A matrix is populated with playing cards, dice symbols, or slot machine symbols at cell locations in the matrix. The player attempts to select symbol combinations in either horizontal rows, vertical columns or diagonal lines. The game may be played as a single player game, may include specific poker hand categories to find, may include time periods, may include scoring points, may include multiple rounds of play and may include single or multiple player versions.
Figure 1

Prior Art

Word Search

W E E K
F I N D
R A N D O M
S L E U T H
B A C K W A R D
V E R T I C A L
D I A G O N A L
W I K I P E D I A
H O R I Z O N T A L
W O R D  S E A R C H
SKILL GAME FOR AMUSEMENT FOR USE IN A CASINO

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is based on and claims the benefit [0001] of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/079424, filed Jul. 9, 2008, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein.

This invention relates primarily to a skill game, and more particularly to a skill game that can be played in an amusement format or in a wagering format in a gaming casino.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Skill games have been popular pastime for many years. Some of the best known skill games are word games such as crossword puzzles and word search games.

A classic word search game uses a matrix of letters. A player is given a list of words to find among the matrix of letters. The player visually searches through the matrix and circles the words that he finds from the list of words. The words are formed vertically, horizontally or on a diagonal line.

A representative PRIOR ART word search game is shown generally at A in FIG. 1. A letter matrix B, in this example a 10x10 matrix, is populated with letters. A word list C shows the ten words that the player should find in the letter matrix B. By visually inspecting the letter matrix B, the player circles the words that he finds. As shown in FIG. 1, the player has circled the words “word search” at D and the word “sleuth” at E. The words to be found by the player can be in a vertical column, a horizontal row or a diagonal line.

The typical word search game is played as a solitaire game by a single player. The game is simply a skill game with the player achieving the satisfaction of finding all of the words on the list.

The present invention adopts the word search skill aspects into a more challenging method that can be played as a wagering game or as an amusement game. The features of winning points or money is added to the method of play. Multiple player features have also been added as well as the feature of playing the game with time limits imposed or by adding multipliers for finding the result quickly.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A matrix is populated with playing cards, dice symbols, or slot machine symbols at cell locations in the matrix. The player attempts to select symbol combinations in either horizontal rows, vertical columns or diagonal lines. The game may be played as a single player game, may include specific poker hand categories to find, may include time periods, may include scoring points, may include multiple rounds of play and may include single or multiple player versions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a word search game that is prior art.

FIG. 2 shows a single player game using poker hand combinations as the objects to be found.

FIG. 3 shows a single player game using Twenty-One game numerical counts as the objects to be found.

FIG. 4 shows a single player game using dice combinations as the objects to be found.

FIG. 5 shows a single player game using slot machine symbol combinations as the objects to be found.

FIG. 6 shows a two player game using poker hand combinations as the objects to be found.

FIG. 7 shows a single player game using poker hand combinations as the objects to be found with a time period for completing the game.

FIG. 8 shows a single player game using a number of specific poker hand combination as the objects to be found with a time period for completing the game.

FIG. 9 shows the game of the present invention displayed on a monitor that can be connected to a computer and may also be used for online play.

FIG. 10 shows the game of the present invention displayed on a cell phone and may also be used for online play.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention is a skill game that uses playing cards, dice faces, or slot machine symbols that a player is required to find among a matrix of symbols.

As shown in FIG. 2, a first embodiment of the present invention uses a 7x7 matrix 10 that has a plurality of cell locations arranged as a group of seven vertical columns, seven horizontal rows and a plurality of diagonal lines. A deck of playing cards is provided, each playing card having a unique suit and rank. Each cell location in the matrix 10 is populated with a playing card. The playing cards are preferably selected from a standard fifty-two card poker deck. The player searches for and selects one or more combinations of playing cards, such as five card poker hand combinations, along vertical columns, horizontal rows or along diagonal lines. As shown by way of example in FIG. 2, the player has found a Straight 20 along a diagonal line, a Flush 30 along a diagonal line, a Four-of-a-Kind 40 along a vertical column and a Three-of-a-Kind 50 along a vertical column.

Preferably the five card poker hand combinations are conventional poker hand rankings such as a Royal Flush, a Straight Flush, a Four of a Kind, a Full House, a Flush, a Straight, a Three of a Kind, a Two Pair and a Pair of Jacks or Better. The matrix may be larger or smaller than the 7x7 matrix 10 shown in FIG. 2 and does not have to be a symmetrical matrix.

