METHOD OF PLAYING A CARD GAME WITH BONUS BET OPTIONS ("BLACKJACK BONUS3") AND SYSTEMS FOR PLAYING SAME

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Abstract
A method of playing a card game includes the steps of providing one or more decks of playing cards, requiring a player to place a blackjack wager before cards are dealt, affording the player an opportunity to place a bonus wager before cards are dealt, dealing out two cards to each of a plurality of hands, thereby forming a dealer's initial hand and a player's initial hand, determining whether the player's initial hand is a Blackjack hand, determining whether the dealer's initial hand is a Blackjack hand, and if it is determined that neither the player's initial hand nor the dealer's initial hand is a Blackjack hand, affording the player an opportunity to draw an additional card, and if the player elects to draw an additional card, determining the outcome of a three-card bonus hand consisting of the player's initial hand and the additional card.
METHOD OF PLAYING A CARD GAME WITH BONUS BET OPTIONS ("BLACKJACK BONUS") AND SYSTEMS FOR PLAYING SAME

BACKGROUND

[0001] Technical Field

[0002] The present disclosure relates to systems and methods for playing card games and, more particularly, to a blackjack variant card game with bonus bet options suitable for play in multiple formats, such as at a table or a video terminal, in casino gaming environments and other environments.

[0003] Discussion of Related Art

[0004] Playing cards have been used in a variety of ways. One popular use of cards is for playing games. Card games may be games of chance, games of skill, or a combination of both chance and skill. In most games, the playing cards are assembled into a randomized deck. A common deck used is the "standard" deck of playing cards which consists of 52 cards, divided into four suits: spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. Each suit includes 13 cards, numbered from 2 through 10, and the face or court cards, Jack, Queen, King, and Ace.

[0005] A deck of cards can be used to play a variety of games. As a result, there exist a wide range of card games, including families of related games, such as poker. Some games have formally standardized rules, while rules for others can vary by preference across geographical region, culture, and individual.

[0006] Popular card games include wagering games that are simple to play and which can be played rapidly to a wager resolving outcome, such as blackjack. In blackjack, each player plays against the banker, dealer, croupier, or house rather than against the other players at the table. The goal of each player is to win money by obtaining a hand that will turn out to be higher in point value (closer in numeric value to twenty-one) than the point value of the dealer’s hand without going over twenty-one (“busting”). In determining the value of a hand, the point value of the cards in the hand are added, with cards numbered 2 through 10 having their face value, Jacks, Queens, and Kings having the value of 10, and Ace having the value of 1 or 11 according to the player’s best interest. If the player and the dealer both have the same hand value, this is known as a “push”, and neither the player nor the dealer wins the hand. In the case of a push, the player’s bet is normally returned without adjustment.

[0007] Blackjack is often played in casinos where each player places a wager on the outcome of a hand against the house. Wagers are placed at the beginning of the hand, before any cards are dealt. The minimum and maximum bets are usually posted on the table. After initial bets are placed, play begins with the dealer dealing two cards to each player and himself. The cards are typically dealt in two passes, and may be dealt from one or more hand-held decks, from a dealer’s shoe, or from a shuffling machine. Each player is dealt an initial hand of two cards visible to that player, and often to any other players. One of the dealer’s two cards is dealt face up, the other face down, known as the “hole” card. The dealer’s hole card remains face down until the players have completed their hands.

[0008] At this point, any player having a “natural” twenty-one (an Ace with any 10-count card), often called "Blackjack", is an automatic winner, unless the dealer also has a natural twenty-one, in which case the hand is a “push”. If the dealer was dealt a natural Blackjack hand, all players lose their bets, except those players who also have Blackjack. The traditional payoff for a player Blackjack is 3:2, meaning that the house pays $3 for each $2 originally bet, but gaming establishments pay less at some tables.

[0009] After the dealer and players have been dealt an initial hand of two cards, each player who was not dealt a natural Blackjack with the first two cards is given the option of asking the dealer to deal an additional card (“a hit”) to the player’s original hand. The player may elect to continue to receive additional cards, one by one, either until he or she decides to “stand” (not receive any additional cards from the dealer), or the point total of the player’s hand exceeds twenty-one (“a bust”). Any hand that busts loses, and its bet is immediately forfeited, regardless of the final point total of the dealer’s hand.

