Title: BLACKJACK-STYLE GAME

Abstract: A Blackjack-style game which has rules similar to traditional Blackjack, except a single hard value of one is assigned to all Aces. A virtual embodiment allows a player to cut the cards which are then placed in shoe (200). A player places a bet by dragging chips (210) to betting area (205). Once a player places a bet the deal button (245) becomes active. Other player buttons are provided based on the rules of the game including a surrender button (267), split button (265), double button (260), stand button (255), and hit button (250). Additionally, fun balance display (270) shows a player's balance and played cards are discarded in the discard pile display (275).
BLACKJACK-STYLE GAME

PRIORITY CLAIM
[0001] This invention is related to, and claims priority from, U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/392,038, filed June 28, 2002, the teachings of which are incorporated herein in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION
[0002] The present invention relates to the field of gaming, and in particular provides a new blackjack-style game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION
[0003] Various forms of playing cards have existed since approximately 900 A.D., and many games have been invented using playing cards. One of the most popular casino card games is known as Blackjack, or “21”.

[0004] Blackjack is conventionally played with a dealer and one to seven players. The dealer is responsible for shuffling and dealing the cards, paying winning players, and collecting money from losing players when the game is played for money.

[0005] The casino version of the game is usually begun by the dealer shuffling five or six decks of cards together and placing them in a box called a “shoe”. The dealer will usually remove the top card from the shoe and place it in a discard pile. One card is then dealt to each player and the dealer, with the players’ cards typically face up, and the dealer’s card face down. An additional, face up card is then dealt to all players and the dealer.

[0006] If the dealer’s face up card is an Ace, players are offered an opportunity to purchase “insurance”, which pays only if the dealer’s two cards total twenty-one (called a “Blackjack”). Insurance typically pays two to one. Once the players have accepted or declined insurance, the dealer will check his or her face down card to see if the hand totals twenty-one. If the hand totals twenty-one, the game is over, those purchasing insurance are paid, and any player who was not also dealt a Blackjack loses his or her bet.
Those players dealt a Blackjack have tied, or are in a “push” with the dealer, and are able to keep their bets.

[0007] If the dealer’s face up card is not an Ace, or if the dealer’s hand does not total twenty-one, the game continues. Each player is given an opportunity to either be dealt one or more cards from the shoe (commonly called “hitting” or to hit), or to refuse cards (commonly called “standing” or to stand).

[0008] As a player, the object of the game is to get a hand which, at the end of the game, totals more points than the dealer’s hand without exceeding twenty-one points (called a “bust”). Number cards are given their face value, and “face” cards, including the king, queen, and jack, are each given ten points. An Ace may be counted as either one or eleven points except where counting the Ace as eleven points would cause a player to exceed twenty-one points; in such cases, the Ace is only counted as one point. A player who is dealt a hand totaling twenty-one in only two cards is said to have “Blackjack” and is typically paid at a rate of 3 to 2, and play proceeds to the next player.

[0009] Aside from these basic rules, players are free to hit or stand as they choose. Once a player stands or busts, the process proceeds to the next player. When all of the players have either bust or have chosen to stand, the dealer exposes his or her face down card and begins to draw cards according to very specific rules. In most games, dealers must continue to take cards if their hand totals less than seventeen, and must stand if their hand totals seventeen or more.

[0010] If the dealer draws a hand that exceeds twenty-one, all players who have not bust are paid at a rate equal to their bet. If the dealer draws a hand that totals less than or equal to twenty-one, all players who have not bust and who have hands totaling greater than the dealer’s total are paid at a rate equal to their bet. Players whose hands are equal in total to the dealer’s hand are said to “push”, or tie, the dealer and are not paid but do not lose their bet. Players whose hands total less than the dealer’s or who have busted lose the amount they bet.

[0011] The above rules are generally how Blackjack is played, although some variations have been introduced with varying popularity. By way of example, U.S. Patent No. 6,322,075 to DeFranco (“the ‘075 patent”), teaches a Blackjack-type card game in which
each player receives an array of four playing cards arranged in a square and players bet on at least one and as many as six different card combinations. In addition, U.S. Patent No. 6,336,635 to Baer ("the '635 patent"), teaches a method of playing a Blackjack card game in which a player can control the subsequent cards dealt while simultaneously allowing all players to bet that the player is incorrect and to win a share of a "progressive jackpot". The teachings of both the '075 and the '635 patent are included herein by reference in their entirety.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION
[0012] Accordingly, the present invention is directed to a Blackjack-style game that substantially obviates one or more of the problems due to limitations and disadvantages of the related art.

