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(54) **POKER VIDEO GAME TERMINAL**

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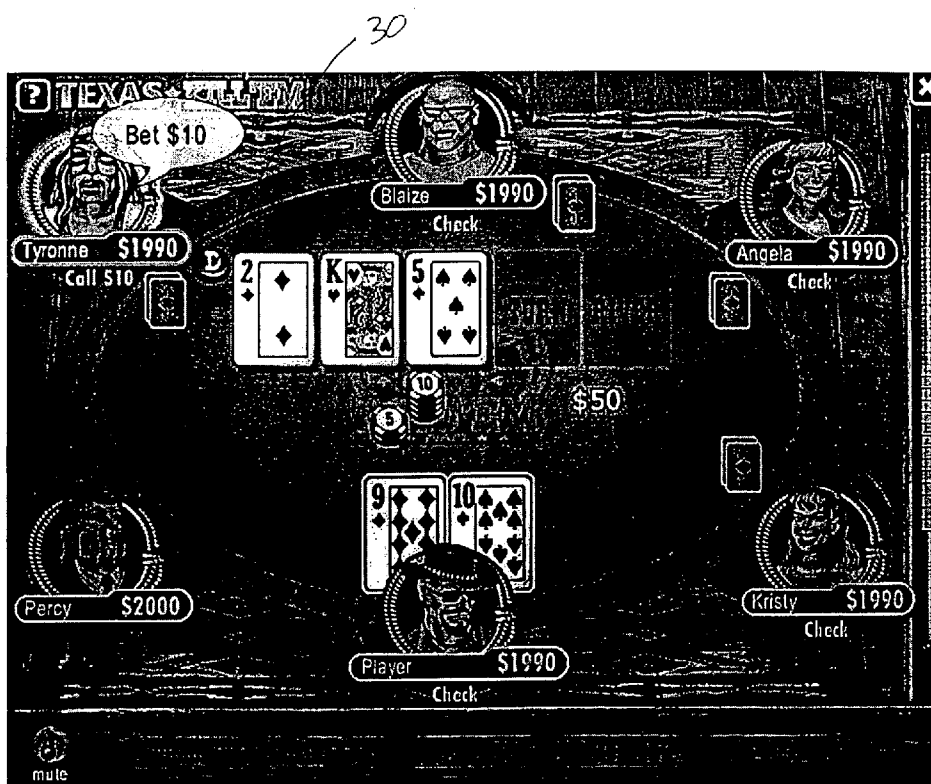
(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **463/16**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of playing a poker game using a video game terminal includes one player using the video game terminal and three or more terminal generated and controlled players to

play against. Each player has a starting point value used for play and scoring in the poker game. The poker game includes a series of elimination rounds where each elimination round comprises two or more hands and eliminating the player with the lowest score at the end of an elimination round. Each hand in an elimination round includes two down cards provided to each player and five common cards provided face up for use by all players in combination with their respective two down cards for forming of the best five card poker hand and thereby determining a winner of a "win" pool associated with the hand. Each hand in an elimination round includes one or more player wagering steps where players wager points from their starting points with said wagered points accumulating in the "win" pool or a player withdrawing from the hand. The game terminal for each hand initially provides two down cards for each player and three face up cards of said five common cards followed by a wagering step and a wagering step follows the fifth card. After each round, the player with the lowest score is eliminated. This poker game method is relatively fast to play and involves similar strategy and expertise used in traditional poker games. The method also has an interconnected terminal mode allowing direct competition between players having a connected terminal.