[0010] Blackjack is played in many variations at casinos with different table rules. Depending on the rules in effect at the table, and depending on what cards the player holds, a player can also exercise certain options which add to the players gambling opportunities during the course of play, such as “doubling down,” “splitting pairs,” “surrender” and “insurance”.

[0011] After all of the players have made their decisions and finished their hands, the dealer reveals the “hole” card and plays out his or her hand depending on the point total that the dealer holds and based on local rules for the game. Under most blackjack rules, if the dealer’s hand has a total point value of less than seventeen, the dealer must take a hit. If the dealer’s hand has a point total of seventeen or greater, the dealer stands.

[0012] When all of the players and the dealer have either received a desired number of cards, or busted, the outcome of the game is determined. A player wins if either the dealer’s point total exceeds twenty-one, i.e., the dealer busts, or the player’s point total exceeds the dealer’s point total, without busting.

[0013] Wagering games have been developed incorporating multiple wagering choices for players. These include casino table games that offer bonus bets or jackpots where players may wager on occurrences that generally do not affect the outcome of the standard game. There are a number of variations on blackjack with a bonus bet. An example of such a bonus bet is the blackjack/poker game “21+3”, which combines a basic blackjack bet with an optional three-card poker bet, disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,175,180, 6,854,733, 6,481,719 and 6,012,719, which are all issued to Webb. The game is a standard blackjack game where the player is also given the option of placing a bonus wager on whether or not a three-card poker hand made of the player’s first two cards and the dealer’s face-up card is of a certain rank. In this game, each player is dealt two cards face-up and the dealer is dealt two cards, one face-up and the last one face-down. At this point, the outcome of each three-card poker hand is determined, where a three-card poker hand consists of the two-card hand dealt to that player and the dealer’s face-up card. After settling the poker bets, the game of blackjack continues in a typical fashion.

[0014] Another example of a bonus bet is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,402,147 issued to Lo. The basic game is seven-card-stud poker, played by two to seven players with at least one standard deck of 52 cards plus at least one Joker. One of the players is the banker. A player who is not a banker may
place a poker bet, playing against the banker’s hand. The player is also given the option of placing one to seven bonus wagers on the rank of the player’s own hand.

Another example of a bonus bet is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,568,704 issued to Davis et al. The game is a blackjack-style game with an optional bonus bet wherein a player bets that he or she will be dealt a natural Blackjack hand.

Games that offer players a plurality of wagering choices may heighten player interest in the games. A more interesting game may result in increased revenue to the casino by its increased play. There exists a continuing need for new and improved card games that offer players a plurality of wagering choices, which are suitable for play in gaming establishments and other environments.

SUMMARY

The present disclosure relates to a method of playing a card game including the initial steps of providing one or more decks of playing cards, requiring a player to place a blackjack wager before cards are dealt, and affording the player an opportunity to place a bonus wager before cards are dealt. The method includes the step of dealing out two cards to each of a plurality of hands, thereby forming a dealer’s initial hand and a player’s initial hand. The method also includes the steps of determining whether the player’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, determining whether the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, and if it is determined that neither the player’s initial hand nor the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, affording the player an opportunity to draw an additional card, and if the player elects to draw an additional card, determining the outcome of a three-card bonus hand consisting of the player’s initial hand and the additional card.

The present disclosure also relates to a system including a processor unit, a display device in operative communication with the processor unit, and a memory device storing a series of programmable instructions configured for execution by the processor unit for performing a method of playing a card game. The method includes the steps of providing one or more decks of playing cards, requiring a player to place a blackjack wager before cards are dealt, affording the player an opportunity to place a bonus wager before cards are dealt, dealing out two cards to each of a plurality of hands, thereby forming a dealer’s initial hand and a player’s initial hand, determining whether the player’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, determining whether the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, and if it is determined that neither the player’s initial hand nor the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, affording the player an opportunity to draw an additional card, and if the player elects to draw an additional card, determining the outcome of a three-card bonus hand consisting of the player’s initial hand and the player’s additional card.

