



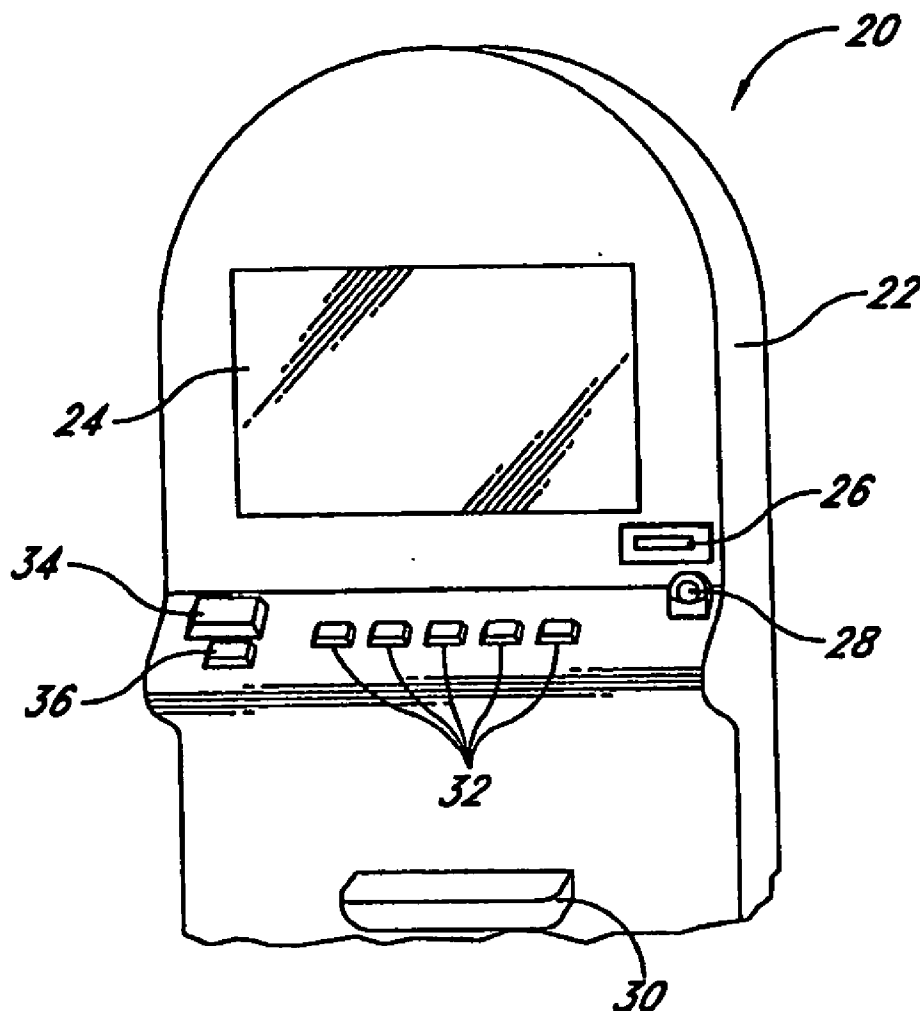
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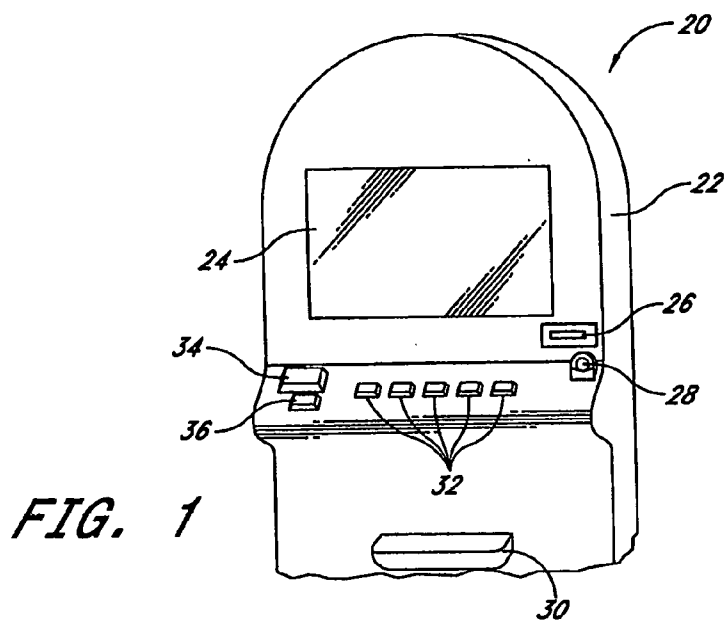
(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Mou et al.**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0241504 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 18, 2007**(54) **POKER GAME****Publication Classification**(76) Inventors: **Oliver C. Mou**, Las Vegas, NV  
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(JP)(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A63F 1/00** (2006.01)  
(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/292**  
(57) **ABSTRACT**Correspondence Address:  
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A poker game is disclosed. In one embodiment, a set of cards is dealt to a player who chooses cards to select as hold cards and discards non-selected cards from the set. Replacement cards are dealt to the player in a first draw to replace the non-selected cards. If the set of cards after the first draw is one or two cards short of a high-ranked hand, a second draw occurs where the player tries to obtain the perfecting card(s). In a further embodiment, during a draw for the perfecting card(s), the card is revealed to the player at a slower speed than occurs with the original deal or other draws. In one embodiment, the set of cards is a five-card poker hand and the game is implemented on a gaming machine. In one embodiment, the game is initiated by the player making a wager.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/513,607**(22) Filed: **Aug. 30, 2006****Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/791,360, filed on Apr. 12, 2006.





(♥—Heart; ♣—Club; ♦—Diamond; ♠—Spade)

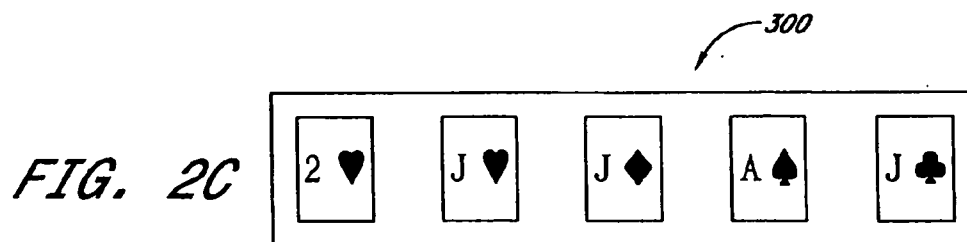
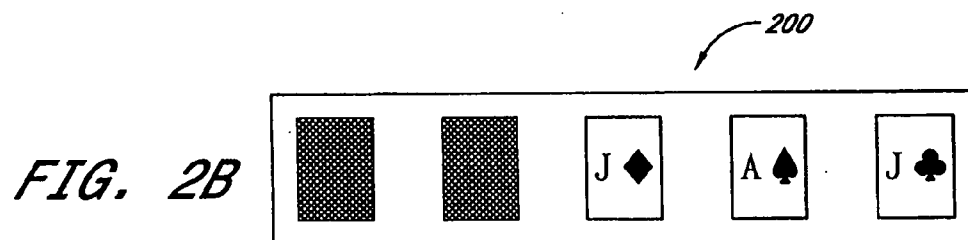
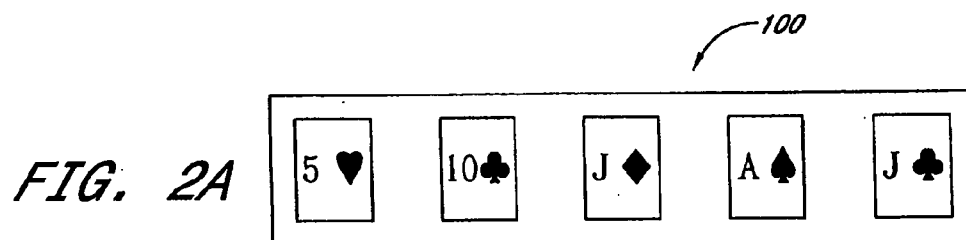


