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(54) **METHOD FOR PLAYING BLACKJACK WITH A THREE CARD POKER WAGER ("21+3")**

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

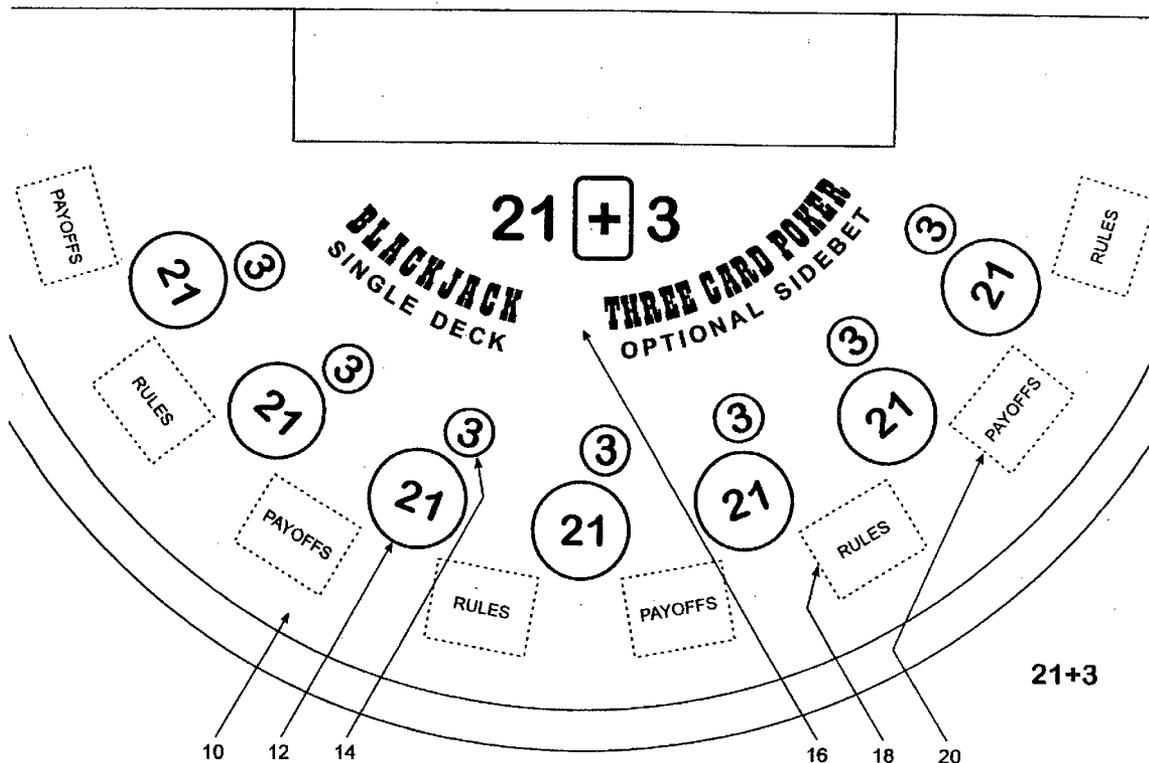
(60) Continuation of application No. 11/640,988, filed on Dec. 19, 2006, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 10/261,784, filed on Oct. 2, 2002, now Pat. No. 7,238,108, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 11/030,285, filed on Jan. 7, 2005, now Pat. No. 7,175,180, said application No. 10/261,784 is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/589,202, filed on Jun. 8, 2000, now Pat. No. 6,503,145, said application No. 11/030,285 is a continuation of application No. 10/281,113, filed on Oct. 28, 2002, now Pat.

No. 6,854,733, which is a continuation of application No. 09/845,312, filed on May 1, 2001, now Pat. No. 6,481,719, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/464,778, filed on Dec. 16, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,371,867, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 09/118,067, filed on Jul. 17, 1998, now Pat. No. 6,012,719, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 08/889,919, filed on Jul. 10, 1997, now Pat. No. 6,056,641, which is a division of application No. 08/504,023, filed on Jul. 19, 1995, now Pat. No. 5,685,774.

