TEXAS HOLD’EM GAME WITH SIDE POTS

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ABSTRACT
A method, apparatus, and computer readable storage for a Texas hold’em style game with an additional side pot(s). An additional three card hand side pot can be bet into by the players and will be awarded to the player with the best three card hand formed using each players’ respective hole cards and one card from the flop. An additional five card hand side pot can be bet into by the players and will be awarded to the player with the best five card hand formed using each players’ respective hole cards and the flop. These side pots will not be resolved until the main Texas hold’em game is over and then all of the cards can be revealed.
FIGURE 2

1. receive ante wagers
2. deal hole cards
3. conduct main pot betting round
4. conduct side pot betting rounds
5. reveal flop
6. conduct main betting round
7. conduct side pot betting round
8. reveal turn
9. conduct main betting round
10. conduct side pot betting rounds
11. reveal river
12. conduct main betting round
13. conduct side pot betting rounds
14. reveal hands and resolve main pot
15. resolve side pots
16. conduct main betting round
FIGURE 4
TEXAS HOLD’EM GAME WITH SIDE POTS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims benefit to provisional application 61/149,653 filed in the USPTO on Feb. 3, 2009, entitled, “Triple Threat Hold’em” which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. This application is also related to U.S. Pat. No. 7,108,265, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention
[0003] The present inventive concept relates to a casino table game, and more particularly, to a variation of Texas Hold’em.
[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art
[0005] Texas hold’em is well known popular gambling card game and is described in U.S. patent publication 2008/0237985, which is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. The game can be played in casino card rooms with a dealer to deal and moderate the game.

[0006] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating a method of playing the known game of Texas Hold’em. The method can begin with operation 100, which receives ante wagers from all players in a pot. Then, in operation 102, two hole cards are dealt face down to each player who can each review only their own cards. A first betting round is then conducted wherein the players go around the circle either raising, checking, or folding, as known in the art. If a player does not want to match the current raise into the pot, he must fold. After the first betting round is completed, the method proceeds to operation 106, which reveals the flop which is three community cards dealt in the center of the table. Another betting round is conducted (operation 108), and then a fourth community card (the turn) is revealed (operation 110). Another betting round is conducted (operation 112), then a fifth community card (the river) is revealed (operation 114). A final betting round is conducted (operation 116), and then all players remaining in the game (who have not folded) can determine who has the highest ranked five card poker hand which is made out of any combination of each player’s own two hole cards and the five community cards.

[0007] However, given the success of Texas Hold’em, some players may feel that the game could use additional challenges and more action. Thus, what is needed is a version of the game that can provide greater excitement and more betting opportunities.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an aspect of the present invention to provide exciting variations of Texas hold’em.
[0009] The above aspects can be obtained by a method that includes (a) receiving ante wagers by players into a main pot; (b) receiving ante wagers by the players into a side pot; (c) dealing hole cards to each of the players and community cards; (d) conducting betting rounds among the players for the main pot; and (e) conducting betting rounds among the players for the side pot, (f) wherein when the betting rounds are completed and the community cards are revealed, awarding the main pot to a main winning player out of the players with the highest poker hand using main predetermined criteria, and awarding the side pot to a side winning player out of the players with a highest poker hand using side predetermined criteria, wherein the side predetermined criteria is different than the main predetermined criteria.

[0010] These together with other aspects and advantages which will be subsequently apparent, reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] Further features and advantages of the present invention, as well as the structure and operation of various embodiments of the present invention, will become apparent and more readily appreciated from the following description of the preferred embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings of which:

[0012] FIG. 1 is a flowchart illustrating a method of playing the known game of Texas Hold’em;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a Texas hold’em game with side pots, according to an embodiment;

[0014] FIG. 3 is an example layout for use with the method of implementing a Texas hold’em game with side pots, according to an embodiment;

[0015] FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a two stage card game with delayed resolution, according to an embodiment; and

[0016] FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating hardware that can be used to implement the methods described herein, according to an embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0017] Reference will now be made in detail to the presently preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like elements throughout.

