ROULETTE BASED BINGO GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING BINGO

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ABSTRACT

A roulette based bingo game and method of playing bingo is disclosed. The game includes a bingo table that resembles a traditional roulette table and a bingo wheel used to select randomly from among a set of numbers. Players purchase primary and interim bingo cards by placing chips on the bingo table in a manner that evokes the experience of betting at a roulette table. Bingo numbers are randomly selected by spinning the bingo wheel and matching numbers are daubed or otherwise marked on player’s bingo cards. Players obtaining predetermined winning patterns of matched numbers on their bingo cards are winners.
EVENS INTERIM BINGO CARD

FIG. 5
ROULETTE BASED BINGO GAME AND
METHOD OF PLAYING BINGO

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This provisional disclosure relates generally to the
game of bingo and more specifically to bingo and a method of
playing bingo that evokes the experience of playing the casino
game of roulette.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The game of bingo traditionally is played by a plurality of players, each of whom holds a card bearing numbers arranged in a 5 by 5 matrix with the letters B I N G O heading respective columns of numbers. A bingo game caller draws bingo balls randomly generated by a bingo blower, each bingo ball being printed with a combination of a letter and a number. For example, a bingo ball may be printed with the designation “B-8” corresponding to a number 8 in the B column of the matrix or “0-74” corresponding to the number 74 in the O column of the matrix. If a drawn combination of column and number appears on a player’s bingo card, then the player covers the number on his or her card.

[0003] A bingo game is won, i.e. a “BINGO” is obtained, by the first person or persons covering a pre-designated pattern of numbers on his or her bingo card. There are a large number of possible patterns that can be designated as winning patterns, but most fall within the categories of static patterns (patterns that cannot be rotated or shifted), crazy patterns (patterns that can be rotated by 90, 180, or 270 degrees), or wild patterns (patterns that are fixed but can be shifted up and down or side to side). For example, a wild pattern comprising a line of covered numbers across a bingo card may be designated as a winning pattern. The first player to obtain a line of covered numbers across any of the five rows or his or her bingo card may declare “BINGO” and win the game. Alternatively, a pattern of one covered number in the left column and one in the right column of a bingo card or simply a number in one designated column may be designated as a winning pattern. Any one or more of the very large number of possible patterns may be designated as a winning pattern including, for instance, happy faces, airplanes, diagonal lines, letters of the alphabet, around the corners, and so on.

[0004] In many states, traditional bingo and other games similar to bingo, which satisfy particular legal requirements, may be played for charitable purposes as well as in Native American gaming establishments on Native American land placed in trust for gaming by the Department of Interior, or on a Native American Tribe’s reservation. These are sometimes referred to as Native American casinos. High stakes bingo has evolved over the years within Native American gaming facilities as Class II gaming where Class III gaming is prohibited. Such high stakes bingo has received considerable attention in recent years, and many Native American Tribes have invested in high end casino-like facilities where Class II bingo and other Class II games such as pull-tabs and electronic bingo can be played. Although traditional high stakes bingo has grown in popularity over the years, it typically requires a lot of space and a relatively large number of players to be economically feasible. Further, high stakes bingo has generally remained quite traditional and basic, lacking not only the excitement of Vegas-style gaming but also the intimacy and fast action of electronic gaming and traditional table games such as blackjack, poker, roulette and craps.

[0005] Variations in the game of bingo have been offered in the past in attempts to increase the excitement of play while striving to comply with the basic legal requirements for permissible bingo games. Some of these variations have attempted to adapt bingo to table play, with hopes of capturing the intimacy and excitement of traditional table games. One such form of bingo, generally known as “fast action” bingo and sometimes referred to as “lightening” or “bullet” bingo, while differing from traditional bingo by using a limited group of numbers (and in some cases three numbers), are nevertheless labor intensive and require large numbers of players to be financially successful, both for the players and for the bingo game operator.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 5,823,534 of Banyai discloses a bingo table game including a table having player stations arrayed around the table. Players sit around the table in an intimate group. The game permits each player to select a set of numbers to be matched during play by randomly drawn numbers on bingo balls. The selection may include a wild designation, which each player may deem to match one of his or her selected numbers. A dealer or caller draws random numbers printed on bingo balls and a “bingo” occurs whenever a player has matched all of his or her selected numbers to a set of randomly drawn numbers. The game is permitted to progress at multiple levels of play notwithstanding the occurrence of prior bingos in the game being played. While the bingo table game of Banyai may be a step in the right direction, it nevertheless remains quite simplified and still does not provide players with the more exciting experience of playing a Vegas-style betting game.

