A method for exhibiting a card game, such as a poker game, in which graphic and text data is superimposed on continuous video images of the game in progress to inform the video viewing audience of each player's cards and each player's bets. In this manner, the video viewers can get the feel of the game from each player's perspective while viewing the game at the same time. The graphic and text data is superimposed on the video image in the form of pop-up boxes which can be selectively displayed in an unobstructive manner.
### CHIP COUNT vs. TITLE OF COMPETITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAYER</th>
<th>CHIP COUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>$</td>
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<td>NAME</td>
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<td>NAME</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Antes vs. Blinds:

**Fig. 2**

**Fig. 4**
Fig. 7
Prior Art
METHOD FOR EXHIBITING A CARD GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a video format for exhibition of a card game and more particularly to a method for exhibiting video images of a card game, such as poker game, in which a plurality of video frames of video images of the game in progress are presented with textual/graphic data regarding the status of the game including each player’s cards and each player’s bet in a manner which does not detract from a viewer’s interest in viewing a recording of the game.

[0003] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0004] Various methods are known for exhibiting card games, such as poker games. One method is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,451,054. The method described in the ‘054 patent requires a custom poker table configured with a plurality of card viewing windows adjacent each players station, built into the playing surface of the poker table, and a chip receptacle for each player. The card viewing windows enable each of the players to view their cards face down on the table so that the cards can be displayed to the viewing audience without revealing the cards to the other players. The chip receptacle is used for electronically keeping track of each players’ total number of chips. Other data pertinent to the poker game, such as player names, each player’s cards and bet is added as text boxes to the video recording during editing. Although the text boxes provide important data relating to the current status of the poker game, such as each player’s cards and bets, the exhibition method disclosed in the ‘054 patent utilizes a format in which the text boxes are displayed in lieu of the game itself. Unfortunately, poker games are rather short and quick. Interruption of the game to display the text information, thus detracts the viewer’s attention to the game.

[0005] The custom poker table disclosed in the ‘054 patent was used during a poker tournament called the “Poker Million Tournament,” broadcast from the Ladbrooke Casino on the Isle of Man by Fox Sports Net. FIG. 7 is a video shot from underneath the viewing window on the poker table. As shown, the viewing window is used to display a player’s cards to the viewing audience without revealing the player’s cards to other players. While the cards are being viewed by the viewing audience, for example, as illustrated in FIG. 7, the poker game is continuing in the background out of view of the viewing audience. Even though each player’s hands is displayed by way of the viewing window, the viewing audience will miss a substantial portion of the poker game while the player’s cards are being displayed.

[0006] FIG. 8 illustrates a video format used in the video presentation of the World Heads Up Poker Championship, played on Jun. 2 through Jun. 5, 2001. As shown, the video format includes an exemplary video frame, generally identified with the reference numeral 20. The exemplary video frame 20 is sectioned into a pair of player viewing windows 22 and 24, disposed in the upper left and right hand corners of the video frame 20, which represent video images of two of the players. The video presentation of the poker tournament is presented in a upside-down T-shaped viewing window 26. The T-shaped viewing window 26 represents a camera shot viewing down on the table which shows, for example, three of the dealer’s cards, collectively identified with the reference numeral 28. The player’s cards are superimposed on the presentation window 26 and disposed under the player viewing windows 22 and 24, respectively. For example, as shown, the cards identified with the reference numerals 30 and 32 are associated with the player in the player window 22. Similarly, the cards identified with the reference numerals 34 and 36 are disposed beneath the player exhibited in the viewing window 24. A bottom viewing window 38 is selectively used as a rectangular presentation area, for example, to illustrate the dealer’s cards. Alternatively, the bottom viewing window 38 is used to form part of the viewing window 26.

[0007] The configuration of the player viewing windows 22 and 24 and the T-shaped video image presentation area 26 illustrated in FIG. 8 is not conducive to presenting video images of the players seated around the table playing the game. As such, the video format illustrated in FIG. 8 detracts from the viewing audience’s view of the poker tournament itself.