[0018] The present general inventive concept relates to a method, system, and computer readable storage which allows a Texas hold’em game to be played with three pots (one main pot and two side pots) as opposed to the standard one main pot. While the main pot in Texas hold’em is based on the best five card hand out of all 7 cards (each player owns two hole cards and the five community cards), a three card side pot can be based on each player’s own two hole cards plus one out of the three flop cards (whichever combination of the five cards makes the best three card hand), and a five card side pot can be based on each player’s own two hole cards plus all three flop cards. In another embodiment, for the three card side pot, the player must use his or her two hole cards and then a best card out of the flop. The players can conduct betting rounds with regard to the two side pots in a similar manner to the betting round for the main pot. It is possible that a player who wins one of the pots may lose the other pot(s).

[0019] FIG. 2 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a Texas hold’em game with side pots, according to an embodiment. It is noted that the game can also be played with only one additional side pot instead of the two shown in FIG. 2.

[0020] The method can begin with operation 200, which receives ante wagers. Ante wagers are placed in the main pot as known in the art. Ante wagers are also placed in the two
side pots (the three card pot and the five card pot) in the same manner that ante wagers are placed in the main pot.

[0021] From operation 200, the method proceeds to operation 204, which conducts a main betting round for the main pot. This is done as known in the art.

[0022] From operation 204, the method proceeds to operation 206, which conducts a betting round for the side pot(s). This can include any side pot(s) in play, such as three card side pot and/or a five card side pot. Players check, raise, and drop out of the side pots just as they do as known in the art for a main pot in Texas hold’em.

[0023] From operation 206, the method proceeds to operation 208, which reveals the flop. The flop is three community cards dealt face up.

[0024] From operation 208, the method proceeds to operation 210, which conducts another main betting round, as known in the art.

[0025] From operation 210, the method proceeds to operation 212, which conducts another side pot betting round(s).

[0026] From operation 212, the method proceeds to operation 214, which reveals the turn card, which is a fourth community card dealt face up.

[0027] From operation 214, the method proceeds to operation 216, which conducts another main betting round.

[0028] From operation 216, the method proceeds to operation 218, which conducts another side pot betting round(s).

[0029] From operation 218, the method proceeds to operation 220, which reveals the river card, which is a fifth (and last) community card dealt face up.

[0030] From operation 220, the method proceeds to operation 222, which conducts a final main betting round.

[0031] From operation 222, the method proceeds to operation 224, which conducts a final side pot betting round(s).

[0032] From operation 224, the method proceeds to operation 226, which reveals hands of the live players (unless the player chooses to muck his or her hand and forfeit) and resolves the main pot as known in the art. Typically, as known in Texas hold’em, the highest (best) five card hand formed using any combination of each players’ respective two hole cards and the five community cards out of the players still alive in the game wins the pot.

[0033] From operation 226, the method proceeds to operation 228, which resolves the side pots and awards each sit pot to the respective winner based on each side pot’s criteria for winning. For example, a card pot is awarded to the player who is still live in the three card pot and has the best three card hand formed using any combination of each players’ two hole cards and the three flop cards (like the main pot, the player is not required to use any of his own hole cards, although in another embodiment the player must use both of his/her hole cards). A five card pot is awarded to the player who is still live in the five card pot and has the best five card hand formed using each players’ two hole cards and the three flop cards.

[0034] In a further variation of FIG. 2, the different betting rounds are all performed simultaneously. That is, instead of performing operations 204 and 206 separately for each of the pots, each player goes around the table raising, checking, or folding for the 3 pots simultaneously (e.g., a player puts $1 into one pot and $2 into another pot contemporaneously). This would also be true for operations 210 and 212; 216 and 218; 224 and 222.

[0035] FIG. 3 is an example layout for use with the method of implementing a Texas hold’em game with side pots, according to an embodiment.

[0036] The hold’em pot 300 is the standard pot used by all players for the main Texas hold’em game. The three card pot 301 is used by all players to place the three card pot wagers. The five card pot 302 is used by all players to place the five card pot wagers. Instead of using both the three card pot and the five card pot, a modified Texas hold’em game can also be played using either one of these additional pots.

[0037] An optional three card pot betting circle 303 can exist for each player and can be used by each player to put their chips in instead of putting them directly into the three card pot 301. In this manner, each player easily sees how much each other player has bet for the card pot 301 and thus it would be easy to equalize the bets (see how much one player must put in to make up for any deficiency). When the betting rounds for the three card pot are done, then all of each players’ chips in their respective three card pot betting circles can then be collected and moved into the three card pot 301.