FIG. 3 shows a variation of the present invention in which the player searches for card count combinations that add up to twenty-one based on the manner in which card counts are determined in the game of Twenty-One. The matrix 100 shown in FIG. 3 is populated by a playing card at each cell location. Using conventional Twenty-One game card numerical values in which Aces are worth one or eleven, face cards (Kings, Queens, and Jacks) are worth ten and all of the other cards are worth their pip values, each playing card is provided with a numerical value based on the rank of the playing card. The player selects those card combinations in the matrix that add up to a numerical count of twenty-one. As shown in the example in FIG. 3, the player has found a two card twenty-one count at 110, a two card twenty-one count at 120, a three card twenty-one count at 130, a three card twenty-one count at 140, a three card twenty-one count at 150, a three card twenty-one count at 160 and six card twenty-one count at 170. In the preferred embodiment of this version, the cards must be adjoining in either a vertical column, a horizontal row or a diagonal line.
Another version of the present invention is shown in FIG. 4. The matrix 200 is populated with dice symbols, each dice symbol being a die face from conventional dice having six sides with a value of One, Two, Three, Four, Five, or Six. The player searches for dice symbol combinations such as four or more of a kind of dice symbols or straights of dice symbols. As shown in the example in FIG. 4, the player has found a dice symbol combination of seven Fives in a row at 210, a straight combination of six dice with values One through Six at 220, a dice combination of five Threes in a row at 230 and a dice combination of four Fives in a row at 240. In the preferred embodiment of this version, the dice must be adjoining in either a vertical column, a horizontal row or a diagonal line. Also, in a preferred embodiment, the dice symbol combination must be a group of at least five dice symbols.

Another version of the present invention is shown in FIG. 5. The matrix 300 is populated with typical slot machine symbols. The player searches for symbol combinations such as three or more in a row. As shown in the example in FIG. 5, the player has found a symbol combination of five Bells in a row at 310, three 7’s in a row at 320 and a symbol combination of three Cherries in a row at 330. In the preferred embodiment of this version, the dice must be adjoining in either a vertical column, a horizontal row or a diagonal line. Also, in a preferred embodiment, the slot machine symbol combination must be at least a group of five slot machine symbols.

FIG. 6 shows a two player competition version of the present invention. A matrix 400 is shown with each cell location being populated by a playing card selected from a deck of playing cards. A scoring table 35 is also provided that lists the points a player may achieve for a five card poker hand that is selected by the player. As shown in FIG. 6, the scoring table 35 may use conventional poker hand rankings as the scoring poker hands. Player One goes first and attempts to find a poker hand along a vertical column, a horizontal row or a diagonal line. Player One has found a Flush 410 and scores six points which is shown in the scoring box 420 for Player One. It now becomes Player Two’s turn and Player Two is given one minute in the Player Two timer box 450. Should Player Two find a scoring poker hand within the allotted time, Player Two’s score would be recorded in the Player Two scoring box 450. When Player Two’s turn is over, a one minute time period would be posted in Player One’s timer box 430 and Player One’s turn would begin.

The game would end when each player has a predetermined number of turns, or when a player achieves a predetermined total score or when all of the winning poker hand combinations displayed in the matrix 400 are exhausted.

FIG. 7 shows a player game of the present invention similar to the two player game shown in FIG. 6. In FIG. 7, a matrix 500 is displayed which is populated with playing cards. A scoring table 35 is provided that lists the points a player may achieve for each five card poker hand that is selected by the player. The scoring table may use conventional poker hand rankings as the scoring poker hands.

The player is provided with a scoring box 510 and a timer box 520. The player starts with a time period, say three minutes, shown in the timer box 520 during which the player must find as many scoring poker hand combinations in the matrix 500 as possible. Each scoring hand has an associated score shown in the scoring table 35. In the example shown in FIG. 7, the player has found a Three-of-a-Kind 540 for thirty points, a Pair of Jacks 550 for ten points, a Straight 560 for forty points, a Two Pair for twenty points and a Flush 580 for fifty points. The total score box 530 shows the player’s accumulated score of one hundred fifty points.

The scoring box 510 shows one of the poker hands that is still available for the player to find and the amount of scoring points that the player can earn for finding that scoring hand. The timer box 520 counts down the remaining time available.