**Publication Classification**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/292**  
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A card game combines the play of Blackjack ("21") with a 3-card Poker wager or side bet ("21+3"). At least two cards are dealt to a player. A three-card hand is formed using the at least two cards, and the three-card hand is resolved based on a Poker rank of the three-card hand. The at least two cards dealt to the player are used to form a first Blackjack hand, and at least one card of the three-card hand is used to form a second Blackjack hand. Subsequently, a Blackjack game is played using at least the first Blackjack hand and the second Blackjack hand.



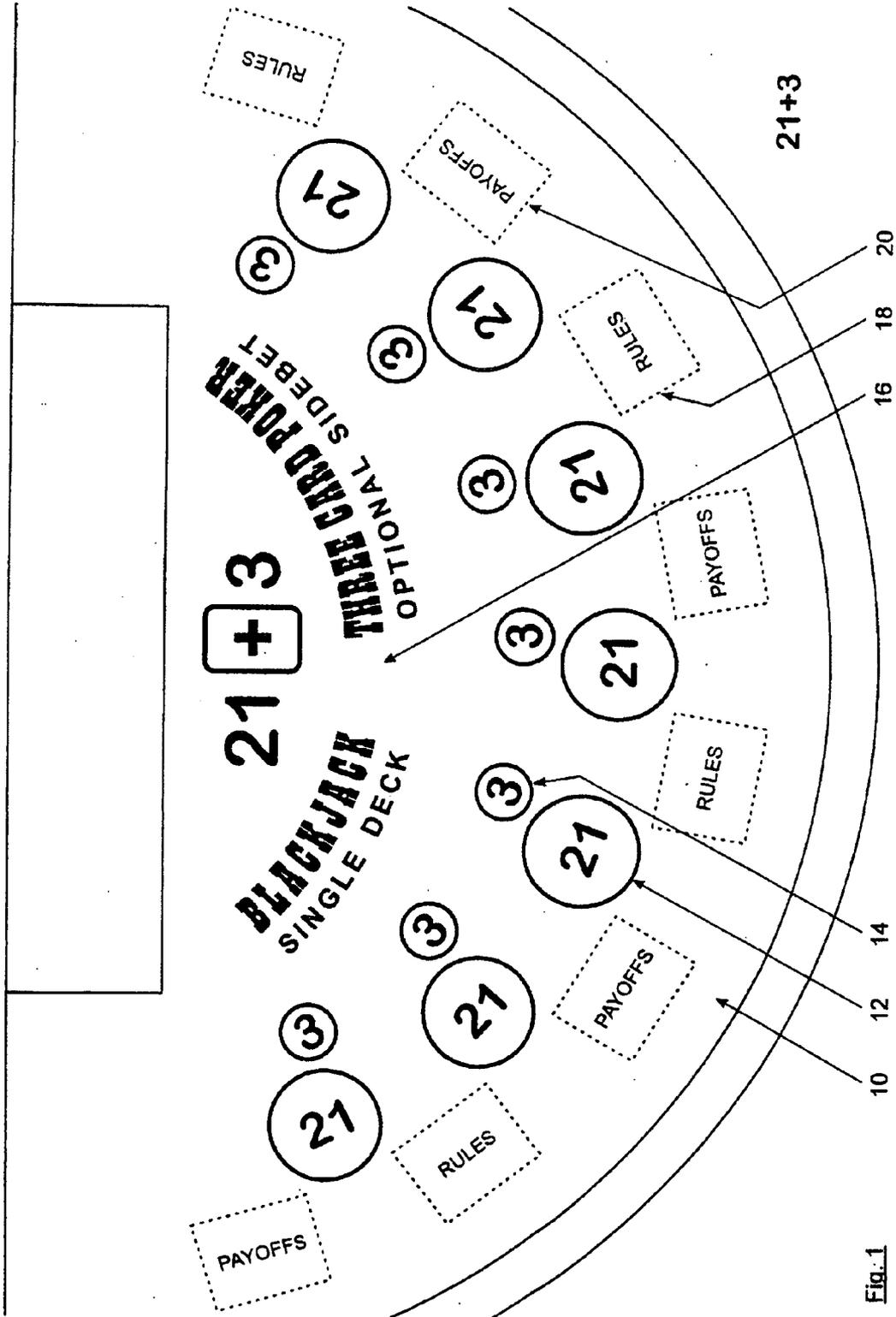


Fig. 1

**METHOD FOR PLAYING BLACKJACK WITH A THREE CARD POKER WAGER ("21+3")**

**CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/640,988, filed Dec. 19, 2006, pending; which is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/261,784, filed Oct. 2, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,238,108, and a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/030,285, filed Jan. 7, 2005, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,175,180. U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/261,784 is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/589,202, filed Jun. 8, 2000, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,503,145. U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/030,285 is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/281,113, filed Oct. 28, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,854,733; which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/845,312, filed May 1, 2001, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,481,719; which is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/464,778, filed Dec. 16, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,371,867; which is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/118,067, filed Jul. 17, 1998, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,012,719; which is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/889,919, filed Jul. 10, 1997, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,056,641; which is a division of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/504,023, filed Jul. 19, 1995, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,685,774. The entire contents of all of the above-identified applications/patents are hereby incorporated by reference in this application.

**STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

[0002] (NOT APPLICABLE)