[0038] An optional five card pot betting circle 304 can exist for each player and can be used by each player to put their chips in instead of putting them directly into the five card pot 302. In this manner, each player easily sees how much each other player has bet for the card pot 302 and thus it would be easy to equalize the bets (see how much one player must put in to make up for any deficiency). When the betting rounds for the five card pot are done, then all of each players’ chips in their respective five card pot betting circles can then be collected and moved into the five card pot 302.

[0039] Upon reaching operation 226 (or 228), if the betting circle 303 and 304 are being used (instead of putting the chips for the side pots directly into the side pots themselves), then all of the chips in these betting circles can then be collected and put into their respective pots.

[0040] Betting rules for the three card pot and the five card pot (the side pots) can be set in a number of ways. In the simplest way, a betting round in each side pot can be accomplished as done according to a regular poker betting round (i.e., players go around in the circle and check, raise, or fold, and if a player raises all other players must match the raise or fold for the rest of the game). In another manner to effectuate the betting rounds for the side pots, the players can enter the side betting rounds anytime (even after dropping out of that side pot by not matching a raise) during each of the betting rounds, providing that equivalence of wagering is maintained. In other words, a player can drop out of the first three card pot betting round, but after viewing the flop, can reenter the three card pot betting round as long as he makes up for any deficiency in the chips he has placed in the respective side pot betting circle. In the end, before the side pots are resolved, each player must have contributed an equal amount to be eligible to win the side pot. If a player does not willing to contribute an equal amount, then the player can drop out of the respective side pot, but will not get back his ante or any chips he has already committed for the side pot.

[0041] It is noted that a predetermined hierarchy of ranks for three card poker hands can be established as well as the standard five card poker hands. Table II below illustrates a predetermined hierarchy of five card poker hands, from highest (top) to lowest or worst (bottom). The list is merely exemplary but is not exhaustive (in other words, other hands exist as well).
Table II below illustrates an exemplary list of three card poker hand ranks from highest or best (top) to lowest or worst (bottom). The definitions for the hands described in Tables I and II are well known in the art.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four of a kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three of a kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example game will now be presented which utilizes both additional pots. A Texas hold’em game is being played with three players: Alice, Bob, and Charlie. There is the main standard pot, in which each player places a $1 ante. There is also a three card hand pot in which each player places a $1 ante, and a five card hand pot in which each player places a $1 ante. The dealer deals out the hole cards: Alice gets two hearts/three hearts. Bob gets king spades/three diamonds. Charlie gets ace spades/two spades.

Alice checks in the main game and checks for both side pots. Bob checks in the main game and raises $2 in the three card side pot. Charlie raises $1 in the main pot and sees Bob’s $2 in the three card side pot and raises $3 more in the three card side pot. Charlie also raises $5 in the five card side pot. Alice calls the $1 raise in the main pot, calls the $5 in the three card side pot, and declines to match the raise in the five card pot. Bob folds in the main pot, and puts in $3 in the three card side pot in order to stay in that pot and declines to match the raise in the five card pot. This activity corresponds to operations 202-206 from FIG. 2.

The dealer now deals and reveals the flop (operation 210): ten hearts/king diamonds/six diamonds.

Alice now checks in the main pot, raises $1 in the three card pot, and puts in $5 in the five card pot (to make up for the deficiency from the prior round from Charlie’s bet) and raises $2 in the five card pot (i.e., puts in $7 in the five card pot). It is noted that deficiencies in the side pots can be made up for but this is not the case with the main pot. If a player does not match the current money owed to the main pot (as is standard in poker), then the player folds in the main pot. Bob raises $1 in the main pot but declines to bet for the three card pot or the five card pot. At this point, Bob is now out of the three card pot and the five card pot, but he can return at a later betting round by making up for the deficiency of what he owes. The deficiency is the amount that each other player had put in to stay live with respect to that pot. Charlie folds in the main pot but matches the $1 raise in the three card pot and matches the $2 raise in the five card pot. Alice now calls the $1 raise in the main pot. This activity corresponds to operations 212-216.