[0007] A need therefore persists for a Class II bingo table game and a method of playing bingo that supplies players with the excitement, intimacy, and enjoyment of playing a Vegas-style Class III casino game while complying with the legal definitions of Class II Bingo. A more specific need exists for a bingo game and method that evokes the experience of playing a traditional roulette game. It is to the provision of such a table game and method that the present invention is primarily directed.

SUMMARY

[0008] Briefly described, a bingo table game is disclosed that includes a table having a felt playing surface with graphics printed thereon that evoke the appearance of a table for playing the traditional betting game of roulette. Chips are purchased and used by players during game play to buy bingo cards. A Bingo Session includes a primary bingo game and interim bingo games that are played while the primary bingo game is in progress. Primary bingo game cards are purchased by players for playing the primary bingo game and Interim bingo game cards are purchased by players for playing one of a number of possible interim bingo games. The roulette evoking graphics on the playing surface include at least one first region designated for receiving chips used to purchase primary bingo game cards for playing the primary bingo game. The graphics also has a second region designated for receiving chips used to purchase interim bingo game cards during play of a primary bingo game. The second region resembles the surface of a roulette table and includes an inside 3x12 matrix containing the numbers 1 thru 36, an outside area containing the numbers 0 and 00, and various other outside areas containing indicia corresponding to a variety of interim bingo game card purchase options that relate to the numbers in the inside matrix.
A bingo wheel is disposed adjacent to the playing surface within the reach of a bingo dealer or caller who oversees game play. The bingo wheel resembles a traditional roulette wheel and may have a central rotor with pockets associated with the numbers 1 thru 36, a pocket associated with the numeral 0 (zero), and a pocket associated with the number 00 (double zero). Half of the numbers 1 thru 36 are associated with one color (the color red for example) and the other half are associated with a different color (the color black for example). The periphery of the roulette wheel includes a sloped surface and a track around which a bingo ball may be launched until it loses momentum and falls into one of the pockets of the rotor, thereby selecting randomly a number and color corresponding to the pocket into which it settled. The bingo wheel is used by the bingo dealer in much the same way as a roulette wheel by spinning the rotor in one direction and launching the bingo ball in the other. When the bingo ball falls into one of the pockets, the associated number and color are selected for bingo game play.

A bingo session begins when two or more players purchase a primary bingo card by placing a chip or chips in the first region of the playing surface and the bingo dealer issues primary bingo cards to the players. The bingo cards may take any form such as paper, erasable boards, or even electronic cards or cards displayed on a PDA. Once a primary bingo card has been purchased, a player may purchase one or more interim bingo cards for playing interim bingo games by placing chips in a variety of different positions within the second region of the playing surface. The player receives interim bingo cards corresponding to the positions of his or her chips. The various possible chip positions and corresponding interim bingo games evoke the sense or experience of different kinds of bets that can be made in a traditional roulette game. When all desired interim bingo cards have been purchased, the bingo dealer spins the rotor of the bingo wheel in one direction and launches the bingo ball in the opposite direction. When the ball settles into a pocket, the corresponding number and color may be considered to be randomly selected.

The bingo dealer verbally announces the randomly selected number as, for instance “25.” Players then cover or daub any matching numbers on their primary bingo cards. They also daub any matching numbers on any interim bingo cards they may have purchased before the spin of the bingo wheel. The designated winning pattern for an interim bingo game may be a single match on an interim bingo card. Thus, a single match on an interim bingo card wins the interim bingo game and the player is paid according to the payout associated with the interim bingo card that was purchased. Conversely, the designated winning pattern for the primary bingo game may be a match of two numbers from spins of the bingo wheel on a primary bingo card. Thus, in this example, primary bingo games last a minimum of two spins of the bingo wheel, and usually last for several spins of the bingo wheel.

Following each spin of the bingo wheel and consequent selection of a number, players of interim bingo games having matches on their interim bingo cards are “winners” and are paid chips according to a designated payout ratio associated with the interim bingo game that they won. The chips of players that do not have matches are removed from the table and retained by the house. Players may then purchase interim bingo cards to play another round of interim bingo games on the next spin of the bingo wheel. Interim bingo games continue to be played on each spin of the bingo wheel until one or more players declares BINGO in the primary bingo game. The winner or winners of the primary bingo game receive all of the chips of all players that purchased primary bingo cards, with the house having no interest or involvement in the primary bingo game winnings. Then a new Bingo Session is started as players again place chips on the table to purchase primary bingo cards and then interim bingo cards.

