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(54) **HOLD'EM TABLE GAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of playing a house-banked casino card game includes dealing player cards to a player, dealer cards to a dealer, and community cards to form a player hand and a dealer hand. After initial wagers, the players are provided with options to place additional wagers, which are not required to stay in the game. Competition wagers are resolved based on a comparison of the dealer hand and the player hand, and a proposition wager is resolved based on either the player hand or the dealer, or possibly the better of the two, against a payout scale.
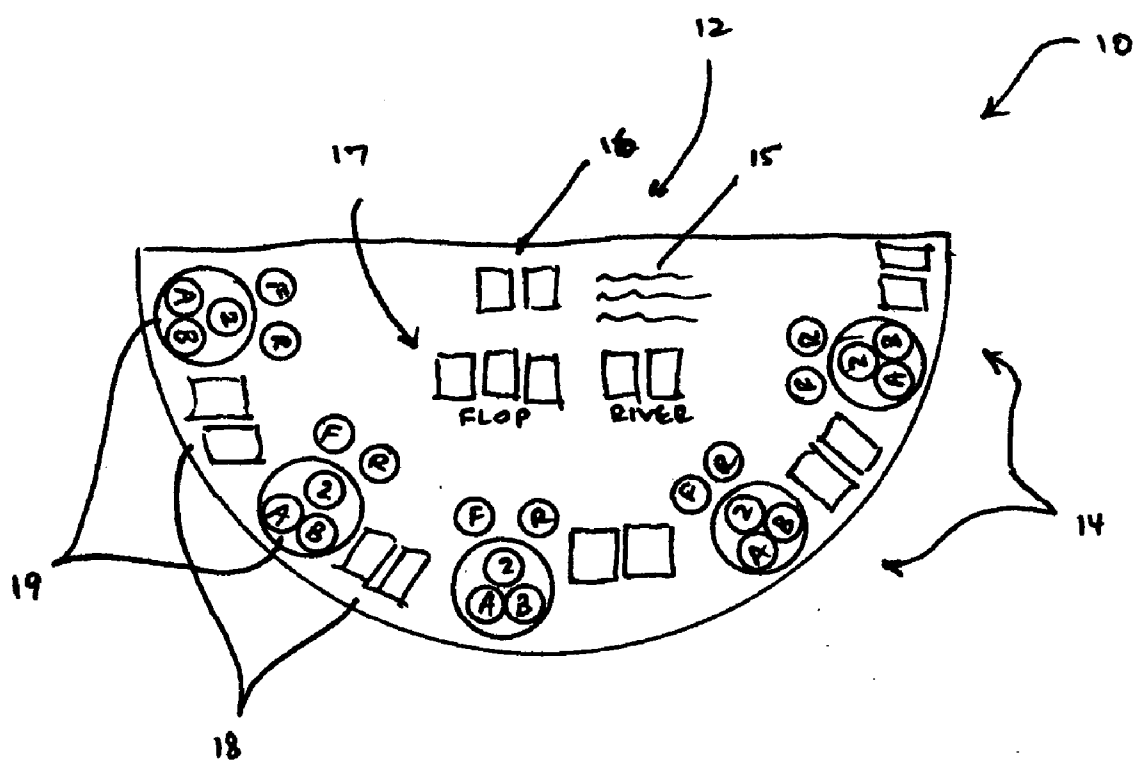
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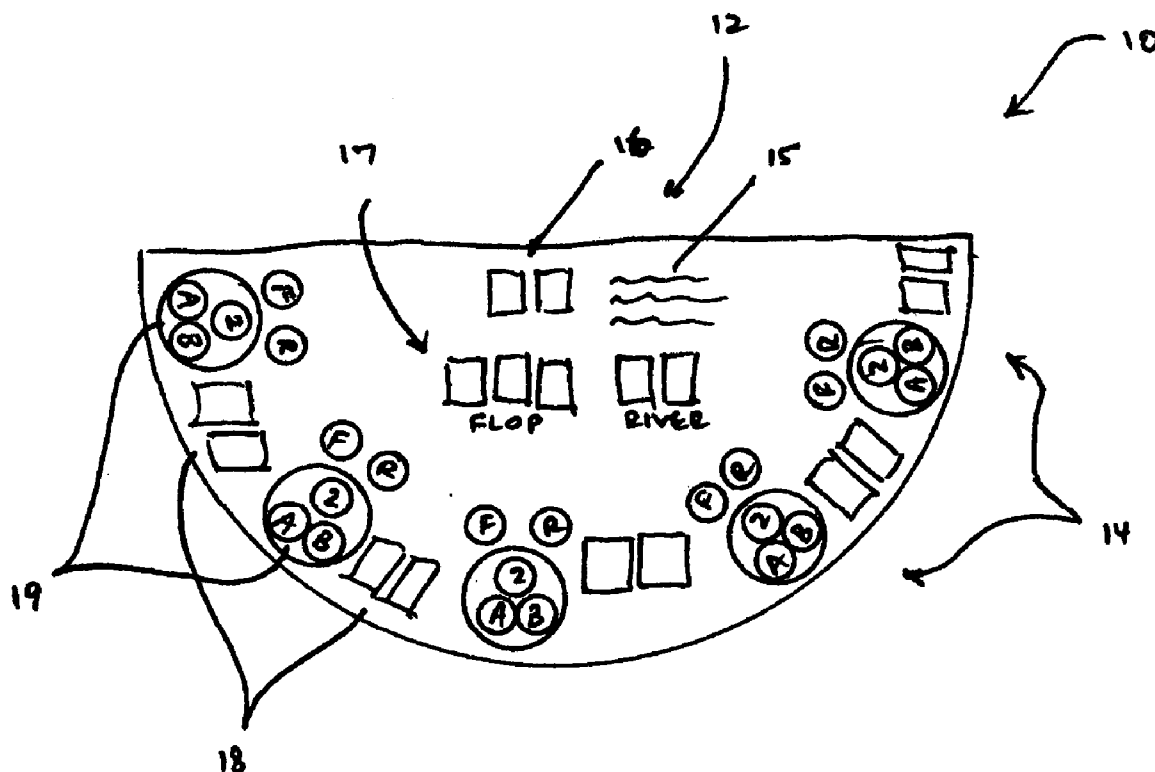
FIG. 1