[0008] FIG. 9 illustrates yet another video format for exhibiting a poker game. This format was presented in a television production entitled “Inside the World Series of Poker,” presented on the Discovery Channel. As shown, the exemplary video frame of video images illustrated in FIG. 9 is from a perspective from behind the dealer. As shown, four (4) community cards, collectively identified with the reference numeral 40, are shown face-up on the table while the fifth community card 42 is being placed face up on the table by the dealer. The video format used in this exhibition does not allow the audience to learn the identity of any of the player’s cards, normally face down, until revealed by the players. Moreover, betting information can only be derived from the video image, if possible.

[0009] The format utilized in FIG. 9 is an undesirable format for exhibiting a poker game for several reasons. First, the audience is unable to get a feel for the game as its being displayed since the audience is not made aware of each individual player’s hand until the player turns his normally face down cards face up. In addition, betting information can only be derived from the video image which means the audience must count the number of chips played by each of the players in an attempt to keep track of these bets. Also, when players bet a stack of ships, the audience is unable to determine the exact amount of the bet. Finally, such a format does not easily allow the audience to keep track of each player’s bets.

[0010] FIG. 10 illustrates another known video format which integrates both video images of the poker game along with graphic/textual information regarding the status of the game. As shown, an exemplary video frame, generally identified with the reference numeral 44, is divided into a generally rectangular video image viewing window 46 and a generally L-shaped graphics/text presentation area 48. The graphics/text presentation area 48 is used to exhibit various types of information including the player’s names, identified in the text boxes 50 and 52; graphic images of the cards associated with each of the players, generally identified with the reference numerals 54 and 56; and the odds associated with each player, by way of text boxes, generally identified with the reference numeral 58 and 60, 62 and 64. Near the
bottom of the graphics/text presentation area 48, graphical images of each of the community cards, collectively identified with the reference numeral 66, are identified.

[0011] As shown, the player Smith is favored to win with a pair of aces while the odds are zero that player Jones with a 2 of spades and an 8 of diamonds will win. The odds also show there is a zero percent chance of a game ending in a tie.

[0012] The format presented in FIG. 10 was used at the 31st Annual World Series of Poker at the Binion’s Casino in Las Vegas, Nev., produced by Ross Television Productions for the Discovery Channel. This format requires a reduced size video image presentation window which detracts from viewer’s interest in the game. Moreover, betting information is not included. Thus, there is a need for a video format for exhibition of a card game, such as a poker game, which does not detract from the viewer’s interest in viewing the game while at the same time provides the viewing audience with at least information as to each player’s cards and each player’s bet.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] The present invention relates to a method for exhibiting a card game, such as a poker game, in which graphic and text data is selectively superimposed on video frames which include the video image of the card game in a relatively unobstructive manner in order to inform the viewing audience of each player’s cards and each player’s bets. In this manner, viewers can get the feel of the game from each player’s perspective during the game and at the same time view the card game in a relatively unobstructed manner. The graphical and text data may be superimposed on the video image in the form of pop-up boxes which can be selectively displayed on top of the video image and removed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] These and other advantages of the present invention will be readily understood with reference to the following specification and attached drawing wherein:

[0015] FIG. 1 is an exemplary video format of an exemplary frame of a card game, such as a poker game, illustrating superimposed graphic and text matter on the video frame in accordance with the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 is a sectional elevational view of a portion of a game table for use with the present invention which includes a vertically oriented camera disposed, for example, in a side bumper of the poker table for enabling the viewing audience to view the player’s cards, shown with a player in phantom placing the cards before the camera.

[0017] FIG. 3 is a perspective view illustrating a player showing his cards to the camera illustrated in FIG. 2.

[0018] FIG. 4 is an exemplary optional text box illustrating each player’s current chip count in accordance with an aspect of the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 5 is an exemplary view of an optional video frame of a card player and superimposed data regarding the player’s current status in the game in accordance with an aspect of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 6 is an exemplary view of another optional frame for displaying various information regarding an individual player in accordance with another aspect of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 7 is a representation of a video frame from a previously exhibited poker tournament, identified as the Poker Million, broadcast from the Ladbroke Casino located in the Isle of Man by Fox Sports Net, illustrating a camera shot from underneath the table through a window on the table.


[0023] FIG. 9 is a representation of a video format of a previously exhibited video production entitled “Inside the World Series of Poker” produced by Ross Television Productions for the Discovery Channel.

