, or if he gets non-matching low cards can still play the low end. Hence, this game results in substantial wagering.

[0049] A beneficial feature of the game is the progressively increased costs of the redraws. This contributes to building the pot while allowing a player to increase the chances of improving his hand. Thus, the odds of drawing a further card of denomination X are twice as high with two draws as with one, and three times as high as with one.

[0050] A limitation of the first embodiment is that with a standard 52-card deck, no more than six players can play. A second embodiment allows more than six players, through the use of community cards. Each community card is available to every player who has not folded his hand.

DESCRIPTION OF A THIRD EMBODIMENT

[0051] A third embodiment according to various aspects of the invention is adapted for use in a gaming casino, for example. Any of the prior embodiments can of course be played in a casino in which, illustratively, the “house” can be

the dealer and collect a share or predetermined amount from each pot or per player. The third embodiment, however, offers further modifications for casino use.

[0052] FIG. 6 for-poker game 100 thus includes a game table 102 at which six players P1, P2 . . . P6 may be seated. The house dealer D has a central location opposite players P. Game 100 is preferably played as a high-only game, but a high-low version could also be played. Each player P has a respective region 104 where his playing cards will be dealt. The house dealer D also has a similar region 106 for his cards. Preferably game table 102 includes a region for the dealer's supply of chips or token, as customary in casinos.

[0053] Game 100 preferably is robust with multiple forms and/or levels of betting. Various regions on table 102 are shown for use in such betting. Preferably, each player P has respective first through fourth betting regions 108, 110, 112, and 114, and hence a table for six players (plus a dealer) will have six first regions 108, six first regions 110, six third regions 112, and six fourth regions 114. First regions 108 are used for "bonus" betting and may comprise demarked areas of the table or may comprise slots in which tokens, chips or coins may be placed. In the latter arrangement, a sensor arrangement could be used to determine the presence or absence of the token, chip or coin which a player may optionally place in his first region 108. Such sensor arrangements are well known in casinos and may further include a feedback arrangement such as a light (not illustrated) on the table adjacent the slot that becomes illuminated to signal a player's participation in the bonus arrangement if and when he places a token in the slot or other sensed location. In brief, if a player places a wager in region 108, he may win a bonus based on the strength of cards dealt (or otherwise available) to him, without regard to whether his cards are superior to those of other players or the dealer. The bonus will typically be paid according to a predetermined schedule. For example, a first bonus could be awarded to each player whose hand contains a pair, a higher bonus for two pair, a still higher bonus for three of a kind, and so forth. The casino will establish and publish the bonus schedule (not illustrated).

[0054] The second regions 110 are used for wagering against other players, as set forth below. Third regions 112 are for ante bets. To play, a player is required to place an ante bet in his region 112. Regions 114 are used for wagering against the house and typically are not used by the players until after some or all of the cards are dealt to the player. The table 102 preferably does not include such betting regions for house dealer D.

[0055] To begin play, each player P must place the required ante in region 112. The players P may place optional bets in regions 108. Next, dealer D deals cards to each player P and to himself. He deals the players' cards in regions 104 and his own cards in region 106. One of the dealers' cards may optionally be dealt face up.

[0056] Each of the players P now examines his cards and determines whether he wants to fold the hand or continue. He can place a bet against the house by placing a bet preferably equal to the ante, or as determined by the house rules, in region 114. For example, the house may determine that at a "Five Dollar" table, the ante must be Five Dollars, and any bet in region 114 must be at least as great as the ante bet but may alternatively be twice or three times as large. The house may establish an upper limit for the bet in region 114 if desired, in addition to the lower limit.

[0057] In addition to playing against the house via betting region 114, players may determine at this time whether they want to bet against each other. To place such a wager, a player uses betting region 110. The house may specify the amounts wagered there, illustratively as a multiple of the ante. For example, at a Five Dollar table, the house may specify that an allowed initial bet in region 110 may be five, ten, or fifteen dollars. The house may permit a player to choose the amount of his wager in region 110 within these or other prescribed limits, which may also include upper limits. Hence, a player who believes he has a reasonably good chance of getting a better poker hand than the other players P may want to wager the higher amount. Other players P who wish to participate in that inter-player wagering must match the bet. The house may charge a fee for inter-player wagering in regions 110. This fee could be collected by, for example, the house taking a prescribed percentage or flat rate fee from the total amounts wagered in regions 110. It will be appreciated that these inter-player bets may be increased as a result of card redraws, described below.

