



US 20080042355A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Snow

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2008/0042355 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 21, 2008**

(54) **PROGRESSIVE SIDE BET GAME WITH
FOUR CARD POKER AND ASSOCIATED
GAMES**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63F 1/00 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **273/292**

(76) **Inventor: Roger M. Snow, Las Vegas, NV (US)**

Correspondence Address:
Mark A. Litman & Associates, P.A.
3209 West 76th Street
York Business Center, Suite 205
Edina, MN 55435 (US)

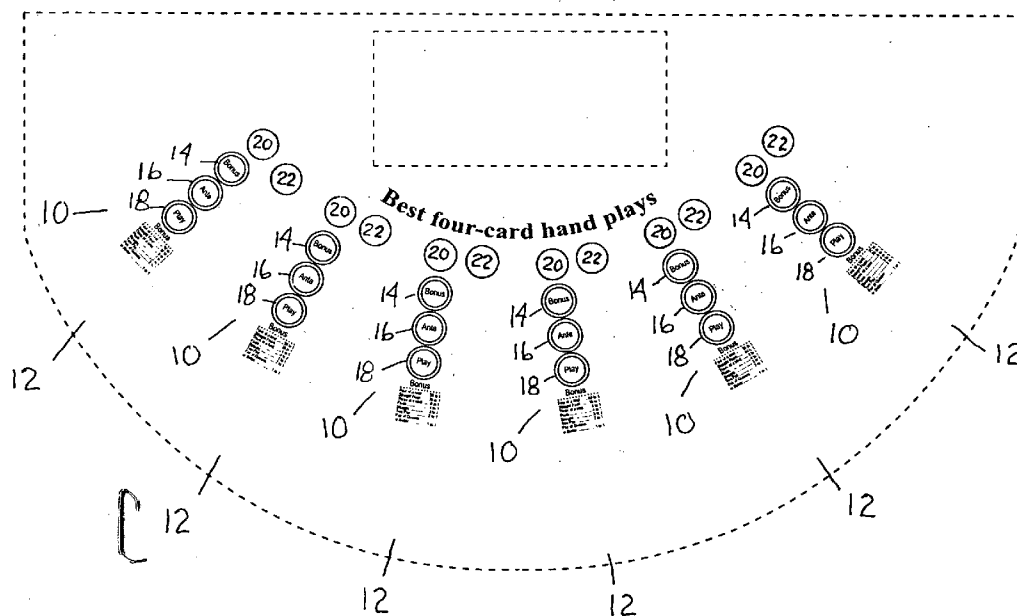
(57) **ABSTRACT**

(21) **Appl. No.: 11/893,661**
(22) **Filed: Aug. 17, 2007**

A method of playing a wagering game is used with symbols or cards. At least a first hand and a second hand are provided. The first hand competes against the second hand. The first hand has a statistical advantage versus the second hand. A player elects to place a side bet on a jackpot game and has an option on wagering on at least the first hand or on at least the second hand to win the jackpot event. A first separate payable is provided against the jackpot for the first hand and a second separate payable is provided against the jackpot for the second hand. If the side bet includes a wager on the first hand, at least some winning events against the first payable for the first hand return a lesser amount or lesser percentage of a jackpot than a same winning event will return from the second payable for the second hand.

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/499,864, filed on Aug. 4, 2006.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 11/589,701, filed on Oct. 30, 2006, which is a continuation of application No. 10/152,325, filed on May 20, 2002, now abandoned.



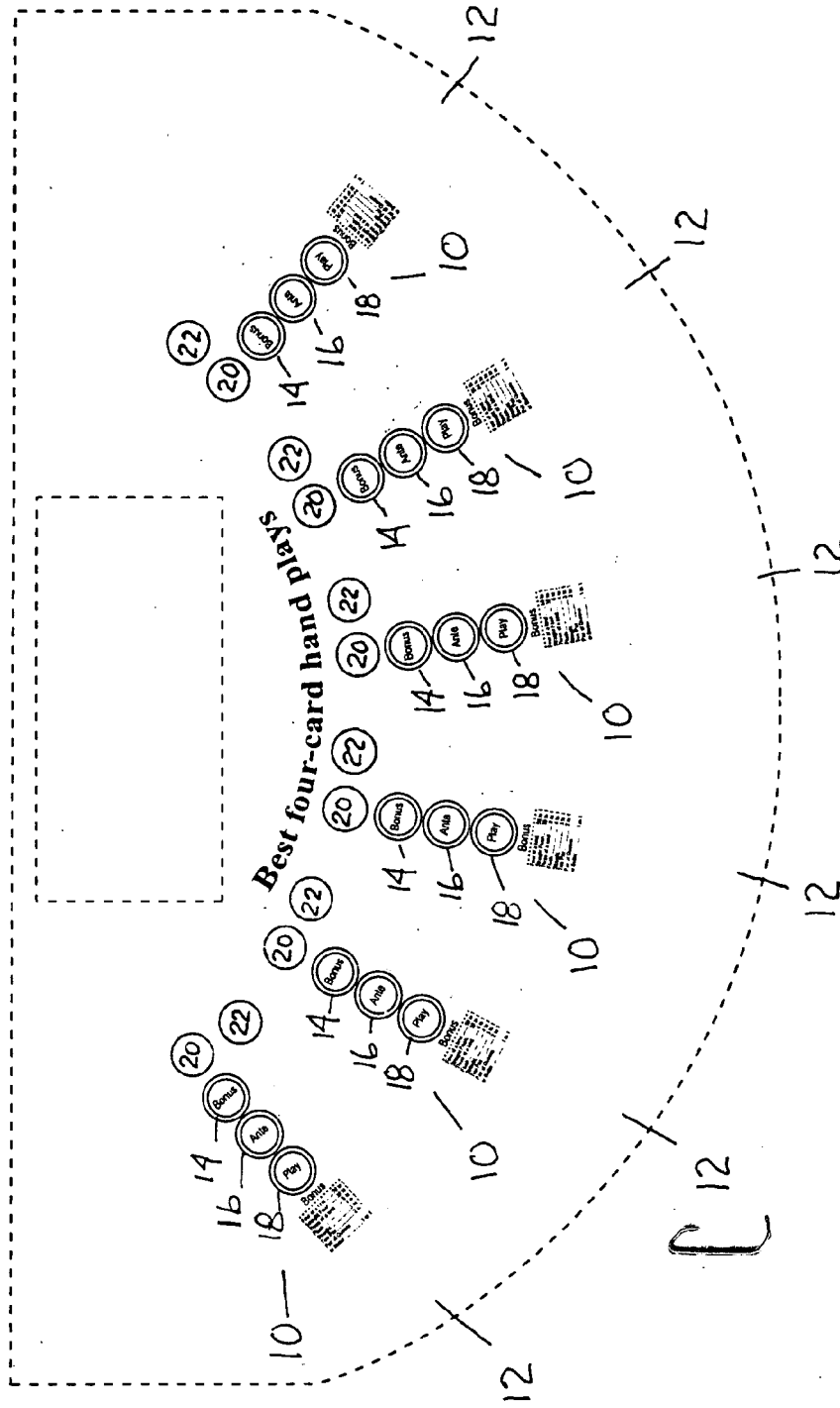


Fig. 1

PROGRESSIVE SIDE BET GAME WITH FOUR CARD POKER AND ASSOCIATED GAMES

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of copending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/499,864, filed Aug. 4, 2006 and copending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/589,701, filed Oct. 20, 2006, which are in turn continuations of now abandoned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/152,325, filed May 2, 2002, which applications are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to the field of gaming, particularly gaming using wagering symbols and in particular casino table wagering games with playing cards and especially poker-type casino wagering games.