[0024] FIG. 10 is a representation of a video format of a previously exhibited video production, entitled the “31st Annual World Series of Poker,” produced by Ross Television Productions for the Discovery Channel.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0025] The present invention relates to a method for exhibiting a card game, such as a poker game. In accordance with an important aspect of the invention, the video format of the card game is exhibited such that the viewing area on the television screen or monitor is optimized for display of the video images of the card game while including pop-up text and graphics information boxes which provide the viewing audience with information regarding the status of the game such as each player’s cards, their bets and optionally additional information. The video format produced by the method in accordance with the present invention enables continuous presentation of the card game illustrating the players and the poker table at a minimum, while at the same time providing the video audience with the status of the game obstructing as little as possible of the game in order to give the viewing audience the feel of the game to thereby increase interest in viewing the game.

[0026] As illustrated and described herein, the method and resulting video format is presented for a poker game, for example a poker tournament. The exemplary game exhibited is a seven (7) card poker game in which five (5) dealer cards are dealt face up and placed on a poker table. Each of the players are dealt two (2) cards face down. Each player’s hand thus consists of face down two (2) cards plus the five (5) community cards. The player with the best poker hand wins the game.

[0027] The poker game described above is typically played at poker tournaments, such as a “Poker Million”, the “World Series of Poker” and the “World Poker Tour”. However, the method and resulting video format is clearly applicable to other games, such as other card games in which there is very little movement or action on the part of the players and/or games which last a relatively short period of time. The method and resulting video format in accordance with the present invention compensates for the little amount of player action during the games by optimizing the video image display of the game by allowing virtually continuous
presentation of the card game and utilizing pop-up text and graphic boxes, superimposed on the video image, in a relatively unobstructive manner to inform the viewing audience of the various information regarding the status of the game including each player’s cards and bets. These pop-up data boxes may be selectively displayed in different areas of the video image viewing window to avoid overlaying important features of the video image of the game. By optimizing the video images of the game and providing pop-up text and graphic boxes which include the player’s cards and current bet, the resulting video format in accordance with the present invention enables a viewing audience to follow the game from each player’s perspective during the game thus increasing the viewer’s interest in the game. As will be discussed in more detail below, additional information may also be optionally provided to further enhance the audience interest in viewing the game.

[0028] In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a small video camera 100 (FIG. 2) may be vertically mounted with respect to the playing surface of a poker table 104, for example, in a bumper portion 102 of the table 104. As shown best in FIG. 2, the bumper portion 102 is raised from the playing surface of the poker table 104, forming a wall around the poker table 104. The video camera 100 is thus vertically mounted with respect to the playing surface of the poker table 104 to provide a more natural presentation of the player’s cards. As a player lifts his cards as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 to view the cards himself, the cards are also exposed to the video camera 100. As shown best in FIG. 1, a video camera 100 is provided for each player, adjacent each player’s station around the poker table 104.

[0029] This video information can be used to present each player’s cards to the viewing audience during the game in one of several ways. In particular, a signal from a video camera 100 may be coupled to a microprocessor (not shown) by way of an analog digital converter and compared with stored video images to automatically identify the player’s cards, for example as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,451,054, whereby incorporated by reference, so that the player’s cards can be identified in the form of a graphic/text box to the viewing audience in real time. Alternatively, the video shots of the player’s cards as illustrated in FIG. 3 can be used strictly during video editing of the card game. In this situation, the player’s card information along with the player’s name may be input into a pop-up text/graphic box. By utilizing a vertically oriented video camera, for example, disposed in the bumper portion 102 of a poker table 104, the player’s actions are more natural than the system disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,451,054 in which the players are required to slide their cards over a viewing window on the surface of the table.

[0030] The video format in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 1. Unlike the known video format illustrated in FIG. 9, the video format in accordance with the present invention optimizes the frames of video image of the poker game in progress by utilizing most if not all of the video frame 106 for the video images of the game in progress rather than dividing the display area 106 into viewing different video windows as in the known methods as discussed above. By optimizing the video image of the poker game in progress within the video frame 106, a more natural exhibition of the poker game from the standpoint of the viewing audience can be presented.

