VIDEO POKER WAGERING GAME WITH CARD SUBSTITUTION FEATURE

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Abstract
A gaming system for playing a video poker game includes a wager-input device, a display, and a controller. The wager-input device receives a wager input from a player and the display displays the video poker game having a plurality of cards. The controller is coupled to the display and the wager-input device, and is programmed to provide an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from the plurality of cards. In response to a bonus feature being triggered, a certain card in the initial poker hand is replaced with at least two substitute cards from the plurality of cards to form two distinct final poker hands.
Fig. 2
ROLL DICE FOR STAMPEDE BONUS

ODD NUMBER = NUMBER OF STAMPEDE CARDS
EVEN NUMBER = NO STAMPEDE BONUS

PAY TABLE

ROYAL FLUSH 250
STRAIGHT FLUSH 50
FULL HOUSE 9
FLUSH 6
FOUR OF A KIND 3
THREE OF A KIND 2
TWO PAIRS 1
JACKS OR BETTER 1
VIDEO POKER WAGERING GAME WITH CARD SUBSTITUTION FEATURE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is related to and claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/702,876 filed Jul. 26, 2005, titled “Video Poker Wagering Game With Card Substitution Feature,” which is incorporated herein in its entirety.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The present invention relates generally to gaming machines, and methods for playing wagering games, and more particularly, to a gaming machine for playing a video poker game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money at the machine and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options. Where the available gaming options include a number of competing machines and the expectation of winning at each machine is roughly the same (or believed to be the same), players are likely to be attracted to the most entertaining and exciting machines. Shrewd operators consequently strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines, features, and enhancements available because such machines attract frequent play and hence increase profitability to the operator. Therefore, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to continuously develop new games and improved gaming enhancements that will attract frequent play through enhanced entertainment value to the player.

[0005] One concept that has been successfully employed to enhance the entertainment value of a game is the concept of a “secondary” or “bonus” game that may be played in conjunction with a “basic” game. The basic game may comprise any type of game, either similar to or completely different from the basic game, which is entered upon the occurrence of a selected event or outcome in the basic game. Generally, bonus games provide a greater expectation of winning than the basic game and may also be accompanied with more attractive or unusual video displays and/or audio. Bonus games may additionally award players with “progressive jackpot” awards that are funded, at least in part, by a percentage of coin-in from the gaming machine or a plurality of participating gaming machines.

[0006] Because the bonus game concept offers tremendous advantages in player appeal and excitement relative to other known games, and because such games are attractive to both players and operators, there is a continuing need to develop gaming machines with new types of bonus games or other feature to satisfy the demands of players and operators.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] According to one aspect of the present invention, a gaming system for playing a video poker game includes a wager-input device, a display, and a controller. The wager-input device receives a wager input from a player and the display displays the video poker game having a plurality of cards. The controller is coupled to the display and the wager-input device, and is programmed to provide an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from the plurality of cards. In response to a bonus feature being triggered, a certain card in the initial poker hand is replaced with at least two substitute cards from the plurality of cards to form two distinct final poker hands.

[0008] According to another aspect of the invention, a method for playing a video poker game having a plurality of cards includes receiving a wager input from a player for playing the video poker game. The method further includes forming, in response to receiving the wager, an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from the plurality of cards. In addition, the method includes substituting a first card for a card in the initial poker hand to form a first final poker hand, and substituting a second card for the card in the initial poker hand to form a second final poker hand.

[0009] According to yet another aspect of the invention, a method for playing a video poker game having a plurality of cards includes receiving a wager input for playing the video poker game. The method further includes forming, in response to receiving the wager, an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from the plurality of cards, wherein the initial poker hand includes a plurality of initial cards. A wild card is substituted for a first one of the plurality of initial cards to form a first final poker hand, wherein the wild card and any unsubstituted cards of the first final poker hand results in a predetermined ranking for the first final poker hand. The wild card is substituted for a second one of the plurality of initial cards to form a second final poker hand, the wild card being selected such that a combination of the wild card and any unsubstituted cards of the second final poker hand results in another predetermined ranking for the second final poker hand.

[0010] According to yet another aspect of the invention, a computer readable storage medium is encoded with instructions for directing a gaming device to perform the above methods.