The present disclosure also relates to a computer-readable medium storing a series of programmable instructions configured for execution by at least one hardware processor for performing a method of playing a card game. The method includes the steps of providing one or more decks of playing cards, requiring a player to place a blackjack wager before cards are dealt, affording the player an opportunity to place a bonus wager before cards are dealt, dealing out two cards to each of a plurality of hands, thereby forming a dealer’s initial hand and a player’s initial hand, determining whether the player’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, determining whether the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, and if it is determined that neither the player’s initial hand nor the dealer’s initial hand is a Blackjack hand, affording the player an opportunity to draw an additional card, and if the player elects to draw an additional card, determining the outcome of a three-card bonus hand consisting of the player’s initial hand and the player’s additional card.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Objects and features of the presently-disclosed methods of playing a card game with bonus bet options and systems for playing the same will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art when descriptions of various embodiments thereof are read with reference to the accompanying drawings, of which:

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a playing surface according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a gaming machine according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 3 is a schematic view of a system suitable for playing a card game according to an embodiment of the present disclosure; and

FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating a method of playing a card game with bonus bet options according to an embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Hereinafter, embodiments of a method for playing a card game with bonus bet options and systems for playing the same are described with reference to the accompanying drawings and the rules of the card game “Blackjack Bonus3”.

As it is used herein, the term “computer” generally refers to anything that transforms information in a purposeful way. For the purposes of this description, the terms “software” and “code” should be interpreted as being applicable to software, firmware, or a combination of software and firmware. For the purposes of this description, “non-transitory” computer-readable media include all computer-readable media, with the sole exception being a transitory, propagating signal. As it is used in this description, the term “game data” generally refers to a wide variety of information pertaining to a game, some of which may be captured and stored in hardware and/or non-transitory computer-readable media, and some of which may be participant observations, e.g., empirical or visual observations made by a game player.

Various embodiments of the presently-disclosed card games are directed to blackjack variant card games with bonus bet options wherein indicia of playing cards are displayed to one or more players and a dealer. As it is used in this description, the phrase “indications of playing cards” should be interpreted as being applicable to physical playing cards and images of playing cards displayed either mechanically, electro-mechanically, electronically or otherwise. Systems and methods for playing the card game Blackjack Bonus3 may display indicia of playing cards on a physical or simulated gaming board or table (also referred to herein as a “playing surface”), on a mechanical slot machine, on an electronic gaming device, or other electronic display.

This description may use the phrases “in an embodiment,” “in embodiments,” “in some embodiments,” or “in
other embodiments,” which may each refer to one or more of the same or different embodiments in accordance with the present disclosure.

[0029] Rules of the Card Game Blackjack Bonus3 according to an embodiment of the present disclosure are set forth below. It is to be understood that the rules and payout ratios listed in the Rules of the Card Game Blackjack Bonus3 are provided for illustrative purposes only, and that card game embodiments of the present disclosure may be utilized with many different rule variations and many different payout ratios.

[0030] 1. The improved game is played on a playing surface having on one side seven player locations of a plurality of betting spots (e.g., five betting spots shown in FIG. 1).

[0031] 2. To play the game, all initial bets are made before any cards are dealt. Cards will be dealt to the dealer and to those player locations where bets have been put down. The dealer may be either a person or a mechanized card dealer operated by a croupier.

[0032] 3. At the option of the house or the dealer, a plurality of card decks may be used to play the game.

[0033] 4. The house or the dealer may set and/or change the minimum and maximum wagering limits at any time during play.

[0034] 5. A player must place a “base bet” wager and may also place an optional “bonus bet” wager before cards are dealt. After the base bet and optional bonus bet are made, the dealer or croupier deals an initial hand of two cards to himself and to one or more players. Although a plurality of players or as few as one player and one dealer may play Blackjack Bonus3, one player is described for ease of explanation. The player’s two cards are dealt face-up. One of the dealer’s cards is dealt face-down, the other face-up.