[0058] The first bonuses may be settled before or after this betting. If a player who has placed a bet in region 108 has been dealt a poker hand of predetermined merit, he wins a bonus, without regard to what cards the dealer or other players have. Preferably the bonuses are higher for more difficult hands to achieve in a five-card deal. Illustratively, the dealer deals five face down cards to region 104. If a player has a pair, he wins one bonus. If he has two pair, he wins a higher bonus, and so on. The house may establish a minimum qualification for bonus, such as a pair of Jacks or better. Illustratively, to win such bonus, the player must have previously placed a wager in region 108. He then reveals at least the cards establishing the right to the bonus. That is, if the player has a qualifying pair, he would show the pair to establish his right to the bonus but need not show the remaining three cards. If he has two pair, he shows those four cards and may keep the remaining one card face down. If he has a (five-card) straight, he must show all five cards in order to collect the first bonus. As an alternative to showing the cards that entitle the player to bonus, he can segregate the cards that entitle him to the bonus, so they may be inspected later. As still another alternative, the players' cards may be dealt all face up, but this would chill the inter-party wagering unless such bets are placed before the cards are dealt. Thus, it is preferable that any betting using region 110 be placed before any cards are revealed to other players. The house collects all losing bets placed in regions 108. Preferably the house maintains a pool with which to pay any region 108 bonuses. The bonus betting using regions 108 is a revenue source for the house.

[0059] At this point in the preferred manner of play, each player has been dealt five cards, the dealer has dealt himself five cards (one of which may be face up), bonuses (may) have been decided, and players may decide whether to continue play or to discard (fold) their respective hands. Players P may elect to continue by placing a bet in region 114, as noted above. Illustratively, the wager may be limited to the amount of the ante bet in region 112 or may bear some relationship to that ante (such as up to double or triple the ante).

[0060] The players are now permitted card exchanges (redraws). Preferably, they are allowed to exchange one card

per round for each of one or two rounds. While they might be allowed to exchange multiple cards at once, exchanging cards one at a time is preferred. Preferably a card exchange calls for a payment to the house of a predetermined amount, or an amount that is a predetermined portion of the wager(s) placed in regions **112** or **114** or the combination of the two regions. Illustratively, at a Five Dollar table, the first card exchange fee could cost one dollar. It will be understood that a higher or lower amount could be charged. At a Fifty Dollar table, the cost of the first redraw could be set at either five dollars or ten dollars. In any event, the cost of each first redraw is preferably a uniform amount that could be equal to 5-20% of the table minimum. Preferably the house keeps this card exchange fee, providing a second revenue source. Preferably, card exchanges (redraws) are done sequentially, in clock-wise order, so that with reference to **FIG. 6**, player **P6** is allowed a first redraw, then player **P5** is allowed a first redraw, and so forth through player **P1**.

[0061] After the first round of redraws, the house may allow a round of raises in betting regions **110**. Players may increase their wagers, obligating all other competing players (that is, players who have wagered in regions **110**) to drop or call the raise. Illustratively, the raises may be in specified amounts, such as the amount of the ante or a multiple thereof.

[0062] In the preferred mode of play, the players next have an option of a second redraw. Preferably this second redraw costs more than the first redraw and may, for example, cost twice as much as the first redraw. At this point, the players have their final hands. Once again, the house may permit raises to be placed by players competing in the inter-player competition using regions **110**.

[0063] In addition, the house may if desired permit players to increase their bets against the house in regions **114**.

[0064] The dealer now exposes his hand totally. If one of his cards has been dealt face up, then he reveals the other four cards. If all of his cards were dealt face down, then they are all turned over. An optional feature at this point is qualification of the dealer's hand. For example, unless initial five cards of the dealer contain a pair of Jacks or better, then the players automatically recover their bets in regions **114**. The house may also return the antes from regions **112** or may pay even money on the ante. The dealer may be permitted card exchanges at this time also, to achieve his final hand. The dealer qualification option can be based on his initial five cards, or his hand after one redraw, or after two redraws. The house may permit the dealer a third redraw, particularly if increased wagering in regions **114** is allowed to the players. Of course, dealer qualification can be omitted if desired. The dealer redraws are for the dealer to (1) attempt to qualify his hand if that is necessary, and (2) achieve the highest possible five-card poker hand to attempt to beat the hands of any players **P** who have placed wagers in region **114** and not folded their hands. Dealer qualification controls the downside risk to the house.