[0031] As used herein, a video image is defined to mean an image recorded by one of more video cameras. These video images may represent a static frame or multiple frames in accordance with, for example, a standard format, such as NTSC or PAL formats or other standard or non-standard formats. Stop action video refers to a freeze frame of the video image.

[0032] A pop-up data box refers to a text/or graphics box which can be overlaid over the video image in a video frame using conventional off the shelf special effects video editors, such as Adobe After Effects and the like. These special effects video editors allow the pop-up data boxes to be programmed to be visible for any desired amount of time and can be selectively placed anywhere in the video frame 106. Use of such special effects video editors is well known within the art.

[0033] Referring to FIG. 1, the video format in accordance with the present invention is illustrated. An exemplary video format is presented for example, for a video poker tournament. As shown, a video image of a poker table 104 is illustrated along with three players, identified with the reference numerals 108, 110 and 112 and a dealer 114. As mentioned previously, video cameras 100 are disposed, for example, in the bumper portion 102 of the poker table 104. In addition, a main video camera (not shown) is used to record successive frames of the main video image, identified with the reference numeral 116, for example, a poker game in progress which includes a video display of the action of the players 108, 110 and 112 around the poker table 104 and optionally a dealer 114. As the game is being played, various pop-up data boxes are displayed and overlaid over a selected portion of the video frame 106 in an unobstructive manner. As shown in FIG. 1, most if not the entire video frame 106 is used for the video image. The pop boxes are selectively positioned so as to obstruct a minimal portion of the main video image 116 of the game in progress, if any at all. As discussed previously, these pop-up data boxes include various data regarding the status of the game to increase the audience interest in the game. For example, individual pop-up data boxes 118 and 120 may be provided for each player. Each pop-up data box may be provided with a portion 120 for the player’s name as well as portions 122 and 124 for each player’s cards and a portion 126 for the player’s current bet. A turn arrow 128 may also optionally be provided to indicate which player has the current turn.

[0034] The video format in accordance with the present invention provides the video viewing audience with a distinct advantage over the live viewing audience and viewers of other video formats, namely, the video viewing audience of the video format in accordance with the present invention will be provided with information regarding each player’s cards and current bet while the game is in progress. Thus, the video viewing audience will be able to get a better feel for the game while it is in progress to further stimulate viewer interest in watching video replays of a poker game. In addition to the data boxes 118, 120 which identify the player’s cards and bets, additional data boxes may be provided to increase viewer interest. For example, a data box 128 may optionally be provided which illustrates the community cards, collectively identified with the reference numeral 130.

[0035] As mentioned above, for the particular game being illustrated, five (5) cards are dealt by the dealer 114 face up.
These five (5) cards, identified herein as the community cards 130, may be displayed in a pop-up data box 128. These cards 130 may be displayed as shown with alphanumeric characters and symbols or images of the cards themselves may be shown. Similarly, the data boxes 118 may also illustrate alphanumeric images and symbols of the playing cards or alternatively display images of the cards themselves.

As shown in FIG. 1, the pop-up data box 128 illustrating the community cards 130 allows the viewing audience to easily view each player’s entire hand. As mentioned above for the particular game illustrated, each player’s hand consists of the five (5) community cards 130 plus the two (2) individual cards dealt face down to the player 108, 110, 112. As shown, the player Jones has a pair of aces and a pair of eights. The player Smith has three (3) eights and a pair of nines. The indicator arrow 128 indicates that it is currently Smith’s turn. The audience at this point is aware that Smith’s hand can win. As indicated, Smith “calls”. At this point, the viewing audience knows that Smith will win the hand before Smith himself.

Other pop-up boxes may be deployed and overlaid over portions of the video frame 106. For example, a pop-up box 130 may be used to present the odds to the audience. In addition, other pop-up boxes 132 and 134 may be used to identify the pot size for the current hand. A pop-up box 136 may be used for additional information regarding lingo used in the game, hand update or a prior play. All of the pop-up boxes 118, 120, 128, 130, 132, 134 and 136 may be overlaid over the video image being displayed in the frame 106 for example, adjacent to the main video image 116 of the poker game. In this way the main video image 116 is optimized while at the same time providing the viewing audience with at least minimal information regarding the status of the game including the identity of each player’s face down cards as well as each player’s bet.