[0004] 2. Background of the Art

[0005] The present invention generally relates to a symbol award wagering game, and especially a card game that can be played in a casino, on electronic media, over the internet or in a card room. More particularly, it relates to a modified version of a stud poker game.

[0006] As a leisure time activity, poker and other card games have been popular for many years. The capital requirements for playing poker and other table card games are very low. All that are needed are one or more decks of cards, a playing surface and a few participants. Five card poker is a game that most people know how to play and many games have been developed using the same basic priority or rank order of winning poker hands: Royal Flush, Straight Flush, Four of a Kind, Full House, Flush, Straight, Three of a Kind, Two Pair, One Pair and high card(s) in hand.

[0007] Many places, both within and without the United States, have legalized gaming. Poker is one of the games of chance offered in both casinos and card rooms. In a conventional card room poker game, the house provides a dealer, the playing cards, the table and chairs, but the house does not finance play. The house collects a nominal percentage of each player's bet ("the rake") that compensates the house for providing the facilities to the players. Alternatively, the house may charge each player a set amount per hand or for a specified length of time of play. Each player is competing not against the house, but against all the other players with the highest hand winning the total of all the wagers made on that hand.

[0008] Many people do not like to play card room poker because each player is competing against his fellow players, not against the house. Many people would rather attempt to win money from an impersonal source, the house or the casino, rather than from their fellow players with whom they may be acquainted. Card room poker also tends to not offer any bonus payments for particularly good hands, although bonuses are sometimes paid for highest hands in tournaments or for specific combinations of hands at poker tables (e.g., a losing hand of at least a full house). While a Royal Flush is a rare occurrence and generates a thrill for any poker

player, the player collects the same total wager that he would have collected if the hand was won with a Three-of-a-Kind.

[0009] In the past fifteen years, a number of card games have been introduced to provide poker-type card games as house-banked casino table games. These games have focused on a number of elements in providing excitement and staying power for the games. The games must be quickly understood by players. The rules must be simple and clear. The resolution of wagers by the dealer must be easily accomplished. The reading of hands by a dealer must not be complex. In addition, the games must provide a high enough hit frequency to appeal to players, yet allow the house to retain a profitable portion of the wagers. These needs have limited the number of successful games that have been designed and successfully introduced into the casino gaming market and the use of successful side bet bonus, jackpot or progressive jackpot is even more difficult with the variety of games.

[0010] Among the successful games are Let It Ride Bonus® poker, Three Card Poker® game and Caribbean Stud® poker. These games have each achieved a high level of commercial success with different formats and attributes.

[0011] Let It Ride Bonus® stud poker is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,288,081. In this game, the player makes a wager in three parts, three cards are dealt to each player (there may be only a single player), and two common cards are dealt face down in front of the dealer. The player examines his/her three cards, evaluates the likelihood of a ranked hand (e.g., at least a pair of tens) being achieved with those three cards and the as yet unseen common cards. The player, based on judgment of that likelihood, may elect to withdraw the first of the three-part wager or keep the wager at risk. Upon the player making that decision, and withdrawing or allowing the first wager to remain at risk, a first of the common cards is turned face up. The player then can make another decision with regard to the play of the hand and whether there is a changed potential for a ranked hand. A second portion of the three-part wager is then withdrawn or allowed to remain at risk. After this decision, the last common card is exposed, and the rank of each player's hand, including the common cards, is evaluated. Payments are made to each player based on only the rank of hand achieved and the number of wagers left on the table from the original three-part wager. As noted, at least one wager must remain, as only two parts can have been withdrawn. Wagers are paid off at rates (or odds), for example, of 1:1 for pairs of at least 10's, 2:1 for two pairs, 3:1 for three-of-a-kind, 5:1 for straights, 7:1 for flushes, 12:1 for full houses, 50:1 for four-of-a-kind, 250:1 for straight flushes, and 1000:1 for Royal Flushes. The specific payout odds can be varied and often casinos choose payout tables that help them achieve a desired percentage hold. Side bonus wagers may also be placed in which ranked hands over three-of-a-kind receive fixed or progressive bonuses, such as \$25,000 for a Royal Flush. The bonus payouts and hand combinations are typically displayed on a payout table on the table surface.

[0012] The Three Card Poker® game is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,685,774. In this game, the dealer deals three cards to each player and three cards to the dealer, all face down. Initially one or two optional wagers may be made by the player. One such wager is for the "Pair Plus" bonus bet, a bet on achieving a winning combination included in a payout

table. Another wager is the game ante on which the player competes against the dealer. The Pair Plus bet in one example of the invention is a wager that the three card hand will have a rank of at least one pair or more. The hand is paid off in multiples of the bet depending upon the rank of the hand, with up to 40:1 or more paid out for three-of-a-kind. In the ante wager, if the player wants to compete against the dealer's hand (after viewing the rank of the player's hand), an additional wager equal to one (or alternatively two) times the ante must be placed by the player. The dealer's hand is then exposed. If the dealer does not have a hand of at least a certain qualifying rank (e.g., at least Queen high), the dealer's hand is not in play. If the player has not made the additional wager, the ante is collected by the dealer at some point in the play of the game. If the player has made the additional wager, the ante is paid off to the player if the dealer's hand has not qualified or if the dealer's hand is not as high a rank as the player's hand. If the dealer's hand has qualified, and the dealer's hand is higher than the player's hand, then the ante and the additional wager are collected by the house. If the dealer's hand qualifies (e.g., at least Queen high) and is lower than the player's hand rank, both the ante and additional wager are paid off, with multiples payable to the ante wager for certain high ranking hands (e.g., straights, flushes, straight flushes, three-of-a-kind, etc.). The ranking of the various three card poker hands is different than in five card poker games.

[0013] In Caribbean Stud® poker, described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,836,533, a player makes an initial ante wager, and five cards are dealt to each player and to a dealer. The dealer exposes one of the five cards to influence the player. The player decides if the dealt player hand is of sufficient rank to compete against the dealer's hand. The player may fold the player's hand at that time, or continue the game by placing an additional wager (referred to as the "Bet") that is usually required to be twice the value of the ante. The dealer's hand qualifies for active play against the Bet with a rank of at least Ace-King. If the dealer qualifies, the rank of the players' hands are compared with the rank of the dealer's hand. Players with hands of higher rank than the dealer's hand win both the ante and the Bet. Players with hands of lower rank than the dealer's hand lose both the ante and the Bet. If an initial side bet (often referred to as the Progressive Jackpot side bet) has been made by the player, ranked hands of particularly high values (e.g., at least a Flush) are paid absolute bonus amounts or may be paid out of a progressive jackpot. This bonus side bet is paid whether or not the player's hand rank exceeds the rank of the dealer's hand.

[0014] U.S. Pat. No. 6,170,827 describes another poker-type casino table card game. This game may be played at a table with as many as seven players competing against a dealer. The play of the game is fairly complex, with each player having both multiple hands and utilization of a dealer's card. One method of play is to provide each player with three cards, and the dealer is provided with four cards. The dealer's play of cards is predetermined, while the players may select their desired holding. Player's hands are competing directly against the dealer's hand in each of the hands made by the player and the dealer.

[0015] It is always desirable to explore alternative games for play in the field of gaming tables to provide players with varied experiences and alternatives to known games.

