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(54) **NOVEL SIDE BET FOR CARD GAMES**

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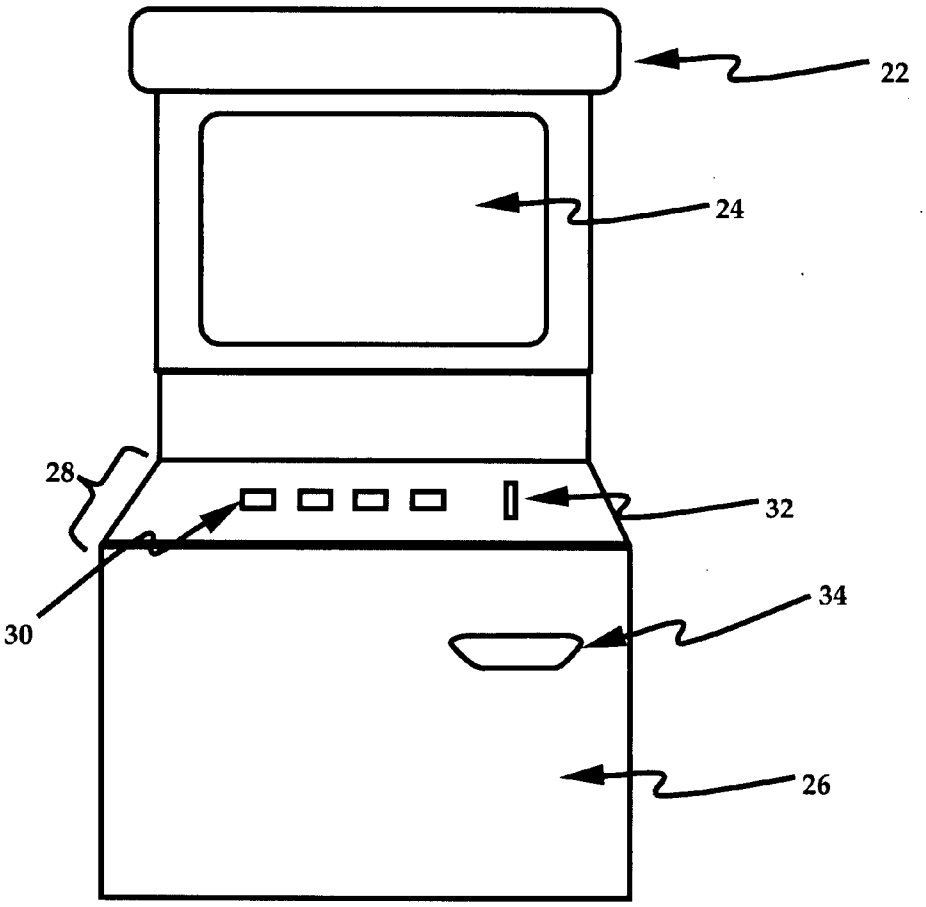
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Optional wagers for casino-style card games are disclosed wherein the wages are rewarded based on the number of times a predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt for any given round of play.



