A method, system, and computer readable storage medium to provide a blackjack variation to be played in a casino. When the player busts (receives a point total that exceeds 21), the player is allowed the option to backtrack by placing an additional wager and taking a backtrack card. The backtrack card is then subtracted from the player's point total, and the game then continues normally. Thus, if a player busts then the player has a recourse in order to stay in the game if the player wishes to wager an additional amount. If the player does not wish to exercise the backtrack option, then the player will then lose the hand as in standard blackjack.
FIGURE 1

100. RECEIVE MAIN WAGER

102. DEAL PLAYER'S HAND AND DEALER'S HAND

104. PLAYER'S ACTION?

106. DEAL PLAYER ADDITIONAL CARD

108. NO

110. DON'T BACKTRACK

112. DEAL PLAYER BACKTRACK CARD

114. REVEAL DEALER'S HOLE CARD AND RESOLVE DEALER'S HAND

116. TABULATE PLAYER'S POINT TOTAL AND DEALER'S POINT TOTAL

118. WHO WINS?

120. PAY PLAYER BASED ON MAIN WAGER

122. TAKE MAIN WAGER

124. PUSH MAIN WAGER

TIE

STAND

HIT

NO

YES

PLAYER BUST?
BLACKJACK VARIATION WITH BUST RECOVERY OPTION

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention
[0002] The present inventive concept relates to a system, method, and computer readable storage, for playing a variation of a casino blackjack game.
[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art
[0004] A standard game of casino blackjack is well known in the art and can be played as follows. To start the game the player places a wager, typically using chips which are redeemable for cash. The dealer deals an initial two card hand to the dealer (one card face up, one card face down), and two cards to the player (either face up or face down, however the player is permitted to view both of his or her own cards). The player can then decide to hit or stand. If the player decides to hit, the player is then dealt an additional card (typically face up). The player can continue to hit until the player decides to stand, or until the player’s point total has exceeded 21 (in which the player has “busted” and loses).
[0005] Once the player has finished playing out his or her hand, the dealer then reveals the dealer’s initial two card hand and decides to hit or stand according to predetermined house rules. For example, the dealer can continue to hit until the dealer has a total (either soft or hard) of 17, or until the dealer’s hard point total exceeds 21 (in which the dealer has busted).
[0006] After the dealer has played out the dealer’s hand, a point total of the player’s hand is compared to a point total of the dealer’s hand. If the player’s point total is higher than the dealer’s point total (and the player has not busted), then the player wins (and typically gets paid even money on the player’s wager). If the player’s point total is lower than the dealer’s point total, then the player loses and the house takes the player’s wager. If the player’s point total ties the dealer’s point total, then the hand is considered a “push” and the player does not win or lose.
[0007] The player can also double after viewing the player’s initial two cards and the dealer’s upcard by placing a double wager alongside the player’s original wager. The double wager is equal in amount to the player’s original wager. The player then receives only one additional card.
[0008] The standard game of blackjack has become boring to some players, who are looking for new and exciting games. Therefore, what is needed is a new and exciting blackjack variation in which some players may find more exciting than the standard version.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] It is an aspect of the present general inventive concept to provide an improvement to the standard casino game of blackjack.
[0010] The above aspects can also be obtained by a method that includes (a) providing a physical deck(s) of cards; (b) receiving a main wager from a player; (c) dealing an initial player’s hand and an initial dealer’s hand using the deck(s); (d) allowing the player to draw additional card(s) until the player stands or the player’s point total is over 21; (e) if the player’s point total is over 21, then offering the player an option to backtrack, and if the player backtracks then dealing to the player a backtrack card; (f) resolving the dealer’s hand according to predetermined rules; and (g) determining a player’s point total and a dealer’s point total; (h) if the player’s point total is over 21 then the player loses the main wager; (i) if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the player’s point total is over 21 then the player wins an award based on the main wager; (j) if the players point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is higher than the dealer’s point total then the player wins an award based on the main wager; (k) if the player’s point total is over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is lower than the dealer’s point total then the player loses the main wager; (l) wherein if the player exercised the backtrack option, then the player’s point total is computed by adding the numerical values of the initial player’s hand and all additional card(s) dealt minus the numerical value of the backtrack card.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] These together with other aspects and advantages which will be subsequently apparent, reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereininafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0012] Further features and advantages of the present invention, as well as the structure and operation of various embodiments of the present invention, will become apparent and more readily appreciated from the following description of the preferred embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings of which:
[0013] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a wagering game, according to an embodiment;
[0014] FIG. 2 is an example table layout that can be used to implement a wagering game, according to an embodiment; and
[0015] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of exemplary hardware that can be used to implement an electronic version of a wagering game, according to an embodiment.