[0013] An object of the present invention is to provide a new Blackjack-style game.

[0014] Another object of the present invention is the implementation of a new Blackjack-style game as an electronic, or virtual, game.

[0015] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be apparent from the description, or may be learned by practice of the invention. The objectives and other advantages of the invention will be realized and attained by the structure particularly pointed out in the written description and claims hereof as well as the appended drawings.

[0016] The present invention is a new Blackjack-style game using hard, or static, values for Aces. In a preferred embodiment, Aces are assigned a value of one. In this preferred embodiment, it is impossible to be dealt a two card hand totaling 21 points. The present invention introduces new rules concerning game play while allowing for a wide variety of variations within the rules.

[0017] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory and are intended to provide further explanation of the invention as claimed.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide a further understanding of the invention and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the invention.

[0019] In the drawings:

[0020] Figure 1 is a top view of a standard, casino-style Blackjack table.

[0021] Figure 2 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game before any cards are dealt.

[0022] Figure 3 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player and a dealer have each been dealt one card.

[0023] Figure 4 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has doubled his or her bet and taken an additional card.

[0024] Figure 5 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to split his or her hand.

[0025] Figure 6 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to double his or her bet on one hand and to take an additional card on that hand.

[0026] Figure 7 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to split his or her hand again.

[0027] Figure 8 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which the player has chosen to double his or her bet on one hand and to take an additional card on that hand.

[0028] Figure 9 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which game play has progressed to a subsequent hand and a player has chosen to double his or her original bet.

[0029] Figure 10 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has doubled his or her bet again and has chosen to take an additional card on that hand.

[0030] Figure 11 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which game play has progressed to a subsequent hand.
[0031] Figure 12 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to take an additional card.

[0032] Figure 13 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to double his or her original bet and to take an additional card.

[0033] Figure 14 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which game play has progressed through the dealer’s turn, and winning and losing hands have been determined.

[0034] Figure 15 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to surrender.

[0035] Figure 16 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player is presented with an option to purchase insurance.

[0036] Figure 17 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which a player has chosen to purchase insurance, and in which game play has progressed through the player’s turn.

[0037] Figure 18 is a screen capture of a virtual Blackjack game in which the dealer has a hand which would cause insurance to be paid.

[0038] Figure 19 illustrates a sample architecture through which a virtual embodiment of the present invention can be implemented.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

[0039] Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the present invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

[0040] The present invention is an exotic variant of the standard game of casino Blackjack which emphasizes player control through a robust set of playing choices. The game can be implemented in a variety of embodiments, such as, but not limited to, a physical embodiment played at a casino, and virtual embodiments played on a desktop computer or other computing device. By way of further illustration, without intending to limit the present invention, virtual embodiments can include kiosks or other stand-alone devices which are configured to play the game, computer software implementing the
invention which runs on a user’s computer, and network-based software which uses wired or wireless networks, such as the Internet or cellular telephone networks to communicate and coordinate the game with one or more remote computing devices.

[0041] In a casino embodiment, the invention preferably uses a standard Blackjack style playing table, as illustrated in Figure 1. A sample user interface for a virtual embodiment is illustrated in Figure 2. While the description below focuses primarily on a virtual embodiment, one skilled in the art should appreciate that the game described below can be easily adapted for play in a casino, other physical environment, or other virtual embodiments.

[0042] As with traditional Blackjack, the present invention can be played with one or more decks of standard playing cards (preferably without the Jokers). Should wagering be desired, betting chips can be employed to simplify the betting process.

[0043] The present invention assigns values to the playing cards in a manner similar to traditional Blackjack. However, unlike traditional Blackjack in which an Ace may have a value of one or eleven, the present invention assigns a static value to an Ace, preferably a one. This is referred to as “Hard Aces”. The present invention also introduces a two new types of hands, called “Caribbean 21” and “Natural Caribbean 21”. A Caribbean 21 hand is a three card hand in which one card is an Ace and the other cards each have a value of ten, giving the hand a total of 21. A Natural Caribbean 21 hand is any Caribbean 21 hand that was not created from a split hand. In a preferred embodiment, a Natural Caribbean 21 hand ranks higher than any other hand that is not a Natural Caribbean 21 hand. Therefore, a Natural Caribbean 21 is the highest hand possible. A Caribbean 21 hand is the second-highest hand possible, and ranks higher than any other hand that is not a Caribbean 21 or a Natural Caribbean 21.