FIG. 2D

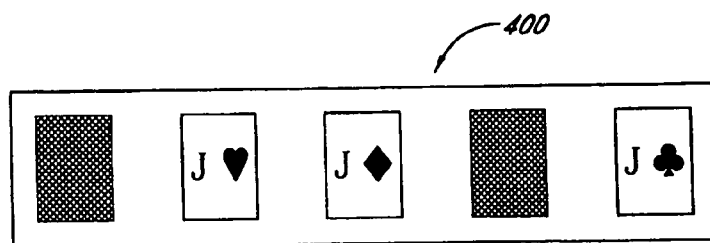


FIG. 2E

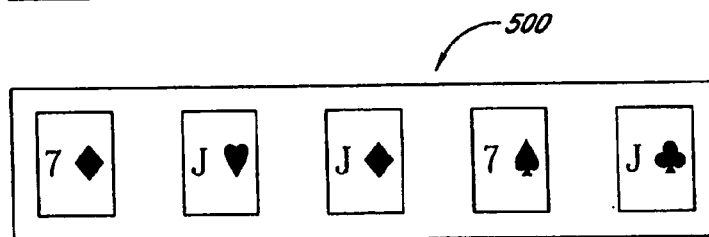


FIG. 3A

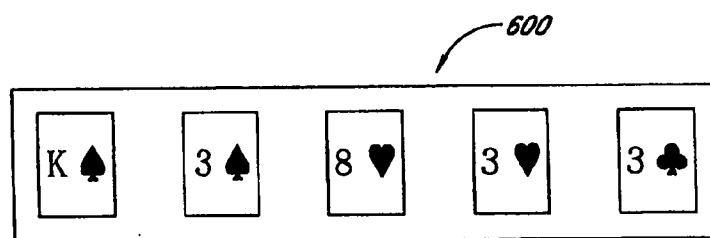


FIG. 3B

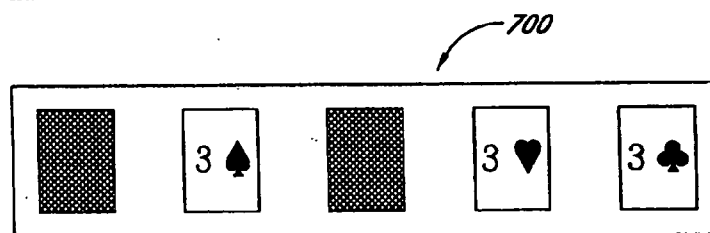


FIG. 3C

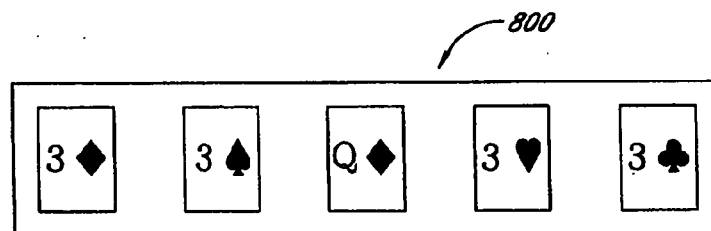
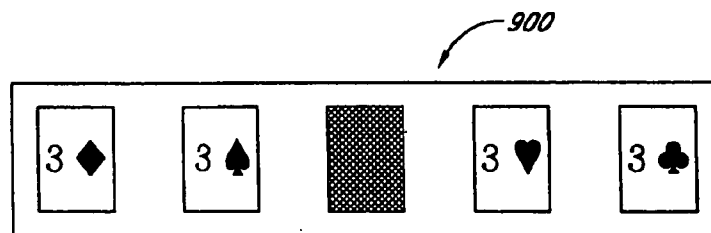
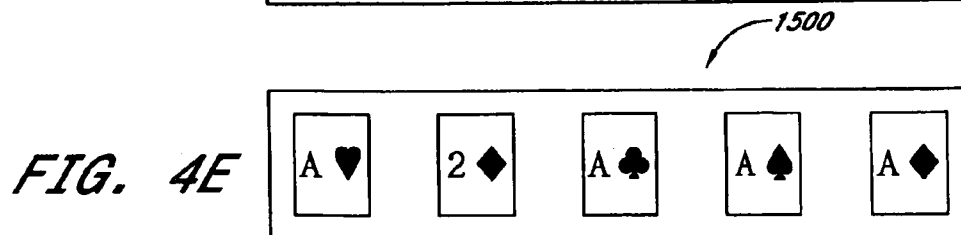
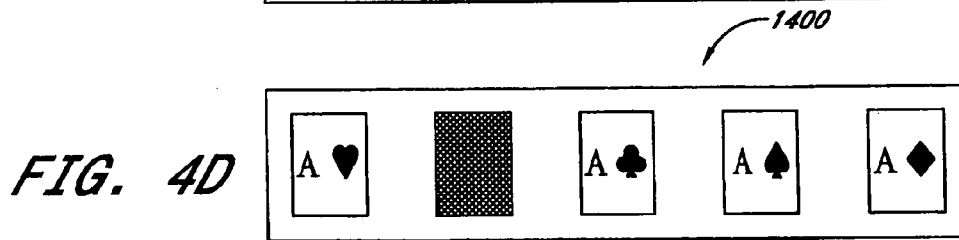
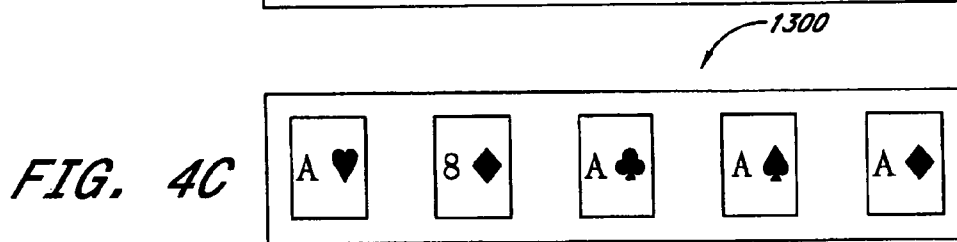
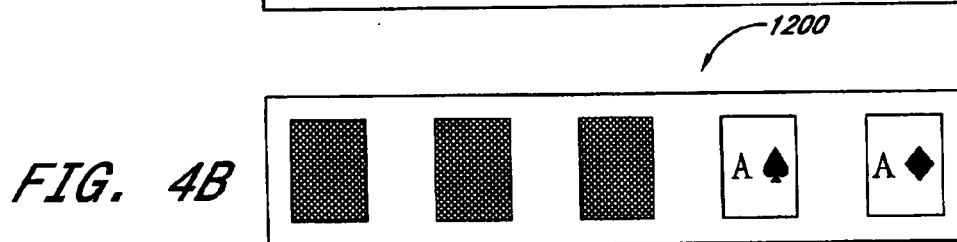
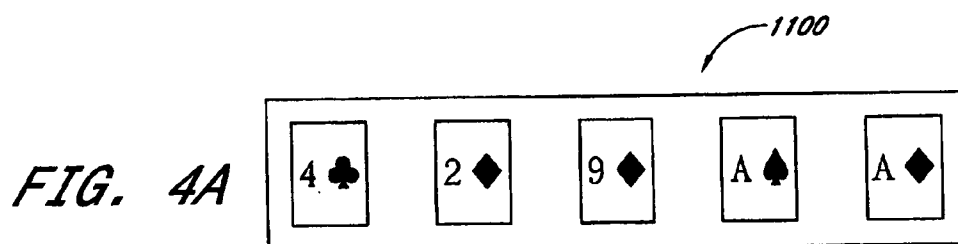
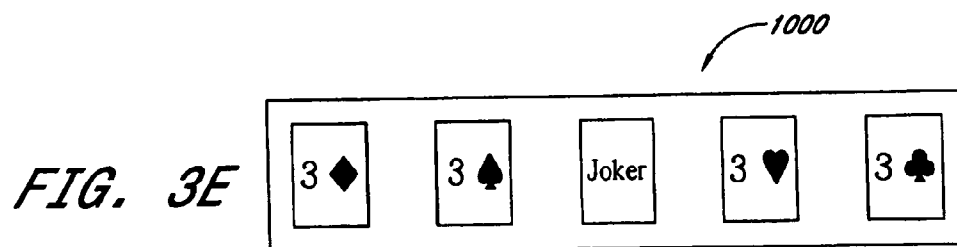
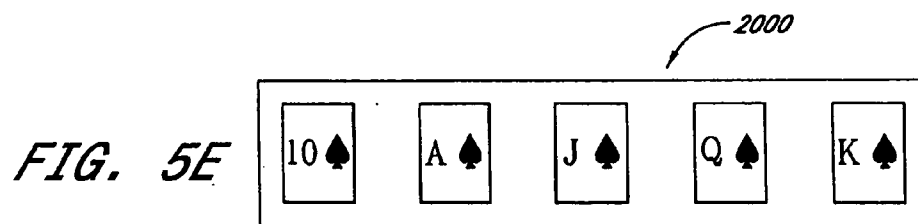
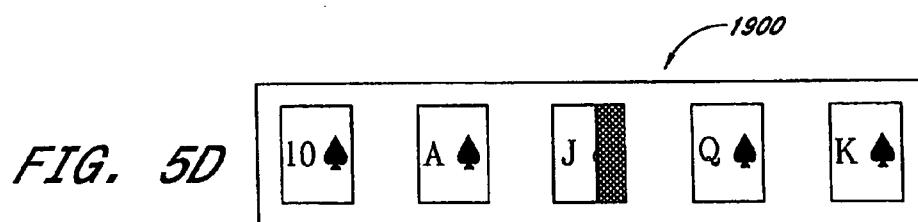
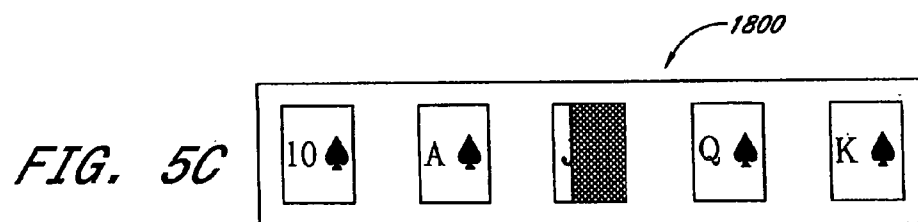
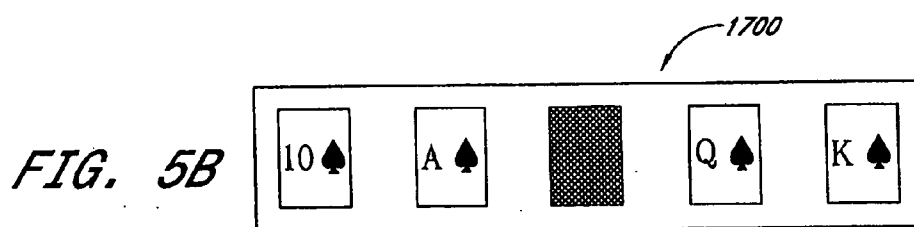
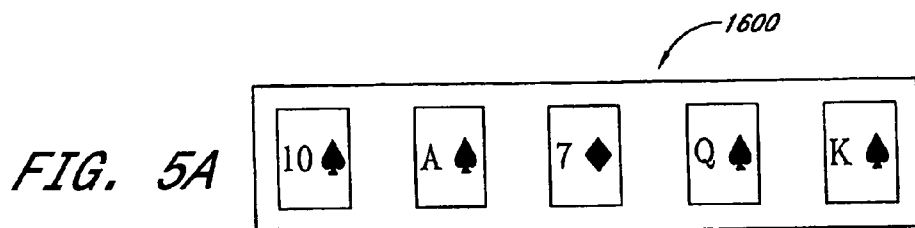


FIG. 3D







## POKER GAME

### RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/791,360, filed Apr. 12, 2006.

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to games, particularly to card games and more particularly to poker-type card games.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Poker is a favorite and frequently played card game which, in addition to its basic attraction, is very popular as a casino game. The traditional format of playing against live players has recently become even more widespread, and this has increased the appeal of the electronic format of poker played on gaming machines. As is known, this is commonly referred to as "video poker". In a typical game of video poker, a player makes a wager and receives a conventional set of five cards known as a hand. The player attempts to obtain a hand which comprises a predetermined combination of winning cards. More specifically, the player tries to make the best possible hand by selectively holding certain cards and discarding certain cards and receiving replacement cards for those discarded.

[0004] The term generally used to define the character of a hand is its "rank". In most video poker games, the lowest ranked hand that qualifies as a winning hand and for a corresponding payout is often a pair of Jacks. As the rank of the hand increases, so does the payout.

[0005] The highest ranked hand in a conventional poker game is generally a Royal Flush, which consists of an Ace-high straight, with all of the cards having the same suit. The hand with the next highest rank is a Straight Flush, where all cards are likewise of the same suit but consist of cards of any five consecutive values other than 10 through Ace. The third highest ranked hand in a conventional poker game is Four-of-a-Kind, which consists of four cards of the same value, such as four Threes. The fourth highest ranked hand is a Full House, which consists of three cards of the same value paired with two cards of the same value, but with the values of the two different sets being different. An example of a Full House is three Kings and two Queens. When playing video poker, the hands just described generally qualify for the highest payouts in descending order.