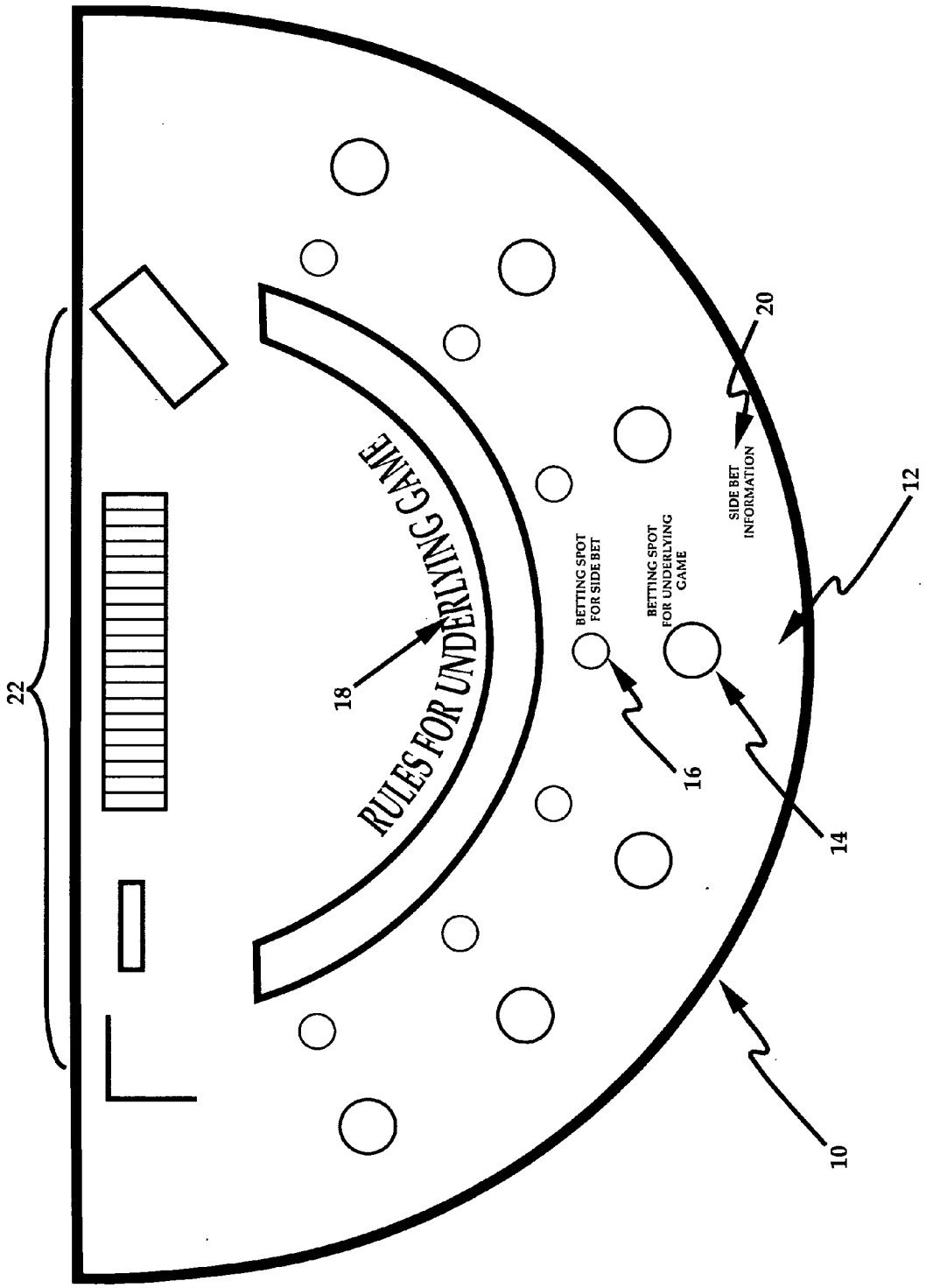

RULES FOR UNDERLYING GAME
BETTING SPOT FOR SIDE BET
BETTING SPOT FOR UNDERLYING GAME
SIDE BET INFORMATION
10
12
14
16
18
20
22