[0044] Reference will now be made to game play based on a preferred virtual Blackjack embodiment, as illustrated in Figures 2-18. Corresponding components of Figures 2-18 are similarly labeled for easy reference where practical. In this embodiment, game play begins by a computer “shuffling” a desired or pre-selected number of decks. The user is given the option to cut the cards, and the reassembled cards are placed in shoe 200.
[0045] A player can preferably indicate his or her bet by dragging one or more betting chips 210 to betting area 205, clicking on one or more betting chips 210, or otherwise interacting with betting chips 210. While the above-described bet indication methods are presently preferred, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that alternative bet indication methods can be substituted therefor without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention.

[0046] As Figure 3 illustrates, a preferred embodiment of the present invention graphically represents the player’s bet by displaying an appropriate number of betting chips within or near betting area 205. The total amount bet is preferably indicated by bet total 215. Any amount bet will preferably cause fun balance 270 to be decremented accordingly. Bets are typically placed after shuffling is complete, although this limitation is not necessary. However, once a particular game is underway, it is presently preferred that the only modification a player may make to his or her bet is to double its value or to surrender, as described below.

[0047] In a preferred embodiment, the initial amount bet in a given game may be regulated. By way of example, without intending to limit the present invention, a player may be required to bet at least five dollars, but no more than five hundred dollars. Once the player has bet at least the minimum amount, deal button 245 becomes active. In the virtual embodiment illustrated in Figures 2 through 18, active, or available, buttons are indicated by black lettering on a white background, whereas inactive buttons are indicated by white lettering on a black background. Button availability is preferably controlled based on the rules of the game and the status of the game at any given instance. Thus, by way of example, without intending to limit the present invention, the availability of surrender button 267, split button 265, double button 260, stand button 255, hit button 250, and deal button 245 will vary throughout Figures 2 through 18 as appropriate.

[0048] When a player is satisfied with his or her bet, the player preferably presses deal button 245. In a preferred embodiment, deal button 245 causes a single, face up card 220 to be dealt to the player and a single, face up card 230 to be dealt to the dealer. The
current value of the player’s hand is preferably illustrated by player value 225, and the
current value of the dealer’s hand is preferably illustrated by dealer value 235.

[0049] At this point, a preferred embodiment of the present invention allows a player to
choose to hit, stand, double his or her bet, split, or surrender, as illustrated by buttons
250, 255, 260, 265, and 267, respectively. In a preferred embodiment, a player can also
indicate his or her desire to double the bet by dragging one or more betting chips 210 to
betting area 205, and a player can indicate his or her desire to hit by clicking on shoe 200.

[0050] If a player chooses to double his or her bet, additional betting chips are moved to
betting area 205, and the new bet value is reflected in bet total 215 as illustrated in Figure
4. Unlike traditional Blackjack, in which a player who doubles is dealt only a single
additional card, the present invention allows the player to continue to request additional
cards after a bet is doubled. In addition, there are preferably no limits to the number of
times a player may double his or her bet. In one embodiment, subsequent doubling
increases the value of the bet by the originally bet value. Thus, in this embodiment, a
player originally betting $100 who doubles his or her bet two times would be betting a
total of $300; this action can also be referred to as a ‘Raise’. In an alternative
embodiment, subsequent doubling increases the value of the bet by the current value of
the bet. Thus, in this alternative embodiment, a player originally betting $100 and
doubling his or her bet two times would result in a $400 bet. This alternative
embodiment is utilized in the examples shown in Figures 2 through 18.

[0051] After a player has chosen to hit by pressing hit button 250 or clicking on shoe
200, or after the player has doubled his or her bet, a second, face up card is dealt to the
player, as illustrated in Figure 4 by card 305. As Figure 4 further illustrates, player value
225 is updated as necessary to reflect the value of the player’s hand.