[0016] Progressive jackpot systems and apparatus and other side bet progressive and jackpot bonus games are described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,861,041 (Jones, et al.) and U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,743,800; 6,146,270; 6,139,430; 6,179,710; 6,638,167; and 6,929,264. All patent and patent applications referenced in this disclosure are incorporated herein in their entirety.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0017] An underlying technology in the present invention includes a base game in which two hands compete against each other for rank or score, and a player may wager on one or both hands against the other and/or against a payable. The base game is particularly suited for a progressive jackpot played where one hand has a higher probability of success against the payable and especially a higher probability for that one hand in favor of winning the progressive jackpot as compared to the at least one another hand. The game would therefore use two paytables constructed with different payouts for the same ranks or score in the different hands (e.g., a dealer hand and a player hand). The payable would especially be modified with different payouts for the highest winnings on the jackpot, where even with the maximum winning hand appearing in the hand having the higher probability for the ranked hands.

[0018] The invention is particularly suitable with games in which symbols are provided to multiple hands and either a) mapping of available symbols weights one hand versus another, b) a wild card(s) is possible with only one hand, or c) more symbols are provided to one hand versus another to provide a statistically higher likelihood of higher ranked hands for one hand versus another.

[0019] A particular format of play includes a dealer hand and a player hand, with a greater number of cards, a potentially greater number of symbols, or wild cards being made available to the dealer hand. A progressive side bet or fixed jackpot side bet or bonus side bet is provided which pays on at least one high poker rank, at least one high symbol rank or at least one high score. Because the probabilities for success on a jackpot win or high award rank win is greater on one hand (herein referred to as the "higher probability hand") versus another, different paytables are provided for the side bet wager on the progressive or fixed jackpot wager, with at least some payouts being lower. The game of Four-Card Poker® game is particularly suited or the underlying game. In one embodiment, the dealer hand has a greater win probability than the player hand. In another embodiment, the player had has a higher win probability.

[0020] A problem with the existing Four-card Poker™ game is that there presently is no hand that players can achieve which offers an extraordinary pay-out. Although the odds of winning are low, progressive jackpots requiring a relatively small monetary amount for eligibility remain interesting to players. Players seem highly attracted to the possibility of an extraordinarily large payout for what appears to be a nominal wager. Also, most progressive wagers are a fixed nominal amount, and players that win with lesser hands will win a fixed payout based only on one unit being wagered, rather than a multiple of the units wagered. Thus, it would be desirable to include a progressive jackpot side wager in the Four Card Poker™ game that would provide players with the potential to win an extraor-

dinarly large pay-out for a relatively minimal investment. It would also be desirable to configure the side wager so that lesser hands can pay an award as a multiple of the units wagered by the player.

[0021] A summary of Four-Card Poker® casino table poker game is a game played with poker hands of players competing against a poker hand of a dealer. A player enters the game by placing one or both of a Bonus Bet (also referred to as an Aces-Up wager) for competition against a pay table and an Ante for direct competition against the dealer. The player is dealt more cards than needed to form a poker hand. The dealer is also provided with more than the required number of cards, from which a number of cards are selected for the dealer's hand to play. The player is provided with bonus payouts (e.g., multiple returns) on the Aces-Up bet for ranked hands or a pair of Aces or better. The players' hands also compete directly against the rank of the dealer's hand if an additional play bet is placed to supplement the ante. The additional play bet may be varied by the player to be 1x, 2x, 3x, 4x, or 5x the amount of the ante. Bonuses may also be paid on the Aces-Up or ante wager with unusually high ranking player's hands (such as a straight flush or four of a kind), whether or not the rank of the player's hand exceeds the rank of the dealer's hand.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0022] FIG. 1 is a plan view of a gaming table layout suitable for play of the game of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] A method of playing a wagering game comprises providing at least a first hand and a second hand. Typically at least one player and even a plurality of players will make a first Ante wager on the second hand in an underlying game competing against the score or rank of the first hand. The first hand competes against the second hand. The structure of the game or the provision of symbols in the game is done in a manner so that the first hand has a statistical advantage versus a second hand. In a second embodiment, the second hand holds the statistical advantage. This statistical advantage will be discussed in greater detail herein. At least one player has an option for a side bet wager. At least one player may elect to place a side bet on a jackpot game. The election on the side bet may include an option on wagering on at least the first hand or at least the second hand to win the jackpot event. The option may also include a side bet wager for the jackpot award that includes both the first hand (e.g., the dealer hand) and the second hand (a player hand or a community player hand). Because of the greater statistical advantage of the first hand, a first separate distinct payable is provided against the jackpot for the first hand and a second separate distinct payable is provided against the jackpot for the second hand. The paytables would be applicable for jackpot side bet wagers on the first hand, the second hand and both the first hand and second hand. If the side bet includes a wager on the first hand, at least some winning events against the payable for the first hand return a lesser amount or lesser percentage than a same winning event will return from the payable for the second hand.

[0024] According to the invention, payable payouts may include fixed payout amounts, odds payout amounts, pro-

gressive payout amounts, percentage of progressive payout amounts and/or randomly determined payout amounts.

[0025] The impact on the respective awards provided in the paytables may be varied close to or strategically different from the statistical advantage of the first hand to reflect the actual probabilities of the advantage. The simplest analogy will be applied to a progressive jackpot where percentages of the jackpot are typically awarded for the lowest probability winning events or hands. For example, it is typical in a four card poker hand for the lowest probability winning hand to be Four Aces (a four card straight flush or four-card royal flush having a higher or similar probability), or using the fifth card as a special event such as Four Aces and a King (the last not used in the actual four-card poker game) to determine a 100% Jackpot winning event in the player's hand. In the special event of the present game where a dealer four-card hand is constructed from six cards and a player's four-card poker hand is constructed from five cards, the paytables may reflect at least the following types of differences:

TABLE 1

HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
Highest Defined Rank	100%	60-95%
2 ND Highest Defined Rank	10%	5-9%
3 RD Highest Defined Rank	500X Side Bet Wager	200-400X Side Bet Wager
4 TH Highest Defined Rank	100X Side Bet Wager	60-95X Side Bet Wager
5 TH Highest Defined Rank	25X Side Bet Wager	10-20X Side Bet Wager
6 TH Highest Defined Rank	10X Side Bet Wager	6-9X Side Bet Wager

[0026] An alternative type of jackpot payout distribution is exemplified in the following Table:

TABLE 2

HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
Highest Defined Rank	100%	60-95%
2 ND Highest Defined Rank	10%	5-9%
3 RD Highest Defined Rank	\$500	\$200-\$400
4 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$100	\$60-\$95
5 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$25	\$10-\$20
6 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$10	\$6-\$9

[0027] In the practice of this technology in an electronic format where symbols, including playing cards are provided in and played on an electronic system, the higher statistical probability for higher ranked hands is programmed into provision of symbols for the first hand. The higher statistical probability may be provided for the first hand by mapping of individual symbol probabilities (e.g., U.S. Pat. No. 4,448, 419, Telnaes) or mapping of template (e.g., Yoseloff, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,159,096 and 6,117,009) probabilities for combinations of symbols. A preferred method of play is performed where the first hand and the second hand comprise playing cards, physical cards or electronic cards. Other embodiments of the game utilize reel slot displays, elec-

tronic video poker displays or electronic reel slot displays. Playing cards or other game symbols may be used to determine a score to determine awards against paytables. The playing cards may be used to determine a poker hand rank to determine awards against paytables. The statistical advantage for the first hand versus the second hand may be provided by providing more playing cards to the first hand than to the second hand. Other methods of providing statistical advantage are contemplated, such as providing wild symbols or dealing cards to the first hand from a separate deck that is richer in high-value cards. The greater number of extra cards provided to the first hand (usually considered the dealer hand in the practice of the present technology), the greater the statistical probability of success in achieving a winning hand against a payable or achieving a jackpot payout rank or score. As the skilled player, given an option on wagering on the dealer hand (the higher probability first hand) or the player hand (the lower probability second hand) would always select the dealer hand because of the higher probability, payout amounts or percentages between the two hands must be adjusted to make the selections or options more equivalent.