[0035] 6. After the initial hand is dealt, if either the dealer’s or the dealer’s hand has a point value equal to twenty-one (an Ace with any 10-count card), which is “Blackjack”, no further cards are dealt. The round is over and the outcome of the player’s hand is determined according to Rules 7 through 9, below.

[0036] 7. If the player was dealt Blackjack and the dealer was dealt Blackjack, the hand is a draw (the player neither wins nor loses), in which case the player’s base bet and bonus bet are a push.

[0037] 8. If the player was dealt Blackjack and the dealer was not dealt Blackjack, the player wins his or her blackjack wager, in which case the player is paid a payout 3 to 2 on the base bet for the hand, but the player’s bonus bet is forfeit.

[0038] 9. If the dealer was dealt Blackjack and the player does not have Blackjack, the player’s bonus bet is a push, but the player loses his or her blackjack wager.

[0039] 10. If the player placed a bonus bet and does not draw a third card on his or her hand for that round of play, the bonus bet is pushed to a push up betting spot. A push bonus bet will remain in play for the next hand(s) dealt and played, until the player draws a third card on that hand (see Rule 14). The push bonus bet can be accumulated until the player draws a third card, but payoff is only ½ the amount of the original bonus bet payoff.

[0040] 11. Any and all of the bonus bets and push bonus bets are forfeited upon a drawn card that does not establish a three-card bonus winning hand.

[0041] 12. Upon establishing that no Blackjack hand was dealt either to the player or the dealer in the first two cards, the player has the option to “draw” cards, one at a time, either until the player elects to “stand”, or the player’s hand exceeds 21 (“busting”).

[0042] 13. If the player draws an additional card after the initial two-card hand has been dealt, that third card establishes a three-card bonus hand.

[0043] 14. If the additional card dealt to the player after the initial two-card hand causes the player’s blackjack hand to bust, the player loses his or her blackjack wager, but the player wins the three-card bonus hand if the three-card hand is a winning hand according to a table of bonus payoff hands (e.g., Bonus Bet Pay Table 209 shown in FIG. 2), and he or she receives a payout on the bonus wager (assuming the player placed a bonus bet for that hand and/or has push bonus bet(s) on the table).

[0044] 15. If the player is dealt a pair, the player may split his or her hand. A second base bet wager, equal to the original base bet wager, is automatically placed on the player’s second hand. After a player has split a pair, the player is afforded the opportunity to place a bonus bet on the player’s second hand. Such additional bonus bet, if placed, will remain active until the player is dealt a third card on the second hand.

[0045] The presently-disclosed card game with bonus bet options may be played on a variety of physical playing surfaces, from folding tables suited for portable play to stationary tables, such as casino-type card tables, or on simulated playing surfaces. Various embodiments are suitable for casino play on blackjack casino-type tables, and may provide casino operators with additional revenue generating features without the need for added gaming tables or requiring additional gaming floor space or game surveillance video equipment. Simulated playing surfaces for playing the card game Blackjack Bonus3 in accordance with the present disclosure may allow one or more players to participate via individual gaming machines (e.g., 250 shown in FIG. 2), game consoles, portable gaming devices, or other portable or hard-held electronic devices, e.g., cellular phones, PDAs (personal digital assistants) and other mobile devices, as well as home desktop or laptop computers, or other electronic devices, in either standalone or networked configurations.

[0046] The card game Blackjack Bonus3 may be implemented in a wide variety of forms and media, such as without limitation, single-player slot video machines, multi-player slot video machines, electronic games and devices, 3-D gaming laptops, desktop computers, lottery terminals, scratch-card formats, home entertainment gaming, Internet casino gaming, in-flight gaming and gaming on cruise ships. Blackjack Bonus3 embodiments may be implemented in software, which may be stored on a suitable data storage medium, such as a disk (e.g., magnetic disk, optical disk such as a CD (compact disk), and the like), and used with any type of computing device, computational circuit, or any type of processor or processing circuit capable of executing a series of instructions that are stored in memory, where memory may be any device or medium that can store code and data, e.g., game data, for use by a computer.

