An electronically implemented method of playing poker whereby a player selects one or more cards of a poker hand. Upon making a wager, the player selects a suit and value of one or more cards of the player’s poker hand. Thereafter, the hand is completed pursuant to conventional poker rules corresponding to the particular poker game played. Suitable poker games include five card draw, five card stud, seven card stud and variations thereof. Once the player’s hand is completed, the hand is compared to predefined winning hands to determine whether said player is entitled to an award. If the player is entitled, the player is paid an amount pursuant to a pre-established pay table including pay outs which are a function of the one or more cards selected initially. In otherwords, multiple pay tables account for the countless unique combinations of selected cards.
Royal Flush
Straight Flush
4 Kind
Full House
Flush
Straight
3 Kind
Two Pair

FIG. 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 coin</th>
<th>2 coins</th>
<th>3 coins</th>
<th>4 coins</th>
<th>5 coins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Flush</td>
<td>Straight Flush</td>
<td>Full House</td>
<td>Flush</td>
<td>Straight Kind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 4**
ELECTRONIC POKER GAME

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to an electronically implemented video poker game. More particularly, a video poker game includes means for a player to initially select the value and suit of one or more cards of a poker hand. Multiple pay tables based on the selected one or more cards display pay out amounts corresponding to predefined winning final poker hands.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[0002] Poker has always been the most popular wagering card game in the world and will undoubtedly continue to be so. Casinos have long benefited from both live poker games and electronic video poker machines. “Video poker”, as it is commonly known, first consists of a player inserting a wager into a video poker machine. Thereafter, the player is dealt five face-up cards from a standard 52 card deck. The player then decides which of the five dealt cards to hold and which to discard. The discs are replaced by new cards from the remaining cards in the deck. The player, according to a pre-established pay table, is paid for the resultant poker hand (e.g. 4000 coins for a royal flush, 250 coins for 4 of a kind, etc.).

[0003] Many variations of video poker are disclosed in the patent literature. For example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,723,950, 5,816,916 and 5,823,873 all to Moody disclose video poker games which allow simultaneous play of multiple poker hands based on identically held cards. In other words, the player can hold the best cards in a first hand and the identical cards will be transposed to multiple hands whereby the player can draw into the selected best cards in multiple hands. The Moody patents provide players with more opportunities to win prizes and thus have been very successful in practice.

[0004] However, traditional video poker can become repetitive, especially realizing that the chances of obtaining a maximum payout based on a royal flush are 1 in 50,000 dealt hands. Most non-professional players are emotionally and/or financially unwilling to invest in the number of hands necessary to achieve the maximum pay out. Therefore, players play for a short time, become frustrated and move on. While the Moody patents provide players with more opportunities to obtain the maximum pay out, the chances continue to be remote.

[0005] By providing a player with the first one or two cards of a poker hand, the present invention dramatically increases the player’s chance of obtaining a maximum pay out. Although the maximum pay out will be reduced to reflect the selection process, the player will still feel satisfied knowing that the maximum machine pay out was obtained. While certain previous poker games allow a player to choose between hands with exposed cards, no previous video poker game allows a “player” to select the value and suit of one or more cards in a poker hand. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,816,915 to Kadlic provides four five card draw poker hands, each with two exposed cards, for the player to choose from. However, the exposed cards are randomly generated and selected by the machine, not the player.

[0006] Other video poker games allow a player to select one or more “lucky” cards which, if they appear in the final poker hand, result in a bonus pay out. However, the selected lucky card or cards do not become part of the hand when selected. In other words, the chosen lucky cards must be dealt into the final poker hand to have a positive result for the player. The lucky card selection process has no affect on the resultant poker hand or pay out from a standard video poker pay table.

[0007] The need exists for a player to achieve a maximum pay out on a more consistent basis. The present invention provides the solution by allowing the player to select the value and suit of one or more cards in a poker hand. In effect, the player has a head start to achieving a powerful and valuable hand. Of course depending on the selected cards, smaller pay outs may be altered to account for the more consistent large pay outs. Further, some traditional pre-defined winning hands may be eliminated by the selection process described herein (e.g. any pair of Jacks, Queens, Kings and Aces).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] An object of the present invention is to provide a gaming machine player with increased opportunities to achieve a maximum machine pay out.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide a gaming machine player more input with respect to the player’s gaming outcome.