REFERENCE

[0016] Reference will now be made in detail to the presently preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like elements throughout.
[0017] The general inventive concept relates to an improvement of the standard casino blackjack game. Blackjack is a well known casino game and is described in US application publication 2003/0155715, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety for all purposes.
[0018] When a player busts (achieves a hand with a point total that must be greater than 21), according to the standard rules of blackjack, the player loses (regardless of what the dealer’s total is). In an embodiment of the present inventive concept, the player can optionally avail himself to a “backtrack” option, which allows the player to recover from a losing bust hand. The way the backtrack option works is that when the player busts, if the player opts to (the player is not required to), the player can place an additional wager (typically equal to the player’s main wager) and receive a “backtrack” card. The numeric value of the backtrack card is then subtracted from the player’s point total, and then the player
has completed playing his or her hand, and this player’s point total is ultimately compared to the dealer’s point total to determine who the winner is.

[0019] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a wagering game, according to an embodiment.

[0020] The method can begin with operation 100, which receives a main wager. This can be done as known in the art, for example the player places chips in a betting circle in front of the player.

[0021] From operation 100, the method can proceed to operation 102, wherein a dealer deals a player’s hand and a dealer’s hand. Typically, the player gets two initial cards (dealt either face up or face down but viewable by the player), and the dealer gets two initial cards (typically one is face up (the “upcard”) and one is dealt face down (the “hole” card).

[0022] From operation 102, the method proceeds to operation 104, wherein the player takes action (hit or stand). The player can indicate his or her action by speaking to the dealer, using hand signals, or pressing an appropriate button on the gaming table.

[0023] If in operation 104, the player decides to hit, the method can then proceed to operation 105, which deals the player an additional card (typically face up so that the player can see it).

[0024] From operation 106, the method can proceed to operation 108, which determines whether the player breaks. If the player’s point total is greater than 21 (and all aces are being counted as a 1) then the player breaks (has “busted”). In the standard prior-art game of blackjack, if the player breaks, then the player automatically loses.

[0025] If in operation 108, the player has not busted (also known is breaking), then the method can return to operation 104, wherein the player is free to take another card (hit) or stand (not take any additional cards and keep the player’s current hand as is).

[0026] If in operation 108, the player has busted, then the method can proceed to operation 110, wherein the player has the option to backtrack. If the player does not wish to backtrack, then since the player has busted, the method proceeds to operation 122, wherein the dealer (house) takes the main wager (placed in operation 100) and the player’s hand is over (the player has lost).

[0027] In one embodiment, the player can always backtrack if the player has busted. In another embodiment, there can be conditions before the player is allowed to backtrack. For example, the player must have busted with a 23 or greater in order to be allowed to backtrack; thus, if the player has busted with a 22 the player will not be allowed to backtrack and the player will have lost.

[0028] If in operation 110, the player decides to backtrack (the player can indicate his or her action by verbal actions, hand signals, or pressing a button), then the method proceeds to operation 112, which deals the player a backtrack card. Typically, in order to receive a backtrack card, the player will have to place a backtrack wager, which is equal to the amount of the main wager placed in operation 100. In an alternate embodiment, the backtrack wager is not required to be equal to the main wager. In a further alternate embodiment, the player does not place a backtrack wager in order to receive a backtrack card. A single backtrack card is then dealt to the player (typically face up, although not required to be). The player’s point total is the total of the value of all of the player’s cards dealt in operation 102 (the players initial two cards) plus the total value of all of the card(s) dealt to the player in operation 106 (all additional cards the player drew) minus the value of the backtrack card. Thus, by drawing the backtrack card, the player has an opportunity to possibly turn a bust hand (over 21) into a playable hand (under 22).

[0029] From operation 112, the method proceeds to operation 114, wherein all of the dealer’s cards are revealed and the dealer’s hand is then resolved. Typically the dealer’s hand is resolved according to predetermined rules (e.g., the dealer keeps hitting until the dealer has a point total of 17 or greater).

[0030] From operation 114, the method proceeds to operation 116, which tabulates the player’s point total and the dealer’s point total. The dealer’s point total is tabulated in the art, that is by adding all of the numerical values of cards in the dealer’s hand. The player’s point total is determined as described in operation 112, that is by adding all of the numerical values of cards in the player’s hand but for the backtrack card (if there is one) which is subtracted from the point total.