[0011] Additional aspects of the invention will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the detailed description of various embodiments, which is made with reference to the drawings, a brief description of which is provided below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a gaming machine embodying the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a control system suitable for operating the gaming machine;

[0014] FIG. 3 is an illustration of a stampede feature, according to one embodiment of the present invention;
FIG. 4A is an illustration of a triggering event for a stampede feature, according to another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4B is an illustration of the stampede feature of FIG. 4A; and

FIG. 5 is an illustration of a roving wild feature, according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While this invention is susceptible of embodiment in many different forms, there is shown in the drawings and will herein be described in detail preferred embodiments of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to the embodiments illustrated.

Referring to FIG. 1, a gaming machine 10 is used in gaming establishments such as casinos. With regard to the present invention, the gaming machine 10 may be any type of gaming machine and may have varying structures and methods of operation. For example, the gaming machine 10 may be an electromechanical gaming machine configured to play mechanical slots, or it may be an electronic gaming machine configured to play a video casino game, such as blackjack, slots, keno, poker, blackjack, roulette, etc. In particular, the present invention is directed to poker games.

The gaming machine 10 comprises a housing 12 and includes input devices, including a value input device 18 and a player input device 24. For output the gaming machine 10 includes a primary display 14 for displaying information about the basic wagering game. The primary display 14 can also display information about a bonus wagering game and a progressive wagering game. The gaming machine 10 may also include a secondary display 16 for displaying game events, game outcomes, and/or signage information. While these typical components found in the gaming machine 10 are described below, it should be understood that numerous other elements may exist and may be used in any number of combinations to create various forms of a gaming machine 10.

The value input device 18 may be provided in many forms, individually or in combination, and is preferably located on the front of the housing 12. The value input device 18 receives currency and/or credits that are inserted by a player. The value input device 18 may include a coin acceptor 20 for receiving coin currency (see FIG. 1). Alternatively, or in addition, the value input device 18 may include a bill acceptor 22 for receiving paper currency. Furthermore, the value input device 18 may include a ticket reader, or barcode scanner, for reading information stored on a credit ticket, a card, or other tangible portable credit storage device. The credit ticket or card may also authorize access to a central account, which can transfer money to the gaming machine 10.

The player input device 24 comprises a plurality of push buttons 26 on a button panel for operating the gaming machine 10. In addition, or alternatively, the player input device 24 may comprise a touch screen 28 mounted by adhesive, tape, or the like over the primary display 14 and/or secondary display 16. The touch screen 28 contains soft touch keys 30 denoted by graphics on the underlying primary display 14 and used to operate the gaming machine 10. The touch screen 28 provides players with an alternative method of input. A player enables a desired function either by touching the touch screen 28 at an appropriate touch key 30 or by pressing an appropriate push button 26 on the button panel. The touch keys 30 may be used to implement the same functions as push buttons 26. Alternatively, the push buttons 26 may provide inputs for one aspect of the operating the game, while the touch keys 30 may allow for input needed for another aspect of the game.

The various components of the gaming machine 10 may be connected directly to, or contained within, the housing 12, as seen in FIG. 1, or may be located outboard of the housing 12 and connected to the housing 12 via a variety of different wired or wireless connection methods. Thus, the gaming machine 10 comprises these components whether housed in the housing 12, or outboard of the housing 12 and connected remotely.

The operation of the basic wagering game is displayed to the player on the primary display 14. The primary display 14 can also display the bonus game associated with the basic wagering game. The primary display 14 may take the form of a cathode ray tube (CRT), a high resolution LCD, a plasma display, an LED, or any other type of display suitable for use in the gaming machine 10. As shown, the primary display 14 includes the touch screen 28 overlaying the entire monitor (or a portion thereof) to allow players to make game-related selections. Alternatively, the primary display 14 of the gaming machine 10 may include a number of mechanical reels to display the outcome in visual association to at least one payline 32. In the illustrated embodiment, the gaming machine 10 is an “upright” version in which the primary display 14 is oriented vertically relative to the player. Alternatively, the gaming machine may be a “slant-top” version in which the primary display 14 is slanted at about a thirty-degree angle toward the player of the gaming machine 10.

A player begins play of the basic wagering game by making a wager via the value input device 18 of the gaming machine 10. A player can select play by using the player input device 24, via the buttons 26 or the touch screen keys 30. The basic game consists of a plurality of symbols arranged in an array, and includes at least one payline 32 that indicates one or more outcomes of the basic game. Such outcomes are randomly selected in response to the wagering input by the player. At least one of the plurality of randomly selected outcomes may be a start-bonus outcome, which can include any variations of symbols or symbol combinations triggering a bonus game.