[0052] Figure 4 illustrates a preferred embodiment in which a dealer receives only one
card on the deal, wherein the dealer’s card is face up. In an alternative embodiment, a
dealer may receive two cards on the deal, a second card after the player draws a second
card, or according to other, similar rules. In such an embodiment, the dealer’s second
card is preferably dealt face down. Dealer value 235 preferably reflects the value of all
face up cards in the dealer’s hand.
[0053] As illustrated in Figure 5, when a player has two cards in a hand, he or she can choose to "split" the cards into two separate hands, provided the hand meets splitting rules established by the game operator. A preferred embodiment of the present invention allows a game operator to customize the available splitting rules by selecting from any of the following rules:

[0054] Only split any two cards of equal value;

[0055] Only split any two cards of equal rank;

[0056] Only split any two cards of equal suit;

[0057] Only split any two clubs;

[0058] Only split any two diamonds;

[0059] Only split any two hearts;

[0060] Only split any two spades;

[0061] Only split any two cards of the same color;

[0062] Only split any two red cards;

[0063] Only split any two black cards; and,

[0064] Split any two cards.

[0065] In addition, a game operator may combine any or all of the rules using standard Boolean logic functions, such as, but not limited to, AND, OR, NOT, and XOR to create custom splitting rules. Although the splitting rules described above are implemented in a preferred embodiment of the present invention, it should be apparent to one skilled in the art that alternative splitting rules can be substituted therefor without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention. In a virtual Blackjack embodiment, split button 265 may only be active when the player's hand meets the game operator's splitting rules.

[0066] As illustrated in Figure 5, splitting a hand allows the player to play multiple hands within the same game, but requires that the player have enough in his or her fun balance 270 to cover the additional bet. The value of the bet on the additional hand is preferably equal to the current bet on the original hand, and the additional wager for the new hand is
reflected in bet total 217. By way of example, without intending to limit the present invention, Figures 3-4 illustrate a player who begins with a $100 wager, and who then doubles on his or her single card after the deal, resulting in a single player hand with two cards and a $200 wager. In Figure 5, the player has split the hand, creating a second hand by moving card 305 from the original hand to a new position, and placing a $200 wager on the new hand. Bet total 217 is then created and set to $200.

[0067] As Figure 5 illustrates, player total 405 is provided for the new hand. In addition, hand indicator 240 preferably shows the player which hand is currently being played. As Figure 6 illustrates, each resulting hand is played individually according to the rules of the present invention. In Figure 6, the player has elected to double his or her bet in the right-hand most hand, as reflected in bet total 217, and the player is dealt an additional card 605. In one contemplated embodiment, each hand may be split into additional hands if the player wishes, provided the player has enough funds in his or her fun balance and the particular game embodiment allows for such splits. In Figure 7, the player has elected to split cards 305 and 605 to create a third hand, including a $400 bet for the new hand.

[0068] Game play preferably continues on a given hand until the hand totals more than twenty-one points, until a player stands by pressing stand button 255, or until a player surrenders by pressing surrender button 265, if surrendering is allowed by the game operator. In the game illustrated in Figure 8, the player doubled his or her bet on the right-hand most hand, then hit. A preferred embodiment of the present invention limits the player to only two splits, for a maximum of three hands per game. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 8, even though a second card has been dealt in the right-hand most hand, split button 265 is unavailable.

[0069] Returning again to the example game illustrated in Figure 8, after the player chose to double his or her bet, the player chose to stand by pressing stand button 255. Pressing stand button 255 preferably causes game play to move to the middle hand, as illustrated in Figure 9 by the changed location of hand indicator 240. As illustrated in Figure 10, the player doubled his or her bet on the middle hand, which resulted in the dealing of an additional card to that hand. The player subsequently chose to stand by pressing stand
button 255, which caused game play to move to the left-hand most hand, as illustrated in Figure 11 by the changed location of hand indicator 240.

[0070] Figures 12 illustrates the player taking a hit on the left-hand most hand. As illustrated in Figure 13, the player subsequently doubled his or her bet by pressing double button 260 and was dealt an additional card, resulting in a total score for the left-hand most hand of seventeen. The player then chose to stand by pressing stand button 255.