[0065] The house may permit increased wagering in regions **114** by the players after each redraw by the dealer.

[0066] At the end of these card exchanges, the strength of each player's hand and the dealer's hand is determined, and if a player's hand beats that of the dealer, the player wins the amount in regions **112** plus **114**. If the dealer beats the

player's hand, the house collects the bets in regions **112** and **114**. Also, if bets have been made using regions **110**, the dealer before collecting the cards settles these inter-player bets among the competing players. The dealer preferably will also determine a winner and settle bets among players (that is, bets placed in region **110**) even if the dealer's hand failed to qualify. Alternatively, the house may determine that if the dealer's hand fails to qualify, not only would antes and wagers in regions **112** and **114** be returned, but also wagers in region **110** would be returned. However, it is presently contemplated that the better mode of play is to allow inter-player bets using region **110** to be settled by determining which competing player **P** has attained the best poker hand and awarding to that player the pot formed by the bets in all regions **110**. In the event of a draw, the pot would be divided equally between the equal winners. Preferably the house keeps a portion of each pot formed by the aggregated wagers in regions **110**. This is a third revenue source for the house.

[0067] Cards may be played face down or face up uniformly, or in some combination. The dealer's hand need not be the same as the player's hands in terms of whether cards are up or down.

[0068] Community cards could also be added to the third embodiment as a variation. If one or more community cards are to be used, a further region on the table **102** could be designated. Preferably such region would be centrally located for ease of view by all players. In the game **100** as previously described with each of six players **P** and the dealer **D** receiving five cards ($7 \times 5 = 35$ cards), and allowing two redraws for each of them ($7 \times 2 = 14$ cards), 49 cards are used and there are three cards left in a standard, 52-card poker deck. Hence the game in this format could be played with up to three community cards. The community card or cards may be dealt first, or after the initial non-community cards, or after the redraws, as may be elected by the house in advance. However, when community cards are used, it is preferable for them to be dealt prior to any card redraws so that players **P** can make informed decisions about their discards.

[0069] If game **100** is varied to use community cards, each player and the dealer may receive five non-community cards as just described. However, the modified game could be played with fewer non-community cards, as in the second embodiment game described above, which uses three non-community cards, for example.

[0070] In the community card variation of the third embodiment game **100**, depending on the number of cards, additional redraws could be allowed. That is, with three community cards, seven players plus a dealer could play, each receiving three non-community cards, thus using 27 cards ($24 \text{ cards} + 3 \text{ community cards} = 27 \text{ cards}$). Each player and the dealer could take three redraws (24 more cards), thus using 51 of the 52 cards in the standard deck. (Of course, the house may decide that players can have only two redraws, and indeed the house can elect to have more redraws than the players are entitled to have.)

[0071] With six players and a dealer, each of them could receive four non-community cards ($7 \times 4 = 28$ cards), three community cards could be dealt (3 cards), and each player and the dealer could have three redraws ($7 \times 3 = 21$ cards), thus using all 52 cards of a standard deck. It should be recalled

that with more redraws, more wagering can be permitted, with the house receiving a share of the aggregated wagers (the "pot") formed by bets in regions **110**. Hence, more revenue for the house is available through this variation. In addition, the house may permit increased wagering against the house in regions **114** with each of the redraws. However, to compensate for the increases, the house may have some further advantage such as an additional redraw permitted to the house or a higher qualification level, or any combination thereof.

[0072] In the event that community cards are used in game **100**, the bonus (using bets **108**) could be determined from either the non-community cards dealt to the player, on the one hand, or based on the best hand the player can form using any or all of the community cards but prior to any redraws.