# Texas Kill'em Poker



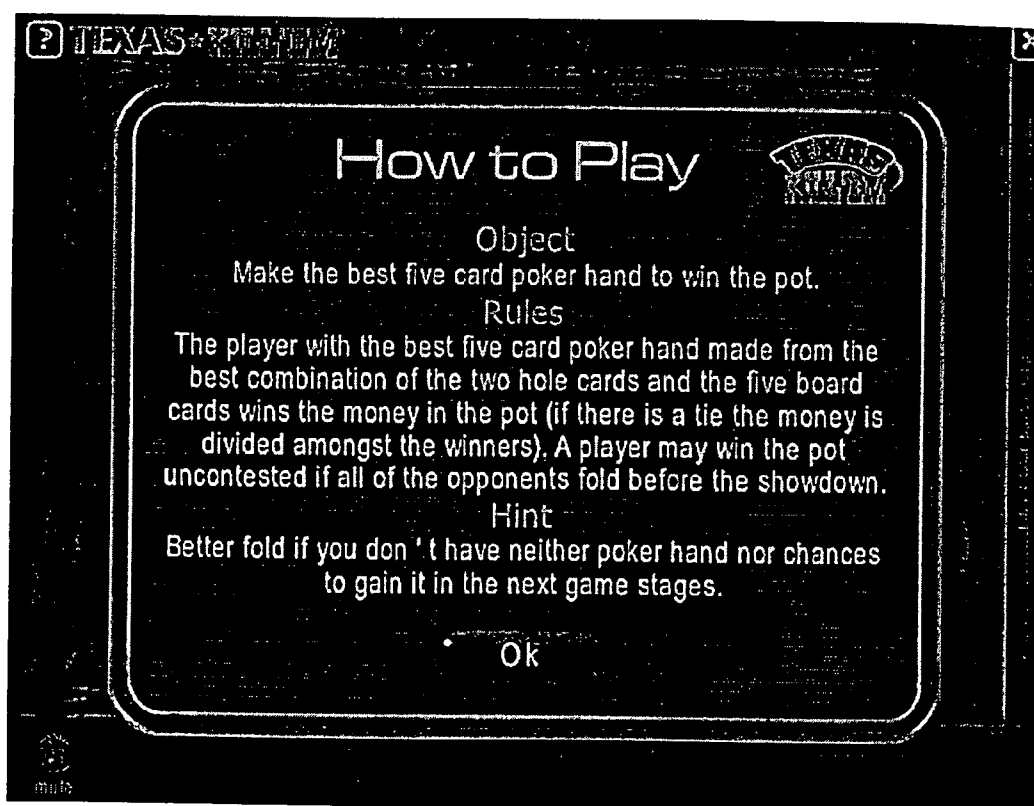


FIG 1

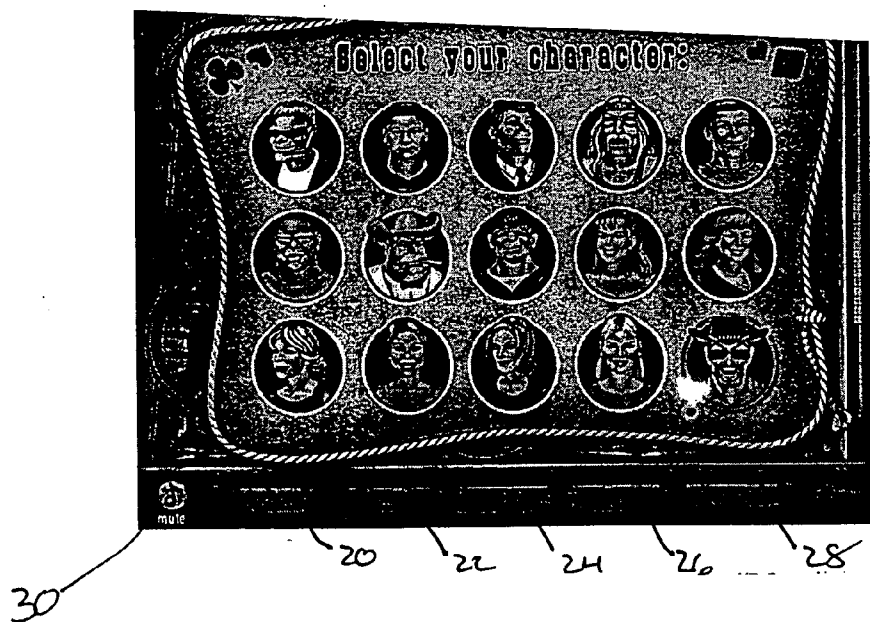


FIG 2

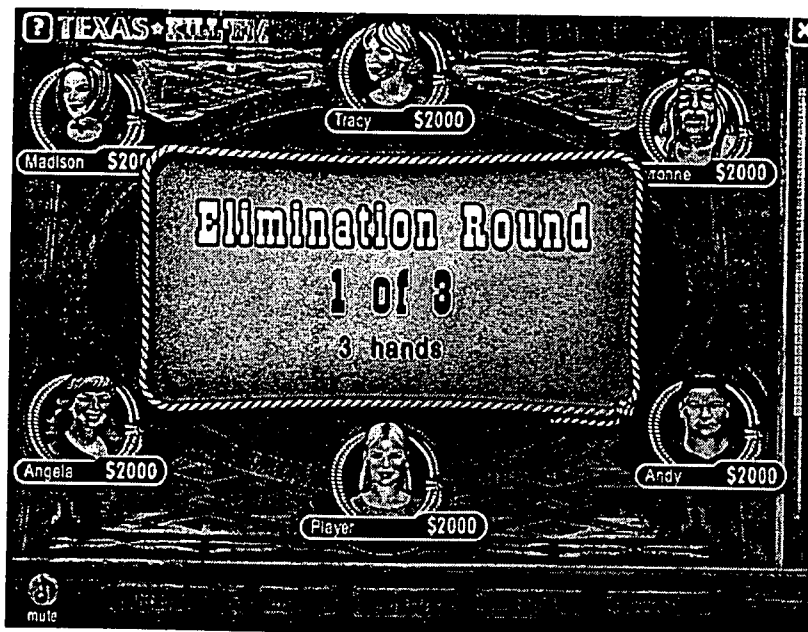


FIG 3

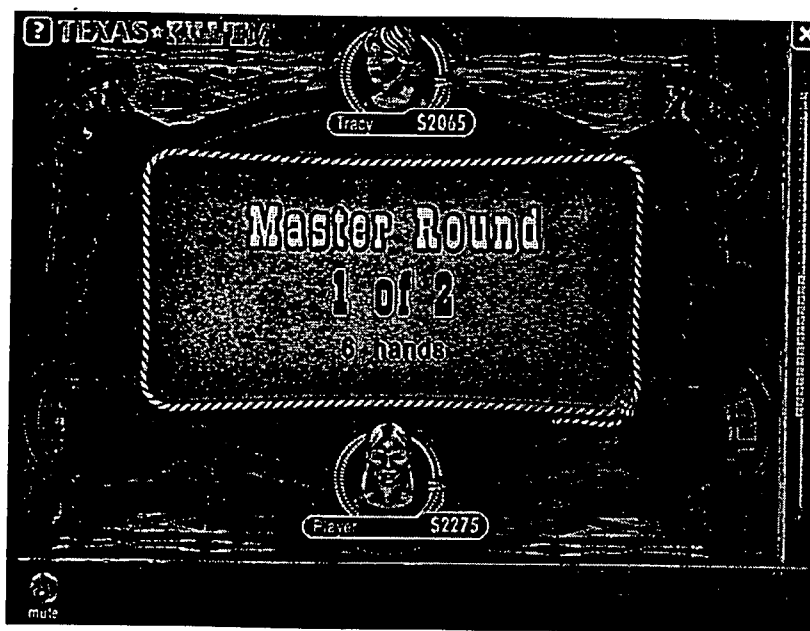


FIG 4

# Texas Kill'em Poker

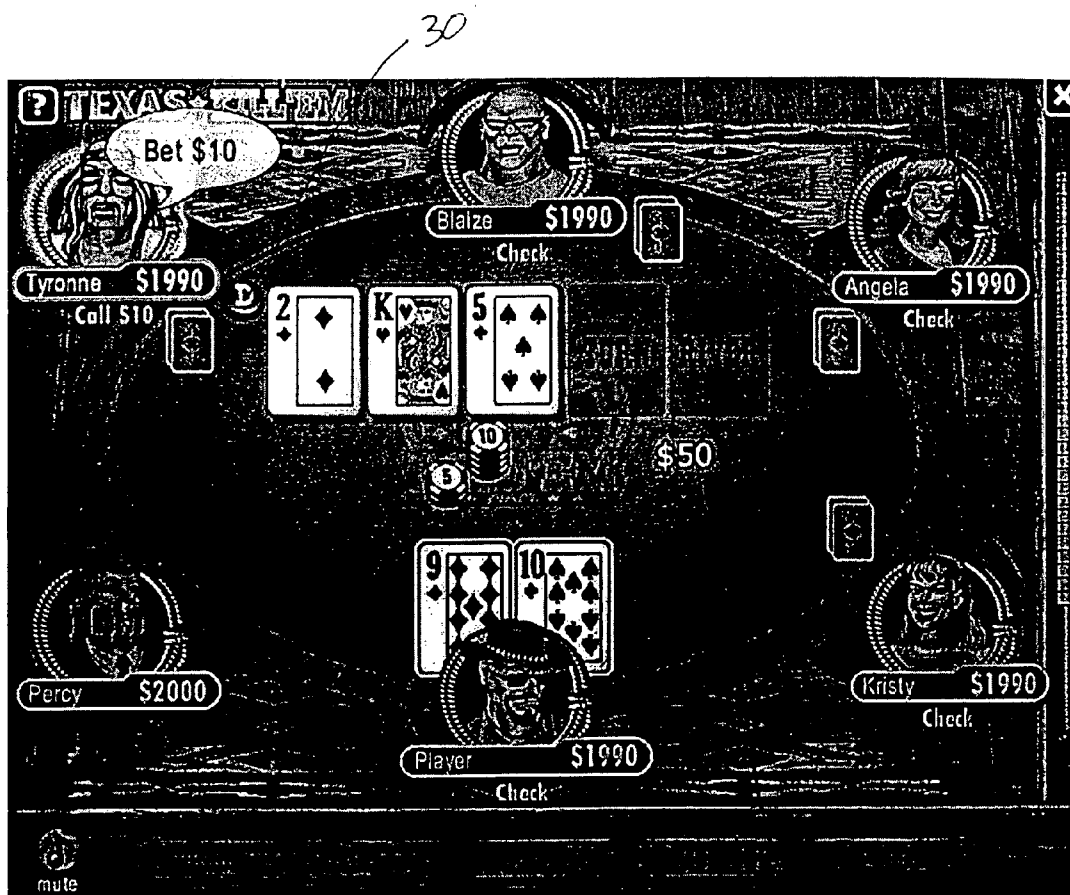