It will thus be seen that a bingo table game and a method of playing bingo is now provided that is intimate, fast paced, fun, and that provides players with a playing experience that evokes the experience of playing a traditional casino game of roulette. These and other aspects, features, and advantages of the table game and method of this invention will be better appreciated by the skilled artisan upon review of the detailed description set forth below, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing figures, which are briefly described as follows.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a bingo game table that embodies principles of the invention in one preferred form.

**FIG. 2** is a top plan view illustrating one possible version of graphics printed on the bingo table for playing bingo according to the invention.

**FIG. 3** illustrates the arrangement of numbers and associated colors on the bingo wheel according to the invention.

**FIG. 4** illustrates a possible appearance of a primary bingo game card according to one embodiment of the invention.

**FIG. 5** shows one possible appearance of an interim bingo game card according to aspects of the invention.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference will now be made in more detail to the drawing figures, wherein like reference numbers identify like parts throughout the several views. **FIG. 1** illustrates one possible embodiment of a game table for playing the bingo game of the present invention. It will be recognized that the table **12** resembles a table for playing a traditional Vegas-style wagering game of roulette. More specifically, the table **12** has a playing surface **13** at least partially bordered by a rail **15** where bingo players may stand during game play. A bingo dealer or caller position **11** is located on a side of the table **12** opposite from the player positions. The playing surface **13** preferably is covered with felt and has graphics **14** printed thereon that resemble at least to some extent the graphics one might find on a traditional roulette table. The graphics **14** includes a first region **16** for receiving chips from players to purchase primary bingo cards for playing a primary bingo game, as detailed below. A second region **17** includes various areas detailed below where players may place chips to purchase interim bingo cards for playing interim bingo games during a primary bingo game.

**FIG. 2** further includes a bingo wheel **26**, which, as can be seen, resembles the roulette wheel of a traditional roulette table. The bingo wheel **26** includes a rotor **27** that is mounted for selective rotation about its axis, usually in the direction of arrow **28** (it also may rotate in the opposite
direction). The rotor 27 is made with a series of peripheral pockets 34 separated by upstanding metal frets 35. In the preferred embodiment, there are a total of 38 pockets, one each for the numbers 01 through 36, one for the numeral zero and one for the number double zero. Alternate pockets 34 are painted different colors, usually red and black. The numbers 1 through 36, zero, and double zero are printed around the periphery of the bingo rotor 27, one adjacent to and associated with each of the pockets 34. An ornament 36 may project upwardly from the center of the bingo wheel 26 and may be merely decorative in nature.

A fixed downwardly sloped peripheral portion 29 of the bingo wheel 26 surrounds the rotor 27 and the rotor 27 spins inside the fixed peripheral portion 29. A ball track 31 is defined at the extreme outer edge of the peripheral portion 29 and is configured such that a bingo ball 32 can be launched around the ball track 31 by the bingo dealer in a direction opposite to the direction of spin of the rotor; or, in this illustration, in the direction indicated by arrow 33. During game play, the bingo dealer will manually spin the rotor 27 in one direction such as the direction 28 and then will launch the ball 32 around the track 31 in the opposite direction such as the direction 33. The ball 32 races around the ball track 31 and gradually slows until its momentum is insufficient to maintain it in the ball track 31. The ball 32 then rolls down the sloped peripheral portion 29 of the bingo wheel and ultimately lands in one of the pockets 34 of the rotor 27, thus randomly selecting the number and color associated with that pocket (or randomly selecting zero or double zero).

FIG. 2 is a more detailed illustration of one possible design for the graphics printed on the felt of the playing surface 13 of the bingo table 12. The graphics has a first region 16 where players may place chips to purchase primary bingo cards for playing a primary bingo game. A second region 17 includes a number of areas where players may place chips to purchase interim bingo cards for playing interim bingo games during a primary bingo game. More specifically, the second region 17 preferably includes a 3 by 12 matrix 18 with each of the 36 cells of the matrix bearing one of the numbers 1-36 and its associated color from the bingo wheel 26. A zeros area 19 has two cells bearing zero and double zero respectively. A columns area 21 has three cells each corresponding to one of the columns of the matrix 18 and each has a payout indicia “2 to 1” printed therein.

A dozens area 22 has three cells each corresponding to a contiguous 12 of the thirty six cells of the matrix 18. The indicia “1” to “12” printed in the leftmost cell indicates that this area corresponds to the numbers 01-12 of the matrix 18; the indicia “21” to “36” in the center cell indicates that this area corresponds to the numbers 13-24 of the matrix 18; and the indicia “31” to “42” in the rightmost area indicates that this area corresponds to the numbers 25-36 of the matrix 18. An outside region 23 has six cells each associated with an interim bingo game that can be played by placing chips in one of the cells to receive a bingo card associated with that cell. The first cell on the left bears the indicia “1-18” corresponding to a “low” interim bingo game, the next cell bears the indicia “Even” corresponding to an “even” interim bingo game, the next bears the color black corresponding to a “black” interim bingo game, the next bears the color red corresponding to a “red” interim bingo game, the next “Odd” corresponding to an “odd” interim bingo game, and the last bears the indicia “19-36” corresponding to a “high” interim bingo game.