[0028] For purposes of discussion, and not asserting the absolute accuracy of the numbers, it will be assumed that in a preferred Four-Card Poker-8 game where a dealer hand (the higher probability hand) receives six (6) cards and the player hand (the second hand or lower probability hand) receives five (5) cards, and where the 100% jackpot award for the player hand is received for four Aces and the King of Spades, the probability of that hand (four Aces and the King of Spades) appearing in the higher probability dealer hand would be about 12-25% greater than in the Player hand. For further purposes of discussion only, the nominal increase in probability for that highest ranked hand will be assumed to be about 20%. Therefore, the payout table for the higher probability hand can and should be adjusted to reflect this approximately (nominal) 20% difference in higher probability. It should be recognized that this nominal 20% higher probability difference is not uniform across the payable for a multiplicity of different bonus hands or jackpot hands. That is, even if the nominal probability increase is 20% for the highest winning hand, the probability increase for lower ranked and lower award hands is likely to be different from the 20% nominal value under discussion. For example, the likelihood of two pair may increase 25% and the likelihood of a flush may increase by 15%, etc. These variations may be considered in the paytables or the paytables may be standardized with respect to these variations in probabilities. These variations in probabilities may be balanced across the payable for the higher probability hand to offer incentives or disincentives for wagering on one payable or the other, as reflected in the following sets of tables.

<u>Straight Nominal 20% Correspondence</u>		
HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
Highest Defined Rank	100%	80%
2 ND Highest Defined Rank	10%	8%
3 RD Highest Defined Rank	\$500	\$400
4 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$100	\$8

-continued

<u>Straight Nominal 20% Correspondence</u>		
HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
5 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$25	\$20
6 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$10	\$8

[0029]

<u>Graded Correspondence to Nominal 20%</u>		
HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
Highest Defined Rank	100%	80%
2 ND Highest Defined Rank	10%	8%
3 RD Highest Defined Rank	\$500	\$300
4 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$100	\$60
5 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$25	\$15
6 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$10	\$5

[0030]

<u>Incentive Grading on Nominal 20%</u>		
HAND RANK	PLAYER HAND AWARD	DEALER HAND AWARD
Highest Defined Rank	100%	60-95%
2 ND Highest Defined Rank	10%	5-9%
3 RD Highest Defined Rank	\$500	\$200
4 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$100	\$50
5 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$25	\$25
6 TH Highest Defined Rank	\$10	\$10

In the last example, payouts for the intermediate ranks have been reduced, while the payouts for the lowest winning ranks have been maintained, while the percentage jackpot awards have been reduced by the nominal 20% higher probability.

[0031] The initial wager may be placed by the player on the second hand on winning or losing against the first hand on a basis of poker ranks. The side bet wager may be placed by the player on first hand or the second hand. In another embodiment, the side bet wager may be placed by the player on first hand, the second hand or both the first hand and second hand. The highest award ranked hand attained by the second hand will be awarded 100% of the jackpot and for the highest award ranked hand attained by the first hand, less than 100% of the jackpot is awarded. The jackpot preferably comprises a progressive jackpot with at least a portion of the side bet incrementing the progressive jackpot. A fixed jackpot may also be used, as where the highest ranked second hand (Player hand) would be awarded a fixed amount, such as \$25,000, and the second highest player hand rank would receive, for example, \$2,500.

[0032] The method may require or allow an initial wager to be placed on a player versus dealer poker game utilizing at least one deck of playing cards, the game comprising:

[0033] at least one player placing at least one wager to participate in the casino game;

[0034] dealing a first number of cards to a dealer to form the first hand, said first number of cards being greater than the number of cards to be used in determination of a poker rank hand for the dealer;

[0035] dealing a second number of cards to the at least one player to form the second hand, said second number of cards being greater than the number of cards to be used in determination of a poker rank hand for each player;

[0036] the dealer utilizing fewer than all of the cards dealt to form a resulting single dealer hand; the at least one player utilizing fewer than all of the cards dealt to form a resulting player's hand for the at least one player,

[0037] wherein the number of cards utilized in the resulting player's hands and the resulting dealer's hand are equal; and resolving each player hand against the dealer's hand according to predetermined game rules. The preferred variant of this game is Four-Card Poker™ game wherein the first number of cards is six cards and the second number of cards is five cards and the resulting number of dealer's cards and the resulting number of player cards are both four cards. In this game, the at least one player makes an Ante wager prior to review of that player's second number of cards, and after the at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player must place an additional play wager of at least 1× the Ante wager to stay in the game. The at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player may place a wager of greater than 1× the Ante wager when the player's resulting number of cards' hand exceeds at least a predetermined minimum poker ranking for a player's hand. After the at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player may place a wager at the election of the player which is a multiple of the Ante wager selected from the group consisting of 1×, 2×, 3×, 4× and 5× the Ante wager. In a preferred practice of the game, physical cards are provided to each player and the dealer on a gaming table. The game may further include a mandatory Super Bonus bet in addition to the Ante wager, wherein payouts are made on the Super Bonus bet for predetermined hand ranks.

[0038] A casino table card game (here represented by the preferred 4-Card Poker™ game) is played on a table by at least one player and a dealer. The dealer usually represents the house or the casino in the play of the game. As shown in FIG. 1, wagering areas 10 are provided for each player, and card receiving areas 12 are available for each of the players and the dealer. The wagering area may include three distinct wagering zones for each player comprising a Bonus wager area 14 (e.g., the Jackpot side bet or the traditional Aces-Up™ side bet wager), an Ante area 16, and a Play area 18. Progressive wager areas 20, (dealer hand), 22 (player hand) are also provided. Electronic wager recognition technology such as the proximity switch disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,299,534 assigned to Shuffle Master, Inc. may be used. To initiate play of the game, at least one (and usually only one) deck of 52 standard cards or variant playing cards is provided. In other forms of the game, multiple intermixed decks of cards, decks with wild cards or special decks (i.e. decks with certain cards removed) are used. Each player who wishes to enter the play of the game makes at least one wager selected from the Progressive Jackpot Bonus Bet and

the Ante. One or both of these wagers may be made. The player may also play the hand blind (also referred to as the "House Way") by placing both an Ante and an additional Play Bet. There may be additional wager positions 20, 22 for the Progressive Jackpot side bet wager so that wagers may be placed a) on the dealer hand (the high probability hand), b) the Player hand (the low probability hand). In another embodiment, the player can wager both the Dealer hand and the Player hand. The amount of the wager for wager c) (on both of the hands) is likely to be required to be double the required side bet wagers on a) and b), or else the payout for wager c) would be less than (e.g., one-half) the total jackpot award that would have been awarded on a winning wager on a) and b). After placement of the at least one wager, each player who has made an at least one wager in the preferred 4-Card Poker™ format of the game is provided with a number of cards, preferably five, from which to select a best four-card poker hand. The cards may be dealt as a complete set of five cards or in portions of one or more cards. At about the same time, the dealer is dealt a number of cards exceeding four. In one example of the invention, six cards are dealt. One or more additional cards can be dealt to the player, the dealer or both, with or without additional payments, which would then further adjust the paytables or bring alternative paytables into play.