[0006] Of course, there are a variety of poker game variations. In one variation, "wild cards" may be utilized in play of the game. These wild cards may be additional cards (such as Jokers) to a standard 52 card deck, or designated cards of a 52 card deck (such as "one-eyed Jacks). Generally, a player is permitted to treat a wild card as any card of the deck. Thus, the wild card permits formation of additional hands to the normal poker hands. For example, a "Five of a Kind" hand may be formed from four cards of the same value (such as four 5s) along with a wild card (which is assigned a value of 5).

[0007] In certain poker games, other hands may be designated winning hands or hands of the standard ranks may be assigned different values. For example, a Royal Flush where the cards are in sequential order may be awarded a higher payout than one where the cards are not. In another poker game variation, a Four of a Kind hand may be

awarded different payouts depending upon the value of the fifth card (or "kicker" card) of the hand.

[0008] The goal of the player is to receive a hand which has a high rank, and thus associated payout. It can, however, be appreciated that the probability of receiving the higher ranked hands is relatively low. Thus, the excitement of the game is tempered and infrequently experienced.

[0009] It is thus desired to provide a game of poker which offers increased excitement by increasing the chances of obtaining hands of the highest rank, as well as adding to the anticipation of such a hand by modifying the manner in which the cards are revealed.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The present invention comprises a method of playing a game, and particularly, a poker-type card game.

[0011] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, the method comprises the step of initially dealing a set of cards to a player. The player may select none, one or more of the cards from the set as cards to be held. It follows that the player is allowed to discard non-selected cards from the set initially dealt.

[0012] In a preferred embodiment, the method includes the step of replacing each non-selected card with a new card on a first draw to the player to make a first draw set of cards. It is conventionally at this point that the value of a hand is determined and a payout is made if the hand is a winning one. Periodically, a player will obtain a winning hand comprised of Three-of-a-Kind, i.e. three cards of the same value. While this is a winning hand qualifying for a payout, it can be appreciated that the hand can also be described as being one card away from the much higher ranked hand of Four-of-a-Kind, or alternatively, two perfecting cards short of the higher ranked hand of a Full House.

[0013] In another circumstance, a player may obtain two pairs, i.e. two sets of two cards each, with each card in a set having the same value and with the values of each set being different from one another. This hand also is a winning hand qualifying for a payout. Yet it can be seen that the hand is also one card shy of the higher ranked hand of a Full House.

[0014] The novel method of the present invention enhances the excitement of the game by allowing play in these circumstances to continue after the first draw. More particularly, the inventive method incorporates the step of communicating a prompt to the player that the first draw set of cards comprises a combination of cards that is at least one perfecting card short of a complete set of a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards other than a Royal Flush. For example, as previously described, the Three-of-a-Kind hand is one perfecting card short of a higher ranked Four-of-a-Kind hand, i.e. a predetermined combination of winning cards comprising a plurality of cards having the same value. In some poker games that utilize wild cards, the Three-of-a-Kind hand is two perfecting cards shy of another predetermined combination of winning cards comprising a greater plurality of cards having the same value, i.e. a Five-of-a-Kind hand. The Three-of-a-Kind hand may also be viewed in a different manner as being two perfecting cards short of a Full House hand. A Full House may broadly be described as a predetermined combination of winning cards comprising a first set of cards and a second set of cards, each card in the first set having an equal first value and each card in the second set having an equal second value. The two-pair

hand described above is also one perfecting card short of a higher ranked Full House hand.

**[0015]** As play is allowed to continue in accordance with the inventive method, the player is given an opportunity, on at least second draw, to try to obtain the at least one perfecting card in a second draw set of cards. Thus, the player is given an additional chance at improving the hand.

**[0016]** In one embodiment, the inventive method further incorporates the step of placing a wager. The wager provides an expectation by the player to receive a payout should he or she obtain a winning hand during play. Thus, the inventive method further comprises the step of determining if the first draw set of cards comprises a predetermined combination of winning cards. In a further embodiment, there may be included the step of determining if the second draw set of cards comprises a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

**[0017]** In accordance with the gaming intent, one embodiment of the method comprises the step of paying an award if the first draw set of cards results in a predetermined combination of winning cards. In a related embodiment, the method may include the step of paying an award if the second draw set of cards does not result in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards. Preferably, the method may incorporate the step of paying an award if the second draw set of cards results in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

**[0018]** In accordance with the previously described steps, the inventive method may comprise the step of paying a first full winning amount if the first draw set of cards results in a predetermined combination of winning cards. A related embodiment of the present invention contemplates the step of paying a first reduced winning amount if the first draw set of cards results in a predetermined combination of winning cards but the second draw set of cards does not result in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards. Further, in one embodiment of the invention, the method contemplates paying a second winning amount in the event the set of cards after the second draw is in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

**[0019]** In a further embodiment of the invention, the method may comprise the step of placing a first wager prior to the dealing step and a second wager prior to the step where the at least second draw is allowed. This may alter play strategy, and thus increase interest in the game, if the player risks additional money for the chance to get a perfecting card in an additional draw.

**[0020]** In a further effort to bring excitement to the game, the method contemplates revealing cards on the initial deal at a first speed and revealing one or more cards at the replacing step at a second speed. In one embodiment of invention, the second speed is slower than the first speed. At the point of any of a plurality of draw steps, where there is the anticipation of possibly receiving a perfecting card to obtain a hand of very high rank, the use of a slow draw feature further increases the excitement associated with the method of the invention.

**[0021]** An additional embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the step initially dealing a set of cards to a player, wherein the cards are revealed to the player at a first speed. The player is then allowed to select none, one or more of the cards from the set as cards to be held. Similarly, as before, the method of includes the step of allowing the player to discard non-selected cards of the set.

The step of the inventive method that follows is replacing each non-selected card with a new card on a draw to the player to make a new draw set of cards. In this replacement step, one or more replacement cards are revealed to the player at a second speed. The preferred embodiment of the inventive method contemplates that the second speed is slower than the first speed.

**[0022]** In an additional embodiment of the method, a prompt is communicated to the player when the new draw set of cards comprises a combination of cards that is at least one perfecting card short of a complete set of a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards. The player may be given the option to continue play and, in exercising the option, provided an opportunity, on at least a second draw, to try to obtain the at least one perfecting card in an at least second draw set of cards. This situation further contemplates the step of revealing one or more cards in a second draw at a third speed. In this circumstance, it is contemplated that the third speed is slower than the second speed.