FIG. 3 illustrates more clearly the number and color layout 37 on the bingo wheel. The layout includes black areas 37 corresponding to certain numbers, red areas 38 corresponding to certain other numbers, one area that is green and bears the numeral zero and another area that is green and bears the number double zero. It will be appreciated by purveyors of wagering games that the preferred layout in FIG. 3 corresponds to the layout on a Vegas-style American roulette wheel, as opposed to a European roulette wheel that has a zero but not a double zero.

FIG. 4 illustrates one possible configuration of a bingo card for playing a primary bingo game according to the invention. The primary bingo card comprises a five by five matrix, all but the center cell of which bears numbers. The center cell bears the indicia FS meaning “Free Space.” The columns may be headed by letters or other indicia and, in this case, the columns are headed by the letters “O L E T E” although this is not a limitation of the invention. Thus, a primary bingo card bears twenty-four of the possible thirty-six numbers that may be randomly drawn when the bingo wheel is spun. In order to win a primary bingo game in the preferred embodiment, a player must match two numbers from spins of the bingo wheel, daub those numbers on his or her primary bingo card, and announce “BINGO.” Of course, other winning patterns of matching numbers may be determined beforehand if desired.

FIG. 5 illustrates one possible configuration of a bingo card for playing an interim bingo game according to the invention. This particular figure shows a bingo card for playing an interim “even” bingo game and, accordingly, bears in respective cells of the matrix all of the 18 even numbers (excluding zero and double zero) that can result from a spin of the bingo wheel. The remaining six cells of the matrix bear null numbers (numbers that cannot result from a bingo wheel spin) such as 50, 56, 65, 41, 51, and 45 and the designation FS. Bingo cards for other interim bingo games are similar in appearance, but bear bingo numbers corresponding to the particular interim bingo game being played, again in combination with null numbers and FS.

Having described the roulette based bingo table and bingo cards of the invention, a method of playing bingo according to the invention will now be presented in more detail. A bingo session begins when at least two players purchase a primary bingo card by placing a chip on the BINGO CARD PURCHASES region of the playing surface, where the chips stay during the bingo session. Each player is then issued a primary bingo game card and, when the bingo dealer is satisfied that all primary bingo cards have been distributed, the dealer spins the bingo wheel to select randomly one of the 36 bingo numbers or zero or double zero. The selected number is announced verbally by the dealer. If the selected number matches a number on the primary bingo card of a player, the player covers or daubs that number on his card with a marker, stamp, or other device.

When a primary bingo player has matched a designated bingo pattern (for example two matched numbers on his or her primary bingo card), the primary bingo game is won and the player announces BINGO. If two matching numbers is the designated pattern, it will require at least two spins of the bingo wheel to win a primary bingo game and, most often, several spins. A winner or winners of a primary bingo game receive all the chips in the BINGO CARD PURCHASES region of the playing surface, whereupon the bingo session is over and a new bingo session can begin.