HOLD'EM TABLE GAME

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part (CIP) of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/376,238, filed Mar. 16, 2006, pending. The entire content of this application is herein incorporated by reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] (Not Applicable)

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The present invention relates to a house-banked casino card game and, more particularly, to a house-banked casino card game that emulates a conventional Texas Hold'Em game in a player versus dealer format.

[0004] Texas Hold'Em has become popular over the last several years due to its simplicity, the ability to accommodate a higher number of players per table, and televised coverage. The game is played so that each player has the use of seven cards in order to form a five card poker hand. The player having the highest poker hand is the game winner. Hands are ranked in standard poker fashion, i.e. royal flush, straight flush, four of a kind, full house, flush, straight, three of a kind, two pair, one pair, and high card, in descending order.

[0005] In Texas Hold'Em each player receives two cards face down. Additionally, there are five community cards dealt face up. The term "community card" refers to a non-player specific card that is exposed (face up) and available for use by any of the players in order to form a poker hand. Each player is enabled to use seven cards (i.e. the two concealed cards held by the player, plus the five community cards that are available to each player).

[0006] In Texas Hold'Em, the cards are dealt sequentially so that each player initially receives two cards face down, after which the five community cards are dealt face up. Rounds of betting occur at certain times during the course of play, usually after the two face down cards have been dealt, then after the third community card has been dealt, then after the fourth community card has been dealt, and finally after the fifth community card has been dealt. Thus, there are four rounds of betting (in addition to an ante prior to the cards being dealt).