FIG. 1

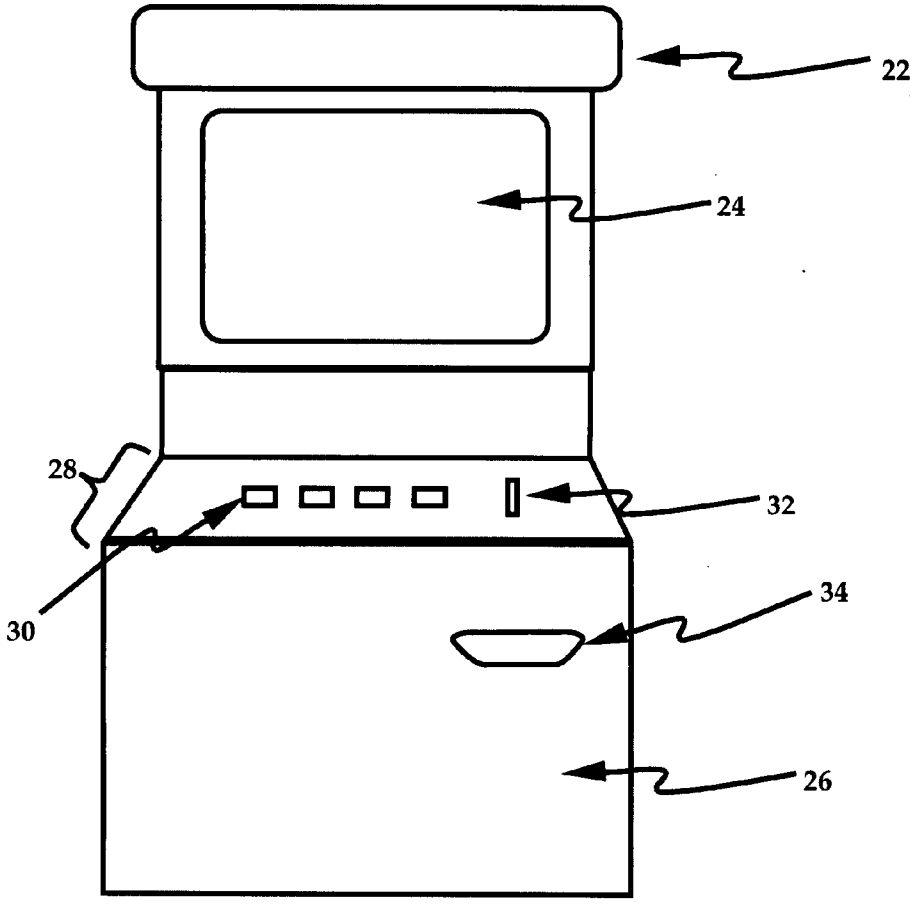


FIG. 2

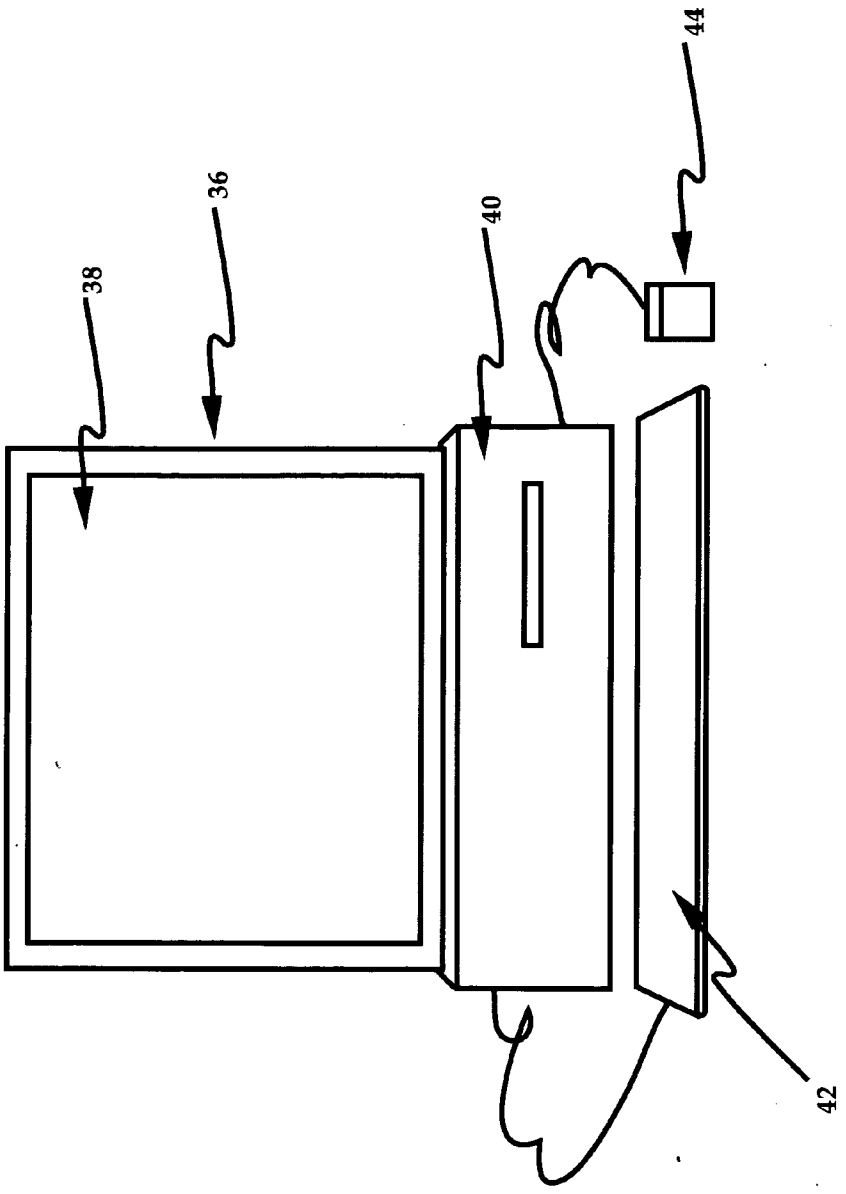


FIG. 3

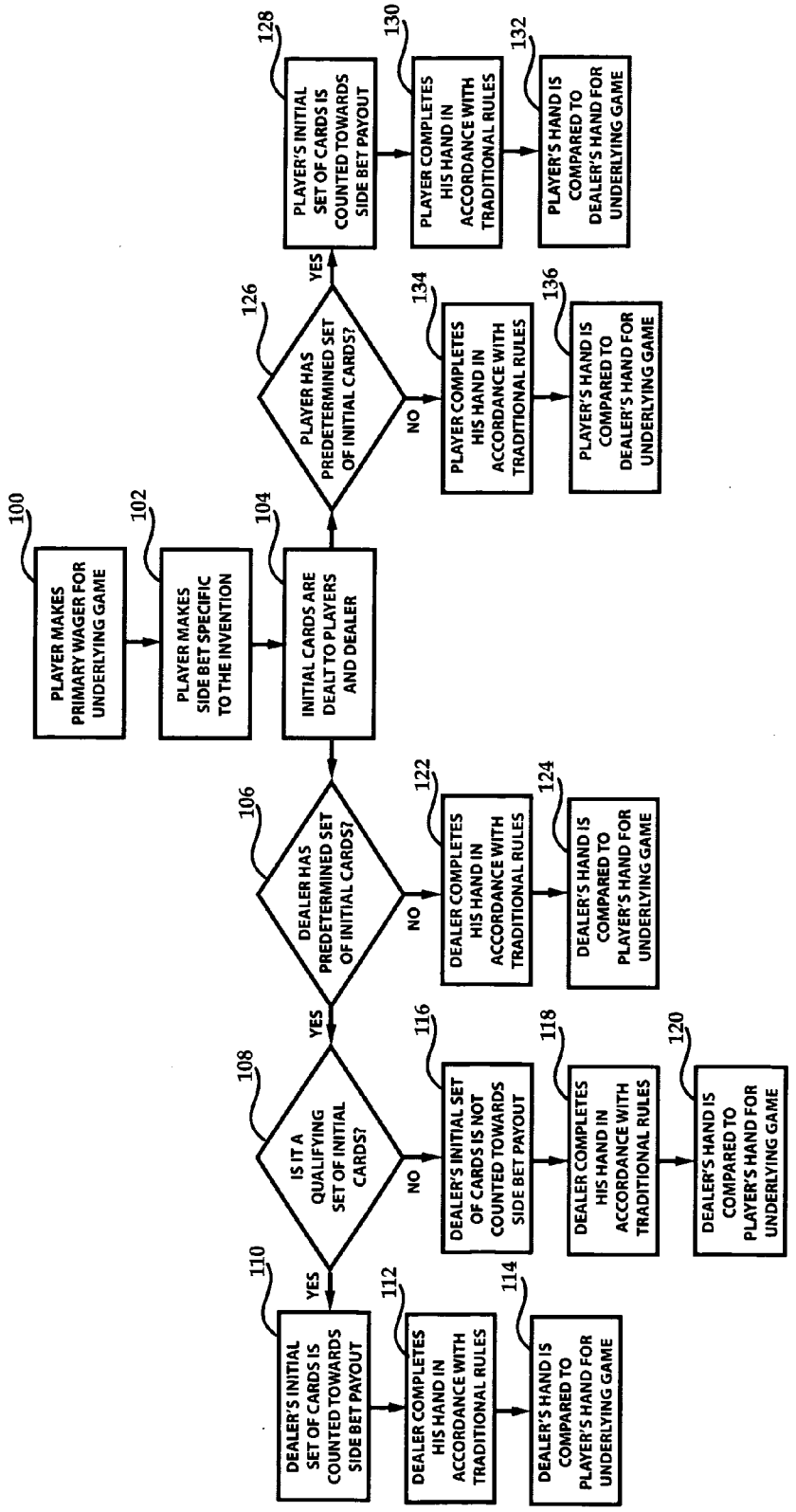

100
PLAYER MAKES PRIMARY WAGER FOR UNDERLYING GAME
102
PLAYER MAKES SIDE BET SPECIFIC TO THE INVENTION
104
INITIAL CARDS ARE DEALT TO PLAYERS AND DEALER
106
DEALER HAS PREDETERMINED SET OF INITIAL CARDS?
YES
NO
108
IS IT A QUALIFYING SET OF INITIAL CARDS?
YES
NO
110
DEALER'S INITIAL SET OF CARDS IS COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
112
DEALER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
114
DEALER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO PLAYER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME
116
DEALER'S INITIAL SET OF CARDS IS NOT COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
118
DEALER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
120
DEALER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO PLAYER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME
122
DEALER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
124
DEALER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO PLAYER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME
126
PLAYER HAS PREDETERMINED SET OF INITIAL CARDS?
YES
NO
128
PLAYER'S INITIAL SET OF CARDS IS COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
130
PLAYER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
132
PLAYER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO DEALER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME
134
PLAYER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
136
PLAYER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO DEALER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME

FIG. 4

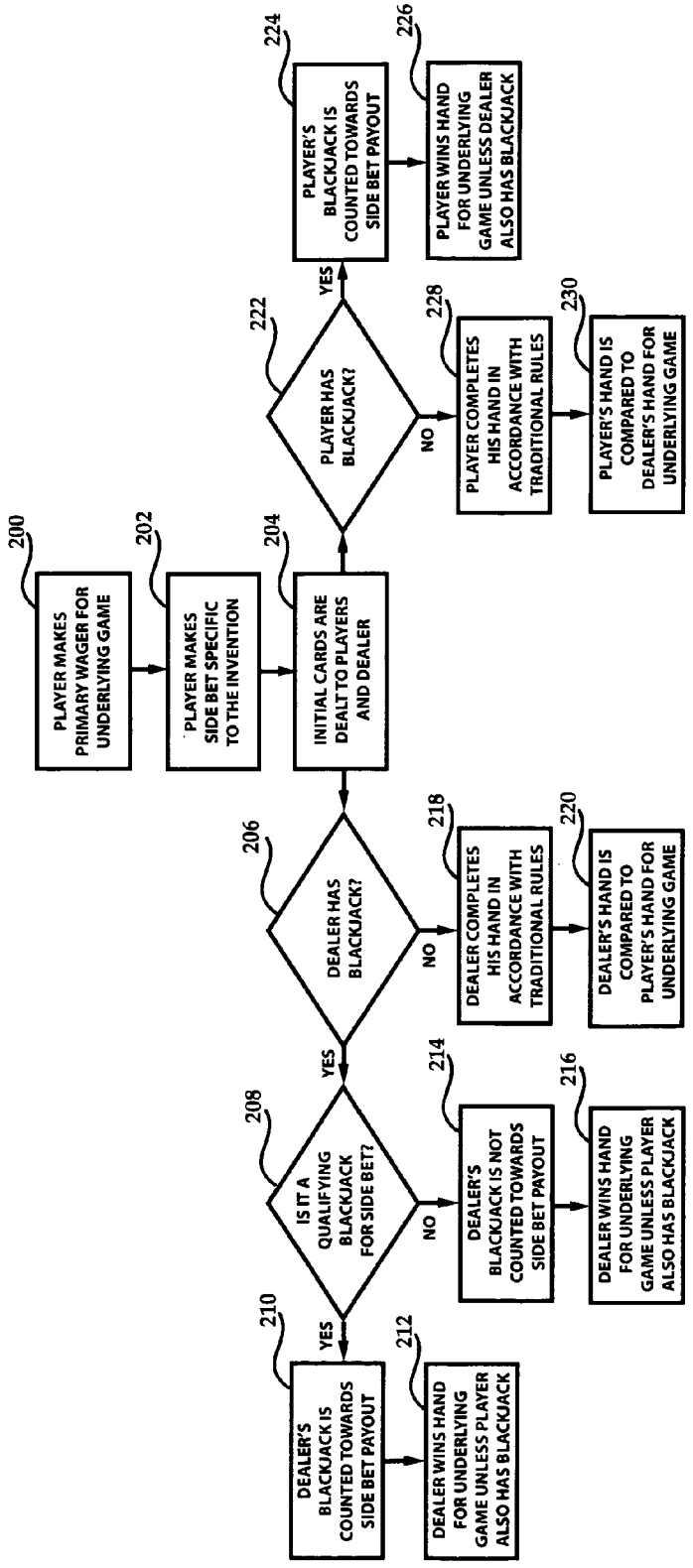

200
PLAYER MAKES PRIMARY WAGER FOR UNDERLYING GAME
202
PLAYER MAKES SIDE BET SPECIFIC TO THE INVENTION
204
INITIAL CARDS ARE DEALT TO PLAYERS AND DEALER
206
DEALER HAS BLACKJACK?
YES
NO
208
IS IT A QUALIFYING BLACKJACK FOR SIDE BET?
YES
NO
210
DEALER'S BLACKJACK IS COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
212
DEALER WINS HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME UNLESS PLAYER ALSO HAS BLACKJACK
214
DEALER'S BLACKJACK IS NOT COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
216
DEALER WINS HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME UNLESS PLAYER ALSO HAS BLACKJACK
218
DEALER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
220
DEALER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO PLAYER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME
222
PLAYER HAS BLACKJACK?
YES
NO
224
PLAYER'S BLACKJACK IS COUNTED TOWARDS SIDE BET PAYOUT
226
PLAYER WINS HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME UNLESS DEALER ALSO HAS BLACKJACK
228
PLAYER COMPLETES HIS HAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH TRADITIONAL RULES
230
PLAYER'S HAND IS COMPARED TO DEALER'S HAND FOR UNDERLYING GAME

FIG. 5

300 **PAYOUTS**

	Qualifying Hands							
Blackjacks	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
1	1:1	1:1	1:1	2:1	3:1	5:1	7:1	19:1
2	5:1	9:1	15:1	15:1	20:1	25:1	100:1	
3	25:1	25:1	30:1	50:1	100:1	100:1		
4	50:1	100:1	300:1	500:1	1000:1			
5	100:1	300:1	500:1	1000:1				
6	300:1	500:1	1000:1					
7	500:1	1000:1						
8	1000:1							

302 **PROBABILITY**

	Qualifying Hands							
Blackjacks	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	0.675708	0.709889	0.745724	0.783290	0.822666	0.863936	0.907188	0.952511
1	0.273445	0.250845	0.225395	0.196882	0.165081	0.129754	0.090646	0.047489
2	0.046321	0.036346	0.027159	0.018939	0.011886	0.006215	0.002167	
3	0.004282	0.002794	0.001667	0.000870	0.000363	0.000095		
4	0.000236	0.000123	0.000055	0.000019	0.000004			
5	0.000008	0.000003	0.000001	0.000000				
6	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000					
7	0.000000	0.000000						
8	0.000000							
Total	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000