FIG 5

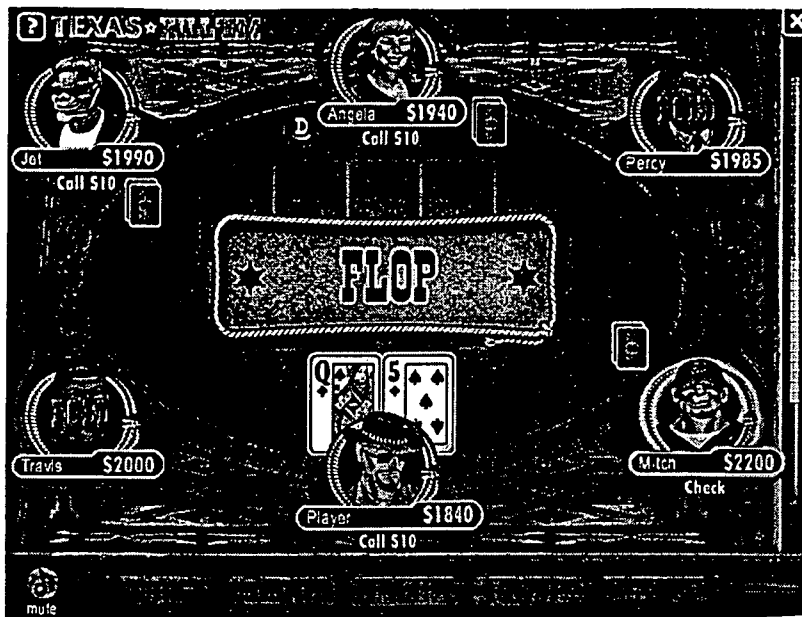


FIG. 6

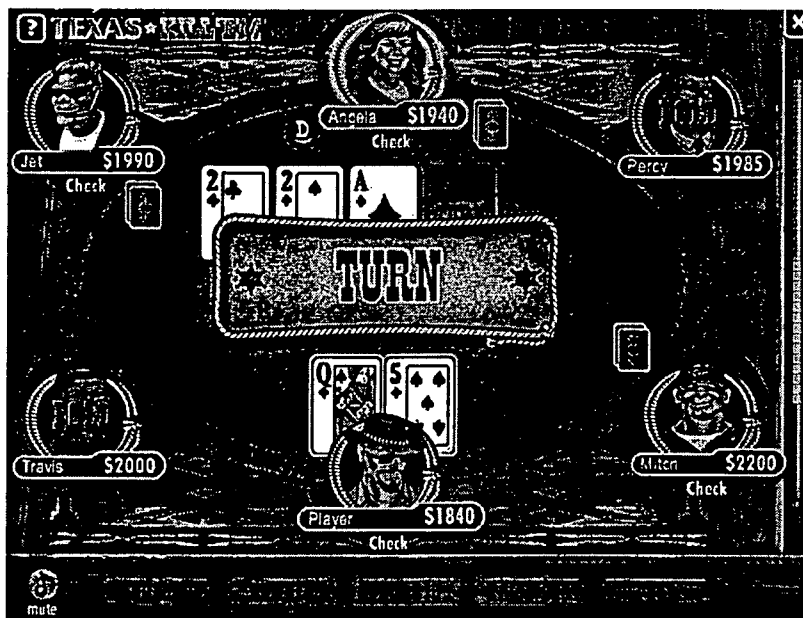


FIG. 7

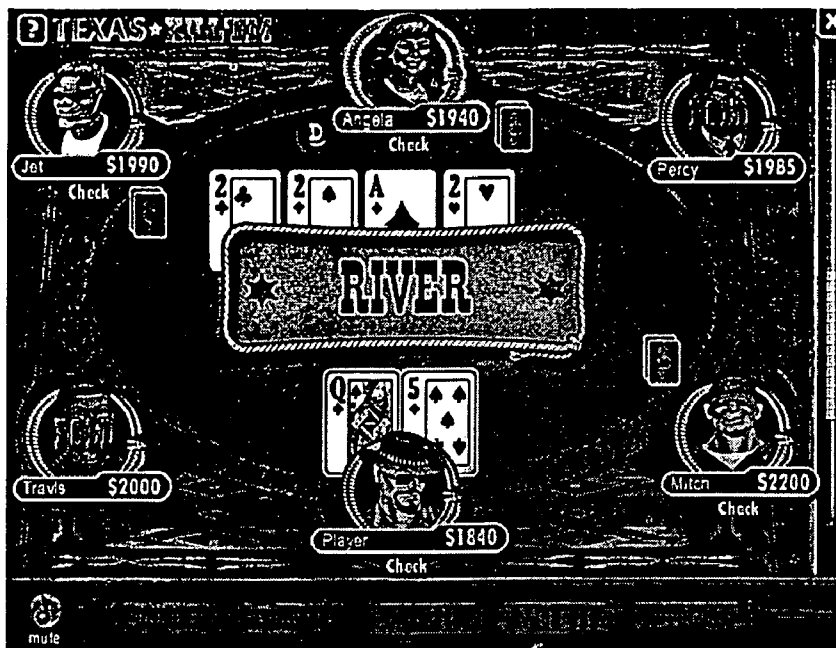


FIG. 8

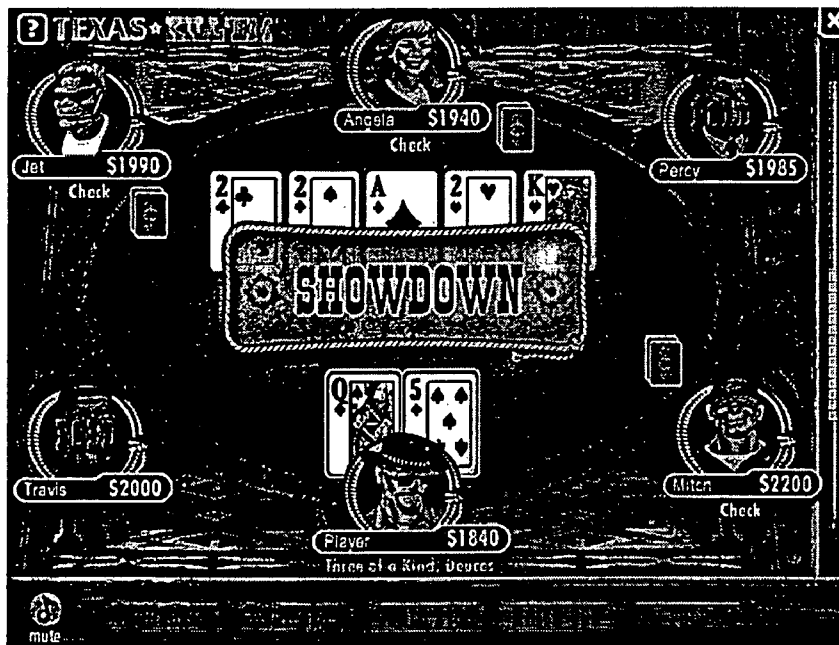


FIG. 9

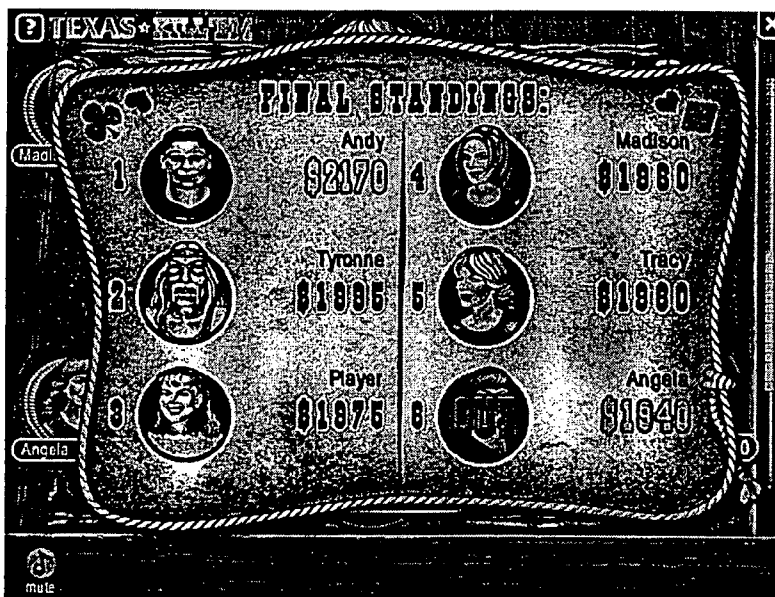


FIG. 10



**POKER VIDEO GAME TERMINAL**

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention relates to video game terminals and in particular, to a method of playing a card game on a video game terminal or on a series of networked terminals.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] Video game terminals are commonly available in restaurants and bars for amusement purposes. Video game terminals typically have relatively simple straight forward games that can be played in two to four minutes. The terminals include a coin or bill payment capability.