[0007] There have been many attempts to derive a house-banked Texas Hold'Em game for casino play, some of which include Casino Hold'Em, Wild Hold'Em Fold'Em, Big Raise Hold'Em, Colorado Hold'Em, All-In Hold'Em, Fast Action Hold'Em, Texas Bonus Hold'Em and Ultimate Texas Hold'Em. There are also other games using some aspect of Hold'Em, namely High Country Poker, Texas Shoot Out and Flip Flop Poker.

[0008] In actual card room Hold'Em, all player wagers are against other players. Players use skills of poker judgment to determine whether to remain in the game at each betting round. Ultimately, one player wins the pot, unless there is a split pot based on equal hands.

[0009] To transform Hold'Em into a house banked casino game is not easy. Firstly, when casino games incorporate skill levels, then experienced players minimize the house advantage, whereas inexperienced players suffer a higher house advantage due to their inferior play. An obvious example is Blackjack, a game that very skilled players are able to actually win at, although the majority of players lose significantly more than they should if they just applied basic correct strategy. A new game should minimize the skill factor in order to have maximum appeal to the maximum number of players.

[0010] Secondly, a casino game is more attractive to more players if there are multiple simultaneous winners. This possibility is excluded in card room Hold'Em. A viable player versus dealer format would be a suitable solution.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] It would be desirable to provide a house-banked Hold'Em game for casino play that overcomes the drawbacks with prior games. It would also be desirable to provide a game incorporating multiple optional betting rounds to be more akin to the conventional card room game. However, it would be desirable to provide such a game that enables players to stay in the game regardless of their hand value, without bet or fold requirements.

[0012] The innovative method of the present invention emulates card room play of a conventional Hold'Em game in a player versus dealer format. Players are required to make an initial competition wager, such as an Ante and/or Blind wager, and an initial proposition wager to participate in the game. Subsequently, cards are dealt to each player and the dealer, and three community cards are exposed. Players are then provided an option to place a Flop wager, effectively increasing their competition wager against the dealer. An additional two community cards are then exposed, and players are then provided an option to place a River wager, which also effectively increases their competition wager against the dealer. Both the Flop wager and the River wager are optional.

[0013] After exposing the dealer hand, the competition wagers are then resolved by comparing poker ranks of the player hands versus the poker rank of the dealer hand. In an exemplary operating mode, if the dealer hand poker rank is a Pair or better, then all competition wagers are in play, and winning wagers are paid 1 to 1. If the dealer hand Poker is less than Pair, then only the Ante wager is in play, and a winning Ante wager is paid 1 to 1.

[0014] In an exemplary embodiment of the invention, a method of playing a house-banked casino card game includes the steps of (a) receiving an Ante wager, a Blind wager, and a Two-Way wager from a player; (b) dealing two player cards to the player and two dealer cards to a dealer; (c) dealing three community cards to a center card area; (d) after step (c), providing the player with an option to place a Flop wager, wherein the Flop wager is not required for the player to stay in the game; (e) after step (d), dealing two additional community cards; (f) after step (e), providing the player with an option to place a River wager, wherein the River wager is not required for the player to stay in the game, wherein a player hand includes cards selected from the player cards, the three community cards, and the two additional community cards, and wherein the dealer hand includes cards selected from the dealer cards, the three community cards, and the two additional community cards; (g) resolving the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager according to a five card poker rank of the player hand versus a poker rank of the

dealer hand; and (h) resolving the Two-Way wager according to the poker rank of one of the player hand or the dealer hand against a scale.

[0015] In another exemplary embodiment of the invention, the method includes the steps of (a) receiving at least a competition wager and a proposition wager from a player; (b) dealing player cards to the player and dealer cards to a dealer; (c) dealing at least one community card to a center card area; (d) after step (c), providing the player with a first option to increase the competition wager; (e) after step (d), dealing at least one additional community card; (f) after step (e), providing the player with a second option to increase the competition wager, wherein a player hand includes cards selected from the player cards, the at least one community card, and the at least one additional community card, and wherein the dealer hand includes cards selected from the dealer cards, the at least one community card, and the at least one additional community card; (g) resolving the competition wager according to a poker rank of the player hand versus a poker rank of the dealer hand; and (h) resolving the proposition wager according to the poker rank of one of the player hand or the dealer hand against a scale.