The game now continues Texas hold’em with further betting rounds (as known in Texas hold’em) for the main pot and the side pots. Since Charlie has folded in the main game (pot), Charlie cannot now decide to participate in the main game (players cannot make up for dropping out of the main pot/game by paying a deficiency like they can in the side pots). The turn card is now revealed to be a 8 spades. Alice checks in the main pot, while Bob raises $2 in the main pot, which Alice calls (by putting $2 in the main pot). All three players decline to make any bets into the side pots. The river card is now revealed to be a 4 hearts. Alice checks and then Bob checks. All three players again decline to make any bets into the side pots. Even though Bob has folded from the side pots, he can pay a deficiency to either of the side pots if he wants to be eligible (at the end of the game) to win that side pot. It is noted that each five player in the three card pot contributed $6 to the three card pot (not including the ante), and each five player in the five card pot contributed $7 to the five card pot (not including the ante). Bob previously put $3 in the card pot and $0 in the five card pot. Thus, Bob’s deficiency for the three card pot is ($6-3)=$3, and for the five card pot is ($7-0)=$7. However, Bob has declined to pay either of these deficiencies and thus is eliminated for both of the side pots.

Now that all of the betting rounds are over, all of the players’ hole cards are revealed (although players do not wish to reveal their cards can muck them and forfeit any proceeds from any of the pots). To recap, the current game conditions are shown in Table III. The “still eligible for” column shows the pots that each player is still eligible to win (e.g., has not folded or failed to contribute the requisite amount), wherein “3” and “5” represent the three card pot and the five card pot, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>still eligible for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main, 3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hearts/3 hearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king spades/3 diamonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ace spades/2 spades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flop:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten hearts/king diamonds/six diamonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 spades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hearts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main pot:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three card hand pot:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five card hand pot:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since all cards are revealed now, all of the wagers can be resolved. Regarding the main pot of $11, only Alice and Bob are still remaining in the main game, and Alice’s best five card poker hand of the 7 cards available to her would be King high. Bob’s best five card poker hand of the 7 cards available to him would be a pair of kings. Thus Bob has the best five card hand out of 7 cards (standard Texas hold’em hand) and wins the main pot of $17. Since Charlie folded in the main pot, he is not eligible to win the main pot.

Regarding the three card hand pot, Bob decided not to match the money bet by the other players for this pot and thus Bob is not eligible for this pot. Alice’s best three card poker hand out of Alice’s hole cards plus the flop is: a flush of 10 hearts/2 hearts/2 hearts. Charlie’s best three card poker...
hand out of Charlie’s hole cards plus the flop is: ace spades/king diamonds/ten hearts (ace high). Thus Alice has the better three card poker hand and wins the $20 three card hand pot.

Regarding the five card hand pot, Bob decided not to match the money bet by the other players for this pot and thus Bob is not eligible for this pot. Alice’s five card poker hand using Alice’s hole cards plus the flop is: 2 hearts/3 hearts/ten hearts/king diamonds/six diamonds (ace high rank). Charlie’s five card poker hand using Charlie’s hole cards plus the flop is: ace spades/2 spades/ten hearts/king diamonds/six diamonds (ace high rank). Since Charlie has the higher five card poker hand rank then Charlie wins the $17 in the five card hand pot.

It is noted that one feature of the above-described method is “delayed resolution,” that is, even after the side pots are closed the winners are not revealed because it would disturb the flow of the main game by requiring the players to reveal their cards. Thus, the side pots are resolved at the end of the game, when all of the cards are revealed anyway.

This same delayed resolution concept can be applied to the multi-stage blackjack game described in U.S. Pat. No. 7,108,265, which is incorporated by reference in its entirety. FIGS. 2–4 (and the accompanying description) of that patent teach a multi-stage blackjack game. A similar two-stage blackjack game can be implemented using delayed resolution, so that the winner of the first stage is not revealed until after the resolution of the second stage. In this manner, a normal blackjack game can be offered (stage 2, with a second stage threshold of 21) with a side wager on a first stage (with a first stage threshold of 11 or other number) without having to reveal the dealer’s cards until the second stage is resolved.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating an exemplary method of implementing a two-stage card game with delayed resolution, according to an embodiment. Please refer to the 7,108,265 patent for more details on the individual operations and terminology.

The method can begin with operation 400, which receives a first stage wager and a second stage wager. House rules can require them to be equal amounts, but alternate house rules can allow them to unequal as well. From operation 400, the method proceeds to operation 402, which deals two cards to each player and two cards to the dealer (one card face up, one card face down).