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] 1. Field of the Invention  
[0004] The invention relates to card games. More particularly, the invention relates to Blackjack variant card games.  
[0005] 2. Description of Related Art  
[0006] With the expansion of gaming and the increase in competition, casinos are striving to offer a wider variety of games. The growth in slot machine popularity and the increase in variety of specialty games has resulted in the overall reduction in conventional Blackjack ("21") tables.  
[0007] Many casinos, however, are reluctant to further reduce the number of Blackjack tables because of the inherent game attractiveness to both players and casinos. The game is based on simple concepts and procedures that are readily understood by casual and regular players alike. In addition, the game allows players to use basic strategies that provide some degree of player control and that allow for heightened excitement. For the casino operators, the game requires relatively low overhead to facilitate and monitor.  
[0008] In an attempt to accommodate the desire for variety and the retention of a significant Blackjack presence, several Blackjack variant games have been introduced. These games include Multiple Action Blackjack, Spanish 21, Face-Up 21, and Royal Match. See, e.g., U.S. Pat. No. 5,673,917 to Vancouver. Although Blackjack variants typically provide additional wagering options, these games tend to either negatively alter the flow of the Blackjack game or add very little game dynamics. Another Blackjack variant is Action Gaming's 21

Stud. In this game, each player has the option of placing a side wager in addition to the basic Blackjack wager. The side wager is a bet that a dealer's 5-card hand will be above a certain rank and has a variable payoff scale according to rank. Since a Blackjack player may be satisfied with a hand before being dealt 5-cards (e.g., when the player is dealt an Ace and a Jack for the first two cards), 21 Stud provides for a dealer settling all Blackjack wagers after standing or busting. The game then allows the dealer to draw extra cards, if necessary until having a total of 5 cards. The dealer's first 5 cards form a Poker hand. A standing hand occurs on the odd occasions that more than 5 cards were required for the dealer to reach 17 or more.