[0016] In still another exemplary embodiment of the invention, a method of playing a house-banked casino Texas Hold'Em card game, includes the steps of (a) receiving compulsory wagers from each player; (b) dealing two cards to each player and a dealer in rotation; (c) dealing five community cards in a Flop round and a River round; (d) providing additional wagering options after the Flop round and after the River round, wherein no additional wagers are required for the players to stay in the game; and (e) resolving the compulsory wagers and any additional wagers according to game rules, wherein all against dealer wagers in play give 1 to 1 symmetrical action.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] These and other aspects and advantages of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which

[0018] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary table layout for the game method according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0019] FIG. 1 is a plan view of an exemplary layout 10 for the game method according to the present invention. The layout 10 includes a dealer area 12 and a plurality of player areas 14. Although FIG. 1 shows five player areas 14, more players can participate in the game at a time using a conventional 52-card deck of cards. In preferred embodiments, the table layouts includes six player areas 14.

[0020] The dealer area 12 lists rules of play and promotional information 15 and includes a dealer hand area 16 and a community card area 17. Each player area 14 includes a player hand area 18 and a wager area 19. The wager area 19 includes spaces for initial wagers including an Ante wager A, a Blind wager B, and a Two-Way wager 2. Additional spaces are provided for an optional Flop wager F and an optional River wager R.

[0021] In order to participate in the game, each player is required to place three initial wagers including the Ante wager A, the Blind wager B, and the Two-Way wager 2. In a preferred operating mode, these compulsory wagers are of

equal amounts. The dealer then deals two cards to each player in the respective player hand areas 18 and to the dealer in the dealer hand area 16. Subsequently, the dealer deals three community cards to the community card area or center card area 17. As in conventional Hold'Em, these initial community cards are designated as the Flop.

[0022] The players are provided an option to place a Flop wager F, which in the preferred operating mode is an equal amount to each of the initial wagers. Since the Flop wager F is optional, the wager is not required for the player to stay in the game. After any Flop wagers have been placed, the dealer deals two additional community cards in the community card area 17. These additional community cards are designated as the River. Subsequently, the players are provided with an option to place a River wager R, which in the preferred operating mode is equal to the each of the other wagers. Like the Flop wager, since the River wager is optional, the River wager is not required for the player to stay in the game.

[0023] Like conventional Hold'Em, each player then forms a player hand including cards selected from the player cards dealt to player card area 18, the three community cards from the Flop, and the two additional community cards from the River. The dealer hand similarly includes the Flop and River community cards in addition to the cards dealt in the dealer hand area 16.

[0024] Wagers are then resolved according to game rules. In one preferred mode, the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager are resolved according to a poker rank of the player hand versus a poker rank of the dealer hand. In this context, resolution of these wagers may be performed differently depending on the poker rank of the dealer hand. That is, in an exemplary preferred embodiment, if the poker rank of the dealer hand is less than Pair, only the Ante wager is in play. In this instance, if the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand, the player wins a payout of 1 to 1 on the Ante wager. On the other hand, if the dealer hand poker rank is Pair or better, all of the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager are in play, and if the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand, the player is paid a payout of 1 to 1 on each of these competition wagers. Typically, if the poker rank of the player hand equals the poker rank of the dealer hand, any wagers in play are pushed. This rule, however, may be varied according to casino preference. For example, ties at certain specific ranks may be deemed as a dealer win or alternatively as a player win.