**[0023]** Other advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in this art from the following description wherein there is shown and described an embodiment of this invention, simply by way of illustration of one of the modes best suited to carry out the invention. As will be realized, the invention is capable of other different embodiments and its several details are capable of modification in various, obvious aspects all without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the drawings and descriptions will be regarded as illustrative in nature and not as restrictive.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0024]** The accompanying drawings incorporated in and forming a part of this specification illustrates several aspects of the present invention and together with the description serves to explain the principles of the invention. In the drawings:

**[0025]** FIG. 1 illustrates a gaming machine of the type which may be used to implement a game in accordance with the invention for play by a player;

**[0026]** FIG. 2A illustrates a set of cards dealt in accordance with a first example of a method of game play which offers a second chance to improve the game outcome, the first example relating to a version of the game played with a standard card deck;

**[0027]** FIG. 2B illustrates cards selected to be held and non-selected cards to be discarded in accordance with the first game example;

**[0028]** FIG. 2C illustrates a resulting hand after a replacement cards have been dealt in a first draw to a player in accordance with the first game example;

**[0029]** FIG. 2D illustrates a set of cards that is one card short of a Four-of-a-Kind or two cards short of a Full House, in preparation for a second draw in accordance with the first game example;

**[0030]** FIG. 2E illustrates a set of cards after receiving a Pair of replacement cards, which cards complete a Full House hand after a second draw in accordance with the first game example;

**[0031]** FIG. 3A illustrates a set of cards dealt in accordance with a second example of a method of game play

which offers a second chance to improve the game outcome, the second example relating to a version of the game played with wildcards;

[0032] FIG. 3B illustrates an example of selected cards to be held and non-selected cards to be discarded in accordance with said second game example;

[0033] FIG. 3C illustrates a resulting hand after a replacement cards have been dealt in a first draw to a player in accordance with said second game example;

[0034] FIG. 3D illustrates a set of cards that is one card short of Five-of-a-Kind hand and in preparation for a second draw in accordance with said second game example;

[0035] FIG. 3E illustrates a set of cards after receiving a wildcard (in the form of a joker), the cards thus forming a Five-of-a-Kind hand, in a second draw in accordance with said second game example;

[0036] FIG. 4A illustrates a set of cards dealt in accordance with a third example of a method of game play which offers a second chance to improve the game outcome, the third example relating to a version of the game where a player attempts to improve a kicker card;

[0037] FIG. 4B illustrates an example of selected cards to be held and non-selected cards to be discarded in accordance with said third game example;

[0038] FIG. 4C illustrates a resulting hand after a replacement cards have been dealt in a first draw to a player in accordance with said third game example;

[0039] FIG. 4D illustrates a set of cards that comprises a Four-of-a-Kind that lacks a perfecting kicker card, in preparation for a second draw in accordance with said third game example;

[0040] FIG. 4E illustrates the Four-of-a-Kind hand after receiving a perfecting kicker card in a second draw in accordance with said third game example;

[0041] FIG. 5A illustrates a set of cards dealt in accordance another embodiment of the invention;

[0042] FIG. 5B illustrates an example of selected cards to be held and non-selected cards to be discarded in accordance with said second embodiment of the invention; and

[0043] FIGS. 5C-5E illustrate a sequence of steps in the draw of a perfecting card that is being revealed at a slow speed in accordance with an example said second embodiment of the invention.

[0044] Reference will now be made in detail to the present preferred embodiment of the invention an example of which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0045] The invention is a method of playing a game. In the following description numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough description of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art, that the present invention may be practiced without the specific details. In other instances, well-known features have not been described in detail so as to not to obscure the invention.

[0046] In its broadest aspects, the invention comprises methods of presenting and playing a game, and more particularly, a poker-type card game. One aspect of the invention is a poker-type card game in which a player is provided, at one or more times, with a second or additional chance to improve the outcome of the game. One embodiment of the invention is a “draw” poker game in which a player is dealt

a first set of cards and given a first opportunity to select none, one or more of the cards from the set as cards to be held. The non-selected cards are discarded for continuing play and replacement cards (if any) are presented to form a first poker hand. In the event the first hand is a particular hand, the player is provided a second chance or additional opportunity to improve their first hand via another draw and replacement sequence. In one embodiment, both the final hand and, if more than one draw occurs, the intermediary or first hand, may be evaluated to determine if they are winning hands based on the rules of the game and qualify for a payout.

[0047] Another aspect of the invention is a method for increasing the anticipation or excitement associated with a card game and, more particularly, a poker-type card game. In one embodiment, the method comprises changing the speed at which one or more cards are revealed to the player.

[0048] It is within the scope of the inventive method that the steps may be practiced as a live game at a poker table, such as including a dealer and one or more live players. It is also contemplated that the method of the present invention may be played in an electronic version of poker. Thus, in one embodiment of the invention, the various steps of the invention are implemented with a gaming machine. As is known in the art, such a gaming machine is referred to as a “video poker machine”. FIG. 1 illustrates a gaming machine 20 in accordance with the invention. As illustrated, the gaming machine 20 includes a housing 22 for enclosing/supporting various components of the machine. The gaming machine 20 includes a display screen 24 for presenting images of cards or other indicia. While not shown, speakers or other devices may be provided for generating sound associated with the game.

[0049] In one embodiment, the game is presented as a “wagering” type game. In such a configuration, the game may be initiated by a player making a wager. During play, if the player receives a combination of winning cards, the player is provided with an award, such as a monetary payout. The monetary payout may be form of credits, coins, or a voucher which may be exchanged for money at a cashier’s cage. The player may also receive the monetary payout from a machine that reads a coded voucher and dispenses money in accordance therewith. It is contemplated that the player may be compensated for winning in a variety of ways, including prizes other than monetary finds.

[0050] In order to accept a wager from a player wishing to initiate a game, the gaming machine 20 may include a bill validator/acceptor 26 for receiving paper currency, and a coin acceptor 28 for accepting coins. Other means of payment, such as credit cards, previously issued money vouchers and the like may be utilized. An award of winnings in the form of coins may be paid to the player via coin tray 30.

[0051] Preferably, the gaming machine 20 includes interface elements for a player to provide input. In one embodiment, the interface elements comprise one or more buttons. For example, a plurality of card “hold” or “select” buttons 32 may be provided for permitting a player to hold/select cards in a hand. A “deal-draw” button 34 may be provided to allow the player to initiate the game with a deal of cards or to continue the game with a draw of replacement cards. A bet button 36 may be provided for a player to select the amount to bet on a specific game.

[0052] A game controller (not shown) may be provided for controlling the various devices of the gaming machine 20



and for providing game information and instructions. More specifically, the game controller may be configured to generate video and audio data for presentation by the display **24** and speakers of the gaming machine **20**. The game controller may further be configured to detect a signal from the coin acceptor **28** indicating the receipt of coins, or alternatively, from the bill validator/acceptor **26** indicating the receipt of paper currency, and may be arranged to cause a coin delivery mechanism to deliver coins from a coin hopper to the coin tray **30** if the player obtains a winning hand.

**[0053]** It will be appreciated that the gaming machine **20** may have a variety of configurations, and that the machine, illustrated in FIG. 1 and described above, is but an example of a device for implementing the game of the present invention. In one or more embodiments, the gaming machine **20** may be associated with a network and receive game information remotely and may be associated with a network and receive game information remotely and may transmit information, such as payout and game play information, to a remote location.

#### Game with Second Chance or Additional Opportunity to Improve Outcome

**[0054]** One aspect of the invention is a game which offers a second chance or additional opportunity for a player to improve their hand. In general, a poker game includes a first opportunity to draw and replace one or more cards to create a poker hand. In accordance with the invention, if the player receives a particular poker hand after a first opportunity to draw and replace cards, the player is provided a second or additional opportunity to improve their hand by replacing one or more cards. In a preferred embodiment, a player is provided a second chance or additional opportunity if their original poker hand is a winning poker hand of a predetermined rank or value (such as defined by winning payout), whereby the second chance or additional opportunity affords the player the chance to obtain a poker hand of even higher rank or value.