[0009] 21 Stud, however, has several drawbacks. Firstly, because all players with the side wager are betting on the same outcome the game is very volatile. Secondly, with the range of payoff odds required with a 5-card game there is a risk of a high payoff amount. Accordingly, the game will likely never be offered with more than a \$1 side bet and may require extra surveillance. Thirdly, the Blackjack hand is the primary part of the game for the majority of players. However, Blackjack wagers are settled first, so the potential anticipatory thrill time is lower on the primary wager. Fourthly, when 5-card hands are dealt face-up, one at a time, there is usually very little excitement because after 3 cards it is often obvious that a premium hand cannot be created. For example when the first 3 cards dealt are 10, 5, and 2 (off-suit), no straight, flush, full house or better are possible. Fifthly, and probably most significantly, the dealer is usually required to take extra cards. This aspect of the game is particularly problematic because it slows the game down and deters potential players who are generally adverse to waiting for other players or the dealer from taking additional cards and those potential players who do not like the run of cards to be altered.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0010] The invention provides card games that combine the play of Blackjack ("21") with a 3-card Poker wager ("21+3"). In a casino embodiment, the invention can be played in conjunction with a conventional Blackjack casino-type table and a single standard deck of 52 playing cards. The table surface not only has the regular Blackjack bet area, but also an extra bet area for an optional 3-card Poker side wager. In such an embodiment, the table also displays a payoff scale on the side wager and further instructional and promotional information.  
[0011] At the beginning of a game, each player places a basic Blackjack wager and an optional 3-card Poker wager. A dealer deals each player a card, with the dealer receiving a face-up card. Each player also receives a second card. A player's 3-card hand consists of the 2-card hand dealt to that player and the dealer's face-up card. At this point, the outcomes of the 3-card Poker hands are determined. In one embodiment of the invention, a pair or better ("Pair Plus") constitutes a winning hand. After settling the Poker wagers, the game of Blackjack continues.  
[0012] The invention advantageously retains all the features and advantages of Blackjack (and Blackjack variants) as well as provides the dynamics of 3-card Poker, without interfering with the card sequence, for enhanced player anticipation and enjoyment. The invention thus benefits the player who desires a Pair Plus type of game as well as the player who does not want to leave a Blackjack game, but desires some variety. In addition, the invention provides casino operators

with added revenue generating features without requiring additional casino tables, space, or extra game surveillance.

[0013] Another feature of the invention is that it can be practiced with a variety of Blackjack deck modes including double deck, four deck, six deck, and eight deck, with each mode having an appropriate payoff scale.

[0014] The invention can also be readily implemented in a wide variety of additional forms and media including, single player slot video machines, multi-player slot video machines, electronic games and devices, lottery terminals, scratch-card formats, software as well as in-flight flight, home, and Internet entertainment. Moreover, the invention can be readily implemented in software, which can be stored on a disk (e.g., magnetic disk, compact disk (CD), etc.) and used with a computer system.

[0015] The foregoing, and other features and advantages of the invention, will be apparent from the following, more particular description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, the accompanying drawing, and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates a playing surface (layout) of a casino-type table in accordance with the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The preferred embodiments of the invention are now described with reference to the FIGURE where like reference numbers indicate like elements.

[0018] The invention provides card games that combine the play of Blackjack ("21") with a 3-card Poker wager or side bet ("21+3"). The first preferred embodiment of the invention is used in connection with a casino-type Blackjack table and a single standard deck of 52 playing cards. FIG. 1 illustrates a playing surface (layout) 10 of the Blackjack table which includes a primary betting area 12 for each of a plurality of players, which in this embodiment is seven players. Primary betting area 12 is used for the placement of a Blackjack wager. Play surface 10 also includes a secondary betting area 14, corresponding with each area 12, for an optional 3-card Poker wager. In addition, playing surface 10 includes a dealer area 16, displays of a predetermined payoff scale 20, and displays of predetermined game rules 18. As would be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art, the predetermined payoff scales and game rules used in a particular embodiment can be based on the teachings of the invention and well known gaming principles and casino specific requirements. Other wager areas and/or information can be displayed on playing surface 10, such as the "21+3" promotional markings illustrated in FIG. 1.

[0019] In this preferred embodiment, each player must place a Blackjack wager at betting area 12 in order to participate in the game. Each player, however, has the option to place an additional 3-card Poker wager at betting area 14. In another embodiment of the invention, both the Blackjack and Poker wagers are required and in yet another embodiment only the Poker wager is required. Additional wagers and wager features can be practiced with the invention.

[0020] The allowable limit of the 3-card Poker wager (placed in area 14) is both governed by predetermined game rules 20 and relative to the Blackjack wager (placed in area 12). For example, with each player having a separate hand and with a payoff scale with a highest payoff similar to Craps or

Roulette, an embodiment of the invention can be operated with a minimum 3-card Poker wager equal to a table minimum for Blackjack, typically \$5 or more. In addition, a maximum 3-card Poker wager for a player can be set to the first hand 3-card Poker wager made by that player after each shuffle or at the beginning of that shoe. This would negate the impact of well known techniques such as card counting, shuffle tracking, and card locating used by proficient players.