[0031] From operation 116 the method proceeds to operation 118, which determines whether the player wins or the dealer wins. This can be done as known in the art. For example, if both the player and the dealer have a point total over 21, then the dealer typically wins. If the player has a point total over 21 and the dealer does not have a point total over 21 then the dealer wins. If the dealer has a point total over 21 and the player does not have a point total over 21 then the player wins. If the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21 and both point totals are equal to each other then the hand is a push (tie) and typically nobody wins. If the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21 and the player’s point total is higher than the dealer’s point total, then the player wins. If the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is higher than the player’s point total then the dealer wins. Aces can count as either 11 (eleven) or 1 (one) and typically take on the value which is more favorable to the player or the dealer.

[0032] From operation 118, if the player wins (dealer loses), then the player wins even money on the main wager. The backtrack wager pushes (is neither taken nor paid) and the player can thus take the backtrack wager back. In an alternate embodiment, the backtrack wager can be paid on a player win as well. The game can end at this operation and a new game can be dealt.

[0033] From operation 118, if the dealer wins (player loses), then the dealer takes the player’s main wager. The dealer would also take any backtrack wager that the player may have made. The game can end at this operation and a new game can be dealt.

[0034] From operation 118, if there is a tie (push), then the player’s main wager does not win and does not lose. The player is free to take back the main wager and he or she may wish to bet it again. Any backtrack wagers placed would also push as well. In alternate embodiments, backtrack wagers can lose or win on a tie. The game can end at this operation and a new game can be dealt.

[0035] Tables I-III below are optimal strategy charts for the following rules set: The game is dealt from a standard shoe of eight standard decks of 52 cards each. If the player hits an undoubled hand (the player did not double) busts with a total of 23 or higher, the player will have an opportunity to place an additional backtrack bet equal to the player’s original (main) bet, upon which the player will be dealt one final backtrack
card with an ace counting as only one, the backtrack card being deducted from the player’s total. If the player’s hand still totals over 21, the player has busted and loses both bets. If the player’s hand is now below 21 after the backtrack card, the player then plays against the dealer in the standard manner, but if the player wins the player will win even money on the main bet and push on the backtrack bet. If the player loses, then the player loses both the main bet and the backtrack bet. A winning blackjack is paid at even money. The dealer draws until a hard 17 or soft 18, the player may double on any two cards, double after split, any pair may be split three times except aces which can double only one card on each ace, and late surrender is not available. Of course, it can be appreciated that the methods described herein can be applied to other sets of rules as well and this rule set is merely one example.

With the rule set described in the above paragraph, the house will win, on average, an amount equal to 1.5% of the initial bet if the player plays optimal strategy. Of course, if the player does not play optimally, the house can expect to win more than this.

Table I below is a chart indicating the optimal strategy for no-pair hands. S represents stand, H represents hit, and D represents double. For example, if the player is dealt a hard 15 the dealer’s upcard is a 6, the player’s optimal strategy is to stand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand Value</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II below is a chart indicating the optimal strategy for pair hands (when the player is dealt a pair of like card ranks). The legend is the same as for Table I with the addition that Sp represents split. For example if the player is dealt a pair of 7’s and the dealer’s upcard is a 2, the player should optimally split.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand Value</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>10/10</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
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<td>Sp</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
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<td>H</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III below is a chart indicating the optimal strategy for when the player should stand and should not backtrack. L represents lose, in other words the player should take a loss, and R represents backtrack, the player should opt to backtrack. For example, if the player has bust with a point total of 24 and the dealer’s upcard is a 3, then the player should place the backtrack bet and backtrack. If the player has bust with a point total of 24 and the dealer’s upcard is an A, then the player should lose (take the loss) and not backtrack.

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 2 is an example table layout that can be used to implement a wagering game, according to an embodiment.

A physical gaming table 200 can be used to implement the wagering methods described herein. The gaming table 200 can be a standard gaming table as known in the art with a custom felt on top of the gaming table 200 which contains the game layout illustrated in FIG. 2.

A dealer’s hand 202 is dealt to the dealer and a player’s hand 204 is dealt to the player. A main wager betting circle 206 is where the player can place chips representing the player’s main wager. A backtrack wager betting circle 208 is where the player can place chips representing the player’s backtrack wager.

The table illustrated in Figure can accommodate six simultaneous players although of course such a table can accommodate any number of players as well. In FIG. 2, only one player is playing (the third spot from the left).