**[0055]** As detailed below, the particular initial poker hands which may trigger the second chance or additional opportunity may vary, including depending upon the rules of the game. The particular poker hands which are declared winning poker hands may also vary.

**[0056]** One example of this embodiment of the present invention is described with reference to FIGS. 2A-2E. In this embodiment, a first set or hand **100** of cards are dealt to a player (preferably after a player places an appropriate wager). The cards may be dealt from a standard deck comprising 52 playing cards, or a plurality of standard decks of playing cards. In the preferred embodiment, the act of dealing comprises the generation of card information and the display of the cards to the player on the display screen **24** of the gaming machine **20**. In this arrangement, the deck does not comprises a physical set of cards, but simply data representing such cards.

**[0057]** In the illustrated example, the set **100** of cards comprises five cards. Preferably, the cards are dealt face-up. In the example shown in FIG. 2A, the set **100** of cards dealt to the player includes the 5 of Hearts, 10 of Clubs, Jack of Diamonds, Ace of Spades, and Jack of Clubs.

**[0058]** In accordance with a further step of the inventive method, a player is permitted to select none, one or more of the cards in the set **100** as cards to be held. As a consequence of selecting cards from the set **100** to be held, the non-

selected cards from the set are discarded. As illustrated by the set **200** of cards in FIG. 2B, the player has elected to hold the Jack of Diamonds, Ace of Spaces and Jack of Clubs. Consequently, the player has elected to discard the 5 of Hearts and 10 of Clubs.

**[0059]** The inventive method contemplates in a subsequent step that replacement cards are dealt in a first draw to the player to replace the non-selected cards from the set **200** that were discarded. This creates, as illustrated in FIG. 2C, a new set **300** of five cards from a first draw. As shown, the new set **300** of cards includes the 2 of Hearts, Jack of Hearts, Jack of Diamonds, Ace of Spades and Jack of Clubs. It is contemplated that the replacement cards, which are represented in this example by the 2 Hearts and Jack of Hearts, are dealt from the same standard deck of cards from which the initial set **100** of cards are dealt.

**[0060]** In a typical game where the predetermined combination of winning cards that qualifies for a payout starts at a pair of Jacks, it can be seen that the set **300** of cards resulting from the first draw to the player represents a winning hand. More specifically, the set **300** of cards represents a Three-of-a-Kind hand having the combination of the Jack of Hearts, Jack of Diamonds and Jack of Clubs. In a game of poker as conventionally played in the prior art, this particular game would be completed with the player qualifying for a payout. The qualifying payout may vary in accordance with the rules for the particular casino and/or the particular gaming machine **20**. A typical payout for a Three-of-a-Kind winning hand is based on a pay table ratio of 3:1. More particularly, as an example, if the wager for that particular game is one coin or credit, the payout for a Three-of-a-Kind winning hand is three coins or credits.

**[0061]** There is always a measure of excitement when a player receives a winning hand, such as, in this case, a Three-of-a-Kind winning hand. Comparing FIGS. 2B and 2C, it is seen that one of the replacement cards from the first draw to the player was a Jack of Hearts, which completed the winning Three-of-a-Kind hand. It can be appreciated by those skilled in the poker art that if the other replacement card, instead of the 2 of Hearts, had been the Jack of Spades, the set **300** of cards after the first draw would have resulted in a winning hand of much higher rank (i.e. Four-of-a-Kind, that being 4 Jacks). Thus, by evaluating the set **300** of cards shown in FIG. 2C, the set is one card (Jack of Spades) short of a Four-of-a-Kind hand.

**[0062]** The set **300** of cards in FIG. 2C can be viewed in a different manner and be considered as two cards short of a Full House. More specifically, the set **300** of cards presently includes Three-of-a-Kind and only requires an additional pair, i.e. two cards of the same value, to achieve a Full House. In other words, any pair, such as, for example, two 7s or two 9s, would perfect the hand to become a Full House. A conventional payout ratio for a Full House winning hand may be 8:1. Consequently, if the player receives, for example, two 7s, defined as perfecting cards that change the first winning hand to a second, enhanced winning hand, the player receives eight coins or credits for every bet coin or credit.

**[0063]** In accordance with a further step of the method of the present invention, the set **300** of cards shown in FIG. 2C qualifies for additional play. More particularly, the inventive method contemplates an opportunity for a second chance or additional opportunity to improve the initial poker hand to a better poker hand. Preferably, this second chance or addi-

tional opportunity is in the form of an additional draw in an attempt to obtain the perfecting card or cards to achieve a higher ranking hand of either Four-of-a-Kind or a Full House. This option is presented to the player, preferably in conjunction with a prompt, when the hand is one or two perfecting cards short of a higher ranked hand based upon a hand which already has a winning rank. When the method is implemented on a video poker machine, it is contemplated that the game controller recognizes the character of any hand and manages the prompts given to the player. It is contemplated that the prompt to the player can be in any form, such as without limitation, a separate button (not shown) on the gaming machine 20 that presents a continuous or flashing light and/or an audio message. The game controller may then either automatically provide for a second draw or, alternatively, receive instruction from the player to proceed with a second draw. It is contemplated for one embodiment of the invention that, in addition to the initial wager by the player, an additional wager, of either the same or reduced amount, may be made by to authorize continued play of the hand. Of course, the second draw may be implemented without an additional wager.

**[0064]** Accordingly, as illustrated by the set 400 of cards in FIG. 2D, the 2 of Hearts and the Ace of Spades are discarded or surrendered in preparation for the second draw to the player. Ultimately, as depicted in FIG. 2E, the set 500 of cards demonstrates that the two replacement cards received in the second draw are the 7 of Diamonds and 7 of Spades. Thus, the set 500 of cards is the result of a successful second draw by the player of perfecting cards to complete an enhanced winning hand of a Full House.

**[0065]** The method of the present invention further contemplates one or more ways to reward a player based on the types of intermediary and final hands received. More specifically, with reference again to FIG. 2C and as previously described, the set 300 of cards shows a Three-of-a-Kind hand which conventionally qualifies for a payout. Thus, one embodiment of the method may have the player automatically qualified to receive an award at this stage regardless of what occurs on any subsequent draw or draws. Thus, using a typical payout ratio, the player may at this stage be guaranteed a minimum award of three coins or credits for every bet coin or credit.

**[0066]** The inventive method contemplates a modified reward structure where, after the player receives the Three-of-a-Kind hand shown in set 300 of cards in FIG. 2C, exercising the option for a second draw puts the payout for the Three-of-a-Kind hand at risk. In one embodiment of the method, if the player exercises the option but does not receive a perfecting card or cards, the player may receive a reduced award that is lower than the typical 3:1 payout ratio associated with the Three-of-a-Kind hand received on the first draw.

**[0067]** Of course, as stated with respect to the complete set of FIGS. 2A-2E, the successful receipt of a perfecting card or cards on the second draw, making a hand with an enhanced combination of winning cards, qualifies for an award that corresponds to that winning hand in the payout ratio being utilized for the game. It is contemplated that the player receives this payout regardless of the content of the intermediary hands or the number of draws to reach the final hand.