[0003] Often these video game terminals have more than 100 games available to play and a large portion of these games will be card games. Some of these terminals allow for multi-player network games to be played by players at different terminals.

[0004] In the present invention, a particular approach for playing a card game is disclosed which allows for a game similar to the popular poker game Texas Hold'em. The particular approach of the game allows the game to be completed in a relatively short period of time while still maintaining a high degree of similarity with conventional poker games.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0005] A method of playing a video game terminal poker game according to the present invention comprises one player using the video game terminal and three or more terminal generated and controlled players with each player having a starting point value used for play and scoring in the poker game. The poker game includes a series of elimination rounds where each elimination round comprises two or more hands and eliminating the player with the lowest score at the end of each elimination round. Each hand in an elimination round includes two down cards provided to each player and 5 common cards provided face up for use by all players in combination with their respective two down cards for forming the best poker hand and thereby determining a winner of a pool associated with the hand. Each hand in an elimination round includes one or more player wagering steps where players wager points from said starting points of said players with said wagered points accumulating in a win pool and a player withdrawing from the hand if a wager is not matched or exceeded. The game terminal for each hand initially provides two down cards for each player and 3 face up cards of said 5 common cards followed by one of said wagering steps. The game terminal subsequently displays a fourth common card followed by a further wagering step for remaining players and thereafter the terminals displays the fifth common card. After the fifth common card the winner of the hand is determined based on the player that forms the best poker hand using any of the 5 common cards and the player's two down cards and awarding the winning player the win pool that is added to the player's point value. At least two hands are played for each elimination round and eliminating the player with the lowest point value at the end of each elimination round is eliminated.

[0006] In a preferred aspect of the invention, the elimination rounds include initial elimination rounds and final elimination rounds and the number of hands forming a final elimination round is greater than the number of hands forming an initial elimination round.

[0007] In a further aspect of the invention each initial elimination round has at least 3 hands.

[0008] In a different aspect of the invention, a further wagering step is completed after the display of the fifth common card and prior to determining the winner of the hand.

[0009] In yet a further aspect of the invention, the best poker hand is the best five card poker hand.

[0010] In a further aspect of the invention, the method includes an initial step executed by the player of selecting a character from a group of characters displayed by the game terminal with said terminal using the selected character to identify the player on any game screens displayed by the terminal during the poker game.

[0011] In an aspect of the invention the method includes at least 3 initial elimination rounds.

[0012] In a preferred aspect of the invention the method includes 2 final elimination rounds.

[0013] In yet a further aspect of the invention each final elimination round includes at least 5 hands.

[0014] According to an aspect of the invention the terminal includes a player actuated step to automatically complete a hand for the remaining terminal generated players if said one player withdraws from a hand.

[0015] In a different aspect of the invention the method includes the terminal stopping the game if said one player is eliminated.

[0016] According to an aspect of the invention the method includes 3 initial elimination rounds followed by two final elimination rounds. Preferably each final elimination round includes at least 5 hands.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0017] Preferred embodiments of the invention are shown in the drawings, wherein:

[0018] FIG. 1 is a screen shot presenting the rules of the game to the player;

[0019] FIG. 2 is a screen shot of various characters that can be selected by the player;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a screen shot announcing the start of the elimination round;

[0021] FIG. 4 is a screen shot of the start of the master round;

[0022] FIG. 5 is a screen shot of the first hand in an elimination round;

[0023] FIG. 6 is a screen shot indicating that the initial three open cards will subsequently appear;

[0024] FIG. 7 is a screen shot indicating that the fourth or "turn" card is about to appear;

[0025] FIG. 8 is a screen shot indicating that the fifth or "river" card is about to appear;

[0026] FIG. 9 indicates that everyone is then about to expose their own two cards and thus, the poker hand; and

[0027] FIG. 10 is a screen shot that the standings that would appear after round 1, in this case, the player Angela is eliminated from the next round as she had the lowest total indicated by 1940.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

[0028] The screen shot of FIG. 1 defines the object of the game as forming the best five card poker hand to win the "pot". The best five card poker hand is made from the best combination of the player's two hold cards and the five common board cards. The player with the best hand wins the "pot". This is the general premise and rule of the card game Texas Hold'em and the variations between the game Texas Hold'em and the present game are found with respect to

forming of elimination rounds and Master or final rounds as will be subsequently discussed.