An example of a wagering game described herein will now be presented. Joe is a player and places a $1 main wager on the gaming table. The dealer deals Joe a 10-clubs and a 5-hearts. The dealer’s upcard is a 8-spades. Note that the suits generally have no effect on the game. Joe decides to hit and receives a 9-spades for a total of 24. Joe has busted and would lose under standard blackjack rules. Joe has the option to either take the loss of the $1 main wager or place an additional $1 backtrack wager and backtrack. Joe decides to place the $1 backtrack wager. The dealer then deals Joe a 3 spades. Joe’s point total is now 21 (10+5+9+3). The dealer then reveals the dealer’s hole card to be a 8-diamonds. The dealer then hits and receives a 4-clubs, for a total of 20 (8+8+4). Since the player has not busted (21 is not over 21) and the player’s point total (21) is higher than the dealer’s point total (20), the player wins. The player wins $1. Thus, the dealer gives the player an additional $1 chip and leaves the players main wager ($1) and backtrack wager ($1) on the...
Thus, Joe has actually bet $2 (the main wager and the backtracking wager) and won an additional $1 in profit. Thus, Joe collects the $3 in chips on the table that are his and a new game can begin.

0045 Another example is presented as follows. Jane places a $2 main wager on the gaming table. Jane is then dealt a 4-hearts and 9-clubs. The dealer’s upcard is a 10-spades. Jane decides to hit and is dealt a 10-diamonds for a point total of 23. Jane decides to backtracking and places a $2 backtracking wager on the gaming table. The dealer then deals Jane a backtracking card of ace-diamonds. In the rule set being applied, aces must always count as 1 when they are dealt as a backtracking (although in alternative embodiments they can count as 11, or both 1 or 11). Thus, Jane’s point total is 23–1 or 22. The point total of 22 is over 21, and thus Jane still has a bust hand and the game considers that Jane busted (regardless that a backtracking was exercised). Thus Jane automatically loses her $2 main wager and her $2 backtracking wager (for a total loss of $4) and the game ends.

0046 As a further example, Bob places a $1 main wager and is dealt a 2-spades and a 10-clubs for a point total of 12. The dealer’s upcard is a 10-hearts. Bob hits, and dealer deals Bob a 10-diamonds, giving Bob a point total of 22. Bob would like to backtracking, but according to the rule set being applied, a player cannot backtracking with a point total of 22, and thus Bob cannot backtracking and thus has busted. Thus, Bob loses his $1 main wager and the game has ended. In an alternative embodiment, the player would be allowed to backtracking with a point total of 22. Different variations may have different point total(s) that the player can and cannot backtracking on. The reason for preventing the player from backtracking on certain player points totals is so the house advantage can be preserved.

0047 As one last example, Tina places a $3 main wager and is dealt a 5-spades and a 5-hearts. The dealer’s hand is dealt and the dealer’s upcard is a 7-spades. Tina hits and receives a 6-hearts for a point total of 16. Tina hits again and receives a 9-spades for a point total of 25. Tina decides to backtracking and places a $3 backtracking wager on the respective betting circle on the table. Tina is dealt a backtracking card of 10-hearts, giving Tina a point total of 15. Now the blackjack game is resolved and the dealer reveals his hole card to be a 9-diamonds, giving the dealer a point total of 16. Since the dealer’s point total is over 16, the dealer decides to hit until the dealer has a point total of 17, the dealer hits and receives a 2-clubs, giving the dealer a point total of 18. Since the dealer’s point total of 18 is greater than the player’s point total of 15, the dealer wins and Tina loses both the $3 main wager and the $3 backtracking wager.

0048 FIG. 3 is a block diagram of exemplary hardware that can be used to implement an electronic version of a wagering game, according to an embodiment.

0049 A processing unit 300 can be a microprocessor and its associate components (e.g., cache, bus, etc.) The processing unit 300 can be connected to an output device 301 such as a touch screen, CRT, LCD, etc. The processing unit 300 can also be connected to an input device 302 such as a keyboard, buttons, touch screen, etc. The processing unit 300 can also be connected to a network connection 303 which can connect the unit to a computer communication network(s) such as the Internet, a LAN, WAN, etc. The processing unit 300 can also be connected to a RAM 304, RAM 305, storage device 306 such as a hard drive, CD-ROM drive, DVD drive, EPROM, etc. A computer readable storage medium 307 such as a CD-ROM (or DVD, flash memory, etc.) can store instructions and assets needed to implement the electronic version of the wagering game. A financial apparatus 308 can be used to receive funds from the player, such as cash (using a bill validator) or a debit/credit card and credit funds to the machine in the form of machine credits which the player can wager with. When the player wishes to redeem the machine credits, the player can cash out (by pressing a button on the machine) and the financial apparatus 308 can issue cash (or coins) directly to the player or can electronically credit the player with the credits (e.g., directly in an account associated with the player).