[0047] Embodiments of the presently-disclosed card game with bonus bet options may be implemented as a computer process, a computing system or as an article of manufacture such as a pre-recorded disk or other similar computer program product or computer-readable media. The computer program product may be a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium, readable by a computer system and encoding a computer program of instructions for executing a computer
process. In some embodiments, a playing surface (e.g., 10 shown in FIG. 1), a deck of cards, chip trays, and/or other game piece(s) may be simulated, represented, presented or depicted in a virtual environment, video game or displayed on a screen (e.g., LCD (liquid crystal display), plasma, OLED (organic light emitting diode), holographic, flat, video, TV, and the like).

[0048] FIG. 1 shows a playing surface (shown generally as 10) that may be used in an embodiment of the present disclosure. Playing surface 10 may be implemented as a physical playing surface or a simulated playing surface. It is to be understood that the playing surface 10 illustrated in FIG. 1 is provided for illustrative purposes only, and that card game embodiments of the present disclosure may be utilized with many different table designs and layouts.

[0049] In embodiments, playing surface 10 may be unitary or otherwise securely attached to the top of a table, e.g., a casino-style gaming table, or other such object. Playing surface 10 may be made of any suitable material, e.g., “heavy” green felt to provide a casino-style playing surface. The shape and size of the playing surface 10 may be varied from the configuration depicted in FIG. 1.

[0050] As shown in FIG. 1, the playing surface 10 generally includes a player’s playing portion P and a dealer’s playing portion D. In the player’s playing portion P of the playing surface 10 there are locations for seven players, P1 through P7. Although seven player locations, P1 through P7, are shown in FIG. 1, more players or as few as one player and one dealer may play the card game Blackjack Bonus3. In practice, the number of player locations may depend on the preference of the house conducting the game. Seven locations will be used to describe one embodiment for ease of explanation.

[0051] Playing surface 10 generally includes one or more edges (e.g., straight line 16 shown in FIG. 1) behind which a dealer 8 stands facing the players and an arcuate-shaped edge 12 around which one or more players sit or stand facing the dealer 8. In one embodiment, the playing surface 10 includes a plurality of straight edges defining a rectangular-shaped recess portion 18, which may be suitably configured to accommodate the dealer 8. The shape and size of the recess portion 18 may be varied from the configuration depicted in FIG. 1, and may depend on the preference of the house conducting the game.

[0052] In the dealer’s playing portion D of the playing surface 10 there are locations for the dealer’s initial hand of two cards, 80 and 81. Playing surface 10 may additionally include one or more locations for chip trays 85 and/or other game pieces, such as without limitation, a combination card deck and shuffling device (not shown) used to deal cards onto the playing surface 10 by a dealer or croupier 8, and/or a receptacle (not shown) or space designated on the playing surface 10 for receiving cards discarded during play of the game. Basic blackjack rules and house rules governing play of blackjack may be displayed on the playing surface 10, or otherwise posted in conveniently accessible locations available to all players and in an area proximal to the playing surface 10. Although seven player locations are shown, a single player may control one or more of the seven player locations during any round of play.

[0053] Marked on playing surface 10 in front of each player location, P1 through P7, are betting spots 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52, respectively, for placing a base bet on the outcome of the player’s blackjack hand and also bonus betting spots 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32, respectively, for placing an optional bonus bet on the rank of a three-card bonus hand consisting of an initial two-card hand and a third card dealt to that player. Although the base betting spots 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50 and 52 are shown as rectangles, and the bonus betting spots 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32 are shown as circles on the playing surface 10 of FIG. 1, the locations may be marked with other shapes or symbols (e.g., a square, a triangle, an “X,” a dot, or an arrow) or marked by colors, logos or any other indicia.

[0054] In some embodiments, each player location may be provided with one or more split betting spots. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, each player location, P1 through P7, includes two split betting spots 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21 and 23, respectively, which may be disposed on opposite sides of the bonus betting spots 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30 and 32, respectively.