[0071] The player having played all available hand, game play preferably progressed to the dealer, as illustrated in Figure 14. As with traditional Blackjack, a dealer playing according to the present invention will preferably hit on any hands totaling 16 or less and stand on any hands totaling 17 or more. If the dealer’s hand totals 22 or more, all player hands that have not been surrendered and which do not total 22 or more are preferably paid at a 1 to 1 ratio. If the dealer’s hand totals less than 22, the dealer preferably wins against all player hands of equal or lesser value. In the preferred embodiment illustrated in Figure 14, the dealer continued to draw cards until the dealer’s hand had a value of seventeen, after which the dealer was forced to stop drawing cards under the rules of the game. The dealer’s had was therefore equal in value to the player’s left-hand most hand and, according to the rules implemented in the preferred embodiment illustrated in Figure 14, resulted in the player losing the bet on that hand. However, the player’s middle and right-hand most hands beat the dealer’s hand, resulting in the player winning an amount equivalent to the bet amounts from the dealer.

[0072] The present invention also allows a game operator to select from additional payouts and rules to make the game more attractive to or exciting for players. Such payouts include, but are not limited to:

[0073] Player dealt a Natural Caribbean 21 hand is paid 3 to 2;
[0074] Player dealt a Natural Caribbean 21 hand is paid 2 to 1;
[0075] Player dealt a Natural Caribbean 21 hand is paid 3 to 1;
[0076] A Natural Caribbean 21 hand is a guaranteed winner (i.e. it would beat any dealer 21 including a dealer Caribbean);
[0077] A Natural Caribbean 21 cannot lose (i.e. it would beat any dealer 21 and push on a dealer Caribbean).

[0078] A player dealt any Caribbean 21 hand is paid 3 to 2;

[0079] A player dealt any Caribbean 21 hand is paid 2 to 1;

[0080] A player dealt any Caribbean 21 hand is paid 3 to 1;

[0081] A player dealt any Caribbean 21 hand is a guaranteed winner (i.e. it would beat any dealer 21 including a dealer Caribbean); and,

[0082] A player dealt any Caribbean 21 hand cannot lose (i.e. it would beat any dealer 21 and push on a dealer Caribbean).

[0083] As with the splitting rules, a game operator can choose to apply one or more of the above rules, including combining the rules using Boolean logic. As should be apparent to one skilled in the art, alternative payout rules and payout values may be substituted therefor without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention.

[0084] When all bets have been collected or paid, the played cards are placed in discard pile 275. Subsequent games can be preferably played from the same, pre-shuffled set of cards in shoe 200 until shoe 200 reaches a minimum number of cards, at which time the cards are reshuffled. Alternatively, a new shoe 200 may be created for each game, when requested by the player, or other such circumstances.

[0085] As described above, a preferred embodiment of the present invention permits game operators to select whether or not to allow players to surrender. When allowed by a game operator, surrendering is available for any player hand at any time before the player stands or busts on the given hand. This concept is illustrated in Figure 15. In Figure 15, the player has bet $200 on a hand that totals sixteen points, and the player has chosen to surrender by pressing surrender button 265. When a player surrenders a hand, the current wager for that hand is divided into two amounts – the House Portion and the Player Portion. The House Portion is collected by the game operator and the Player Portion is returned to the player. In a preferred embodiment these two portions are equal (i.e. the surrender percentage is 50%); other embodiments allow the surrender percentage to be any percentage between 1% and 99% inclusive. The Surrender Percentage preferably
describes the House Portion, which is the percentage conceded to, or kept by, a game operator. As Figure 15 illustrates, the player is preferably able to keep $100 of the original $200 bet, and the game play ceases.

[0086] Figures 16 through 18 illustrate the concept of insurance as implemented in the present invention. A player can purchase "insurance" if the dealer receives an Ace on the deal. The purchase amount of the insurance is preferably one half of the player's initial wager. Insurance may only be purchased prior to the dealer's turn. Insurance is preferably paid if the dealer gets a Caribbean 21, a Natural Caribbean 21, or other card combination as defined by the game operator, as illustrated in Figure 18. In a preferred embodiment, a winning insurance wager is preferably paid at a 9 to 1 ratio.