[0039] Although in one example of the invention the dealer receives one more cards than each player, the number of cards dealt can be equal. What is important is that one hand have a higher frequency of winning, regardless of the specific mechanism for altering win probabilities. This higher probability is, as indicated herein, most easily adjusted by mapping of symbol probabilities or template probabilities in electronic formats, in providing extra cards to the dealer hand and/or providing wild symbols to the dealer (or player) hand. Any alternative method of providing a higher probability to the dealer hand versus the player hand may also be used. For example, a wild card may be provided in the set of symbols or playing cards, and that wild card may be used solely by the dealer hand. For example, the two of clubs (2→) may be designated as a wild card for only the dealer hand, or a random card indicator may be used to designate a random card that would be wild for the dealer hand in each round. As long as a higher probability for a winning hand or at least for the jackpot bonuses (e.g., wild cards may be used in the dealer hand only for establishing the highest ranks, such as four-of-a-kind, Royal flush or straight flush and are otherwise only the shown rank of the card in other hands), an underlying preferred feature of the present technology may exist for play as described herein. The particular collection of symbols used for the highest rank for winning the Progressive Jackpot is not inherently critical. Various combinations of four cards in a single hand may be used, various combinations of the four cards plus at least one additional card, (e.g., the remainder fifth card from the player's five cards used to make the four card hand), or even a combination of player's hand and dealer's hand may be used to determine the preferably Progressive Jackpot payouts. For example, the progressive jackpot may be awarded on the Player's hand or the dealer's hand cards of A-K-Q-J in a specific suit, A-K-Q-J in any single suit, Four Aces, Four Aces and a King in a specific suit, Four Aces and any King, four twos and the Ace of Spades, a Player's hand of A-K-Q-J in a specific suit or any suit and the Dealer hand having a specific card (e.g., a wild card or bonus card or a

specific rank of hand, such as exactly two pairs or at least two pairs, etc.), and the like. It is only necessary that the Jackpot winning events or hands be defined in advance of the play of the game.

[0040] In a preferred form of the technology described herein, a four card poker hand is played as the underlying game. That underlying game is known in the art in the priority chain of the present application (U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/499,864, filed Aug. 4, 2006; U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/589,701, filed Oct. 20, 2006; and abandoned U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/152,325, filed May 2, 2002) and is described as follows. The dealer deals five cards to each player and six cards to the dealer position. The player reviews the five cards received at that player position and determines what best four-card poker hand can be made from the five cards. If the player believes that the cards cannot form a four-card poker rank of sufficiently high rank to warrant competition against the dealer's best four-card hand (even without that hand or any portion of that hand having been displayed), the player may fold the hand, refusing to place an additional wager. At this time or usually a later time, the Ante would be collected by the dealer. In one example of the invention, if the player made the Aces-Up bet and the Ante bet and decides to fold, the Aces-Up bet is swept along with the Ante. In another form of the invention, if the player remains in the game by making the Play Bet and the player's hand does not contain a hand ranking of a pair of Aces or higher, and a bet was made on the Ace-Up wager, that wager may be now or later collected by the dealer. If the player determines that the rank of the best four-card poker hand that can be made from the five cards dealt to the player is sufficiently high as to warrant competition against the dealer (or if the player wants to bluff against the dealer, particularly if the dealer must qualify), the player makes an additional wager, referred to as a play bet or game bet. That additional wager may be multiples of the Ante, such as 1x, 2', 3x, 4x or 5x the amount of the original Ante, at the option of the player. In some examples of the invention, the game bet is 1x the ante unless the player has a qualifying hand such as a pair of kings or better for example. If the player's hand qualifies he has the option of increasing his bet. Fractional amounts or larger amounts may be allowed, but they can complicate the payout or alter the hold for the house, so those changes are in the discretion of the casino. After discarding excess cards and placing the Game Bet, or placing the fifth card face down, or merely leaving the fifth card in the hand so that the hand may be arranged and ranked by the dealer or player when exposed, the player's hand is placed on the table for display. The dealer's hand is then revealed after each and every player has determined whether or not the Game Bet is to be made. The dealer compares the value or rank of his hand against the value or rank of each player's hand, usually in succession around the table, and each series of wagers (the Aces-Up wager, the Ante and the Game Bet) is resolved. Ties on the rank of player's hands and dealers hands may be either paid to the player, called a push, or collected by the dealer, depending upon the desired house advantage the casino wants to build into the game. The dealer may either always qualify (a preferred method of play), or a level of qualification may be built into the game (such as at least Queen high, at least King high, at least Queen-Jack, At least King-Jack, at least Ace-King, or at least one pair).

[0041] Resolution on the wagers may be based upon pay tables for the Aces-Up wager, pay tables on the Ante, and/or the Play Bet. Preferred play of the game provides pay tables for one or more of the Aces-Up wager, the Ante and an automatic bonus payout on the ante. The Play Bet pays one-to-one with a player win. This differentiation is based upon the fact that with certain very high ranking hands, the player would be at an extreme advantage in placing a 5x Game Bet, assuring a very high multiple payout, with essentially no risk or little risk involved in the placement of the 5x Game Bet wager. The payout of wagers may be tailored by the casino by selecting pay tables designed for greater player payouts or greater casino earnings.

[0042] Although a four card poker game is a preferred form of the invention, the game could also be played with three, five or seven cards, with necessary adjustments to the pay tables. All or part of the player and/or dealer hand may include community cards. The underlying game could also include a draw and discard feature.

[0043] For example, in a four card game, the hierarchy of hands is as follows: Four of a Kind; Straight Flush; Three of a Kind; Flush; Straight; Two Pair; Pair; and High Card. A three or five card game would require a different hierarchy of hand rankings.

[0044] There are many variations of the game that may be played within the scope of the present invention. The following variations on the format described above shall be described in a manner that should enable those skilled in the art to appreciate the expanded scope of play available, rather than considering any single described method as limiting the intended scope of the game.

[0045] Version I of the underlying Four Card™ poker game—Each player receives 5 cards, and the dealer receives 6 cards. The players and the dealer identify their best four card poker hands, the players may rely upon the house for assistance, if needed. The dealer always qualifies, that is the dealer's hand and any players' hands are always in play if the ante bet is made. Players have the choice of placing one or both of the Ante Bet and a Bonus Bet (e.g., the Aces-Up wager). House rules may require the player to make the Ante Bet, the Bonus Bet, or both the Ante and Bonus Bet. The Ante wager is a wager directly against the rank of the dealer's hand, and the Aces Up Bonus Bet is a bet against a pay table. If after viewing his/her hand, a player chooses to stay in the game against the dealer (keeping the Ante wager in play), the player must make an additional Play Bet to stay in the game. This Play Bet may be, for example, between 1 and 5 (or between 1 and 4, or between 1 and 3) times the amount of the initial Ante wager at the opinion of the player. In other forms of the game, the player's Play Bet must be 1x the ante unless the player holds a qualifying hand of a pair of Aces or better. If the player has a qualifying hand, he can bet up to 3x the Ante. Preferably, the player must hold a pair of aces or better to win on the Bonus Bet (hence the name 'Aces-Up'). The Bonus Bet preferably pays a maximum return of 50:1, but payouts may theoretically be as high as 500:1 for certain hands, such as for four Aces. The Bonus Bet side bet game may or may not be present in the rules of the game. In this example of the invention, the game pays an automatic bonus for certain high ranking hands according to a payout schedule. This bonus is paid on the Ante wager, and does not require the player to make a separate bet to qualify

for this payout. For example, automatic bonuses are paid on three of a kind, straight flushes and four of a kind.