[0029] As can be appreciated, the present card game is effectively played between the player and the video game terminal. In fact, the video game terminal is controlling the play of initially five of the six players as part of the game.

[0030] In the screen shot of FIG. 2, the terminal has prompted the player to select his particular character.

[0031] The screen shot of FIG. 3 announces the beginning of three elimination rounds. Each round consists of three hands and the player with the lowest score at the end of each round is eliminated. Each player starts the game with the same amount or monetary value which in this case is \$2000.

[0032] FIG. 4 is a screen shot which is presented after the elimination round has been completed. Three players are eliminated by completing the elimination rounds and thus, there are only three players remaining for the Master rounds. The Master rounds consists of two rounds with each round consisting of six hands. Once again, at the end of each round, a player is eliminated. A Master round has more hands than an Elimination round. For example, to reduce the game duration, each Master round could be five hands and each Elimination round could be three hands.

[0033] FIG. 6 is a screen shot which would be in the first round of a game and announces the "flop", i.e., the initial three "common" cards are about to be presented. For example, in the screen shot of FIG. 7, the "flop" is shown as being the cards 2 of clubs, 2 of spades, and Ace of diamonds.

[0034] In FIG. 7, the screen shot is effectively announcing that the "turn" card of the fourth card is about to be presented.

[0035] The screen shot of FIG. 8 shows that the "turn" card has been exposed and was the 2 of hearts. A further series of bets have been completed and the screen shot is now announcing that the "river" or fifth card is about to be presented.

[0036] In the screen shot of FIG. 9, the results of this particular round are about to be determined.

[0037] The screen shot of FIG. 10 shows the final standings of a particular round, and in this case the first round and the player Angela only had \$1940 remaining and is eliminated from the next round of the game as she had the lowest total after the initial round.

[0038] The concept of eliminating the player with the lowest score after each round significantly increases the speed of play and allows the card game to be effective for use in a video game terminal where the desirable game duration is again two to four minutes.

[0039] The present game provides the opportunity for the player to receive cards and determine how they wish to proceed in a series of steps that define a round of the game. The game also allows betting at various stages in each round. The players place bets which include "call", "raise" or "fold". These are entered by the active areas on the touch screen indicated as 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28, at the bottom of the screen. It is also possible for the player to actuate area 30 which allows the game to be played in silence. This effectively turns off background music and other features. Preferably, this area has different settings, and in the first setting, the background music is turned off, while voice and other sound effects can still be heard. It is also possible to turn off both the background music and the voice and sound effects. If this area is not activated, both background music and voice and sound effects are present.

[0040] As can be appreciated, the present game has one human player and five artificial players controlled by the video game terminal. If the human player decides to fold, the terminal automatically completes the round and starts the next round.

[0041] A player is preferably given 25 seconds to play his turn in game. If he does not play, he is prompted to enter a command. If the player does not enter a command in the following period of time, preferably 10 seconds, the terminal makes a decision for him, and "folds" the player's hand.

[0042] The setting is similar to a Texas Hold'em game and variations on betting each round can vary. Typically, there is a betting input for each sequence in the round. This betting sequence can be limited and is preferably limited to three or less opportunities for each player.

[0043] Returning to FIG. 5, it can be seen that the player Tyron is indicated as being the dealer by the "D" button 30 shown on the screen. The dealer has placed a bet of \$10 and the next four players have each "checked" the bet, and as such, their total has been reduced from \$2000 to \$1990. The player Percy has decided to "fold". This may be a good strategy because his first two cards are relatively poor. There is therefore a total of \$50 in the "win" pool or "pot" indicated by the value 30 shown in the Figure. As all players in this round of betting merely "checked", the next step would be for the video game terminal to deal the "turn" card. Thus, the screen shot of FIG. 7 would appear indicating that a "turn" card is about to be shown. Once the "turn" card is shown, the terminal allows for a "next round" of betting. If anyone "raises" the bet, the other players can either "check" or "raise" the bet. As previously indicated, this would be limited to two or three opportunities for each player.

[0044] With this particular game arrangement, a card game similar to Texas Hold'em is completed within a relatively short period of time. Each "round" consists of at least three hands and in the Master round, each "round" consists of six hands. The same type of strategy used in Texas Hold'em is also present in the present game.