[0087] Figure 19 illustrates a sample architecture through which a virtual embodiment of the present invention can be implemented. Such an architecture supports a variety of implementations, including, but not limited to, kiosks, home computers, and client/server based embodiments. Such client/server based embodiments may be especially useful in casinos and on the Internet. As Figure 19 illustrates, a virtual embodiment preferably displays a user interface to a user via a display device 1910. A user interface device 1920, such as, but not limited to, a voice recognition interface, touch-screen display, mouse, keyboard, stylus, joystick, or touch pad, is preferably provided to facilitate user interaction with the virtual embodiment. Game software 1930 preferably interprets the information from user interface device 1920 and generates the user interface to be displayed on display device 1910 based on the information and the rules of the game. Information needed by game software 1930, such as, but not limited to, cards remaining in the shoe, bet values for each player hand, and the like, can be stored in RAM 1940 and/or Non-volatile Storage 1950. While a preferred architecture includes both RAM 1940 and non-volatile storage 1950, it should be apparent to one skilled in the art that as non-volatile storage access speeds increase, non-volatile storage may be used in lieu of RAM 1940 without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention. Computational device 1960 is preferably the heart of the architecture, executing the computations necessary to run game software 1930. Computational device 1960 can also facilitate providing game software 1930 with access to RAM 1940 and non-volatile storage 1950, as well as display device 1910 and user interface device 1920.
[0088] Through the system and methods described above, the present invention provides an exotic and entertaining variation on traditional blackjack. While the invention has been described in detail and with reference to specific embodiments thereof, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. Thus, it is intended that the present invention cover the modifications and variations of this invention provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and their equivalents.
[0089] We claim:

1. A blackjack style game, wherein ace cards are considered to have a value of one, face cards are considered to have a value of ten, number cards are considered to have a value equal to either the numeral or number of symbols displayed thereon, and a hand has a value equal to the total value of any cards contained therein, comprising:

   selecting at least one deck of cards;
   combining the at least one deck of cards to create a shoe;
   receiving a bet value from at least one player;
   dealing a first card from the shoe to the at least one player to create player hand having a value;
   dealing a second card from the shoe to a dealer to create a dealer hand having a value;
   repeating the following steps until the value of the player hand either exceeds twenty-one or the player chooses to stand:
   
   dealing a card from the shoe to the at least one player;
   placing the card into the player hand; and,
   adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;

   stopping game play and collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one;

   repeating the following steps until the value of the dealer hand exceeds seventeen:
   
   dealing a card from the shoe to the dealer;
   placing the card in the dealer hand; and,
   adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;

   comparing the value of the dealer hand to the value of the player hand; and,

   performing one of the following:

   awarding the at least one player a first prize if the value of the player hand equals twenty-one and the value of the player hand exceeds the value of the dealer hand;

   awarding the at least one player a second prize if the value of the player hand is greater than the value of the dealer hand; and,

   collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is less than the value of the dealer hand.
2. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising awarding the at least one player a third prize if the value of the player hand is equal to the value of the dealer hand.

3. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is equal to the value of the dealer hand.

4. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising awarding the at least one player a fourth prize if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

5. The blackjack style game of Claim 4, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21 and the dealer hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

6. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising awarding the at least one player a fifth prize if the player hand is a Caribbean 21.

7. The blackjack style game of Claim 6, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Caribbean 21 and the dealer hand is either a Caribbean 21 or a Natural Caribbean 21.

8. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising giving the at least one player the option of splitting the player hand if the player hand contains two cards.

9. The blackjack style game of Claim 8, wherein the at least one player can create up to a maximum number of hands per game by splitting.

10. The blackjack style game of Claim 8, wherein the at least one player is given the option of splitting the player hand provided the player hand meets at least one rule.

11. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising allowing the at least one player to double the bet value prior to being dealt a card from the shoe.

12. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising allowing the at least one player the option of surrendering the game at any time until either the at least one player stands or the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one.
13. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, further comprising removing any jokers in the at least one deck of cards.

14. The blackjack style game of Claim 1, wherein the at least one deck of cards are combined through shuffling.

15. The blackjack style game of Claim 14, further comprising awarding the at least one player one half the bet value for a given player hand if the at least one player chooses to surrender the player hand.