[0046] Version II of the underlying Four-Card Poker™ game—This game increases the probability that the dealer hand will win by allowing the dealer to replace the hand if the rank is below a threshold rank. Each player and the dealer gets five cards to make the best four-card poker hand. If the dealer's hand does not equal or exceed a certain rank (e.g., a pair of 2's or better), he discards all cards and draws a new five card hand, and then makes a four-card poker hand from the five cards. The player must make the Ante wager to be in the game against the dealer. The dealer always qualifies to play against the player. It is possible to allow the player or require the player to make the Ante wager 1) before the deal of cards, 2) after the deal of cards but before any cards are revealed, 3) after the deal of cards and after the players has reviewed his cards but before the dealer has exposed cards, 4) after the deal of cards and a partial or complete revelation of the dealer's five cards (but before review of the player's cards), or 5) after the deal of cards and a review of the players' cards and a partial revelation or complete revelation of the dealer's five cards, which play might be restricted to where the dealer has not qualified (but not after revelation of any sixth card). The player's hand may be required to exceed a minimum rank to bet more than 1× the Ante. For example, if the player has a qualifying hand of a pair of Kings or better, the player can make a Play Bet of 1×, 2× or 3× the Ante. As with Version I, the rules can provide that the Bonus Bet (side bet) is mandatory or both initial bets (the Ante and the Bonus Bet) are mandatory. The automatic bonus against a pay table on the Ante bet may or may not be present in the rules of the game. The Bonus Bet game may or may not be present, also in the rules of the game. In this example, a pair of aces or better qualifies the player for an Aces-Up payout of 1:1. The automatic bonus pays even if the player's hand is lower in rank than the dealer's hand.

[0047] Version III of the underlying Four-Card Poker™ game—The players and dealer each receive five cards to make their best four-card poker hand. The betting/wagering rules and procedures are the same as in the previous versions, except for those listed below. Either the Ante is mandatory, the Ante or the Bonus Bet is mandatory, or both initial wagers are mandatory. The dealer must qualify to play (for example, with a hand of Ace high or better, King-Queen or higher, Ace-King or higher, pair of deuces or higher, etc.). The automatic bonus side bet game against a pay table is present in the rules of this example of the game.

[0048] If the player stays in the game, the player can bet 1× to 3× or 1× to 5× (according to game rules) the Ante if the player has a qualifying hand of a pair of Kings or better. Otherwise, the maximum Play Bet is 1× the Ante. The lowest ranking hand that qualifies for the bonus payout is a pair of Aces or better.

[0049] Version IV of the underlying Four-Card Poker™ game—Four Card Poker with Super Bonus—The dealer and each player are dealt five cards each. The cards are used to make the best four card poker hand by the players and the dealer. The hands are ranked according to the following four card poker ranking schedule: Four of a Kind; Straight Flush; Three of a Kind; Flush; Straight; Two Pair; Pair; and High Card.

[0050] Players can make a bet against the dealer (Ante), a bet against the pay table (Aces-Up Bonus Bet) or both. House rules may require one or both bets to be mandatory. In addition, the players are required to make a Super Bonus bet in an amount equal to the Ante in this example of the invention.

[0051] Players place equal bets on the Ante and/or Super Bonus and/or Bonus spots on the layout. After viewing the cards, the player must fold or place an additional Bet (play wager). If the player's hand does not qualify with a pair of Kings or better, the player may be required to bet exactly 1× the ante to an in the game. With a qualifying hand of a pair of Kings or better, the player can bet an amount equal to or multiples of the Ante, such as 1×, 2× or 3× the Ante.

[0052] If the player has a higher ranking hand than the dealer's hand, the player is paid 1:1 on the ante and the play bet. If the dealer's hand outranks the player's hand, the player loses the ante and the play bet. The player has the option (or may be required) at the beginning of the game to place an Aces-Up bonus bet. In this example of the invention, the player wins a bonus payout for a pair of Aces or better. If the player makes the Ante and Play bets and beats the dealer, but does not have a pair of Aces or better, the player pushes on the bonus bet. The player is always paid on the Aces-Up bonus bet, regardless of whether or not the player's hand beats the dealer's hand. In addition, this example of the invention may include a mandatory Super Bonus bet that is made in an amount equal to the ante. The player wins a payout for certain high ranking hands such as a straight flush or four of a kind. A pay table is provided on the layout to identify winning hands and payout amounts. A failure to obtain a "Super Bonus" hand does not result in an automatic loss of the bet. For example, when the player's hand against the dealer does not qualify with a pair of kings or a straight flush or better, but the hand still beats the dealer, the Super Bonus bet pushes. But, if the player folds on the ante or lose the ante and play bets against the dealer, the Super Bonus bet is also lost.

[0053] The Super Bonus bet is desirable in some instances where it is desired to provide the house with more of an advantage on the base game. In this example of the game, removing the mandatory Super Bonus bet causes the game to favor the player. However, other rule changes such as requiring the dealer to qualify, or raising the minimum qualification hand ranking when making the play bet are other means to shift the odds to favor the house.

[0054] There are a number of advantages in the game of the present invention. The fold rate on this game is approximately 21%, which is lower than the fold rate in other known games, such as Three Card Poker® game. This feature is believed to attract and retain players, making the game more appealing to casinos. Players win this underlying game approximately 48% of the time, which exceeds the expectation of many players, and increases player appeal. In some situations, e.g., when the player has a qualifying hand, additional betting opportunities are available, such as tripling down on the Ante, increasing player appeal.

[0055] By varying the number of cards made available to the dealer and/or players, in forming the hands, by requiring the dealer's hand to qualify or by eliminating dealer qualification, by modifying the payouts and winning hand combinations possible on the bonus bet, by adding the Super

Bonus bet etc., the payouts can be made to pay as high as 500:1 e.g., for four of a kind hands. This feature is believed to attract and retain more poker players.

[0056] The play of the underlying game of Four-Card Poker™ game may be completed manually on a non-electronic game table, with the dealer using a physical deck(s) of cards, visually identifying the amounts and positions of wagers, manually collecting and paying out wagers, etc. It is possible to incorporate some degree or nearly an entire electronic system into the game table or into the play of the game. Such partial or complete electronic systems may perform such tasks as identifying the existence of a wager (e.g., U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,229,534; 5,337,973; and 5,377,994), may provide virtual cards from an electronically stored deck of cards (e.g., U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,255,915; and 5,897,436), or may provide progressive bonusing systems, such as the systems referenced above. The capabilities of technology are constantly expanding, and the improvements in technology should not be considered to avoid the underlying invention of the play of this game. For example, player monitoring systems, security systems, integrated systems where shufflers identify the number of cards and/or identify the specific cards and their positions in the play of the game are contemplated in the practice of the present invention.