[0021] Once the wagers have been placed, a dealer then deals, in rotation, each player a first card and the dealer receives a face-up card. Each player, again in rotation, is then dealt a second card and the dealer receives a second card face-down. Alternatively, the second face-down card can be retained in the deck. In accordance with the invention, a player's 3-card Poker hand consists of the 2-card hand that player was dealt and the dealer's face-up card.

[0022] Thus at this point, the outcomes of the 3-card Poker wagers are determined and settled prior to continuing with the Blackjack game. In this preferred embodiment, a player wins the 3-card Poker bet with a pair or better ("Pair Plus"), as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,056,641, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. The following delineates hand ranking of this embodiment (wherein Ace, King, Queen, Jack, and 10 are represented as "A", "K", "Q", "J", and "T", respectively; "sss" indicates that the three cards are of the same suit (i.e., all diamonds, hearts, spades, or clubs); and the reference "in sequence" does not denote the order in which the cards were received by a player, but the actual relationship of the three cards together):

Winning 3-Card Hands	
Straight Flush	Three cards of one suit in sequence (e.g., A K Q sss; T 9 8 sss; 3 2 A sss)
Three of a Kind	Three cards of the same rank, whether suited or not (e.g., J J J; 4, 4, 4; or 7 7 7 sss with multiple deck embodiments)
Straight	Three cards in sequence (e.g., A K Q; 6 5 4; 3 2 A)
Flush	Three cards of the same suit (including pairs or not, but not including three of a kind) (e.g., T 8 6 sss; K Q 3 sss; or 5 5 9 sss with multiple deck embodiments)
Pair	Two cards of the same rank (but not when all three are suited with multiple deck embodiments) (e.g., 9 9 5; 8 8 T; 667)
Losing 3-Card Hands	
High card only	None of the above (e.g., K Q 2; J T 3).

[0023] The 3-card Poker wagers are now settled. If the player has a losing 3-card Poker hand, their bet (from area 14) is removed. If the player has a winning 3-card Poker hand, they are paid in accordance the predetermined game rules, predetermined payoff scale, and the amount of their bet placed in area 14. In this single deck preferred embodiment, the payoff scale is as follows:

Straight Flush	35 to 1
Three of a Kind	33 to 1
Straight	6 to 1
Flush	4 to 1
Pair	1 to 1.

[0024] As would be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art, alternative payoff scales (e.g., in accordance with the particular casino requirements) can be practiced with the invention. In addition, multiple decks including double deck, four deck, six deck, and eight deck modes can be used with appropriate predetermined payoff scales. For multiple deck embodiments of the invention, exact hand rankings should be determined for two-way hands. The following illustrates a couple of instances of two-way hands:

Two-Way Hands Examples	
A)	The 3-card Poker hand consisting of King Diamonds, King Diamonds, and Queen Diamonds, could be either: Option 1: Pair, Option 2: Flush, or Option 3: Flush/Pair.
B)	The 3-card Poker hand consisting of King Diamonds, King Diamonds, and King Diamonds, could either: Option 1: Flush, Option 2: Three of a Kind, or Option 3: Flush/Three of a Kind.

[0025] In each instance, the 3-card Poker hand constitutes any of the options. Within a particular game, however, the two-way should be consistently resolved. For example, the same option (i.e., Option 1, 2, or 3) should be used in both instances A and B above. In another preferred embodiment of the invention, the superior of the two regular hand ranks (i.e., Option 2 for both instances above) is chosen to avoid creating additional hand ranks. As would be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art, a wide range of payoff scales for multiple deck games can be used with the present invention.

[0026] After settling the 3-card Poker wages, the dealer proceeds with a Blackjack game. In this embodiment, the Blackjack game is conventional. However, other variant Blackjack games can be practiced with the invention. The Blackjack wagers are settled in accordance with well known principles and the particular aspects of the Blackjack (or Blackjack variant) game.

[0027] The invention advantageously retains all of the features and advantages of Blackjack as well as provides the dynamics of the 3-card Poker, without interfering with the card sequence, for enhanced player anticipation and enjoyment. The invention thus benefits the player who desires a Pair Plus type of game as well as the player who does not want to leave a Blackjack game, but desires some variety. In addition, the invention provides casino operators with additional revenue generating features for Blackjack with acceptable volatility.