**[0068]** Another example of the invention is illustrated by the series of FIGS. 3A-3D. Some poker games may include

the use of one or more "wild" cards. More particularly, it is known in the poker art that in conventional games, the greatest number of cards available having the same value is four, a card of the same value from each of the four suits. By incorporating the use of wild cards, with any wild card being granted the attributes of any individual card of the player's choosing, it is possible to achieve a set of cards that qualifies as Five-of-a-Kind.

**[0069]** FIG. 3A presents a set 600 of cards that results from an initial deal to a player. As shown, this set 600 of cards comprises the King of Spades, 3 of Spades, 8 of Hearts, 3 of Hearts and 3 of Clubs. The method of the present invention proceeds in conventional fashion as the player is allowed to select cards from the set 600 as cards to be held. As shown in FIG. 3B, the set 700 of cards includes the 3 of Spades, 3 of Hearts and 3 of Clubs chosen by the player as cards to be held. In conjunction therewith, the player has selected the King of Spades and 8 of Hearts as non-selected cards to be discarded.

**[0070]** On a first draw to the player, as shown in FIG. 3C, the replacement cards that fill the new set 800 of cards are the 3 of Diamonds and Queen of Diamonds. Thus, the set 800 of cards presents a Four-of-a-Kind hand having the 3 of Diamonds, 3 of Spades, 3 of Hearts and 3 of Clubs. As is known in the art, this qualifies as a winning hand of high rank. Thus, the set 800 of cards qualifies for a significant payout, perhaps at a level of 50:1. While such a winning set of cards is rarely received, it can simultaneously be appreciated that in a game using one or more wild cards, the set 800 of cards is one wild card short of an even higher ranked hand of Five-of-a-Kind. In games in which wild cards are utilized, the payout ratio is likely greater for Five-of-a-Kind hands than for Four-of-a-Kind hands.

**[0071]** Again stated another way, a wild card, such as a Joker, would perfect the hand to become a Five-of-a-Kind hand. The wild card is defined in this situation as the perfecting card that changes the first winning hand to a second, enhanced winning hand.

**[0072]** In accordance with a further step in the inventive method, the set 800 of cards depicted in FIG. 3C qualifies for further play and the player is prompted for continuing the hand. As shown by the set 900 of cards in FIG. 3D, the Queen of Diamonds is discarded in preparation for a second draw to the player in an attempt to obtain the perfecting wild card to create a hand of Five-of-a-Kind. The set 1000 of cards illustrated in FIG. 3E shows the result of the second draw with the player in fact obtaining the perfecting Joker and thus creating an even higher ranked hand than existed after the first draw, replacing a Four-of-a-Kind hand with a Five-of-a-Kind hand. The award given to the player may conform to that described with respect to the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 2A-2E.

**[0073]** While not illustrated in a sequence of figures, another embodiment of the present invention where wild cards are employed contemplates a circumstance where cards are dealt to a player and, after a first draw, a winning hand of Three-of-a-Kind is made. In accordance with the inventive method, the player is provided a second draw to perfect the hand to an enhanced winning hand of either Four-of-a-Kind or Five-of-a-Kind. If the player successfully receives a card that improves the hand to Four-of-a-Kind on the second draw, this embodiment contemplates that the second draw hand qualifies for still even more play to attempt to obtain a Five-of-a-Kind hand. Consequently, the

player is provided with a third draw in a bid to get a perfecting card to make a Five-of-a-Kind hand.

**[0074]** Yet another example of the invention will be described with reference to 4A-4E. In some poker games, particular Four-of-a-Kind hands are paid higher winnings than others, such as where the “fifth” or “kicker” card has a specific value. In accordance with the increasing value of cards, the rules in this modified payout version of poker treat a higher valued kicker card as potentially qualifying for a higher payout. More specifically, for example, a Four-of-a-Kind hand As, 2s, 3s or 4s having a kicker of A, 2, 3, or 4 may have a payout that is twice the payout as compared with a Four-of-a-Kind hand having a kicker card of value 5 through K. In accordance with this aspect of the invention, a player who receives a Four-of-a-Kind hand with a lower ranked kicker card may be provided a second chance or additional opportunity to receive a higher value kicker card, thus improving their hand and their winning payout.

**[0075]** As shown in FIG. 4A, an original set 1100 of cards is dealt to a player comprising the 4 of Clubs, 2 of Diamonds, 9 of Clubs, A of Spades and A of Hearts. Proceeding in similar manner as with previous embodiments, and in accordance with typical video poker play, the player selects certain cards as cards to be held for further play and discards non-selected cards. This is illustrated in FIG. 4B, with the set 1200 of cards showing the A of Spades and A of Clubs as cards selected to be held and the 4 of Clubs, 2 of Diamonds and 9 of Diamonds as non-selected cards to be discarded.

**[0076]** Again, as is customary, replacement cards are dealt in a first draw to a player. This step is presented in FIG. 4C, where the replacement cards comprise the A of Hearts, 8 of Diamonds and A of Clubs. Consequently, the set 1300 of cards shown in FIG. 3C presents a winning combination of cards making a Four-of-a-Kind hand having four As. While this is a winning combination of cards qualifying for a payout, the kicker card in this Four-of-a-Kind hand is a 8 of Diamonds. Thus, in accordance with the rules of the modified payout schedule, the winning hand does not have a kicker card that makes this hand qualify for the higher payout.

**[0077]** In an embodiment of the inventive method, the set 1300 of cards in FIG. 4C qualifies for additional play. The player is prompted to continue and allowed a second draw in an attempt to obtain a kicker card that perfects the winning hand to an enhanced winning hand that qualifies for a higher payout. Thus, as illustrated in FIG. 4D, the set 1400 of cards shows the 8 of Diamonds being discarded in preparation for the second draw for a perfecting kicker card. The result of the second draw is illustrated in FIG. 4E, where the replacement card for the 8 of Diamonds is shown in set 1500 of cards as being the 2 of Diamonds. Thus, as a result of the second draw, the player receives a perfecting higher valued 2 of Diamonds, to enhance the payout for the winning Four-of-a-Kind hand.

**[0078]** It will now be appreciated that there are numerous possible configurations of a game in accordance with the invention. In particular, a player may be awarded a second chance or additional opportunity to improve their hand in various situations or circumstances, not limited to those particular examples detailed herein. For example, in some circumstances, only a single hand may qualify or entitle the player to a second chance or additional opportunity (such as a player's receipt of a Four-of-a-Kind with the opportunity to try for a Five-of-a-Kind). In other circumstances, multiple

hands may qualify (such as a player's receipt of a Three-of-a-Kind or Four-of-a-Kind). Even more specific hands could be designated as qualifying (such as a Four-of-a-Kind of 6s, but no other Four-of-a-Kind hands), or other hands or card combinations, as desired. Further, it will be appreciated that the final hand may be declared winning only if the second chance or additional opportunity resulted in a particular hand. For example, a player may be given a second chance if they receive a Three-of-a-Kind and be awarded winnings if they then obtain a final hand which is a Four-of-a-Kind, but not for obtaining a Full House.

#### Method of Presenting Game in Manner Enhancing Player Anticipation/Excitement

**[0079]** Another aspect of the invention is a method of presenting a game in a manner which enhances the anticipation or excitement of a player. In a preferred embodiment, this method comprises varying the speed at which the cards are revealed to a player.