0050 Thus, in addition to playing the wagering games described herein, an electronic gaming machine as illustrated in FIG. 3 can be used to implement the games as well. Of course, the hardware in FIG. 3 is merely one example, and one of ordinary skill in the art can implement the wagering games described herein using numerous different electronic components.

0051 In the electronic gaming context, the concept of “dealing cards” correlates to displaying random virtual cards from a virtual deck(s) on an output device. Instead of placing physical chips as in the live version, in the electronic version the player can use buttons or a touch screen in order to indicate the player’s wager(s) and actions.

0052 It is noted that the methods described herein can be played using any number of decks (e.g., 1-8 or more). Standard physical decks of 52 cards can be used, as well as other kinds of decks, such as Spanish decks, decks with wild cards, etc. The operations described herein can be performed in any sensible order. Furthermore, numerous different variants of house rules can be applied. For example, the dealer can hit on soft 17 or stand on soft 17, depending on house rules. Cards can be given their standard point values as known in the art (e.g., 2-10 have their face value, jack, queen, and king have a point value of 10, and ace has a point value of 1 or eleven).

0053 Wagers can be placed by placing physical chips on a gaming table, the chips representative of a dollar amount and can be directly redeemable for cash at a casino cashier. When the player wins, additional chips (of the appropriate amount) are then placed in front of the player on the gaming table. When the player loses, the player’s losing wager(s) are collected from the player and typically placed in a chip tray in front of the dealer.

0054 The descriptions provided herein also include any hardware and/or software known in the art and needed to implement the operations described herein. Further, all methods described herein can be programmed on a digital computer and stored on any type of computer readable storage medium.

0055 The many features and advantages of the invention are apparent from the detailed specification and, thus, it is intended by the appended claims to cover all such features and advantages of the invention that fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation illustrated and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:
1. A method to play a wagering game, the method comprising:
   providing a physical deck(s) of cards;
   receiving a main wager from a player;
dealing an initial player’s hand and an initial dealer’s hand using the deck(s) on a gaming table; allowing the player to draw additional card(s) until the player stands or the player’s point total is over 21; if the player’s point total is over 21, then offering the player an option to backtrack, and if the player backtracks then dealing to the player a backtrack card; resolving the dealer’s hand according to predetermined rules; and determining a player’s point total and a dealer’s point total; if the player’s point total is over 21 then the player loses the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is over 21 then the player wins an award based on the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is higher than the dealer’s point total then the player wins an award based on the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is lower than the dealer’s point total then the player loses the main wager; wherein if the player exercised the backtrack option, then the player’s point total is computed by adding the numerical values of the initial player’s hand and all additional card(s) dealt to the player minus the numerical value of the backtrack card.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein if the player backtracks then the player must place a backtrack wager before receiving the backtrack card.

3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the backtrack wager is equal in value to the main wager.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein if the player wins the main wager then the player pushes on the backtrack wager.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein if the player loses the main wager then the player also loses the backtrack wager.

6. A method to play a wagering game on an electronic gaming machine, the method comprising: performing the following on an electronic gaming machine: receiving a main wager from a player; dealing an initial player’s hand and an initial dealer’s hand; allowing the player to draw additional card(s) until the player stands or the player’s point total is over 21; if the player’s point total is over 21, then offering the player an option to backtrack, and if the player backtracks then dealing to the player a backtrack card; resolving the dealer’s hand according to predetermined rules; and determining a player’s point total and a dealer’s point total; if the player’s point total is over 21 then the player loses the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is over 21 then the player wins an award based on the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is higher than the dealer’s point total then the player wins an award based on the main wager; if the player’s point total is not over 21 and the dealer’s point total is not over 21, then if the player’s point total is lower than the dealer’s point total then the player loses the main wager; wherein if the player exercised the backtrack option, then the player’s point total is computed by adding the numerical values of the initial player’s hand and all additional card(s) dealt to the player minus the numerical value of the backtrack card.

7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein if the player backtracks then the player must place a backtrack wager before receiving the backtrack card.

8. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the backtrack wager is equal in value to the main wager.

9. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein if the player wins the main wager then the player pushes on the backtrack wager.

10. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein if the player loses the main wager then the player also loses the backtrack wager.

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