304 **RETURN**

	Qualifying Hands							
Blackjacks	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
0	-0.675708	-0.709889	-0.745724	-0.783290	-0.822666	-0.863936	-0.907188	-0.952511
1	0.273445	0.250845	0.225395	0.393764	0.495244	0.648769	0.634522	0.902300
2	0.231605	0.327117	0.407387	0.284092	0.237712	0.155380	0.216650	0.000000
3	0.107045	0.069849	0.050002	0.043496	0.036320	0.009477	0.000000	0.000000
4	0.011787	0.012280	0.016448	0.009519	0.003966	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
5	0.000790	0.000924	0.000457	0.000158	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
6	0.000047	0.000020	0.000006	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
7	0.000001	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
8	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000
Total	-0.050990	-0.048853	-0.046029	-0.052261	-0.049424	-0.050311	-0.056016	-0.050210

FIG. 6

NOVEL SIDE BET FOR CARD GAMES

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/632,151, filed Jan. 19, 2012 and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/629,507, filed Nov. 21, 2011, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This application relates generally to a method and apparatus for playing card games; more particularly to a method and apparatus for playing modified versions of house-banked casino table games, and more particularly still to a method and apparatus for playing modified casino table games in which a player is able to place a side bet that is rewarded based on the number of times a predetermined set of cards occurs among all qualifying sets of cards dealt for any given round of play.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The game "Blackjack" or "21" is one of the most popular casino table games. Players enjoy the game since it offers fast action and a relatively low house advantage. Casinos offer the game due to its popularity and its dependable income. However, the proliferation of jurisdictions which allow gambling (and in particular card games), and the resulting number of casinos has created increased competition and a need for new games that generate interest and participation among casino patrons. As a result, casinos are constantly exploring new variations of blackjack with various side bets that increase player "action" while retaining or increasing the casino's overall advantage in order to generate incremental income.

[0004] Many of these blackjack games involve side bets based on the total or partial hand values of the dealer and/or player, and specifically, game variations that include side bets as to whether some combination of the player's and/or dealer's initial hand will result in some predetermined value. Such predetermined values include variations on whether the player's hand and/or dealer's hand will form a certain card count, such as 20 or 21, or a two or three card poker hand. While some of the bets are proprietary, other bets are public domain bets. Depending on the side bet, some will offer a range of payouts while others will offer a set, singular payout.

[0005] Often referred to as "prop" bets, or proposition bets, many of these side bets have relatively long-odds that have a tendency to deteriorate the player's bankroll and therefore cannot be played on a continual basis, resulting in limited participation. Additionally, because these initial-hand side bets are typically based either on the player's individual hand, the dealer's individual hand, or a combination of the player's and dealer's individual hands, there is very little group participation or camaraderie associated with the bets, particularly if the bets reduce the pace of the underlying game.

[0006] Therefore, there is a need for a blackjack game with a novel side bet that provides greater camaraderie and a greater range of payouts reflecting a reasonable house edge that encourages participation on a more consistent basis, thereby helping to generate incremental income for the gaming operator.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention introduces an enhanced version of the game of blackjack that provides players with a unique method for a chance to increase their winnings by providing a side bet opportunity that is rewarded based on the total number of times a predetermined set of cards occurs among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt among all players and optionally, the dealer, for any given round of play.

[0008] The benefits of the present invention for both blackjack players and the casino operator are numerous. In addition to providing players an engaging range of payout opportunities, the side bet also offers players more chances of winning the side bet as more players join the game, which in turn creates an increased sense of camaraderie that is not normally associated with blackjack. This is novel with regard to the present invention, as any occurrence of the predetermined set of cards among qualifying initial hands benefits any player who makes the side bet, even if a player who makes a side bet does not have the predetermined set of cards in his initial hand. Furthermore, every player who makes a side bet wins the same payout multiple for the winning side bet, and the more times the predetermined set of cards occurs among qualifying initial hands, the greater the payout multiple for the side bet.

[0009] More specifically, with regard to the mathematics behind the side bet, the invention offers a clear advantage over prior art side bets because the long odds are attenuated as more participants join the underlying game, allowing for a greater range of payouts and greater flexibility for structuring payouts within a given house edge range.

[0010] Additionally, since the payouts increase with the greater number of occurrences of the predetermined set of cards among all qualifying initial hands at the table, the side bet incentivizes more players to congregate at fewer tables, requiring the casino operator to have fewer tables open, thereby reducing labor and operating costs.

[0011] Additionally, and particularly in electronic environments, the payout structure can include or be part of a bonus or progressive jackpot payout structure.

[0012] Embodiments constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention can be offered such that the qualifying initial sets of cards for any given round of play comprise all the initial sets of cards dealt to the players and the dealer or just those sets of initial cards dealt to the players. That is to say, the qualifying initial sets of cards for any given round of play may include or exclude the dealer's initial cards.

[0013] Embodiments in accordance with the principles of the present invention can be constructed such that the predetermined set of cards comprise a specific card count such as 21 (otherwise known as a natural, two-card blackjack) or some other given card count, or even a card count that falls within a specific range of counts. Additionally, embodiments may include a predetermined set of cards that are comprised of matching card values such as two aces, or of matching suits such as two spades, as well as specific card values with specific suits, such as a natural blackjack comprised of an ace of spades and a jack of spades. Further still, embodiments may include a predetermined set of cards that have at lease one given card among a player's two initial cards, such as an ace, or at least one card with a specific suit, such as any spade or at least one card with a specific count and suit, such as the ace of spades.

[0014] Further still, the initial sets of cards and/or the predetermined set of cards need not be limited to two cards, but rather may comprise any number of cards equally dealt to all players and the dealer.

[0015] Further still, according to additional embodiments of the invention, the wager can be offered on other house-banked games in addition to blackjack, including house-banked poker games and baccarat games, where initial sets of cards are dealt to the players and, if applicable, the dealer.