**[0080]** One example of this aspect of the invention is illustrated in FIGS. 5A-5E. FIG. 5A presents a conventional set 1600 of cards originally dealt to a player. This set 1600 of cards comprises the 10 of Spades, Ace of Spades, 7 of Diamonds, Queen of Spades, and King of Spades. As is known, the set 1600 presents a sequence of cards that is close to a straight. More specifically, the set 1600 of cards lacks only a Jack to complete the sequence 10 through Ace for straight. In addition, the set 1600 of cards lacks only a Spade for a winning combination comprising a Flush. Ultimately, it can be seen that the set 1600 of cards lacks only the Jack of Spades to make the highest ranked hand in poker, i.e. a Royal Flush.

**[0081]** As is conventional, the player is allowed to choose cards from the set 1600 as cards to be held and to discard the non-selected cards. As depicted in FIG. 5B, the set 1700 of cards shows that the player has selected the 10 of Spades, Ace of Spades, Queen of Spades and King of Spades to be held and has chosen the 7 of Diamonds to be discarded. Thus, the set 1700 of cards is prepared to receive a replacement card that the player hopes to be a Jack or a Spade or, most preferably, the Jack of Spades.

**[0082]** In order to create additional excitement with anticipation, the inventive method incorporates a slow-opening feature where, in this circumstance, the replacement card drawn to the player is revealed at a slower speed than is conventional in the art. More specifically, FIGS. 5C-5E show in stepped fashion the slower revelation of the replacement card. It should be appreciated that the progression of the revealing process may be either in stepped fashion or with continuous, slower motion.

**[0083]** In FIG. 5C, the replacement card is shown as being approximately one-third revealed. In this presentation, the player begins to see aspects of the card, but preferably cannot make a determination as to its specific identity. FIG. 5D presents the replacement card as being approximately two-thirds revealed. At this point in the revelation process, further aspects of the replacement card can be seen, but desirably there are still sufficient features hidden from view that prevent the complete identification of the card. Consequently, it is contemplated that anticipation is mounting with the player, which increases the excitement of the game. FIG. 5E illustrates the replacement card in its fully revealed state, showing the value as being the Jack of Spades which completes the highest ranked hand of a Royal Flush. It can

be appreciated that the slow-opening feature heightens the additional anticipation felt by the player and further advances the enjoyment of poker play.

**[0084]** Although the slow revelation of one or more replacement cards has just been described in conjunction with a conventional first draw to the player, it is within the scope of the invention that this feature be incorporated into a second draw to the player in accordance with any one or more of the earlier described embodiments.

**[0085]** In summary, numerous benefits have been described which result from employing the concepts of the present invention. Advantageously, the inventive method presents a player with an opportunity to continue play when a combination of cards received on a conventional draw is one or two perfecting cards away from a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards. The player is given an opportunity for a second draw to try to obtain the perfecting card or cards. In addition, a slow-opening feature in the revelation of important and potentially perfecting cards to a player enhances the anticipation of the game and increases the excitement experienced by the player.

**[0086]** The foregoing description of a preferred embodiment of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. Obvious modifications or variations are possible in light of the above teachings. The embodiment disclosed herein was chosen and described to provide the best illustration of the principles of the invention and its practical application to thereby enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as is suited to the particular use contemplated. All such modifications and variations are within the scope of the invention as determined by the appended claims when interpreted in accordance with the breadth to which they are fairly, legally and equitably entitled.

We claim:

1. A method of playing a game, comprising the steps of: dealing a set of cards to a player; allowing said player to select none, one or more of said cards from said set as cards to be held; allowing said player to discard non-selected cards from said set; replacing each non-selected card with a new card on a first draw to said player to make a first draw set of cards; communicating a prompt to said player that said first draw set of cards comprises a combination of cards that is at least one perfecting card short of a complete set of a predetermined combination of winning cards other than a Royal Flush; and allowing said player, on at least a second draw, to try to obtain said at least one perfecting card in an at least second draw set of cards.
2. The method as in claim 1, wherein said first draw set of cards comprises a combination of cards that is two perfecting cards short of a complete set of a predetermined combination of winning cards other than a Royal Flush.
3. The method as in claim 1, wherein said complete set of a predetermined combination of winning cards comprises a plurality of cards having the same value.
4. The method as in claim 3, wherein said plurality of cards having the same value comprises Four-of-a-Kind.
5. The method as in claim 3, wherein said plurality of cards having the same value comprises Five-of-a-Kind.

6. The method as in claim 1, wherein said complete set of a predetermined combination of winning cards comprises a first set of cards and a second set of cards, each card in said first set having an equal first value and each card in said second set having an equal second value.

7. The method as in claim 6, wherein said complete set of a predetermined combination of winning cards comprises a Full House.

8. The method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of placing a wager.

9. The method as in claim 8, further comprising the step of determining if said first draw set of cards comprises a predetermined combination of winning cards.

10. The method as in claim 8, further comprising the step of determining if said at least second draw set of cards comprises a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

11. The method as in claim 9, further comprising the step of paying an award if said first draw set of cards results in a predetermined combination of winning cards.

12. The method as in claim 10, further comprising the step of paying an award if said at least second draw set of cards does not result in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

13. The method as in claim 10, further comprising the step of paying an award if said at least second draw set of cards results in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

14. The method as in claim 11, further comprising the step of paying a first full winning amount if said first draw set of cards results in a predetermined combination of winning cards.

15. The method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of paying a first reduced winning amount if said first draw set of cards results in predetermined combination of winning cards, but said at least second draw set of cards does not result in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

16. The method as in claim 13, further comprising the step of paying a second winning amount if said at least second draw set of cards results in a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

17. The method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of placing a first wager prior to said dealing step and a second wager prior to said step of allowing at least a second draw.

18. The method as in claim 1, wherein said dealing step comprises revealing cards to said player at a first speed and said replacing step comprises revealing one or more cards at a second speed.

19. The method as in claim 18, wherein said second speed is slower than said first speed.

20. The method as in claim 1, wherein said dealing step and said replacing step comprise revealing cards to said player at a first speed and, in said step wherein said at least second draw is allowed, revealing one or more cards to said player at a second speed.

21. The method as in claim 20, wherein said second speed is slower than said first speed.

22. A method of playing a game, comprising the steps of: dealing a set of cards to a player, wherein said set of cards is revealed to said player at a first speed; allowing said player to select none, one or more of said cards from said set as cards to be held;

allowing said player to discard non-selected cards from said set; and

replacing each non-selected card with a new card on a draw to said player to make a new draw set of cards, wherein one or more replacement cards are revealed to said player at a second speed.

**23.** The method as in claim **22**, wherein said second speed is slower than said first speed.

**24.** The method as in claim **22**, further comprising communicating a prompt to said player when said new draw set of cards comprises a combination of cards that is at least one

perfecting card short of a complete set of a predetermined enhanced combination of winning cards.

**25.** The method as in claim **24**, further comprising allowing said player, on at least a second draw, to try to obtain said at least one perfecting card in an at least second draw set of cards and wherein one or more cards are revealed to said player at a third speed.

**26.** The method as in claim **25**, where said third speed is slower than said second speed.

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