FIG. 8 shows another variation of the present invention in which a single player attempts to find particular poker hand combinations. A matrix 600 is provided and is populated with playing cards. A poker hand box 620 instructs the player as to what type of preselected five card poker hand combinations the player is looking for, the scoring value of the poker hand and how many poker hands of that category the player must find. Each time the player selects one of the five card poker hand combinations, a check box 630 is marked. A total points box 640 and a time box 650 are also provided to show the progress of the game.

As shown in the example in FIG. 8, the player has found a Straight 610 in the matrix 600 and has earned two hundred points and has two minutes left as shown in the time box 650 to find three more Straights. This game can be played as a single round game or, once the player has successfully completed a round, a new matrix and a new poker hand combination can be presented to the player in the next round. The game can be played in multiple rounds.

Another variation that may be added to the methods of the present invention that use the timer feature is bonus awards for finding the results quickly. For example, certain categories may be designated as special categories that earn the player bonus awards for finding that category in the matrix. In a playing card matrix, a Flush could be designated as the special category and the player could receive a bonus award for each Flush that is found.

Multiplier awards can be given for finding the one or more of the categories quickly. A 4 x multiplier can be designated for finding the category in the first thirty second period, then a 3 x multiplier can be designated for finding the category in the next thirty second period and a 2 x multiplier can be designated for finding the category in the third thirty second period.

The multiplier awards can be combined with the special category awards to add additional excitement and skill to the play of the methods of the present invention.

FIG. 9 shows how the method of the present invention can be presented to the player on a monitor 700. The monitor can be connected to a stand alone computer (not shown) on which the games described above are programmed to be played. Alternatively, the games can be played online and displayed to the player on the monitor for single or multiple player game play.

FIG. 10 shows how the method of the present invention can be displayed to the player on a cell phone 800. The game may be played self contained in the cell phone 800 or the cell phone 800 may be used for online single or multiple player game play.

While the invention has been illustrated with respect to its various embodiments, these embodiments should be considered illustrative rather than limiting. Various modifications and additions may be made and will be apparent to those skilled in the art.
What is claimed is:

1. A method of playing a game comprising:
   a) providing a matrix having a plurality of cell locations, the cell locations being arranged as a group of vertical columns, horizontal rows and diagonal lines;
   b) providing a deck of playing cards, each playing card having a unique suit and rank, and populating each cell location with a playing card selected from the deck;
   c) a player selecting in the matrix at least one combination of playing cards along a vertical column, along a horizontal row or along a diagonal.

2. The method of claim 1 in which the combination of playing cards is at least a five card poker hand.

3. The method of claim 2 in which a scoring table is provided that lists points that a player may achieve for each five card poker hand that is selected by the player.

4. The method of claim 3 in which a plurality of preselected five card poker hands are displayed to the player and the player attempts to select each of the plurality of preselected five card hands within a predetermined time period.

5. The method of claim 1 in which at least two players compete against each other in selecting poker hand combinations.

6. The method of claim 1 in which
   a) each playing card is provided with a numerical value based on the rank of the playing card,
   b) each playing card that is an Ace having a numerical value of one or eleven, each playing card that is a King, a Queen, or a Jack having a numerical value of ten and any other playing card having a numerical value equal to the number of pips on the playing card; and
   c) the combination of playing cards has a total numerical value of twenty-one.

7. The method of claim 1 in which the matrix has seven cell locations along each vertical column and seven cell locations along each horizontal row.

8. A method of playing a game comprising:
   a) providing a matrix having a plurality of cell locations, the cell locations being arranged as a group of vertical columns, horizontal rows and diagonal lines;
   b) providing a group of dice symbols, each dice symbol being a die face having a value of One, Two, Three, Four, Five, or Six, and populating each cell location with a dice symbol selected from the group;
   c) a player selecting in the matrix at least one dice symbol combination along a vertical column, along a horizontal row or along a diagonal.

9. The method of claim 8 in which the dice symbol combination is at least a group of five dice symbols.

10. The method of claim 8 in which the matrix has seven cell locations along each vertical column and seven cell locations along each horizontal row.

11. A method of playing a game comprising:
   a) providing a matrix having a plurality of cell locations, the cell locations being arranged as a group of vertical columns, horizontal rows and diagonal lines;
   b) providing a group of slot machine symbols and populating each cell location with a slot machine symbol selected from the group;
   c) a player selecting in the matrix at least one slot machine symbol combination along a vertical column, along a horizontal row or along a diagonal.

12. The method of claim 11 in which the slot machine symbol combination is at least a group of five slot machine symbols.

13. The method of claim 11 in which the matrix has seven cell locations along each vertical column and seven cell locations along each horizontal row.