For each spin of the bingo wheel during a primary bingo game, players have the opportunity to play any of a number of interim bingo games by placing chips in designated locations in the interim bingo region of the playing surface. The available interim bingo games may include, for example, the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAME</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even Money interim bingo</td>
<td>These interim bingo games include red, black, odd, even, low (1-18), and high (19-36). A player purchases a bingo card corresponding to one of these games by placing a chip on the corresponding area of the outside region 23 of the playing surface corresponding to the game. In doing so, the player hopes that a bingo number that meets the criteria of the corresponding interim game will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus matches one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 1 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dozens and Columns interim</td>
<td>A player purchases a dozens interim bingo card by placing a chip on one of the three areas of the dozens region of the playing surface. In doing so, the player hopes that one of the twelve numbers associated with the selected interim bingo game is randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus matches one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 2 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corners interim bingo games</td>
<td>A player purchases a corner interim bingo card by placing a chip on the intersection of any four numbers in the inside matrix of numbers 18 on the playing surface, for instance 1, 4, 2, and 5. In doing so, the player hopes that one of the four numbers will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 9 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street interim bingo games</td>
<td>A player purchases a street interim bingo card by placing a chip on the outermost border line of the three numbers in a line or “street,” for instance 01, 04, 07 or 28, 31, 34. In doing so, the player hopes that one of the three numbers in the street will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 12 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Numbers interim bingo</td>
<td>A player purchases a split numbers interim bingo card by placing a chip on the intersecting line between two single number positions situated across or down, for instance, 1 and 4 or 16 and 17. In doing so, the player hopes that one of the two numbers will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 18 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Number interim bingo</td>
<td>A player purchases a single number interim bingo card by placing a chip on a single number in the matrix 18. In doing so, the player hopes that that number will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. If so, the payout is 36 to 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeros interim bingo games</td>
<td>A player purchases an interim bingo card involving the zero and the double zero by placing a chip in one of three ways in the zero and double zero areas. By placing a chip in the zero area, the player hopes that zero, 01, or 02 will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. By placing a chip on the line between zero and double zero, the player hopes that zero, 02, or double zero will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. Finally, by placing a chip on the double zero area, the player hopes that double zero, 02, or 03 will be randomly selected on the next spin of the bingo wheel and thus match one of the numbers on his or her corresponding interim bingo card. In either event, if one of the numbers is selected, the payout is 12 to 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[0031] When the bingo dealer is satisfied that all desired interim bingo cards have been purchased, the bingo dealer spins the bingo wheel and launches the ball in the ball truck. When the ball settles in one of the pockets of the bingo wheel, the bingo dealer verbally announces the number associated with the pocket. The dealer also records the randomly selected number on a bingo board, which may be an electronic display, a manual erasable board, or other appropriate device. In this way, a history of randomly selected numbers is maintained throughout each bingo session. Interim bingo game players then daub or otherwise mark any matches on their interim bingo cards and players with a match on a card associated with any of the interim bingo games wins that game. The winners are immediately paid chips equal to the payout ratio associated with the interim bingo game that the winners won. All chips of players who did not win an interim bingo game on the previous spin of the bingo wheel are swept from the playing surface and retained by the “house” or other establishment hosting the bingo game.
Interim bingo games continue to be played in this manner until a player (or players) obtains the designated winning pattern on his or her primary bingo card and announces BINGO. The winners of the primary bingo game then receive all of the chips in the primary bingo card purchase region of the playing surface. This ends the bingo session and the next bingo session is started when two or more players purchase new primary bingo cards. Bingo sessions continue in this manner indefinitely. The “house” or other establishment does not participate in any way in the primary bingo game winnings.

It will be understood from the foregoing that a bingo game and a method of playing bingo is provided that mimics and evokes the experience of playing a class III Vegas-style roulette game while still satisfying the requirements and legal definitions of a class II bingo game. It is thus believed that the present game and method will be more enjoyable and exciting for players than bingo played in the time honored traditional manner.

The invention has been described herein in terms of preferred embodiments and methodologies considered by the inventor to represent the best mode of carrying out the invention. It will be understood by the skilled artisan, however, that a wide variety of additions, deletions, and modifications, both subtle and gross, might be made to the illustrated embodiments within the scope of the invention. For instance, the illustrated layout of the bingo table and the graphics thereon is presented as exemplary only and is not intended to be limiting in any manner on the scope of the invention. The appearance of the bingo cards in FIGS. 4 and 5 likewise is exemplary only and may well be changed or modified to meet decorative or other requirements. These and other changes may well be made by those of skill in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, which is delineated only by the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A roulette based bingo game table substantially as shown and/or described.
2. A method of playing bingo substantially as shown and/or described.
3. A bingo game including a bingo table that mimics the appearance of a roulette table, a bingo wheel for randomly selecting among bingo numbers, a zero, and a double zero, bingo cards associated with a primary bingo game played at the bingo table, and a plurality of interim bingo cards associated with corresponding interim bingo games to be played at the bingo table during play of a primary bingo game.
4. A method of playing a bingo session comprising the steps of:
   (a) providing a bingo table that evokes the appearance of a roulette table, the bingo table having a bingo wheel and a playing surface with graphics resembling the graphics of a roulette table;
   (b) providing primary bingo cards to at least two players who place chips on the playing surface in a first designated location;
   (c) providing interim bingo cards to players who place chips on the playing surface in a second designated location;
   (d) spinning a bingo wheel and launching a corresponding bingo ball to select randomly from a predetermined set of numbers;
   (e) allowing players to mark on their interim bingo cards and their primary bingo cards numbers that match the randomly selected number;
   (f) if a designated winning pattern is marked on a player’s interim bingo card, providing chips to the player based on a predetermined payout ratio for the interim bingo game;
   (g) If a designated winning pattern is not marked on a player’s primary bingo game, returning to step (c), otherwise ending the bingo session.

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