[0055] In the case of individual gaming machines, an embodiment of which is shown in FIG. 2, implementing the playing surface 10 of FIG. 1, each player has his or her own machine 250. Typically, a payout table is posted on the machine 250 to advise the player of the payoffs available for certain winning combinations of indicia of playing cards. Any suitable pay table can be used. In one embodiment, shown in FIG. 2, machine 250 includes a BONUS BET PAY TABLE 209. It is to be understood that the ranked hands and payoff ratios listed in the BONUS BET PAY TABLE 209 are given as merely illustrative and non-limiting examples, and that pay table embodiments of the present disclosure may utilize many different winning combinations of indicia of playing cards and many different payoff ratios.

[0056] Typically, the dealer’s hand and one or more player hands are displayed on the player’s video screen 210. Prior to playing a game, the player inserts a voucher, a paper ticket, or cash into a reader 217, e.g., a money reader, or swipes a credit, debit, or other player card in a card reader 219. The player enters an amount on the keypad 211 or a touch screen (not shown). If the player elects to play an optional bonus wager, he or she presses the BONUS button and indicates the amount of the wager.

[0057] After the base wager and optional bonus wager are input, the player presses the PLAY button, which activates the dealing sequence, e.g., causing the initial two cards to be displayed on the video screen display.

[0058] If the player played the bonus wager, the player’s 3-card bonus hand consisting of his or her initial two-card hand and a third card dealt to that player is compared to the BONUS BET PAY TABLE 209 of ranked hands for the bonus wager. If the bonus hand rank is listed in the BONUS BET PAY TABLE 209, the winning amount is credited to the player, and a payment ticket or voucher output by a printer 215 may be issued for payment by a cashier. Alternatively, the winning amount may be paid in cash, coins or other monetary tokens by the machine 250, itself.

[0059] FIG. 3 shows a system 300 suitable for playing a card game with bonus bet options according to an embodiment of the present invention. System 300 may be implemented via a wireless network, based on standalone access points. System 300 generally includes one or more gaming machines 350, such as, for example, casino-type gaming platforms, handheld and portable computers (e.g., notebooks
computers, palmtops, and PDAs), cell phones, or other devices, which may be communicatively associated with a remote processing unit 380.

FIG. 3 shows sample components of an embodiment of the gaming machine 350, such as a processor unit 310, a memory device 311 operable to communicate with the processor unit 310, an input terminal 330 operably connected to the processor unit 310, and a display device 320 operably connected to the processor unit 310. In some embodiments, a touch screen may be used as the input terminal 330. Display device 310 may be any suitable display device capable of providing display of images to a user, including without limitation, a rear projection display device, a liquid crystal display device, a cathode ray tube display device, and a plasma display device. Processor unit 310 may be any type of computing device, computational circuit, or any type of processor or processing circuit capable of executing a series of instructions that are stored in a memory, e.g., memory device 311.

Hereinafter, a method of a card game with bonus bet options is described with reference to FIG. 4. It is to be understood that the steps of the method provided herein may be performed in combination and in a different order than presented herein without departing from the scope of the disclosure.

In step 401, the card game with bonus bet options, called “Blackjack Bonus3”, is started. In step 403, the player places a “base bet” wager (also referred to herein as a “blackjack” wager) on the player’s blackjack hand. Wagers may be made in cash, chips, tokens, or by debits to credit cards, debit cards, or other cash equivalent.

In step 405, a determination is made whether the player wishes to place a “bonus bet” wager (on a three-card hand consisting of the player’s initial two-card hand and a third card dealt to the player).

If it is determined, in step 405, that the player does not wish to place a bonus bet wager, then, in step 413, the round is played out as a standard blackjack game, and may be based on local rules for the game. While the basic rules of casino blackjack are generally determined by law or regulation, certain variations are allowed at the discretion of the casino. The key game rules are generally posted on or near the table. After the round is played out, in step 413, the outcome of the blackjack game is determined, in step 415. In step 415, a winning player may be provided with the opportunity to receive a payout, where the payout may be in the form of cash, gaming chips, vouchers, payout slips and tickets, or by any other method wherein the player is credited with the amount won.