[0016] Further still, embodiments in accordance with the principles of the present invention can be constructed such that the bet is offered independent of an underlying game. That is to say, the invention can be offered as a game unto itself where a winning wager is rewarded based on the number of times a predetermined set of cards is dealt among all sets of cards. Further still, as a game unto itself, the sets of cards may not be limited to two cards, but may comprise any predetermined number of cards.

[0017] Another feature of the invention is that it can easily be applied to various gaming formats and media platforms in addition to traditional live-action table games, including, but not limited to, single-player and multi-player video slot machines, electronic games and devices including dedicated handheld electronic gaming devices and tablet computers, lottery terminals, lottery scratch-off cards, home-entertainment software, online gaming applications and online non-gaming applications.

[0018] Therefore, according to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of playing a card game, the game including a dealer or house entity, at least one player, a game playing surface and playing cards, comprising: placing a wager on the playing surface prior to the dealing of cards for any given round of play that at least one predetermined set of cards will be dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt onto the playing surface for the given round of play; dealing an initial set of cards onto the playing surface for each player and an initial set of cards for the dealer; and determining the outcome of a placed wager wherein: the placed wager is rewarded based at least in part on the number of times the predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards for any given round of play; and the placed wager is lost if the predetermined set of cards is not dealt among any initial sets of cards for any given round of play.

[0019] According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided an apparatus for playing a card game, the game including a dealer and at least one player, comprising: means for placing a wager on the playing surface prior to the dealing of cards for any given round of play that at least one predetermined set of cards will be dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt onto the playing surface for the given round of play; means for dealing an initial set of cards onto the playing surface for each player and an initial set of cards for the dealer; and means for determining the outcome of a placed wager wherein: the placed wager is rewarded based at least in part on the number of times the predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards for any given round of play; and the placed wager is lost if the predetermined set of cards is not dealt among any initial sets of cards for any given round of play.

[0020] The advantages and features which characterize the invention are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed hereto and forming a part hereof. For a better understanding of the invention, however, reference should be had to the drawings which form a part hereof and to the accompanying descriptive matter, in which there is illustrated and described a preferred embodiment of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] The present invention will be described in detail with reference to the following:

[0022] FIG. **1** is an illustration of a playing surface for a casino-style gaming table that can be utilized for the various embodiments of the invention.

[0023] FIG. **2** is an example of a video gaming machine apparatus of the type on which the various embodiments of the present invention may be played.

[0024] FIG. **3** is an example of a personal computer apparatus of the type on which the various embodiments of the present invention may be played.

[0025] FIG. **4** is a flowchart that illustrates a general game method according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0026] FIG. **5** is a flowchart that illustrates an exemplary game method according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0027] FIG. **6** is an example of a tiered payout table with accompanying probability and return tables according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0028] Reference will now be made in detail to exemplary aspects of the present invention which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0029] The various embodiments of the invention can be applied to various house-banked casino games that are played on a card game playing surface using one or more standard 52-card decks. The card game playing surface can be a physical surface composed of various materials such as natural or synthetic felts or the game playing surface can be electronically generated on electronic gaming devices. Similarly, the cards used to conduct the game can be physical cards or electronically generated cards using random number generation technology.

[0030] FIG. **1** illustrates an example of a playing surface for a casino-style gaming table that can be utilized for the various embodiments of the invention and includes a playing surface **10** that accommodates one or more player positions **12**, a primary betting area designated for each player position for betting on the underlying game **14**, an additional betting area corresponding to the primary betting area for each player position for the placement of a side bet as it applies to the specific embodiment of the invention **16**, inscribed guidelines of play as they relate to the underlying game **18**, inscribed guidelines of play as they relate to the side bet including, but not limited to, the payout information on a successful wager **20**, and a traditional dealer station that conforms to the needs of a dealer to conduct the game **22**, which typically includes a card dispensing device typically referred to as a shoe, a rack for holding chips, a drop slot for depositing player money and a discard tray for collecting cards after each hand is played.

[0031] It is to be understood that the embodiments shown in FIG. **1** are presented as examples of ways in which the table surface may be laid out. The table surface can be constructed in many other manners to convey the side bet specific to the invention, and so should not be construed as limiting herein. Furthermore, it will be appreciated that the dealer might employ the use of single-deck or multi-deck, electronic automatic card shufflers or continuous card shufflers to facilitate

play and ensure the random distribution of cards in order to help obviate the possibility of card counting among players.

[0032] FIG. **2** is an illustration of a casino-style video gaming machine apparatus on which the various embodiments of the invention can be played. The apparatus typically includes a physical housing **22**, an electronic display monitor **24**, at least one computer processor and computer program designed to conduct the game through random number generation technology **26**, a player interface console **28** that includes buttons or other means by which the player can input decisions for the game **30**, an input device for depositing funds via coins, bank cards or casino debit cards **32** and an output device for returning sums by physical denominations or printed receipt to the player **34**.

[0033] FIG. **3** is an illustration of a personal computer apparatus on which the various embodiments of the invention can be played off-line or online over the internet at virtual casinos. The personal computer apparatus typically includes a physical housing **36**, an electronic display monitor **38**, at least one computer processor and computer program designed to conduct the game through random number generation technology **40**, and a computer keyboard **42** and/or mouse device **44** to assist in play of the game.

[0034] As stated earlier, the predetermined set of cards as it relates to the various embodiments of the invention can be virtually any specified set of cards and the underlying game can be one of numerous house-banked games, including blackjack games, poker games and baccarat games. FIG. **4** illustrates a flowchart that describes the general steps involved in the various embodiments of the present invention that can be applied to numerous games. While the flowchart demonstrates a single player example for purposes of clarity, it is to be understood that multiple players can easily be accommodated by utilizing the appropriate section of the flowchart for each player. It is also to be understood that the present invention allows for slight variations in rules or procedure for any given underlying game as offered by various casino operators.