From operation 402, the method proceeds to operation 404, which determines the player’s first stage action. If the player wishes to hit, then the method can proceed to operation 406, which deals an additional card to the player. From operation 406, the method proceeds to operation 408, which determines if the player’s point total is greater than the first stage threshold (has busted for the first stage). If not, then the method returns to operation 404, wherein the player indicates his or her first stage action.

If in operation 408, the player’s point total is greater than the first stage threshold, then the method proceeds to operation 410, wherein the player loses the first stage wager. The player’s first stage wager can be collected now or later by the dealer.

If in operation 404, the player wishes to stand on the first stage, the method proceeds to operation 414, wherein the player’s first stage stand hand is marked so that it is clear what the player’s hand is when the first stage is completed.

From either operation 414 or 410, the method proceeds to operation 416, wherein the player takes his or her second stage player action. If the player decides to hit, the method proceeds to operation 418, which deals an additional card to the player. From operation 418, the method proceeds to operation 420, which determines whether the player point total is greater than the second stage threshold (the player has busted). If not, then the method returns to operation 416, wherein the player can take another second stage action.

If in operation 420, it is determined that the player has busted, the method proceeds to operation 422, wherein the player loses the second stage wager.

From operations 416 or 422, the method proceeds to operation 424, wherein the dealer’s cards are revealed (e.g., the dealer’s face down card (the “hole card”) is revealed. From operation 424, the method proceeds to operation 426, which determines if the dealer point total is greater than the first stage stand hand. If not, then the method proceeds to operation 412, wherein the dealer takes a hit and proceeds to operation 426.

If in operation 426, it is determined that the dealer point total is greater than the first stage stand hand, then the method proceeds to operation 428 which resolves the player’s first stage wager. The player’s first stage point total is the point total at which the player’s hand is marked in operation 414, unless the player has busted in the first stage (operation 410). The dealer’s first stage point total is the dealer’s point total up until this point (before the dealer takes any additional cards in operation 432).

If the player had already lost the first stage wager in operation 410, then this stands. If the player has not already lost the first stage wager (has not reached operation 410) then the player has not busted in the first stage. So, if the player has not busted in the first stage (operation 410) and if the dealer’s first stage point total is greater than the first stage threshold (the dealer has busted the first stage) then the player wins the first stage wager. If both the player and the dealer have both not busted and both the players first stage point total and the dealer’s first stage point total tie, then the player’s first stage wager either pushes or loses, depending on house rules. If both the player and the dealer have both not busted in the first stage and do not tie in the first stage, then the party with the first stage point total closer to the first stage threshold wins. In other words, if both the player and the dealer have not busted in the first stage and the player’s first stage point total is closer to the first stage threshold than the dealer’s first stage point total, then the player wins the first stage wager. If both the player and the dealer have not busted in the first stage and the dealer’s first stage point total is closer to the first stage threshold than the player’s first stage point total, then the player loses first stage wager.

Once the first stage wager is resolved in operation 428, then the method proceeds to operation 430, which determines whether the dealer point total is greater than the second stage stand hand. If not, then the method proceeds to operation 432, which deals the dealer an additional card (dealer takes a hit), and then returns to operation 430.

If in operation 430 the dealer point total is greater than the second stage stand hand, then the method proceeds to operation 434, which resolves the second stage wager. The second stage wager is resolved similarly to the first stage wager (and like the standard game of blackjack), but for the second stage. If the player’s second stage (final) point total has exceeded the second stage threshold (player busts second stage), then the player loses the second stage wager. If the player’s second stage (final) point total has not exceeded the
second stage threshold (player has not busted the second stage) and the dealer’s second stage (final) point total has exceeded the second stage threshold (the dealer has busted the second stage), then the player wins the second stage wager. If both the player and the dealer have not busted in the second stage and both second stage point totals tie, then the second stage wager pushes (or can lose depending on house rules). If both the player and the dealer have not busted the second stage, then the party with the second stage point total closer to the second stage threshold wins. In other words, if both the player and the dealer have not busted the second stage and the player’s second stage point total is closer to the second stage threshold than the dealer’s second stage point total, then the player wins the second stage wager. If both the player and the dealer have not busted the second stage and the dealer’s second stage point total is closer to the second stage threshold than the player’s second stage point total, then the player loses second stage wager.