[0025] The Two-Way wager is resolved according to the poker rank of one of the player hand or the dealer hand against a payout scale. That is, the Two-Way wager is resolved by paying a payout if the poker rank of either the player hand or the dealer hand exceeds a predetermined poker rank, with increasing payouts for higher ranked hands. In a preferred exemplary embodiment, the payout on the Two-Way wager is paid according to:

Straight	2 to 1
Flush	3 to 1
Full House	4 to 1
Four of a Kind	25 to 1
Straight Flush	50 to 1.

[0026] In one operating mode, the payout for the Two-Way wager is based on the better of the poker rank of the player hand and the poker rank of the dealer hand. Thus, in the event of a premium dealer hand, each player may win a large payout on their Two-Way wager. Alternatively, the payout on the Two-Way wager may be based only on the poker rank of the player hand.

[0027] Of course, the game rules and methodology are exemplary, and those of ordinary skill in the art may contemplate slight variations that fall within the scope of the description herein. For example, the initial wagers may not necessarily be separated into three wagers, including two equal competition wagers (the Ante wager and the Blind wager) and one equal proposition wager (the Two-Way wager); rather, the wagers may merely be designated as a competition wager and a proposition wager. In this instance, the rules may provide that the competition wager must be two times the proposition wager. Moreover, the dealer may deal more or fewer than two cards to the player and dealer, and likewise, more or fewer community cards may be dealt in each community card round. Of course, other variations may also be contemplated.

[0028] As would be apparent to those skilled in the relevant art, the invention can be embodied in a wide variety and forms of media such as, but not limited to, single player slot video machines, multi-player slot video machines, electronic games and devices, lottery terminals, scratch-card formats, software, as well as in-flight, home and Internet entertainment. In addition, the invention can be readily implemented as a computer program product (e.g., floppy disk, compact disc, etc.) comprising a computer readable medium having control logic recorded therein to implement the features of the invention as described. Control logic can be loaded into the memory of a computer and executed by a central processing unit (CPU) to perform the operations described herein.

[0029] An exemplary apparatus configured for playing the game according to the invention may include a display, a player interface, and circuitry for effecting game play and including structure for receiving wagers and dealing hands according to the rules of the game. The processing circuit effects game play according to game rules and resolves wagers based on a comparison of the player hand to a computer dealer hand as well as a payout scale.

[0030] With the game according to the present invention, a house-banked Hold'Em game is provided for casino play. The game provides bet options that are not required for the players to stay in the game. As such, the players can stay in the game regardless of hand value without a bet or fold requirement typical of previous attempts at a Hold'Em table game. Moreover, the game described herein gives 1 to 1 symmetrical action on all against-dealer bets in play. That is, all bets against the dealer that are in play, e.g., depending on a poker rank of the dealer hand, are paid 1 to 1 on a winning player hand.

[0031] While the invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary, is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

1. A method of playing a house-banked casino card game, the method comprising:

(a) receiving an Ante wager, a Blind wager, and a Two-Way wager from a player;

(b) dealing two player cards to the player and two dealer cards to a dealer;

(c) dealing three community cards to a center card area;

(d) after step (c), providing the player with an option to place a Flop wager, wherein the Flop wager is not required for the player to stay in the game;

(e) after step (d), dealing two additional community cards;

(f) after step (e), providing the player with an option to place a River wager, wherein the River wager is not required for the player to stay in the game,

wherein a player hand includes cards selected from the player cards, the three community cards, and the two additional community cards, and wherein the dealer hand includes cards selected from the dealer cards, the three community cards, and the two additional community cards;

(g) resolving the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager according to a poker rank of the player hand versus a poker rank of the dealer hand; and

(h) resolving the Two-Way wager according to the poker rank of one of the player hand or the dealer hand against a scale.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (a) is practiced by receiving equal wagers for the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and the Two-Way wager.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (g) is practiced differently depending on the poker rank of the dealer hand.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein step (g) is practiced such that only the Ante wager is in play if the poker rank of the dealer hand is less than Pair.