After the outcome of the blackjack game has been determined, in step 415, a determination is made, in step 417, whether the player wishes to play another round. If so, the player places a base bet wager on the player’s new blackjack hand. If the player elects not to play another round, then the game ends, in step 419.

If it is determined, in step 405, that the player wishes to place a bonus bet wager, then, in step 407, the dealer places a bonus bet wager on a three-card hand consisting of the player’s initial two-card hand and a third card dealt to the player. In some embodiments, the three-card bonus hand is a poker hand that is compared to a table of bonus payoff hands to determine whether the three-card poker hand is a winning hand and the amount of winnings.

Following the player’s placement of a bonus bet wager, in step 407, the dealer deals two cards to the player and himself, in step 425. One of the dealer’s cards is dealt face-down, the other face-up. The player’s initial hand of two cards is visible to that player, and may be visible to any other players. In some cases, the player’s two cards are dealt face-up.

In step 430, a determination is made whether the dealer has a natural Blackjack hand.

If it is determined, in step 430, that the dealer has Blackjack, then, in step 435, a determination is made whether the player has a natural Blackjack hand.

If it is determined, in step 435, that the player has Blackjack, then, in step 440 the player’s base bet and bonus bet are pushed, and the player neither wins nor loses. In such cases, the player is presented with a waging opportunity, in step 403, to place a base bet wager on the player’s new blackjack hand.

If it is determined, in step 435, that the player does not have Blackjack, then, in step 445 the player loses his or her blackjack wager and the player’s bonus bet is a push. In such event, the player is presented with a waging opportunity, in step 403, to place a base bet wager on the player’s new blackjack hand.

If it is determined, in step 430, that the dealer does not have Blackjack, then, in step 450, a determination is made whether the player has a natural Blackjack hand.

If it is determined, in step 450, that the player has Blackjack, then, in step 455, the player wins his or her blackjack wager, and forfeits his or her current bonus bet along with any push bonus bet(s) from any previous round(s). In one variation of the game, the player forfeits only the current bonus bet, and any push bonus bet remains active until the player draws a third card, at which time the outcome of the player’s three-card bonus hand can be determined.

In step 455, the player with Blackjack wins his or her wager. The payout on the wager may be in the form of cash, gaming chips, vouchers, payout slips and tickets, or by any other method wherein the player is credited with the amount won.

In step 457, a determination is made whether the player wishes to play another round. If the player elects to play another round, the player is presented with a waging opportunity, in step 403, to place a base bet wager on the player’s new blackjack hand. Otherwise, in step 459, the game ends.

If it is determined, in step 450, that the player does not have Blackjack (i.e., neither dealer nor player has a natural Blackjack hand), then, in step 460, play continues as a blackjack game. In such event, a determination is made whether the player wishes to take a hit, in step 465.

If it is determined, in step 465, that the player does wish to take a hit, then the player is dealt an additional card, in step 470. At this point, the outcome of the player’s three-card bonus hand consisting of the player’s initial two-card hand and the third card dealt to the player can be determined, in step 475. The three-card bonus hand may be compared to a table of bonus payoff hands to determine whether the bonus hand is a winning hand and the amount of winnings. An example table of bonus payoff hands is shown in Table 1. It is to be understood that the bonus payoff hands and payoff ratios listed in the Table 1 are given as merely illustrative and non-limiting examples, and that pay table embodiments of the present disclosure may utilize many different bonus payoff
TABLE I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BONUS PAYOFF HANDS</th>
<th>PAYOUT RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight (3 cards in point succession)</td>
<td>5-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush (3 cards in same suit)</td>
<td>4-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>30-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a Kind</td>
<td>20-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hands and many different payout ratios. It will be appreciated that payout ratios may be adjusted by the house conducting the game.

[0078] After the outcome of the player’s three-card bonus hand has been determined, in step 475, assuming the player has not busted, a determination is made, in step 480, whether the player wishes to take a hit.

[0079] If it is determined, in step 480, that the player does not wish to take a hit, then, assuming the player has not busted, the dealer finishes his or her hand, in step 487. After the dealer has finished his or her hand, in step 487, the outcome of the blackjack game is determined, in step 490.