In some embodiments, the gaming machine 10 may also include a player information reader 52 that allows for identification of a player by reading a card with information indicating his or her true identity. The player information reader 52 is shown in FIG. 1 as a card reader, but may take on many forms including a ticket reader, bar code scanner, RFID transceiver or computer readable storage medium interface. Currently, identification is generally used by casinos for rewarding certain players with complimentary services or special offers. For example, a player may be enrolled in the gaming establishment’s loyalty club and may be awarded certain complimentary services as that player...
collects points in his or her player-tracking account. The player inserts his or her card into the player information reader 52, which allows the casino’s computers to register that player’s wagering at the gaming machine 10. The gaming machine 10 may use the secondary display 16 or other dedicated player-tracking display for providing the player with information about his or her account or other player-specific information. Also, in some embodiments, the information reader 52 may be used to restore game assets that the player achieved and saved during a previous game session.

[0027] Turning now to FIG. 2, the various components of the gaming machine 10 are controlled by a central processing unit (CPU) 34, also referred to herein as a controller or processor (such as a microcontroller or microprocessor). To provide gaming functions, the controller 34 executes one or more game programs stored in a computer readable storage medium, in the form of memory 36. The controller 34 performs the random selection (using a random number generator (RNG)) of an outcome from the plurality of possible outcomes of the wagering game. Alternatively, the random event may be determined at a remote controller. The remote controller may use either an RNG or a pooling scheme for its central determination of a game outcome. It should be appreciated that the controller 34 may include one or more microprocessors, including but not limited to a master processor, a slave processor, and a secondary or parallel processor.

[0028] The controller 34 is also coupled to the system memory 36 and a money/credit detector 38. The system memory 36 may comprise a volatile memory (e.g., a random-access memory (RAM)) and a non-volatile memory (e.g., an EEPROM). The system memory 36 may include multiple RAM and multiple program memories. The money/credit detector 38 signals the processor that money and/or credits have been input via the value input device 18. Preferably, these components are located within the housing 12 of the gaming machine 10. However, as explained above, these components may be located outboard of the housing 12 and connected to the remainder of the components of the gaming machine 10 via a variety of different wired or wireless connection methods.

[0029] As seen in FIG. 2, the controller 34 is also connected to, and controls, the primary display 14, the player input device 24, and a payoff mechanism 40. The payoff mechanism 40 is operable in response to instructions from the controller 34 to award a payoff to the player in response to certain winning outcomes that might occur in the basic game or the bonus game(s). The payoff may be provided in the form of points, bills, tickets, coupons, cards, etc. For example, in FIG. 1, the payoff mechanism 40 includes both a ticket printer 42 and a coin outlet 44. However, any of a variety of payoff mechanisms 40 well known in the art may be implemented, including cards, coins, tickets, smartcards, cash, etc. The payoff amounts distributed by the payoff mechanism 40 are determined by one or more pay tables stored in the system memory 36.

[0030] Communications between the controller 34 and both the peripheral components of the gaming machine 10 and external systems 50 occur through input/output (I/O) circuits 46, 48. More specifically, the controller 34 controls and receives inputs from the peripheral components of the gaming machine 10 through the input/output circuits 46. Further, the controller 34 communicates with the external systems 50 via the I/O circuits 48 and a communication path (e.g., serial, parallel, IR, RC, 10 b1, etc.). The external systems 50 may include a gaming network, other gaming machines, a gaming server, communications hardware, or a variety of other interfaced systems or components. Although the I/O circuits 46, 48 may be shown as a single block, it should be appreciated that each of the I/O circuits 46, 48 may include a number of different types of I/O circuits.

[0031] Controller 34, as used herein, comprises any combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware that may be disposed or resident inside and/or outside of the gaming machine 10 that may communicate with and/or control the transfer of data between the gaming machine 10 and a bus, another computer, processor, or device and/or a service and/or a network. The controller 34 may comprise one or more controllers or processors. In FIG. 2, the controller 34 in the gaming machine 10 is depicted as comprising a CPU, but the controller 34 may alternatively comprise a CPU in combination with other components, such as the I/O circuits 46, 48 and the system memory 36.

[0032] Turning now to FIG. 3, the primary display 14 includes a plurality of poker cards, a pay table 60, and a plurality of indicators 62-68 (including a credits indicator 62, a wager indicator 64, a bonus indicator 66, and an award indicator 68). The plurality of poker cards include a standard poker card set and at least one Stampeede card for providing a Stampeede feature, or bonus, when playing a video poker game. The Stampeede feature allows a player of video poker to replace one or more of initial poker cards with a plurality of poker cards, reevaluating the cards to determine the rank of the poker hand for each replacement round. As described in more detail below, the Stampeede feature can be triggered in various ways.