After operation 434 is performed, any other side bets offered can also be resolved, and then the game ends. At this point, a new game can begin and the method can return to operation 400.

[0067] It is also noted that multiple players can simultaneously play the method described herein in the same manner that multiple players can simultaneously play at a blackjack table.

[0068] An example of the game illustrated in FIG. 4 will now be presented. In this example, the stage 1 point threshold is 11 and the stage 1 dealer stand hand is 7, and the stage 2 point threshold is 21 and the stage 2 dealer stand hand is 17 (see Table 1 from the 7,108,265 patent). This is a two stage game.

[0069] e bets $1 on a first stage bet and $1 on a second stage bet (operation 400). The dealer deals the cards (operation 402). Joe is dealt a five and then a three (the suits do not matter). The dealer’s upcard is a three, while the dealer’s downcard (hole card) is unknown to the player. For the first stage, Joe decides to stand (operation 404) on his 8, and the three is marked (operation 414), so that it is clear that Joe’s first stage hand ends here at a point total of 8. Joe then decides to hit for the second stage (operation 416) and receives (operation 418) a ten, for a point total of 18. Joe decides to stand (operation 416). The dealer now reveals (operation 424) the dealer’s downcard to be an 8, for a point total of 11. Since 11 is greater than the dealer’s first stage stand hand (operation 426), the dealer’s first stage hand is complete with a point total of 11. Since 11 is not higher than the stage 1 point threshold (11), the dealer has not busted in stage one. Since the player’s total of 8 is not higher than the stage 1 point threshold (11), the player has not busted in stage one. Since the dealer’s total of 11 is closer to 11 than the player’s point total of 8, the dealer wins stage one and Joe loses (operation 428) his $1 stage 1 wager. The dealer now continues to resolve stage 2 of the dealer’s hand. Since (operation 430) the dealer’s point total (11) is not greater than the dealer’s second stage stand hand (17), the dealer takes an additional card (operation 432), which is a 3, giving the dealer a point total of 14. Since (operation 430) the dealer’s point total of 14 is not greater than the dealer’s second stage stand hand (17), the dealer takes an additional card (operation 432) which is a 10, giving the dealer a point total of 24. Since (operation 430) the dealer’s point total of 24 is greater than the dealer’s second stage stand hand (17), the dealer has busted in stage 2. Since (operation 434) the player has not busted in stage 2 (has a point total of 18) while the dealer has busted in stage 2, Joe wins in stage 2 and thus wins a payout (e.g., $1) on his stage 2 wager. Since Joe lost his $1 stage 1 wager and won his $1 stage 2 wager Joe has broke even on this game.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating hardware that can be used to implement the methods described herein, according to an embodiment. This hardware can be used to comprise an electronic gaming device (EGD) that can offer the methods described herein.

A processing unit 500 can be a microprocessor and associated structure (e.g., cache, bus, etc.) The processing unit 500 is programmed to execute stored instructions that implement the methods described herein. The processing unit 500 can be connected to an input device 500, such as a touch-screen, keyboard, mouse, etc. The processing unit 500 can also be connected to an output device 502 such as a touch screen, CRT, speaker, LCD display, etc. The processing unit 500 can also be connected to a network connection 503 that can connect to a computer communications network such as a LAN, WAN, wifi, Internet, etc. The processing unit 500 can also be connected to a ROM 505, a RAM 508, and a non volatile storage device 506 (e.g., hard disk, CD-ROM, EPROM, etc.) which can read a computer readable storage medium 507 (e.g., CD-ROM, etc.). The processing unit 500 can also be connected to a financial apparatus 504, which can comprise a bill acceptor and also payment mechanism (coin/cash dispenser), ticket-in-ticket-out (TITO) printer, etc. Thus, by operating the EGD, the player can insert money (either cash, a ticket, or a card to access electronic funds), play the methods described herein, and receive payment (e.g., by receiving cash or a cashless voucher that can be redeemed for cash).

FIG. 5 can also illustrate a home computer connected to the Internet so that the methods described herein can be played at a (legal) online casino or online poker room. Such online casinos or poker rooms are run by a server which is connected to the Internet that hosts the game.