[0035] Turning now to FIG. **4**, a flowchart of a game method is illustrated where the player must place a wager for the underlying game in order to place a wager as it pertains to the present invention. However, optionally, embodiments of the invention can be accommodated where players may make a wager as it pertains to the present invention without participating in the underlying game. That is to say, a gaming operator may decide whether a player must initially make a wager on the underlying game in order to place a wager as it pertains to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0036] To begin a game in which the player must participate in the underlying game, the player places a primary wager for the underlying game against the dealer's hand at step **100** and optional side bet as it relates to the invention at step **102**. Once all wagers have been placed, the dealer then proceeds to deal an initial hand in accordance with the traditional rules of the underlying game at step **104**. Once the initial cards have been dealt, it is determined whether the dealer's initial cards are a predetermined set of cards at step **106**. If the dealer's initial set of cards is a predetermined set of cards, then it is determined whether the dealer's predetermined set of cards is a qualifying initial set of cards for the side bet at step **108** in accordance with the rules for that particular embodiment of the invention. If it is, then the dealer's predetermined set of cards is counted among all the predetermined set of cards dealt at the table for the round of play in determining the side bet payout at step **110**. The dealer will then complete his hand at step **112** and the dealer will compare his final hand to the player's final hand at step **114** to determine who wins the underlying game. If, at step **108**, it is determined the dealer's predetermined set of cards is not a qualifying initial set of cards for the side bet, then the predetermined set of cards is not counted towards the side bet payout at step **116**. The dealer will then complete his hand at step **118** and the dealer will compare his final hand to the player's final hand at step **120** to determine who wins the underlying game. Returning to step **106**, if the dealer's initial set of cards is not a predetermined set of cards, then the dealer will complete his hand in accordance with the traditional rules of the underlying game at step **122** and the dealer will compare his final hand to the player's final hand to determine the outcome of the underlying game at step **124** in accordance with the traditional rules of the underlying game. Returning to step **104**, after the dealer has dealt the initial cards, it is determined whether the player's initial set of cards is a predetermined set of cards at step **126**. If it is, then the player's predetermined set of cards is counted among all predetermined set of cards dealt at the table for the round of play in determining the side bet payout at step **128**. The player will then complete his hand at step **130** and the player's final hand will be compared to the dealer's final hand at step **132** to determine who wins the underlying game. Returning to step **126**, if the player's initial set of cards is not a predetermined set of cards, then the player will complete his hand in accordance with the traditional rules of the underlying game at step **134** and the player's final hand will be compared to the dealer's final hand at step **136** to determine who wins the underlying game.

[0037] Turning now to FIG. **5**, a flowchart of a game method according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in which the underlying game is blackjack and the predetermined set of cards as it pertains to the present invention is a natural, two-card blackjack. To begin the game, the player places a primary wager for the underlying blackjack game against the dealer's hand at step **200** (if required) and optional side bet as it relates to the invention at step **202**. Once all wagers have been placed, the dealer then proceeds to deal an initial hand of blackjack in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack well-known to those skilled in the art at step **204**. Here each player and the dealer receives two initial cards in rotation with players traditionally receiving both cards face-up and the dealer receiving one card face-up and one card face-down. It should be noted that the various embodiments of the invention are not affected by slight variations in rules or procedure for dealing the initial cards. Once the initial cards have been dealt, it is determined whether the dealer has a natural two-card blackjack at step **206**. If the dealer has a natural blackjack, then it is determined whether the dealer's natural blackjack is a qualifying blackjack for the side bet at step **208** in accordance with the rules for that particular embodiment of the invention. If it is, then the dealer's blackjack is counted among all the natural blackjacks dealt at the table for the round of play in determining the side bet payout at step **210** and the dealer's natural blackjack will also win the underlying game against the player's hand at step **212** unless the player also has a blackjack, in which case the underlying game will be a draw (also known as a push or tie) in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack. If, at step **208**, it is determined the dealer's hand is not a qualifying blackjack for the side bet, then the blackjack is not counted towards the side bet payout at step **214** and the dealer's natural

blackjack will win the underlying game against the player's hand at step **216** unless the player also has a blackjack, in which case the underlying game will be a draw in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack. Returning to step **206**, if the dealer does not have a natural blackjack, then the dealer will complete his hand in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack at step **218** and the dealer will compare his final hand count to the player's final hand count to determine the outcome of the underlying game at step **220** in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack. Returning to step **204**, after the dealer has dealt the initial cards, it is determined whether the player has a natural two-card blackjack at step **222**. If the player has a natural blackjack, then the player's blackjack is counted among all natural blackjacks dealt at the table for the round of play in determining the side bet payout at step **224** and the player will also win the underlying game against the dealer's hand at step **226** unless the dealer also has blackjack, in which case the underlying game will be a draw in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack. Returning to step **222**, if the player does not have a natural blackjack, then the player will complete his hand in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack at step **228** and the dealer will compare his final hand count to the player's final hand count at step **230** to determine the outcome of the underlying game in accordance with the traditional rules of blackjack.

[0038] As stated earlier, one of the main advantages of the invention is that it allows for a highly tiered and flexible payout table.

[0039] FIG. **6** illustrates an example of the mathematics associated with an exemplary embodiment of the invention in which the underlying game is a blackjack game that accommodates up to seven player hands and one dealer hand and the predetermined set of cards is any two initial cards totaling a count of 21, otherwise know as a natural blackjack. The mathematics demonstrate a tiered payout table based on the number of blackjacks dealt per qualifying hands dealt **300**, associated probability table for the number of blackjacks dealt per qualifying hands dealt **302** and associated return table that demonstrates the house edge based on the listed payouts **304**. In this particular example, the mathematics are based on a six-deck shoe and have a house edge in the neighborhood of 5%. However, numerous payables can be constructed with a varying house edge to satisfy any particular game operator's objectives. It will be appreciated that pay tables can be printed on the game playing surface or posted at the table for easy reference by both players and the dealer, making it easy for players to see what a payout would be for any given winning scenario as well as making it easy for dealers to pay off a winning bet.