[0033] In response to receiving a wager input from a player, an initial poker hand 69 is provided to the player at the bottom of the main display 14. The poker hand is one of the many variations of poker hands that are typically achieved in a poker game. In this case, however, the initial poker hand 69 includes four standard poker cards (i.e., a Queen of Spades, a Queen of Hearts, a King of Diamonds, and a King of Clubs) and a bonus card (the Stampeede card displayed as a “Stampeede x5” card). The Stampeede card indicates the number of cards, i.e., “x5,” that are included in the Stampeede feature.

[0034] The Stampeede feature, as shown at the top of the main display 14, causes five replacement cards to be substituted for the Stampeede card. The five replacement cards are 10 of Spades, 5 of Hearts, a King of Spades, and a Queen of Diamonds. The combination of the four standard poker cards and a respective one of the five replacement cards is reevaluated for each one of the five replacement cards to determine a respective ranking of the poker hand. Thus, each time a replacement card is “stampeded” through the poker hand, the poker hand is treated like a new initial poker hand. The replaced card from the initial poker hand 69 is the Stampeede card. Alternatively, the replaced card can be selected by the player and the Stampeede card is replaced by another card before the “Stampeede” occurs. Optionally, at least one of the replacement cards is a wild card.

[0035] For example, for the first replacement card, the 10 of Spades, the ranking of the poker hand is two pairs—two
Queens and two Kings. For the second replacement card, the 5 of Hearts, the ranking of the poker hand is still two pairs—two Queens and two Kings. For the third replacement card, the King of Spades, the ranking of the poker hand is a full house—two Queens and three Kings. For the fourth replacement card, the Ace of Spades, the ranking of the poker hand is again two pairs—two Queens and two Kings. For the fifth replacement card, the Queen of Diamonds, the ranking of the poker hand is again a full house—three Queens and two Kings. Accordingly, the player has achieved three two pair rankings and two full house rankings.

[0036] A pay table 60 indicates the corresponding awards for winning ranked hands. For example, a Jacks-Or-Better ranking pays one credit, a Two Pairs ranking pays two credits, a Three-Of-A-Kind ranking pays three credits, etc. According to the pay table 60, the player has won 6 credits for the three pair rankings (3x2 credits) and 18 credits for the two full house rankings (2x9 credits), for a total of 24 credits.

[0037] Referring to FIGS. 4A and 4B, alternative ways of triggering and representing the Stampede feature are shown. One way to trigger the Stampede feature is using a random event that is unrelated to a base game, e.g., a poker game. For example, a random occurrence of a pair of dice can indicate to a player the possibility of playing a Stampede bonus game. As illustrated in FIG. 4A, a message instructs the player to “ROLL DICE FOR STAPMDE BONUS.” If the rolled dice result in an odd number, then the player is awarded a number of stampede cards that is equal to the number of the rolled dice. If the rolled dice result in an even number, then a stampede bonus is not awarded. After rolling the dice, it is assumed that the first dice yields the number 3 and the second dice yields the number 2, for a total number of 5. Consequently, the player is awarded 5 Stampede cards.

[0038] Alternatively, the player can purchase a Stampede feature using a side wager. Thus, the player can purchase an X number of cards for a Stampede feature. Optionally, the player can purchase an option for potentially playing a Stampede feature. For example, the player can purchase one or more rolls of dice for determining whether the player will be awarded a Stampede bonus. Each roll of dice that meets a predetermined criteria, e.g., a predetermined number, results in a Stampede bonus. After a Stampede bonus has been awarded, additional rolls of dice can optionally determine the number of Stampede cards available in the Stampede bonus.

[0039] After the Stampede bonus has been awarded, the Stampede replacement cards can be used to replace a single card, as shown and described in reference to FIG. 3, or a plurality of cards. For example, as shown in FIG. 4B, a plurality of randomly selected cards from the initial hand 69 are replaced with the Stampede replacement cards. Alternatively, a number of the Stampede replacement cards can be used to replace a first card of the initial hand 69 and another number of the Stampede replacement cards can be used to replace a second card of the initial hand 69. For example, assuming a total of ten Stampede replacement cards, the first five Stampede replacement cards can be used to replace the Queen of Spades and the last five Stampede replacement cards can be used to replace the Queen of Hearts. Optionally, the replaced cards can be selected by the player.