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to provide a dynamic pay table related to a player’s card selection.

[0011] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a more rewarding gaming experience to increase a player’s participation at a gaming machine.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention operates under the basic protocol of conventional video poker machines. Accordingly, with conventional video draw poker a player first places a wager and is randomly dealt five face up cards from a standard 52 card deck which are displayed on a video screen. The player’s wager may normally be from 1 to 5 coins or more. Wagering maximum coins (e.g. 5 coins) allows players to earn superior pay outs and to participate in progressive jackpots. After the wager is made and the five face up cards are randomly dealt, the player elects which cards to hold and discard. Thereafter, the discs are replaced with new random cards from the standard deck. The player’s final hand is then compared to winning predefined hands and the player is paid according to a pre-established pay table. Those skilled in the art understand the internal process underlying the random dealing and drawing of cards in an electronically implemented poker game. Therefore, a detailed description of the internal processes is not offered herein.

[0013] The pay table typically involves five different columns designated by the number of coins played. A conventional five card draw pay table typically includes pay outs for all hands greater than a pair of Jacks. A conventional pay table is illustrated in Table 1.
TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POKERHAND</th>
<th>NUMBER OF COINS BET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROYAL FLUSH</td>
<td>1       2   3   4   5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRAIGHT Flush</td>
<td>250     500  750  1000 4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR ACES</td>
<td>50      100  150  200  250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR 2'S, 3'S OR 4'S</td>
<td>80     160  240  320  400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOUR 5'S THRU 8'S</td>
<td>40     80   120  160  200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FULL HOUSE</td>
<td>7       14   21   28   35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLUSH</td>
<td>5       10   15   20   25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRAIGHT</td>
<td>4       8    12   16   20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THREE-OF-A-KIND</td>
<td>2       4    6    8    10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWO PAIR</td>
<td>1       2    3    4    5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACKS OR BETTER</td>
<td>1       2    3    4    5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The present invention includes multiple pay tables which are, not only a function of the coins played, but also a function of the cards selected by the player.

The present invention adds the step of the player selecting initially one or more cards of his or her poker hand. The player may select any one or more cards from a standard 52 card deck to begin play. In the case of five card draw, once the one or more cards are selected, the remaining number of unselected cards are randomly dealt to complete the hand. Thereafter, the player selects which of the five cards to hold and discard. The discs are then replaced with new cards from the deck. In an alternative embodiment, the player may not discard the selected card or cards. The player's final hand is then compared to winning predefined hands and the player is paid according to one of a plurality of pre-established pay tables.

Preferably the card selection process allows a player to select either one or two cards at his or her discretion. In the preferred selection process, the player may either select one or two cards and immediately see a corresponding pay table displayed. Thereafter, prior to activating a full deal, the player may change the card selection or the number of cards selected and immediately view a different corresponding pay table. Alternatively, a one card selection game and a two card selection game are independent and one game is selected initially by the player. Again, prior to activating a full deal, the player is able to change the card or cards selected and view corresponding pay tables. The plurality of pay tables are preferably a function of the one or more cards selected by the player. For example, a player selecting a King of spades and an Ace of spades (i.e., two card selection) will be paid less for receiving a flush and/or a royal flush than a player selecting two sevens since the chances of achieving those hands are increased by the selection. In other words, the initial selection will dictate the odds and pay outs related to certain predefined winning hands. The pre-established pay tables will also take into account whether the selected one or more cards may be discarded. If the selected cards may not be discarded, clearly some hands are not achievable which must be reflected in the corresponding pay table. For example, assuming no discard of selected cards is allowed, a two card selection of a pair of nines eliminates hands of a straight, flush, straight flush and royal flush. The corresponding pay table must be formulated to reflect and account for the impossibility of the aforementioned hands.

TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAY TABLE</th>
<th>SELECTED CARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>unsuited cards separated by more than five denominations (e.g., two of hearts/nine of spades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>unsuited cards separated by five or less denominations (e.g., two of hearts/six of spades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>suited cards separated by more than five denominations (e.g., two of hearts/nine of hearts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>suited cards separated by five or less denominations and neither ten or higher (e.g., two of hearts/six of hearts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>suited cards separated by five or less denominations and one card ten or higher (e.g., nine of hearts/jack of hearts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>suited cards separated by five or less denominations and both ten or higher (e.g., ten of hearts/ace of hearts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>unsuited pair of cards (e.g., King of hearts/King of spades)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pay table 1 will likely be set similar to a conventional video poker pay table since the selected cards do not provide a player with an inherent advantage for achieving any winning poker hand. Pay table 2 will likely reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to a straight since two of the five cards necessary to achieve a straight have been selected. Pay table 3 will likely reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to a flush since two of the five cards necessary to achieve a flush have been selected. Pay table 3 may also reflect an increased pay out for a flush in a suit other than the selected spades. Pay table 4 will likely reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to a straight flush since two of the five cards necessary to achieve a straight flush have been selected. Pay table 5 will likely reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to a straight flush and a royal flush since two of the five cards necessary to achieve a straight flush and one necessary to achieve a royal flush have been selected. Pay table 6 will likely further reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to a royal flush since two of the five cards necessary to achieve a royal flush have been selected. Pay table 7 will likely reflect a reduced pay out corresponding to two pairs, three of a kind, four of a kind and full house since the selected cards render the four hands more likely. While a conventional five card draw table provides a pay out for any pair of Jacks or better, pay table 7 must be revised to eliminate any pay out corresponding to a pair since the player has selected a pair of Kings to begin the game.

It should be understood that the foregoing pay tables and basis therefore are illustrative and clearly not exhaustive. The number of pay tables may vary significantly and may be based on many other card selections besides
those described above. Additionally, the pay tables may also reflect higher pay outs for final hands that are more difficult to achieve based on the card selection. Yet further, the pay tables must account for an embodiment of the present invention wherein the selected one or more cards may not be discarded. Ultimately however, the pay tables and corresponding pay outs will be determined by a gaming machine manufacturer pursuant to a gaming machine operator's desired pay out percentage and the overall mathematical odds associated with a particular poker game played according to the present invention.

[0021] As with conventional video poker the present invention includes wagers of 1 coin to 5 coins or more. Maximum coin wagers provide superior pay outs and may also be tied to a progressive jackpot if implemented by a gaming machine operator.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] FIG. 1 is a front view of a conventional video poker machine used to implement the present invention;

[0023] FIG. 2 is a view of a display screen of the present invention prior to a player selecting one or more cards of a five card draw poker hand;

[0024] FIG. 3 is a view of a display screen of the present invention immediately after a player has selected two cards of a five card draw poker hand; and

[0025] FIG. 4 is a view of a display screen of the present invention immediately after a player has selected two cards of a five card draw poker hand.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0026] Reference is now made to the figures wherein like parts are referred to by like numerals throughout. FIG. 1 illustrates the front of a traditional video poker machine 1, including a screen display 3, deal/draw button 5, hold/discard buttons 10, card reader 15, coin slot 20, bet maximum coins button 25 and a bet one coin button 30. In addition to the external features illustrated in FIG. 1, the present invention requires a means to select one or more cards. Although a touchscreen is the preferred means of selection, other means, including selection buttons, may be used. Conventional video poker machines also have internal components including at least a microprocessor, random number generator and memory means.

[0027] FIG. 2 shows a video display screen 1 of the present invention.Depicted on the display screen 1 are five cards 40, 45, 50, 55, 60 dealt face down and a pay table 35. Cards 40, 45 include card suit indicia 70 and card value indicia 75 as a means for a player to select his or her desired card or cards. Preferably, the display screen 1 is a touch-screen such that a player may simply press one of the card suit indicia 70 and one card value indicia 75 on one or both cards to complete the selection process. Alternatively, machine buttons or a wireless mechanism may provide the card selection means. Further, the aforementioned means may be used such that cards may be selected from a completely revealed 52 card deck displayed on the screen in full or in suits. While the selection process may be altered in any number of ways, it does not limit the scope of the invention as bounded by the claims herein.