[0040] By referencing the pay table in FIG. **6**, the following three example scenarios of an embodiment of the invention in which the underlying game is blackjack further demonstrate the flexibility of the present invention by either including or excluding the dealer's initial set of cards as a qualifying hand for the side bet. It will be appreciated that the parameters and rules for the various embodiments of the invention, including whether or not the dealer's hand is a qualifying hand for the side bet payout, can be printed or posted at the table along with the payout table.

EXAMPLE 1

[0041] In this scenario, let's assume the dealer's initial set of cards is a qualifying hand for a side bet specific to the invention. Suppose there are five players at the blackjack table. The dealer deals six hands (the five players and himself). Two of the players and the dealer are dealt blackjack. Since the dealer's hand is a qualifying hand, that means there are six qualifying hands and three qualifying blackjacks. The dealer determines the payout for a side bet specific to the invention by cross-referencing the number of qualifying hands dealt (6 hands) with the number of qualifying blackjacks dealt (3 blackjacks) for a payout of 30:1.

EXAMPLE 2

[0042] In this scenario, let's assume the dealer's hand is not a qualifying hand for a side bet specific to the invention. Once again, suppose there are five players at the blackjack table. The dealer deals six hands (the five players and himself). Once again, two of the players and the dealer are dealt blackjack. However, because the dealer's hand is not a qualifying hand for the side bet, there are only five qualifying hands and two qualifying blackjacks. The dealer determines the payout for a side bet specific to the invention by cross-referencing the number of qualifying hands dealt (5 hands) with the number of qualifying blackjacks dealt (2 blackjacks) for a payout of 15:1.

EXAMPLE 3

[0043] In this scenario, let's assume again that the dealer's hand is not a qualifying hand for a side bet specific to the invention. Once again, suppose there are five players at the blackjack table. The dealer deals six hands (the five players and himself). This time, however, all three blackjacks are dealt to players. Because the dealer's hand is not a qualifying hand for the side bet, there are only five qualifying hands, yet there are three qualifying blackjacks since they were all dealt to players. The dealer determines the payout for a side bet specific to the invention by cross-referencing the number of qualifying hands dealt (5 hands) with the number of qualifying blackjacks dealt (3 blackjacks) for a payout of 50:1.

[0044] It is to be understood that the embodiments shown and described herein are merely illustrative of the principles of this invention and that various modifications may be implemented by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

1. A method of conducting a card game, the game including a dealer or house entity, at least one player, a game playing surface and playing cards, comprising:

a) accepting a wager placed on a game playing surface prior to the dealing of cards for a round of play that at least one occurrence of a predetermined set of cards will be dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt onto the playing surface for the round of play;

b) dealing at least one initial set of cards for each player and at least one initial set of cards for the dealer onto the playing surface for the round of play; and

c) resolving the outcome of a placed wager, wherein:

i) the wager is rewarded based at least in part on the number of times the predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play; and

ii) the wager is lost if the predetermined set of cards is not dealt among any of the qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the qualifying initial sets of cards comprise all initial sets of cards dealt to all players.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the qualifying initial sets of cards comprise all initial sets of cards dealt to all players and the dealer.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of cards comprises at least one card.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of cards comprises any two cards totaling a count of 21, otherwise known as a natural blackjack.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the wager is positioned in a designated marked area on the game playing surface.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the wager is an optional side wager for an underlying card game.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising completing the underlying card game and determining the winner of the underlying game by comparing the player's cards to the dealer's cards.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the use of an automatic card shuffler to determine the cards that are dealt.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the use of a programmed computer or random number generator to determine the value of the cards.

11. A computer-implemented method of playing a card game, the game including a virtual dealer or house entity, at least one player, a computer-generated game playing surface and computer-generated playing cards, comprising:

a) accepting a wager, by means of a programmed computer, placed on a computer-generated game playing surface prior to the dealing of computer-generated cards for a round of play that at least one occurrence of a predetermined set of cards will be dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt onto the playing surface for the round of play;

b) dealing, by means of a programmed computer, at least one initial set of cards for each player and at least one initial set of cards for the dealer onto the computer-generated playing surface for the round of play; and

c) resolving the outcome, by means of a programmed computer, of a placed wager, wherein:

i) the wager is rewarded based at least in part on the number of times the predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play; and

ii) the wager is lost if the predetermined set of cards is not dealt among any of the qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play.

12. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the computer comprises at least one computer processor operative to execute instructions from at least one computer program product embodied in at least one computer-readable medium.

13. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the qualifying initial sets of cards comprise all initial sets of cards dealt to all players.

14. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the qualifying initial sets of cards comprise all initial sets of cards dealt to all players and the dealer.

15. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined set of cards comprises at least one card.

16. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined set of cards comprises any two cards totaling a count of 21, otherwise known as a natural blackjack.

17. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the wager is positioned in a designated marked area on the game playing surface.

18. The computer-implemented method of claim 11, wherein the wager is an optional side wager for an underlying card game.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim 18, further comprising completing the underlying card game and determining the winner of the underlying game by comparing the player's cards to the dealer's cards.

20. A computerized gaming device for conducting a card game, the game including a virtual dealer or house entity, at least one player, a computer-generated game playing surface and computer-generated playing cards, comprising: at least one computer processor operative to execute instructions from at least one computer program product embodied in at least one computer-readable medium, to:

a) accept a wager placed on a computer-generated playing surface prior to the dealing of computer-generated cards for a round of play that at least one occurrence of a predetermined set of cards will be dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards dealt onto the playing surface for the round of play;

b) deal at least one initial set of cards for each player and at least one initial set of cards for the dealer onto the computer-generated playing surface for the round of play; and

c) resolve the outcome of a placed wager, wherein:

i) the wager is rewarded based at least in part on the number of times the predetermined set of cards is dealt among all qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play; and

ii) the wager is lost if the predetermined set of cards is not dealt among any of the qualifying initial sets of cards for the round of play.

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