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on the Ante wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is less than Pair and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

6. A method according to claim 3, wherein step (g) is practiced such that the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager are in play if the poker rank of the dealer hand is Pair or better.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is Pair or better and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

8. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (g) is practiced such that if the poker rank of the player hand equals the poker rank of the dealer hand, the wagers are pushed.

9. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on the Ante wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is less than Pair and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

10. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on the Ante wager, the Blind wager, and if placed, the Flop wager and the River

wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is Pair or better and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the Two-Way wager if the poker rank of either the player hand or the dealer exceeds a predetermined poker rank.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the predetermined poker rank is Straight.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the Two-Way wager according to:

Straight	2 to 1
Flush	3 to 1
Full House	4 to 1
Four of a Kind	25 to 1
Straight Flush	50 to 1.

14. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the Two-Way wager based on the better of the poker rank of the player hand and the poker rank of the dealer hand.

15. A method according to claim 1, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the Two-Way wager based on the poker rank of the player hand.

16. A method of playing a house-banked casino card game, the method comprising:
    (a) receiving at least a competition wager and a proposition wager from a player;
    (b) dealing player cards to the player and dealer cards to a dealer;
    (c) dealing at least one community card to a center card area;
    (d) after step (c), providing the player with a first option to increase the competition wager;
    (e) after step (d), dealing at least one additional community card;
    (f) after step (e), providing the player with a second option to increase the competition wager,
    wherein a player hand includes cards selected from the player cards, the at least one community card, and the at least one additional community card, and wherein the dealer hand includes cards selected from the dealer cards, the at least one community card, and the at least one additional community card;
    (g) resolving the competition wager according to a poker rank of the player hand versus a poker rank of the dealer hand; and
    (h) resolving the proposition wager according to the poker rank of one of the player hand or the dealer hand against a scale.

17. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (a) is practiced such that the competition wager is two times the proposition wager.

18. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (g) is practiced differently depending on the poker rank of the dealer hand.

19. A method according to claim 18, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on at least a portion of the competition wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is less than Pair and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

20. A method according to claim 18, wherein step (g) is practiced by paying a payout of 1 to 1 on the competition wager if the poker rank of the dealer hand is Pair or better and the poker rank of the player hand exceeds the poker rank of the dealer hand.

21. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (g) is practiced such that if the poker rank of the player hand equals the poker rank of the dealer hand, the competition wager is pushed.

22. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager if the poker rank of the player hand exceeds a predetermined poker rank.

23. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager based on the better of the poker rank of the player hand and the poker rank of the dealer hand.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager if the better of the poker rank of the player hand and the poker rank of the dealer hand exceeds a predetermined poker rank, wherein the predetermined poker rank is Straight.

25. A method according to claim 24, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager according to:

Straight	2 to 1
Flush	3 to 1
Full House	4 to 1
Four of a Kind	25 to 1
Straight Flush	50 to 1.

26. A method according to claim 16, wherein step (h) is practiced by paying a payout on the Two-Way wager based on the poker rank of the player hand.

27. A method of playing a house-banked casino Texas Hold'Em card game, the method comprising:
    (a) receiving compulsory wagers from each player;
    (b) dealing two cards to each player and a dealer in rotation;
    (c) dealing five community cards in a Flop round and a River round;
    (d) providing additional wagering options after the Flop round and after the River round, wherein no additional wagers are required for the players to stay in the game; and
    (e) resolving the compulsory wagers and any additional wagers according to game rules, wherein all against dealer wagers in play give 1 to 1 symmetrical action.

28. A method according to claim 27, wherein at least one of the compulsory wagers is a proposition wager, and wherein step (e) is practiced by resolving the proposition wager according to a poker rank of one of a player hand or a dealer hand against a scale.

29. A method according to claim 28, wherein step (e) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager based on the better of the poker rank of the player hand and the poker rank of the dealer hand.

30. A method according to claim 28, wherein step (e) is practiced by paying a payout on the proposition wager based on the poker rank of the player hand.

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