[0040] As shown in the 1st Row, the 10 of Spades replaces the King of Diamonds to achieve a poker ranking of Two Pairs—two Queens and two 10s. In the 2nd Row, the 5 of Hearts replaces the Queen of Hearts to achieve a poker ranking of one pair—two Kings. In the 3rd Row, the King of Spades replaces the Queen of Spades to achieve a poker ranking of Three-Of-A-Kind—three Kings. In the 4th Row, the Ace of Hearts replaces the 10 of Clubs to achieve a poker ranking of Two Pairs—two Queens and two Kings. In the 5th Row, the Queen of Diamonds replaces the King of Clubs to achieve a poker ranking of Three-Of-A-Kind—three Queens. Accordingly, the player has achieved the following ranked rankings: two Two Pairs, each of which pays 2 credits, and two Three-Of-A-Kind, each of which pays 3 credits. Thus, the player has won 10 credits during the Stampede bonus represented in FIG. 4B.

[0041] In alternative embodiments, a Stampede replacement card replaces a card based on the position of the card. For example, a first Stampede replacement card replaces a first card located in a leftmost location of an initial poker hand and a second Stampede replacement card replaces a second card located in a rightmost location of the initial poker hand. The locations are pre-selected (e.g., the controller 34 selects a card located in a specific location), randomly selected (e.g., the controller 34 selects a card located in a random location), or player selected (e.g., the player selects the location of the replaced card). Optionally, a triggering criterion can be used to determine whether a specific position, a random position, or a specific card are replaced.

[0042] Referring to FIG. 5, a Roving Wild feature includes a plurality of initial poker cards and a Roving Wild card. A bottom section 168 of the primary display 14 shows in the bottom row the initial poker cards, which include the Queen of Hearts, the King of Diamonds, and the Ace of Hearts. The Roving Wild card is randomly awarded in the initial poker cards. Alternatively, the Roving Wild card can be awarded based on any triggering event as described above in reference to FIGS. 3-4B.

[0043] After the Roving Wild card has been awarded, the Roving Wild card is replaced with another card from a deck of cards. Thus, in the top row of the bottom section 168 the Roving Wild card has been replaced with a Queen of Diamonds. The Roving Wild card is represented as a sixth card in the top row of the initial poker cards. The replacement card for the Roving Wild card can be randomly selected, pre-selected, or player selected.

[0044] In a top section 169 of the primary display 14, the Roving Wild card is used to evaluate each of the five different positions of the initial poker cards. Each one of the five rows, the 1st Row-5th Row, shows the Roving Wild being evaluated in a different position of the initial poker hand. For each evaluation, the Roving Wild card is assumed to have a card value that would provide the highest possible ranking for the poker hand.

[0045] In the 1st Row, the Roving Wild card is evaluated in combination with the Queen of Hearts, the Queen of Diamonds, the King of Diamonds, and the Ace of Hearts. The highest possible ranking would be achieved if the Roving Wild card has a Queen rank to achieve a Three-Of-A-Kind poker ranking. Thus, the Roving Wild card is replaced with one of the Queen of Spades or the Queen of Clubs to achieve the Three-Of-A-Kind ranking, which provides an award of 3 credits.
In the 2nd Row, the Roving Wildcard is evaluated in combination with the Queen of Spades, the Queen of Diamonds, the King of diamonds, and the Ace of Hearts. The highest possible ranking would be achieved if the Roving Wild card has a Queen rank. Thus, similar to the 1st Row, the Roving Wild card is replaced with one of the Queen of Spades or the Queen of Clubs to achieve the Three-Of-A-Kind ranking, which provides another award of 3 credits.

In the 3rd Row, the Roving Wild card is evaluated in combination with the Queen of Spades, the Queen of Diamonds, and the Ace of Hearts. As in the 1st and 2nd rows, the highest possible ranking would be achieved if the Roving Wild card has a Queen rank. Thus, the Roving Wild card is replaced with one of the Queen of Spades or the Queen of Clubs to achieve the Three-Of-A-Kind ranking, which provides another award of 3 credits.

In the 4th Row, the Roving Wild card is evaluated in combination with the Queen of Spades, the Queen of Diamonds, and the King of Diamonds. The highest possible ranking would be achieved if the Roving Wild card has a Queen rank to achieve a Four-Of-A-Kind poker ranking, which provides an award of 25 credits.