Further, the order of any of the operations described herein can be performed in any order and wagers can be placed/resolved in any order. Any embodiments herein can also be played in electronic form and programs and/or data for each stage of the game can be stored on any type of computer readable storage medium (e.g. CD-ROM, DVD, disk, etc.) Furthermore, any features described herein can be optional.

Methods described herein can be played with a standard 52 card deck of cards, or a shoe using multiple decks (e.g., 2-8 decks or more). Special decks can be used as well (e.g., Spanish decks, short decks, decks with wild cards, etc.) A standard poker table as known in the art can also be used to rest the cards on top of.

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

What is claimed is:

1. A method for playing a wagering game comprising:
   providing a physical deck of cards and a gaming table;
   receiving ante wagers by players into a main pot;
receiving ante wagers by the players into a side pot; dealing hole cards to each of the players and community cards; conducting betting rounds among the players for the main pot; and conducting betting rounds among the players for the side pot, wherein when the betting rounds are completed and the community cards are revealed, awarding the main pot to a main winning player out of the players with a highest poker hand using main predetermined criteria, and awarding the side pot to a side winning player out of the players with a highest poker hand using side predetermined criteria, wherein the side predetermined criteria is different than the main predetermined criteria.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the main predetermined criteria is a best five card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and the community cards.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the side predetermined criteria is a best three card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and one of the community cards.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the side predetermined criteria is a best five card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and a first three revealed community cards.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein there are five community cards and the side predetermined criteria involves the first three dealt cards out of the five community cards, wherein the awarding the side pot is not performed until after additional community cards are revealed and the players reveal their hole cards.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein during the betting rounds among the players for the side pot, each player can decline to match a current raise for the side pot which is a disqualification from winning the side pot, and in a successive betting round the respective player is permitted to contribute a deficiency in order to qualify to win the side pot.

7. A method for playing a wagering game comprising: 
providing a physical deck of cards and a gaming table; dealing a hand to each of at least two players; conducting a first betting round among the at least two players, wherein a particular player out of the players declines to match a current raise into a pot thereby disqualifying the particular player from winning the pot; dealing additional card(s); conducting a second betting round among the at least two players, wherein the particular player pays a deficiency owed by the particular into the pot thereby allowing the particular player to become eligible to win the pot; and awarding the pot to non-disqualified players out of the at least two players that meet predefined conditions associated with the pot.

8. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the hand dealt to each of the at least two players comprises two cards, and the additional card(s) comprise a three card flop, and the predefined conditions associated with the pot comprise a best three card poker hand formed using cards from each player's respective hand and the three card flop.

9. The method as recited in claim 7, wherein the hand dealt to each of the at least two players comprises two cards, and the additional card(s) comprise a three card flop, and the predefined conditions associated with the pot comprise a best five card poker hand formed using each player's respective hand and the three card flop.

10. An electronic gaming device for playing a wagering game, the device comprising:
 a processing unit configured to execute instructions on a digital computer that are operable to perform:
 receiving ante wagers by players into a main pot; receiving ante wagers by the players into a side pot; dealing hole cards to each of the players and community cards; conducting betting rounds among the players for the main pot; conducting betting rounds among the players for the side pot; and
 an output device electrically connected to the processing unit to display at least the dealing, wherein when the betting rounds are completed and the community cards are revealed, awarding the main pot to a main winning player out of the players with a highest poker hand using main predetermined criteria, and awarding the side pot to a side winning player out of the players with a highest poker hand using side predetermined criteria, wherein the side predetermined criteria is different than the main predetermined criteria.

11. The device as recited in claim 10, wherein the main predetermined criteria is a best five card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and the community cards.

12. The device as recited in claim 10, wherein the side predetermined criteria is a best three card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and one of the community cards.

13. The device as recited in claim 10, wherein the side predetermined criteria is a best five card poker hand made from each players' respective hole cards and a first three revealed community cards.

14. The device as recited in claim 10, wherein there are five community cards and the side predetermined criteria involves the first three dealt cards out of the five community cards, wherein the awarding the side pot is not performed until after additional community cards are revealed and the players reveal their hole cards.

15. The device as recited in claim 10, wherein during the betting rounds among the players for the side pot, each player can decline to match a current raise for the side pot which is a disqualification from winning the side pot, and in a successive betting round the respective player is permitted to contribute a deficiency in order to qualify to win the side pot.