In addition to the video format illustrated in FIG. 1, additional information regarding the game may be provided as illustrated in FIGS. 4, 5, and 6. For example, FIG. 4 illustrates one or more text boxes 140 and 142 which provide data regarding each player’s chip count. The pop-up box 140 may be configured as a banner with the words “Chip Count” and the title of the competition, for example “World Poker Tour.” A data box 142 may be used to identify each of the players by name and the value of their current chip count. These pop-up boxes 140 and 142 may be overlaid over a video frame 106 for example, between games.

FIGS. 5 and 6 illustrate additional formats for informational video frames, for example, to be used between games. In particular FIG. 5 illustrates a freeze frame video image of a poker player with a data box 144 at the bottom of the viewing window 106 illustrating the player’s current status. FIG. 6 illustrates yet another format for providing additional information regarding a player. The format illustrated in FIG. 6 is configured such that the video frame 106 is used for the text box and includes a video window 146 which has a freeze frame or video frames of a player. As shown, various textual information may be provided within the video window 146. For example, the player’s first and last name, age, town and past achievements. These video formats may be used between poker games to further enhance a viewer’s interest in viewing the poker games.

Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. Thus, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described above.

What is claimed and desired to be covered by a Letters Patent as is as follows:

We claim:

1. A method for exhibiting a card game comprising the steps of:
   (a) continuously exhibiting video images of a card game in progress as a series of video frames;
   (b) displaying a data box in a portion of the video frames which includes current data regarding the game, said data box primarily overlaid over said video frames to thereby allow concurrent exhibition of the card game and its status.
2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein step (b) further comprises: displaying first data boxes which include representations of each player’s current hand.
3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein step (b) further comprises: displaying second data boxes which identify each player’s current bet.
4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein said first and second data boxes are displayed continuously.
5. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein said first and second data boxes are selectively displayed during a portion of the game in progress.
6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein steps (b) includes providing a game table having a bumper there around with a video camera disposed at each player’s station to enable the player’s cards to be viewed remotely without revealing the cards to other player’s at the game table.
7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein video images from said video cameras at said player stations are used to identify each player’s card for the purpose of generating the data in said data box.
8. A method for exhibiting a card game comprising the steps of:
   (a) providing a game table having a plurality of video cameras vertically oriented with respect to a playing surface of the poker table;
   (b) providing a main video camera for recording video images of the card game in progress;
   (c) exhibiting the video images of the card game in progress as a series of video frames; and
   (d) overlaying first data boxes over a portion of a plurality of said frames representing each player’s cards as determined by the vertically oriented video cameras at each player’s station.

9. The method as recited in claim 8, further including the steps of: overlaying second data boxes representing each player’s current bet.
10. The method as recited in claim 8, further including a third data box representing each player’s odds.
11. The method as recited in claim 8, further including a fourth data box representing the dealer’s cards.
12. The method as recited in claim 8, further including a fifth data box for providing additional information selected from group of bingo, hand update or prior play.
13. The method as recited in claim 8, further including a sixth data box representing the current pot size.
14. The method as recited in claim 8, further including the steps of: exhibiting data boxes between card games.
15. The method as recited in claim 14, wherein said step of exhibiting data boxes between card games includes exhibiting a data box listing all of the players and their current chip count.
16. The method as recited in claim 8, further including the step of illustrating informational video frames between games which include an image of a player and informational regarding the player.
17. The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the step of illustrating informational video frames includes exhibiting one or more video frames of a player with a data box representing data about the player.
18. The method as recited in claim 16, wherein the step of illustrating informational video frames includes one or more video frames as data boxes and providing a video window within said data box of a video image of a player.
19. A video format for a video representation of a card game comprising:
   a plurality of video frames representing a video image of a card game in progress; and
   one or more data boxes overlaid over said video frames which include data regarding the current status of the game in progress.
20. The video format as recited in claim 19 wherein one of said one or more data boxes includes data representative of each player’s current hand.
21. The video format as recited in claim 20, wherein one of said one or more data boxes includes data representative of each player’s current bet.

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