EXAMPLE OF PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT FOUR-CARD POKER™ GAME

[0057] The Examples will be described with a single player at a table as the play of each individual player even in a seven card player table would be equivalent in actions. Play table 1, above will be used to resolve the side bet wagers.

Example 1

[0058] A player places an Ante wager of \$10.00 on the Player hand versus the Dealer hand competition and places a \$1.00 (fixed rate, non-variable) wager on the Dealer hand in a progressive Jackpot wager in which the Jackpot stands at \$40,000.00. The player also places a \$5.00 wager on the Queens or better side bet. The player is dealt five cards face-down and the Dealer is dealt six cards, five of which are face down and a Jack of hearts (J♥) is shown face-up. The player examines the five cards and finds a hand of 7♦, 7♥, 7⇒, 6⇒, 6♠. The player's best 4-card hand is therefore three-of-a-kind with a six (6) kicker. The second six cannot be used in the four card hand. The player would place a Play wager to remain in the game.

[0059] The Dealer then reveals all six cards in the Dealer hand to display a hand of A♥, K♥, Q♥ and J♥ and three of diamonds (3♦). The dealer holds a straight flush which is second in rank to a 4-of-a-kind. This hand would have been a 10% of the total jackpot win if present in the Player's five-card hand for Four-card Poker™ games, but because it is in the Dealer's six-card hand, it will pay only 8% of the jackpot or \$3,200 to the player. The player loses on the Player versus dealer wager, and wins 5 to 1 on the \$5.00 Queens or better wager.

Example 2

[0060] A player places an Ante wager of \$10.00 on the Player hand versus the Dealer hand competition and places a \$1.00 (fixed rate, non-variable) wager on the Dealer and

Player hands in a progressive Jackpot wager in which the Jackpot stands at \$40,000.00. The player also places a \$5.00 wager on a "Queens or better" side bet. The player is dealt five cards face-down and the Dealer is dealt six cards, five of which are face down and a Jack of hearts (J♥) is shown face-up. The player examines the five cards and finds a hand of 9♦, 7⇒, 7♦, 6⇒, 6♥. The player's hand is therefore two pair. The player would place a Play wager to remain in the game.

[0061] The Dealer then reveals all six cards in the Dealer hand to display a hand of A♥, K♥, Q♥ and J♥ and three of diamonds (3♦). This hand would have been a 10% of the total jackpot win if present in the Player's five-card hand for Four-card Poker™ games, but because it is in the Dealer's six-card hand, it will pay only 4% of the jackpot or \$1,600 to the player. The 4% award is based on the fact that the player made a single \$1.00 wager on both the player and dealer hands for the jackpot, which effectively becomes half a side wager on each hand. If the player had placed \$1.00 on each hand or \$2.00 on both hands, the award would have been the full 8%. The player loses on the Player versus dealer wager, and wins 3 to 1 on the \$5.00 Queens or better wager.

Example 3

[0062] A player places an Ante wager of \$10.00 on the Player hand versus the Dealer hand competition and places a \$2.00 (fixed rate, non-variable) wager on both the Dealer and Player hands in a progressive Jackpot wager in which the Jackpot stands at \$40,000.00. The player does not place any additional side bet wagers. The player is dealt five cards face-down and the Dealer is dealt six cards, five of which are face down and a Jack of hearts (A♥) is shown face-up. The player examines the five cards and finds a hand of 9♦, 8⇒, 7⇒, 2⇒, 4♥. The player's hand is therefore only nine-high. The player would not place a Play wager to remain in the game, but the Progressive Jackpot side bet wager remains in play.

[0063] The Dealer then reveals all six cards in the Dealer hand to display a hand of A♥, A♦, A⇒, A♠, and K♥. This hand would have been a 100% of the total jackpot win if present in the Player's five-card hand for Four-card Poker™ games, but because it is in the Dealer's six-card hand, it will pay only 80% of the jackpot or \$32,000 to the player. The 80% award is based on the fact that the player made a \$2.00 wager on each of the player and dealer hands for the jackpot, which effectively becomes a full side wager on each hand. The player loses on the Player versus dealer wager, and there was no Queens or better wager.

[0064] The method disclosed herein addresses the problem described above by providing a new version of the Four Card Poker™ game which further includes a concurrently played secondary or side game played by players placing one or more independent, variable wagers on either the player's final hand achieving preset criteria, the dealer's final hand achieving preset criteria, or both hands achieving the preset criteria, wherein the top payouts include all or part of a progressive jackpot.

[0065] Additionally the present technology is directed to a side wager which has different payout award amounts for a

player hand satisfying the same criteria as a dealer hand, wherein the difference in payout award amounts corresponds with the difference in the odds of the player hand satisfying the preset criteria and the odds of the dealer hand satisfying the same preset criteria.

[0066] Although the presently preferred embodiment as disclosed herein is directed to the game according to the present invention played on a commercially available DEQ's G3 product (e.g., as described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,929,264, Huard et al. and related applications cited above), it should be understood that the game of the present invention may alternatively be played as a live table game without the electronic wagering system shown as the G3 product, or with other partially or fully automated systems, such as those having bet sensors or electronic wagering. The game of the present invention may also be played on multiplayer electronic gaming platforms, such as the Table Master™ platform, Rapid Table Games™ platform and Vegas Star™ platforms.

[0067] The G3 system may be described as a multi-bet electronic side betting system (including the material hardware components and software programs therefor) which enhances a table game by allowing multi-betting and by giving players the opportunity to win randomly drawn special prizes. The G3 includes individual player interfaces mounted on the gaming table at each player position, and a dealer control console for managing all aspects of the game. A player that wishes to place bets using the G3 system will provide the dealer with chips or money which will be entered into the system by the dealer using the dealer console. The corresponding amount will then be shown on the interface at the position chosen by the player. The player interface includes a display of the total player credits available, which is shown as wagering units, and Dealer and Player bet displays, which show wagered units placed on either the dealer hand or the player hand, respectively. The player and dealer bet displays include one button corresponding thereto which upon being depressed adds a unit wager to each respective bet.

[0068] In the presently preferred embodiment, the Four Card Poker™ base game remains substantially as described above and played in most casinos, while further comprising an optional side wager on a concurrently played side game in which each player may place a fixed or variable wager on the player's final hand, the dealer's final hand or both, achieving at least a preset hand rank, via the G3 system player interface.

[0069] The side wager is placed prior to dealing the cards to the player, typically at the same time a mandatory ante wager must be placed in the underlying game. Assuming players have been afforded credit on the G3 system player interface by providing chips or money to the dealer before the start of the round, players may proceed to place wagers on either the player hand, the dealer hand or both by depressing the buttons on the player interface corresponding with the player and/or dealer hand.

[0070] The side wagers can be in varying amounts, and players may wager different amounts on the player and dealer hands in any round of the game. It should also be noted that in the preferred embodiment the player's hand side wager is a wager on the hand of the player placing the wager only, and the dealer's hand side wager is a wager on

the hand of the dealer at the gaming table at which the player is playing the underlying Four Card Poker™ game.

[0071] Once all players at the table have placed their respective side wagers using the G3 system player interface, the dealer may lock the system so that no changes may be made and proceed with dealing the underlying game according to the standard Four Card Poker™ game rules.