[0073] Of course, it will be appreciated that the house could also elect to allow player bonuses to be determined after redraws. This would increase the likelihood of bets being placed in regions **108**, but since redraws would be permitted before determining bonus entitlement, the bonus scale must be adjusted downward to account for the players' ability to discard non-helpful cards. For example, if bonus is determined prior to redraws, then a pair of Jacks or better may pay double the region **108** bet. However, if redraws permitted prior to determining bonus, that the house may elect to pay only even money as a bonus.

[0074] In any event, each payment on a bet in region **108** is always made without regard to whether a player beats or fails to beat the hand of the dealer. Hence, in a game with six players P and a dealer D, all six players P could be entitled to bonus of one level or another (assuming that each of them places a bet in region **108**).

[0075] It will be understood that the poker games described herein could be played without predesignated betting regions such as **108**, **110**, **112**, and **114**. Having such areas is convenient to facilitate organization and play of the game, however. In addition, the poker games described here could be played with variations, such as, for example, varying whether certain cards are dealt face up or face down, eliminating some betting rounds, but still substantially producing the same results, within the scope of the invention, as described.

We claim:

1. A poker card game playable with conventional playing cards, comprising:

dealing five cards to each player and betting at least once;
 in three separate rounds, allowing each player to exchange any single card currently in his hand and dealing to that player a new card from the deck;
 betting after at least one of said exchanges; and
 determining a winner based on the card values after said third round of exchanges.

2. The card game of claim 1 wherein said game is played as a high-low game, and further including a determining which of said players are going high and which are going low, and wherein said determining a winner step includes determining the highest poker hand and the lowest poker hand.

3. The card game of claim 1 comprising a round of betting after each of said three card exchanges.

4. The card game of claim 1 wherein said betting at least once comprises betting after the second, third, fourth, and fifth cards.

5. The card game of claim 1 further including paying predetermined amounts for each of said card exchanges.

6. The game of claim 5 wherein said predetermined amounts increase over prior amounts with each round of card exchanges.

7. The poker game of claim 1 wherein some of said cards are dealt face up and others are dealt face down.

8. A poker card game playable with conventional playing cards, comprising:

dealing three cards to each player, dealing three community cards, and betting at least once; thereafter

in three separate rounds, allowing each player to discard any card currently in his hand in exchange for dealing a new card from the deck;

betting after at least one of said exchanges; and

determining a winner based on the card values after said third round of exchanges.

9. The card game of claim 8 wherein said game is played as a high-low game so that said determining step includes determining winners for the highest poker hand and for the lowest poker hand.

10. The card game of claim 8 wherein said betting after at least one of said exchanges comprises betting after each of said three card exchanges.

11. The card game of claim 8 wherein said dealing comprises dealing two non-community cards to each player, then dealing three community cards, and then dealing a third non-community card to each player, wherein at least one of said non-community cards is dealt face down.

12. The card game of claim 8 further including paying predetermined amounts for each of said card exchanges.

13. The game of claim 12 wherein said predetermined amounts increase over prior amounts with each round of card exchanges.

14. A poker game playable with conventional playing cards, comprising:

allowing each player to place a first wager in advance on the strength of the cards he will be dealt;

dealing cards to each player;

paying a first bonus to each player who has placed a said first wager and whose cards form a poker hand that qualifies for such first bonus;

allowing each player to make a card exchange upon payment of a predetermined fee; and

determining a winner.

15. The game of claim 14 further comprising dealing a hand to the dealer and allowing bets against the house (represented by the dealer).

16. The game of claim 15 further comprising determining whether the dealer's hand qualifies by reaching at least a minimum strength, and returning said bets against the house unless the dealer's hand qualifies but determining a winner as between the house and the players if the dealer's hand qualifies.

17. The game of claim 15 further comprising allowing the dealer to make a limited number of card exchanges to qualify his hand.

18. A poker game playable with conventional playing cards, comprising:

allowing each player to place a first wager against the dealer;

dealing cards to each player;

allowing each player to place a second wager against other players;

allowing each player to make at least one card exchange upon payment of a predetermined fee;

paying a first amount to a player when his hand is superior to the dealer's hand; and

settling bets placed by players against other players.

19. The game of claim 18 wherein said at least one card exchange comprises two card exchanges, wherein the predetermined fee is greater for the second card exchange than for the first card exchange.

20. The game of claim 19 further comprising allowing the dealer to make a limited number of card exchanges to qualify his hand.

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