[0045] The present game has been described for use with one game terminal and one actual player. The game terminal has provided the opponents and controls their play. This game can also be used by several connected game terminals or devices that are interconnected to allow players to play against one another. For example, six or more game terminals can be interconnected and each player provides his input through one of the terminals. In an interconnected arrangement, one terminal or device would be controlling and the further terminals acting as displayed input devices. The controlling terminal could provide additional opposition for less than six actual players. Thus, the game is also directed for use in interconnected terminal systems.

[0046] Although various preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described herein in detail, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, that variations may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention or the scope of the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method of playing a video game terminal poker game comprising one player using the video game terminal and three or more terminal generated and controlled players with each player having a starting point value used for play and scoring in the poker game;

the poker game including a series of elimination rounds where each elimination round comprises two or more hands and eliminating the player with the lowest score at the end of an elimination round;

each hand in an elimination round including two down cards provided to each player and five common cards provided face up for use by all players in combination with their respective two down cards for forming of the

best poker hand and thereby determining a winner of a pool associated with the hand;

each hand in an elimination round including one or more player wagering steps where players wager points from said starting points of said players with said wagered points accumulating in a win pool or a player withdrawing from the hand;

the game terminal for each hand initially providing two down cards for each player and three face up cards of said five common cards followed by one of said wagering steps; the game terminal subsequently displaying a fourth common card followed by a further wagering step for remaining players; the game terminal thereafter displaying the fifth common card; and

thereafter determining the winner of the hand based on the player that forms the best poker hand using any of the 5 common cards and the player's two down cards and awarding the winning player the win pool that is added to the player's point value;

playing at least two hands for each elimination round and eliminating the player with the lowest point value at the end of each elimination round.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the elimination rounds include initial elimination rounds and final elimination rounds and the number of hands forming a final elimination round is greater than the number of hands forming an initial elimination round.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein each initial elimination round has at least three hands.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 including a further wagering step after the display of the fifth common card and prior to determining the winner of the hand.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 including an initial step executed by the player of selecting a character from a group of characters displayed by the game terminal with said terminal using the selected character to identify the player on any game screens displayed by the terminal during the poker game.

6. A method as claimed in claim 3 including at least three initial elimination rounds.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6 including two final elimination rounds.

8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein each final elimination round includes at least five hands.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said terminal includes a player actuated step to automatically complete a hand for the remaining terminal generated players if said one player withdraws from a hand.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the terminal stops the game if said one player is eliminated.

11. A method as claimed in claim 3 including five generated and controlled players.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein three initial elimination rounds are followed by two final elimination rounds.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the best poker hand is the best five card poker hand.

14. A method as claimed in claim 1 including an interconnected terminal mode allowing direct competition between actual players each providing their game input through a respective terminal.

15. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said method in said interconnected terminal mode reduces the terminal

generated and controlled players with each additional interconnected terminal having an actual player.

16. A method of playing a video game terminal poker game comprising one player using the video game terminal and at least three further players with each player having a starting point value used for play and scoring in the poker game; said further players including players at connected video game terminals and video game terminal generated and controlled players;

the poker game including a series of elimination rounds where each elimination round comprises two or more hands and eliminating the player with the lowest score at the end of an elimination round;

each hand in an elimination round including two down cards provided to each player and five common cards provided face up for use by all players in combination with their respective two down cards for forming of the best poker hand and thereby determining a winner of a pool associated with the hand;

each hand in an elimination round including one or more player wagering steps where players wager points from said starting points of said players with said wagered points accumulating in a win pool or a player withdrawing from the hand;

the game terminal for each hand initially providing two down cards for each player and three face up cards of said five common cards followed by one of said wagering steps; the game terminal subsequently displaying a fourth common card followed by a further wagering step for remaining players; the game terminal thereafter displaying the fifth common card; and thereafter determining the winner of the hand based on the player that forms the best poker hand using any of the 5 common cards and the player's two down cards and awarding the winning player the win pool that is added to the player's point value;

playing at least two hands for each elimination round and eliminating the player with the lowest point value at the end of each elimination round.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said poker game includes two or more players with each player using a connected video game terminal to participate in said game.

18. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein said further players are all computer generated and controlled players.

19. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein each hand in an elimination round including one or more player wagering steps where players wager points from said starting points of said players with said wagered points accumulating in a win pool; and wherein said method including determining a winning hand for each round and awarding the win pool to the player associated with the winning hand.

20. A method as claimed in claim 19 wherein each hand is an elimination round initially includes two down cards for each player and three fact up cards of said five common cards followed by a wagering step.