16. A blackjack style game, wherein ace cards are considered to have a value of one, face cards are considered to have a value of ten, number cards are considered to have a value equal to either the numeral or number of symbols displayed thereon, and a hand has a value equal to the total value of any cards contained therein, comprising:

selecting at least one deck of cards;
combining the at least one deck of cards to create a shoe;
receiving a bet value from at least one player;
dealing a first card from the shoe to the at least one player to create a player hand having a value;
dealing a second card from the shoe to a dealer to create a dealer hand having a value;
repeating the following steps for each player hand until either the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one or the player chooses to stand:

allowing the at least one player to double the bet value;
dealing a card from the shoe to the at least one player;
placing the card into the player hand;
adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand; and,
allowing the at least one player to split the player hand, thereby creating an additional player hand, if the player hand contains two cards and if the two cards meet at least one rule;
collecting the bet value from the at least one player for each player hand in which the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one;
stopping game play if all player hands exceed twenty-one;
repeating the following steps until the value of the dealer hand exceeds seventeen:
dealing a card from the shoe to the dealer;
placing the card in the dealer hand; and,
adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand; comparing the value of the dealer hand to the value of the player hand; and, performing one of the following:

awarding the at least one player a first prize if the value of the player hand equals twenty-one and the value of the player hand exceeds the value of the dealer hand;

awarding the at least one player a second prize if the value of the player hand is greater than the value of the dealer hand; and,

collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is less than the value of the dealer hand.

17. The blackjack style game of Claim 16, further comprising awarding the at least one player a third prize if the value of the player hand is equal to the value of the dealer hand.

18. The blackjack style game of Claim 16, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is equal to the value of the dealer hand.

19. The blackjack style game of Claim 16, further comprising awarding the at least one player a fourth prize if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

20. The blackjack style game of Claim 19, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21 and the dealer hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

21. The blackjack style game of Claim 16, further comprising awarding the at least one player a fifth prize if the player hand is a Caribbean 21.

22. The blackjack style game of Claim 21, further comprising collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Caribbean 21 and the dealer hand is a Caribbean 21 or a Natural Caribbean 21.

23. The blackjack style game of Claim 16, further comprising allowing the at least one player the option of surrendering each player hand at any time until either the at least one player stands or the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one.
24. The blackjack style game of Claim 23, further comprising awarding the at least one player one half the bet value for a given player hand if the at least one player chooses to surrender the player hand.

25. A virtual blackjack style game, wherein ace cards are considered to have a value of one, face cards are considered to have a value of ten, number cards are considered to have a value equal to either the numeral or number of symbols displayed thereon, and a hand has a value equal to the total value of any cards contained therein, comprising:

selecting at least one deck of cards;
combining the at least one deck of cards to create a shoe;
receiving a bet value from at least one player;
dealing a first card from the shoe to the at least one player to create a player hand having a value;
indicating the player hand value to the at least one player;
dealing a second card from the shoe to a dealer to create a dealer hand having a value;
indicating the dealer hand value to the at least one player;
repeating the following steps for each player hand until either the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one or the player chooses to stand:

allowing the at least one player to double the bet value;
dealing a card from the shoe to the at least one player;
placing the card into the player hand;
adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;
indicating the player had value to the at least one player; and,
allowing the at least one player to split the player hand, thereby creating an additional player hand, if the player hand contains two cards and if the two cards meet at least one rule;
collecting the bet value from the at least one player for each player hand in which the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one;
stopping game play if all player hands exceed twenty-one;
repeating the following steps until the value of the dealer hand exceeds seventeen:
dealing a card from the shoe to the dealer;
placing the card in the dealer hand; and,
adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;
comparing the value of the dealer hand to the value of the player hand; and,
performing one of the following:

awarding the at least one player a first prize if the value of the player hand
equals twenty-one and the value of the player hand exceeds the value of the
dealer hand;

awarding the at least one player a second prize if the value of the player hand
is greater than the value of the dealer hand; and,

collecting the bet value from the at least one player if the value of the player
hand is less than the value of the dealer hand.

26. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 25, further comprising awarding the at
least one player a third prize if the value of the player hand is equal to the value of the
dealer hand.

27. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 25, further comprising collecting the bet
value from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is equal to the value
of the dealer hand.

28. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 25, further comprising awarding the at
least one player a fourth prize if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

29. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 28, further comprising collecting the bet
value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Natural Caribbean 21 and the
dealer hand is a Natural Caribbean 21.

30. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 25, further comprising awarding the at
least one player a fifth prize if the player hand is a Caribbean 21.

31. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 30, further comprising collecting the bet
value from the at least one player if the player hand is a Caribbean 21 and the dealer
hand is a Caribbean 21 or a Natural Caribbean 21.

32. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 25, further comprising allowing the at least
one player the option of surrendering each player hand at any time until either the at
least one player stands or the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one.

33. The virtual blackjack style game of Claim 32, further comprising awarding the at
least one player one half the bet value for a given player hand if the at least one player
chooses to surrender the player hand.
34. A computer based, blackjack style gaming system, comprising:

   at least one display device;
   at least one user interface device;
   at least one non-volatile storage device;
   at least one computational device; and

   game software, wherein the game software is stored in the at least one non-volatile
   storage device, the game software generates a user interface for display on the at
   least one display device, the game software interprets input from the at least one
   user interface device, and the game software implements a blackjack style game
   wherein ace cards are considered to have a value of one, face cards are considered
   to have a value of ten, number cards are considered to have a value equal to either
   the numeral or number of symbols displayed thereon, a hand has a value equal to
   the total value of any cards contained therein.

35. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 34, further comprising
   at least one random access memory device.

36. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 34, wherein the at least
   one display device and the at least one user interface device a physically separate
   from the remaining components of the system.

37. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 36, wherein the display
   device and the at least one user interface device are connected to the game software
   via a network.

38. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 37, wherein the
    network is the Internet.

39. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 38, wherein the display
    device and the at least one user interface device are part of a separate computer.

40. The computer based, blackjack style gaming system of Claim 34, wherein the gaming
    system is implemented as a kiosk.

41. A blackjack style game, wherein ace cards are considered to have a value of one, face
    cards are considered to have a value of ten, number cards are considered to have a
    value equal to either the numeral or number of symbols displayed thereon, and a hand
    has a value equal to the total value of any cards contained therein, comprising:
dealing a first card to the at least one player to create a player hand having a value;
dealing a second card to a dealer to create a dealer hand having a value;
repeating the following steps until the value of the player hand either exceeds
twenty-one or the player chooses to stand:
   dealing a card from the shoe to the at least one player;
   placing the card into the player hand; and,
   adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;
stopping game play if the value of the player hand exceeds twenty-one;
repeating the following steps until the value of the dealer hand exceeds seventeen:
   dealing a card from the shoe to the dealer;
   placing the card in the dealer hand; and,
   adding the value of the third card to the value of the player hand;
comparing the value of the dealer hand to the value of the player hand; and,
performing one of the following:
   awarding the at least one player a first prize if the value of the player hand
   equals twenty-one and the value of the player hand exceeds the value of the
   dealer hand;
   awarding the at least one player a second prize if the value of the player hand
   is greater than the value of the dealer hand; and,
   collecting a prize from the at least one player if the value of the player hand is
   less than the value of the dealer hand.
CARIBBEAN 21 PAYS EVEN MONEY
Dealer stands on 17 and wins ties
INSURANCE PAYS 9 TO 1

fun balance
$373,739.00

Surrender  Split  Double X2  Stand  Hit  Deal

click chips to bet

Figure 2

Figure 2 of 19
Figure 5
Figure 6
Figure 16
Figure 17

Figure 17 of 19
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Game Software</td>
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Figure 19
# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

| IPC(7) | A63F 1/00 |
| US CL  | 463/12 |

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

- U.S.: 463/12, 42; 273/292

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Scarne's Encyclopedia of Card Games

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>US 6,540,230 B1 (WALKER et al.) 01 April 2003 (01.04.2003), column 4, lines 22-36, column 5, lines 1-14, column 29, line 20-column 34, line 27, and figures 11 and 12.</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>US 5,823,879 A (Goldberg et al.) 20 October 1998 (20.10.1998), figures 1-8B, column 1, line 55-column 6, line 40, column 7, line 1-column 8, line 67.</td>
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</table>

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

**Date of the actual completion of the international search**

07 November 2003 (07.11.2003)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

- Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US Commissioner for Patents
- P.O. Box 1450
- Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
- Facsimile No. (703)305-3230

Authorized officer

Teresa Walberg

Paralegal Specialist
Tech. Center 3700

Date of mailing of the international search report

**Date of mailing of the international search report**

2003-11-07

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (July 1998)