Title: MULTIPLAYER CARD TOURNAMENTS AND METHODS

Abstract: The invention provides a multiplayer card tournament for playing on a communications network and methods for conducting and determining a winner of the tournament.
MULTIPLAYER CARD TOURNAMENTS AND METHODS

Cross-Reference to Related Application

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/166,462, filed on June 24, 2005, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/609,613, filed on September 14, 2004, both of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the field of multiplayer card tournaments, such as blackjack tournaments, that can be played either in the presence of a community of players or over a communications network.

Background of the Invention

Blackjack is a popular game played typically in casinos. The game is played by a player who tries to win the game playing against the house. In an ordinary casino set up, several players play concomitantly with the house but are not interacting amongst themselves. This is explained schematically in Figure 1 in which the set-up of the game is described. House 10 interacts directly with players 12, 14, 16 and 18. Each one of the players is a solitary player having no interaction with the other players.

In a blackjack game, cards are dealt by the dealer (house) to each player and to the dealer in respect of each player separately. A player thus has a set of cards (a “hand”) which opposes a corresponding “hand” of the dealer. The rules of the game are such that the opposing hands of cards, each typified by a numerical sum and nature of cards, are compared at specific events, determining which opposing side wins. To reach such an event, the player and dealer are dealt cards, until the conditions defining an event are reached. The player places the bet before the dealing starts, but the bet may change if and when certain card combinations occur.
Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a schematic description of the relationships between the players and the house in a blackjack game of the prior art;

Figure 2 is a schematic description of the relationships between the players and the house in a game of the invention;

Figure 3 is a description of the sequence of steps carried out in the playing of a round by a player in a blackjack game of the invention; and

Figure 4 is a description of the sequence of steps carried out in the tournament game of the invention after the rounds are finalized, for determining the winner of the game.

Detailed Description of the Invention

A blackjack game played in accordance with the present invention involves different playing interactions with respect to the prior art blackjack game. To further explain the game of the invention, reference is first made to Figure 2, which portrays schematically the set-up of a game of the invention. House 10 interacts in a game session with the players, exemplified by players 12, 14, 16 and 18. A player such as player 14 also relates to the co-players in the game session in a relationship which is different than the interaction this player has with the house 10. The relationships of the player 14 with the co-players in the session are hereinafter referred to as inference relations. The inference relations of the invention are defined as the drawing of information from the playing conduct of co-players without interacting with them directly otherwise.

Exemplary Playing Rules of the Game of the Invention

A tournament is played by a player against the dealer (house) and other players. A tournament consists of a sequence of rounds. The number of rounds is predetermined and all of
the players in the tournament are synchronized, so that all the players play the same round with the house concomitantly with the co-players. Before the tournament begins, each of the players is allotted a number of credit points which is equally received by all the co-players. If during the tournament the number of credit points drops to zero, the player loses the game. The playing of a round is described with reference to Figure 3. As a round starts, the player of the example places a bet in step 20, after which the dealer starts dealing the cards at step 22. The game is subsequently played according to the customary rules in step 24. In the next step there is a decision to be made at step 26 as to who wins the game. If the player wins the round, the score of the player is increased by the wager at step 28. If the player loses the round, the score is nullified and the player is left with a zero score for that round at step 30. The tournament then continues by starting the next round at step 32 similar to step 20. As the predetermined number of rounds is reached, the tournament comes to an end and, as described in reference with Figure 4, further calculations are made. At step 40 the personal betting score of each player is computed. At step 42 the personal scores are compared, and the highest score is determined at step 44. If a player’s score is highest he/she is declared a winner of the tournament at step 46. The player is declared a loser at step 48, if his/her score is not highest.

In an ongoing tournament, a player of the game of the invention has a chance to learn from the playing behavior of the co-players. The individual player, although playing a direct game only with the house, infers from the activities of the co-players as to their respective playing characteristics. Such a game is conducive to more involvement of planning and memory based activity on behalf of the players. With respect to the traditional blackjack game the winning is less a matter of chance and more a matter of learning and planning, making the game overall a more joyful and rewarding pastime event.

In order for the player to be able to be acquainted with the games of his/her co-players, in some embodiments of the invention, the game parameters (e.g., score or bet) of each individual co-player are presented on a screen that a player can observe.

We claim:
Claims

1. A multiplayer card tournament that is played over a communications network, the tournament comprising a sequence of card games that are played concomitantly by at least two players against a house until a winner is determined, wherein prior to the tournament the players are provided with a number of points that are used to make wagers, and wherein the winner is the player that obtains the highest number of points compared to the house and the other players.

2. The multiplayer tournament according to claim 1, wherein the tournament is a blackjack tournament.

3. The multiplayer tournament according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the games comprise (a) each player placing a wager; (b) a dealer dealing cards to each player; (c) each player assessing their cards; and (d) determining a winner.

4. The multiplayer tournament according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a predetermined number of games is played.

5. The multiplayer tournament according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the tournament comprises inference relations.

6. The multiplayer tournament according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a score and/or a wager of at least one player is presented on a screen that the at least one player can observe.

7. A method for conducting and defining a winner in a multiplayer card tournament that is played over a communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a sequence of card games on a communications network, wherein the card games are played concomitantly by at least two players against a house until a winner is determined, wherein prior to the tournament the players are provided with a number of points that are used to make wagers; and
(b) identifying a player that obtains the highest number of points compared to the house and the other players.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein the tournament is a blackjack tournament.

9. The method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the method comprises the steps of (a) each player placing a wager; (b) a dealer dealing cards to each player; (c) each player assessing their cards; and (d) determining a winner.

10. The method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein a predetermined number of games is played.

11. The method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the tournament comprises inference relations.

12. The method according to claim 7 or 8, wherein a score and/or a wager of at least one player is presented on a screen that the at least one player can observe.