[0080] After the outcome of the blackjack game has been determined, in step 490, a determination is made whether the player wishes to play another round. If the player elects to play another round, the player is presented with a wagering opportunity, in step 403, to place a base bet wager on the player’s new blackjack hand. Otherwise, in step 499, the game ends.

[0081] If it is determined, in step 480, that the player does wish to take a hit, then, the player is dealt an additional card, in step 483. Assuming that the player did not bust, a determination is made, in step 485, whether the player wishes to take a hit. If it is determined, in step 485, that the player does wish to take a hit, then the player is dealt an additional card, in step 483. If it is determined, in step 485, that the player does not wish to take a hit, then, assuming the player has not busted, the dealer finishes his or her hand, in step 487.

[0082] The above-described card game embodiments with bonus bet options may be played on a physical playing surface or on a simulated playing surface.

[0083] The above-described card game embodiments with bonus bet options are suitable for play in multiple formats, such as at a casino-type card table or a video terminal (e.g., single-player slot video machines, multi-player slot video machines, and the like) in gaming establishments and other environments. The above-described card game embodiments with bonus bet options may be implemented via game consoles, portable gaming devices, or other portable or handheld electronic devices, e.g., cellular phones, PDAs and other mobile devices, as well as home desktop or laptop computers, or other electronic devices, in either standalone or networked configurations.

[0084] The above-described card game embodiments with bonus bet options may be practiced as an amusement (non-monetary) game wherein the player is only allowed to wager for his or her personal entertainment and winnings have a non-monetary value.

[0085] Although embodiments have been described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings for the purpose of illustration and description, it is to be understood that the inventive processes and apparatus are not to be construed as limited thereby. It will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that various modifications to the foregoing embodiments may be made without departing from the scope of the disclosure.

1. In a method of dealing casino blackjack, wherein dealing two cards to each playing hand provides an initial two-card blackjack playing hand having a corresponding placed base bet being wagered only for a three-card bonus hand, wherein the three-card bonus hand comprises both the three-card bonus hand and three-card blackjack hand; and paying out a winning amount for the three-card bonus hand having a three-card poker combination of a poker pair or better or, alternatively, collecting a forfeited, placed bonus bet for the three-card bonus hand not having a three-card poker combination of a poker pair or better.

2.8. (canceled)

9. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:

paying out a winning amount for each playing hand being a two-card playing hand winning at blackjack, or alternatively, collecting a forfeited, placed base bet for each two-card playing hand losing to the dealer hand having blackjack.

10. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:

with respect to each playing hand comprising a two-card playing hand for which an optional third card can’t be not desired, pushing the placed bonus bet to a push up betting spot on a playing surface to serve as a wager only for a future three-card bonus hand, wherein a winning amount for the future three-card bonus hand comprises a reduced winning amount.

11. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:

dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the corresponding placed base bet, and wherein a third spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the placed bonus bet; and
dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

12. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:

dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the corresponding base bet comprising one or more chips, and wherein a third spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the placed bonus bet comprising additional one or chips; and
dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

13. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:

dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a felt playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the corresponding base bet comprising chips, and
wherein third spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the placed bonus bet comprising additional chips; and
dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

14. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:
dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a felt playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the corresponding placed base bet comprising one or more chips, voucher, ticket, cash, tokens, cash or cash equivalents, and wherein a third spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the accompanying placed bonus bet comprising additional one or more chips, voucher, ticket, cash, tokens, cash or cash equivalents; and
dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

15. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:
dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the corresponding placed base bet comprising one or more chips, voucher, ticket, cash, tokens, cash or cash equivalents; and
dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

16. In the method of claim 1, the improvement further comprising:
dealing each blackjack playing hand onto a corresponding first spot appearing on a felt playing surface, wherein a second spot appearing on the playing surface is for locating the accompanying placed bonus bet comprising additional one or more chips, voucher, ticket, cash, tokens, cash or cash equivalents; and

dealing the dealer hand onto a corresponding fourth spot appearing on the playing surface.

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