[0072] The side wagers of the present invention will be resolved upon the dealer revealing the dealer's final four card hand. Any player that placed a wager on the player's final hand will receive a payout award if the player's final hand has a ranking of at least a preset hand ranking. Likewise, any player that placed a wager on the dealer's final hand will receive a payout award if the dealer's final hand has a ranking of at least a preset hand ranking. Any player that wagered on both the player and dealer final hands is paid depending on which of the hands have a ranking of at least their respective preset hand rankings. In this embodiment, the hand rankings for purposes of the side wager are determined and ordered according to the rules of the Four Card Poker™ game. However, the hand rankings and/or payouts may differ for wagers on the player and dealer hands.

[0073] In a preferred embodiment, the payout awards for winning player hand rankings are greater than the payout awards for the same rank of winning dealer hand rankings. This discrepancy in payout amounts corresponds to the lower odds players have of achieving any particular hand ranking as compared with the dealer's odds of achieving that same hand ranking, which is built into the underlying Four Card Poker™ game by having the dealer receive six (6) cards from which a four card hand must be formed while players receive only five (5) cards from which a four card hand must be formed.

[0074] Thus, in one embodiment, the payout awards are odds payouts which are expressed as multiples of a unit wagered, with the multiples being lower for dealer's hand payouts than player's hand payouts. For example, the player may receive "5:1" or "5 to 1" on a side wager placed on the player hand using the G3 system if the player hand has a ranking of flush, whereas the player may receive only "4 to 1" for the same side wager placed on the dealer hand when the dealer's hand is a flush. Although the payout for a wager on the dealer hand is less than the payout for the same player hand of a winning rank, the dealer hand would theoretically achieve winning ranks more often than the player hand.

[0075] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the highest ranking hands have payouts which include all or a percentage of a progressive jackpot. As in other progressive configurations, a portion of the side bet of the present invention is used to fund the progressive reserve. The reserve amount is preferably displayed in real-time, or substantially close thereto. Fixed pays, a portion of the reserve, or all of the amount displayed may be paid depending on the preset criteria satisfied during the game. The fixed pays are preferably paid out as multiples of the side wager to all winning players. If a portion of the progressive reserve is won by multiple players, the portion is preferably paid to all winning players according to any method or order allowed by the state, tribal or other regulatory agency, rather than split between the winning players. If the entire progressive reserve is won by more than one player, then it will

be split evenly between the winning players. In the preferred embodiment, the outcome of the side wagers are reflected on the G3 system player interfaces, except for progressive payouts. The resolution and payouts are preferably managed and/or confirmed by authorized personnel using the dealer console.

[0076] Although players preferably place an ante wager and a play wager in the base game in addition to the optional side wager of the present invention, it should be noted that the outcome of the underlying game has no bearing on the outcome of the side wager. Thus, even if a player does not place a Play wager, and thus forfeits their ante wager, the side wagers of the present invention may still be won.

[0077] As described herein, the present technology represents generic concepts encompassed by the claims. The examples and details provided herein are intended to provide specific support for the generic concepts and are not intended to be read as limiting the scope of the claims or the practice of the generic technology.

What is claimed:

1. A method of playing a wagering game comprising:
 - providing at least a first hand and a second hand;
 - the first hand competes against the second hand;
 - the first hand has a statistical advantage versus the second hand;
 - a player elects to place a side bet on a jackpot game and has an option on wagering on at least the first hand or on at least the second hand to win the jackpot event;
 - a first separate payable is provided against the jackpot for the first hand and a second separate payable is provided against the jackpot for the second hand; and
 - wherein if the side bet includes a wager on the first hand, at least some winning events against the first payable for the first hand return a lesser amount or lesser percentage of a jackpot than a same winning event will return from the second payable for the second hand.
2. The method of claim 1 played on an electronic system in which a higher statistical probability for higher ranked hands is programmed into provision of symbols for the first hand.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the higher statistical probability is provided for the first hand by mapping of individual symbol probabilities or mapping of template probabilities for combinations of symbols.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the first hand and the second hand comprise playing cards.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the playing cards are used to determine a score to determine awards against paytables.
6. The method of claim 4 wherein the playing cards are used to determine a poker hand rank to determine awards against paytables.
7. The method of claim 4 wherein the statistical advantage for the first hand versus the second hand is provided by providing more playing cards to the first hand than to the second hand.
8. The method of claim 7 wherein an initial wager is placed by the player on the second hand on winning or losing against the first hand on a basis of poker ranks.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the side bet wager may be placed by the player on first hand or the second hand.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the side bet wager may be placed by the player on first hand, the second hand or both the first hand and second hand.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein for a highest award ranked hand attained by the second hand, 100% of the jackpot is awarded and for the highest award ranked hand attained by the first hand, less than 100% of the jackpot is awarded.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the first and second pay tables pay a progressive jackpot, and at least a portion of the side bet increments the progressive jackpot.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein an initial wager is placed on a player versus dealer poker game utilizing at least one deck of playing cards, the game comprising:

at least one player placing at least one wager to participate in the casino game;

dealing a first number of cards to a dealer to form the first hand, said first number of cards being greater than the number of cards to be used in determination of a poker rank hand for the dealer;

dealing a second number of cards to the at least one player to form the second hand, said second number of cards being greater than the number of cards to be used in determination of a poker rank hand for each player;

the dealer utilizing fewer than all of the cards dealt to form a resulting single dealer hand; the at least one player utilizing fewer than all of the cards dealt to form a resulting player's hand for the at least one player, wherein the number of cards utilized in the resulting player's hands and the resulting dealer's hand are equal; and resolving each player hand against the dealer's hand according to predetermined game rules.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the first number of cards is six cards and the second number of cards is five cards and the resulting number of dealer's cards and the resulting number of player cards are both four cards.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the at least one player makes an Ante wager prior to review of that player's second number of cards, and after the at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player must place an additional play wager of at least 1x the Ante wager to stay in the game.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein after the at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player may place a wager of greater than 1x the Ante wager when the player's resulting number of cards' hand exceeds at least a predetermined minimum poker ranking for a player's hand.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein after the at least one player reviews that player's second number of cards, that player may place a wager at the election of the player which is a multiple of the Ante wager selected from the group consisting of 1x, 2x, 3x, 4x and 5x the Ante wager.

18. A method of playing a secondary playing card game concurrently with an underlying playing card game wherein a dealer and a player receive hands of cards, comprising the steps of:

- a) placing one or more wagers in the underlying game, wherein the one or more wagers optionally include an election among
 - i) a wager on the final player hand

- achieving at least one preset poker rank, ii) a wager on the final dealer hand achieving at least one preset poker rank, or iii) both;
- b) forming the final player hand and the final dealer hand according to the rules of the underlying game, wherein the rules of the underlying game provide for a difference in the odds of the player hand and the dealer hand achieving final hands of the same poker rank;
- c) resolving the one or more wagers in the side game based on the final player hand and the final dealer hand;
- d) paying an award to players placing winning wagers, wherein awards on wagers i), ii) and iii) differ for the same at least one poker rank achieved depending on whether the winning wager relates to the final player hand or the final dealer hand, and wherein the difference in the award corresponds in relative amount to the

relative difference in the odds of the player hand and the dealer hand achieving the at least one poker rank.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein each pay table comprises a plurality of predetermined winning outcomes and corresponding prizes, wherein the prizes are selected from the group consisting of a fixed payout amount, an odds payout amount, an amount displayed on a progressive meter, a percentage of an amount displayed on a progressive meter and a randomly determined amount.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the statistical advantage of the first hand is lowered by one or more methods selected from the group consisting of: providing a hand qualification step, providing more cards to the first hand, discarding and replacing at least a portion of the first hand, and providing at least one wild symbol to the first hand.

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