In the 5th Row, the Roving Wild card is evaluated in combination with the Queen of Spades, the Queen of Hearts, the Queen of Diamonds, and the King of Diamonds. The highest possible ranking would be achieved if the Roving Wild card has a Queen rank to achieve a Four-Of-A-Kind poker ranking, which provides an award of 25 credits. Thus, the player has been awarded a total of 59 credits, as indicated in the award indicator 68, for the Roving Wild bonus game.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the Roving Wild feature includes a plurality of Roving Wild cards. For example, the player may trigger two Roving Wild cards that randomly replace, generally simultaneously, cards of the initial poker hand. Thus, referring to FIG. 5, instead of substituting one Roving Wild card per each row, two Roving Wild cards are randomly substituted per each row.

Optionally, the ranking of the initial poker hand, after being evaluated with the Roving Wild card, can be randomly selected from a plurality of rankings. For example, if the Roving Wild card can be used to achieve a Two Pair ranking, a Three-Of-A-Kind ranking, and a Full House ranking, the Two Pair ranking can be randomly selected as the current hand ranking.

In the examples described above in reference to FIGS. 3-5, it is assumed that all the cards are selected from the same deck of cards, i.e., a standard deck of 52 cards. Alternatively, the cards are selected from a plurality of decks of cards. For example, an initial poker hand can include cards that are selected from a first deck of cards, while at least some of a plurality of stampeding cards are selected from a second deck of cards. Optionally, a deck of cards includes one or more Jokers that are designated as wild cards. In an alternative embodiment, one or more of the ranks, e.g., deuces, are designated as wild cards.

Each of these embodiments and obvious variations thereof is contemplated as falling within the spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming system for playing a video poker game, comprising:
   - a wager-input device for receiving a wager input;
   - a display for displaying said video poker game having a plurality of cards; and
   - a controller coupled to said display and said wager-input device and programmed to
     provide an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from said plurality of cards,
     in response to a bonus feature being triggered, replace a certain card in said initial poker hand with at least two substitute cards from said plurality of cards to form two distinct final poker hands.

2. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein said bonus feature is triggered based on a predetermined criterion that is unrelated to said initial poker hand.

3. The gaming system of claim 2, wherein said predetermined criterion includes at least one of a predetermined number of a dice roll and a side wager received from said player.

4. The gaming system of claim 3, wherein said controller is further programmed to randomly select said certain card from said initial poker hand.

5. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein said certain card is a plurality of cards.

6. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein said certain card is a player-selected card from said initial poker hand.

7. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein said controller is further programmed to determine whether each of said final poker hands is a winning hand.

8. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein at least one of said two substitute cards is a wild card.

9. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein said controller is further programmed to trigger said bonus feature when a bonus card is included in said initial poker hand.

10. The gaming system of claim 9, wherein said bonus card is said certain card.

11. A method for playing a video poker game having a plurality of cards, comprising:
   - receiving a wager input from a player for playing said video poker game;
   - in response to receiving said wager, forming an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from said plurality of cards;
   - substituting a first card for one of said cards in said initial poker hand to form a first final poker hand; and
   - substituting a second card for said one of said cards in said initial poker hand to form a second final poker hand.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising triggering said substituting of said first card and second card based on a predetermined criterion that is unrelated to said forming of said initial poker hand.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said triggering includes at least one of selecting a predetermined number of a dice roll and receiving a side wager from said player.
14. The method of claim 11, further comprising randomly selecting said first card and said second card from said plurality of cards.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising determining whether each of said first final poker hand and said second final poker hand is a winning hand.

16. The method of claim 11, further comprising receiving a player selection for selecting said one of said cards from said initial poker hand.

17. The method of claim 11, further comprising triggering said bonus feature when a bonus card is included in said initial poker hand.

18. A computer readable storage medium encoded with instructions for directing a gaming device to perform the method of claim 11.

19. A method for playing a video poker game having a plurality of cards, comprising:

    receiving a wager input for playing said video poker game;

    in response to receiving said wager, forming an initial poker hand that is randomly selected from said plurality of cards, said initial poker hand having a plurality of initial cards;

    substituting a wild card for a first one of said plurality of initial cards to form a first final poker hand, said wild card and any unsubstituted cards of said first final poker hand resulting in a predetermined ranking for said first final poker hand; and

    substituting said wild card for a second one of said plurality of initial cards to form a second final poker hand, said wild card and any unsubstituted cards of said second final poker hand resulting in another predetermined ranking for said second final poker hand.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising substituting all remaining ones of said plurality of initial cards, one at a time.