[0028] Another predominant feature of the invention, is that casino embodiments of invention do not require additional space or tables to practice the invention, rather the invention can be practiced with existing tables, preferably modified as illustrated in FIG. 1.

[0029] An additional feature is that the invention does not require any more game surveillance than a conventional Blackjack game.

[0030] As would be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art, the invention can be embodied in a wide variety of forms and media including, but not limited to, single player slot video machines, multi-player slot video machines, electronic games and devices, lottery terminals, scratch-card formats, software as well as in-flight, home, and Internet entertain-

ment. In addition the invention can be readily implemented as a computer program product (e.g., floppy disk, compact disk (CD), etc.) comprising a computer readable medium having control logic recorded therein to implement the features of the invention as described in relation to the other preferred embodiments. The control logic can be loaded into the memory of a computer and executed by a central processing unit (CPU) to perform the operations described herein.

[0031] Although the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to several preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the relevant art that various changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

1. A method of playing a card game comprising:
  - (a) using a gaming table or at least one device, dealing at least two cards to a player;
  - (b) forming a three-card hand using the at least two cards;
  - (c) resolving the three-card hand based on a Poker rank of the three-card hand;
  - (d) using the at least two cards to form a first Blackjack hand;
  - (e) using at least one card of the three-card hand to form a second Blackjack hand; and
  - (f) continuing with a Blackjack game using at least the first Blackjack hand and the second Blackjack hand.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the first Blackjack hand is a player hand.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the second Blackjack hand is a dealer hand.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the first Blackjack hand is a player hand, and wherein the second Blackjack hand is a dealer hand.
5. A method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving a side wager from the player, wherein step (c) is practiced by paying a payout on the side wager if the Poker rank of the three-card hand matches or exceeds a predetermined Poker rank.
6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the predetermined Poker rank is flush.
7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising, prior to step (a), receiving at least two wagers from the player, at least one of which is resolved based on a comparison of a player Blackjack hand with a dealer Blackjack hand.
8. A method of playing a card game comprising:
  - (a) using a gaming table or at least one device, receiving at least a competition wager and a side wager from a player;
  - (b) dealing at least two cards to the player;
  - (c) forming a three-card hand using the at least two cards;
  - (d) resolving the side wager by paying a payout on the side wager if a Poker rank of the three-card hand matches or exceeds a predetermined Poker rank;
  - (e) using the at least two cards to form a first Blackjack hand; and
  - (f) using at least one card of the three-card hand to form a second Blackjack hand;
  - (g) continuing with a Blackjack game; and
  - (h) resolving the competition wager based on a comparison of the first Blackjack hand with a dealer Blackjack hand.
9. A method according to claim 8, wherein step (d) is practiced such that the predetermined Poker rank is flush.
10. A method according to claim 8, wherein the first Blackjack hand is a player hand.

**11.** A method according to claim **8**, wherein the second Blackjack hand is the dealer Blackjack hand.

**12.** A method according to claim **8**, wherein the first Blackjack hand is a player hand, and wherein the second Blackjack hand is the dealer Blackjack hand.

**13.** A method of playing a card game comprising:

- (a) using a gaming table or at least one device, dealing playing cards to a player;
- (b) forming a three-card hand using at least the cards dealt to the player;
- (c) resolving the three-card hand based on a Poker rank of the three-card hand;
- (d) using the cards dealt to the player to form at least one Blackjack hand; and
- (e) continuing with a Blackjack game.

**14.** A method according to claim **13**, further comprising, prior to step (b), dealing playing cards to a dealer, wherein step (b) is practiced using at least of the playing cards dealt to the player and at least one of the playing cards dealt to the dealer.

**15.** A method according to claim **14**, wherein step (d) is practiced using the cards dealt to the player to form a player Blackjack hand and using the cards dealt to the dealer to form a dealer Blackjack hand, and wherein step (e) is practiced by playing the player Blackjack hand against the dealer Blackjack hand.

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