[0028] The pay table 35 depicted in FIG. 2 is dynamic and pay outs appear only after the player has selected at least one card. Therefore, in FIG. 2 prior to the player selecting cards, the pay table 35 depicts predefined winning hands 80 but does not depict corresponding pay outs. The pay table 35 of FIG. 3 displays both winning hands 80 and corresponding pay outs 85 (the letter x is used for illustrative purposes only, in practice each x corresponds to a unique value analogous to Table 1) based on the selected card 90 and number of coins played. Once the first card 90 has been selected, the player may opt to either select a second card or press the deal button (or any other deal means as known in the art) to randomly reveal the value and suit of the remaining four cards. Assuming the player only elects one card and activates the deal means, the player then elects which of the five cards to hold and which cards to discard. Once the election is made, the player activates the deal means a second time and the discards are replaced with new cards from the deck. The player's final hand is then compared to predefined winning hands 80 to determine whether the player has won. If the player has won, the player is paid according to one of a plurality of pre-established pay tables 35.

[0029] FIG. 4 illustrates a screen where a player has opted to select two cards 90, 95. A corresponding pay table 35 having a second set of corresponding pay outs 100 (some of the unique values x likely being different than those in FIG. 3) then appears. In this fashion, the player may, prior to activating the full five card deal, repeatedly change the card suit indicia 70, the card value indicia 75 and the number of cards selected (e.g. change from selecting one card to selecting two cards and vice versa). For each change made, a different corresponding pay table appears. Once the player activates the deal means the remaining three cards are randomly dealt and the player then elects which of the five cards to hold and which to discard. Once the election is made, the player activates the deal means a second time and the discards are replaced with new cards from the deck. The player's final hand is then compared to predefined winning hands 80 to determine whether the player has won. If the player has won, the player is paid according to one of a plurality of pre-established pay tables.

[0030] As detailed above, an alternative embodiment of the present invention requires the player to pre-select either a game based on selecting only one card or a game based on selecting two cards. Thereafter, the one card selection and two card selection games proceed according to the method described herein.

[0031] Although the invention has been described in detail with reference to a preferred embodiment, additional variations and modifications exist within the scope and spirit of the invention as described and defined in the following claims.

I claim:

1. An electronically implemented method of playing a draw poker game including:
   a. a player making a wager;
   b. said player selecting one or more cards from a deck of cards, by suit and value, of a draw poker hand;
   c. dealing and displaying face up remaining cards of the draw poker game to complete an initial poker hand;
d. said player electing to hold or discard each card of the initial poker hand;

c. dealing and displaying replacement cards from said deck of cards to replace said player’s elected discards resulting in a final poker hand; and

f. comparing said final poker hand to predefined winning poker hands and paying said player according to a pre-established pay table.

2. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein said pre-established pay table is one of a plurality of pre-established pay tables.

3. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 2 wherein said plurality of pre-established pay tables have pay outs which are a function of the one or more player selected cards.

4. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 3 further including one of the plurality of pre-established pay tables being displayed once said player selects one or more cards.

5. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein said selected one or more cards is displayed face up upon selection.

6. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein said selection of one or more cards is by means of a touchscreen display.

7. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein said draw poker game is a five card version.

8. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein said draw poker game is a five card version.

9. The method of playing draw poker according to claim 1 wherein at step b said selection of one or more cards may be modified by said player one or more times prior to step c.

10. The method of playing a draw poker game according to claim 1 wherein the electronic implementation of the poker game is facilitated by means of a video poker machine including at least display means, memory means, selection means, wager accepting means, a microprocessor and a random number generator.

11. An electronically implemented method of playing a stud poker game including:

a. a player making a wager;

b. said player selecting one or more cards from a deck of cards, by suit and value, of a stud poker hand;

c. dealing and displaying face up remaining cards of the stud poker game to complete a final stud poker hand; and

d. comparing said final poker hand to predefined winning poker hands and paying said player according to a pre-established pay table.

12. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein said pre-established pay table is one of a plurality of pre-established pay tables.

13. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 12 wherein said plurality of pre-established pay tables have pay outs which are a function of the one or more player selected cards.

14. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 13 further including one of the plurality of pre-established pay tables being displayed once said player selects one or more cards.

15. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein said selected one or more cards is displayed face up upon selection.

16. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein said selection of one or more cards is by means of a touchscreen display.

17. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein said stud poker game is a five card version.

18. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein said stud poker game is a seven card version.

19. The method of playing stud poker according to claim 11 wherein at step b said selection of one or more cards may be modified by said player one or more times prior to step c.

20. The method of playing a stud poker game according to claim 11 wherein the electronic implementation of the poker game is facilitated by means of a video poker machine including at least display means, memory means, selection means, wager accepting means, a microprocessor and a random number generator.