A system and method for playing a card game are disclosed. The card game may be played with a real deck of cards and an associated playing surface or with a virtual deck of cards as part of a virtual card game on a processor-based platform. The method comprises providing at least one deck of playing cards and shuffling the deck such that the playing cards are put into a substantially unknown random order. The method further comprises placing at least one wager by betting a monetary amount and attempting to correctly guess a number of points that will be totaled during a current round of play. The method further includes dealing each of the playing cards in an arrangement and revealing a face of each of the playing cards. The method also includes totaling a number of points associated with the dealt playing cards based on at least a number of revealed pairs within the arrangement. The method also includes paying any winning wager according to the monetary amount bet and odds associated with the winning wager.
FIG. 1

start

provide at least one deck of playing cards

shuffle the at least one deck of playing cards such that the playing cards are put into a substantially unknown random order

place at least one wager by betting a monetary amount and attempting to correctly guess a number of points that will be totaled during a current round of play

deal each of the playing cards in an arrangement and reveal a face of each of said playing cards

total a number of points associated with the dealt playing cards based on at least a number of revealed pairs within the arrangement

pay any winning wager according to the monetary amount bet and odds associated with the winning wager

end
FIG. 3

300

program memory 320

virtual card game software

325

360
display

310
processor

330
user interface

340
image memory

350
display controller
METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PLAYING A CARD GAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS/INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0001] This application claims priority to provisional U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 60/517,676, filed on Nov. 6, 2003, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Certain embodiments of the present invention relate to apparatus and methods for playing a card game. More particularly, certain embodiments of the present invention relate to methods and systems for playing a card game in conjunction with wagering. It is to be appreciated, however, that the method of playing a card game may find further applications in areas outside of the wagering arena.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A common problem in non-initiated players, casino games such as roulette can be intimidating. For example, roulette incorporates many alternate ways of wagering and these wagering alternatives can confuse non-initiated players. Therefore, players unfamiliar with roulette and other casino games may hesitate to play. Consequently, there is a need for a casino-style game that provides easily understood wagering principles while, at the same time, provides the excitement associated with other casino games. Also, providing a casino-style game in a format or using a media that is likely already familiar to a player is desirable.

[0004] Further limitations and disadvantages of conventional, traditional, and proposed approaches will become apparent to one of skill in the art, through comparison of such systems and methods with the present invention as set forth in the remainder of the present application with reference to the drawings.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] An embodiment of the present invention provides a method and apparatus for playing a card game. The method comprises providing at least one deck of playing cards and shuffling the deck such that the playing cards are put into a substantially unknown random order. The method further comprises placing at least one wager by betting a monetary amount and attempting to correctly guess a number of points that will be totaled during a current round of play. The cards or representation of cards are dealt or displayed in an arrangement whereby the cards are adjacent one another and revealing a face of each of the playing cards. The method also includes totaling a number of points associated with the deal playing cards based on at least a number of revealed cards having the same value or characteristic, within the arrangement. The method also includes paying any winning wager according to the monetary amount bet and odds associated with the winning wager.

[0006] An embodiment of the present invention provides a processor-based system for implementing a virtual card game. The processor-based system comprises at least one processor to execute playing of the virtual card game, and wherein the playing of the virtual card game comprises the steps of providing at least one virtual deck of playing cards, electronically shuffling the at least one virtual deck of playing cards such that the playing cards are put into a substantially unknown random order, electronically placing at least one wager by betting a monetary amount and attempting to correctly guess a number of points that will be totaled during a current round of play, electronically dealing each of the playing cards in an arrangement and revealing a face of each of the playing cards, electronically totaling a number of points associated with the deal playing cards based on at least a number of revealed pairs within the arrangement, and electronically paying any winning wager according to the monetary amount bet and odds associated with the winning wager. The system further comprises a program memory interfacing to the at least one processor to store software associated with the virtual card game and a user interface connecting to the at least one processor to allow a player of the virtual card game to select various functional inputs of the virtual card game. The system further comprises an image memory interfacing to the at least one processor to store image data of the virtual card game to be displayed. The system also includes a display controller interfacing to the image memory to extract image data from the image memory in a controlled manner and to convert the image data to video data. The system further includes a display interfacing to the display controller to accept the video data from the display controller such that the video data is presented to the player on the display.

[0007] Alternative embodiments may implement the game in an instant lottery ticket game format, wherein representations of cards are selectively revealed. Such representations may typically be masked or covered in some way, and subsequently selectively revealed to play the game. In such an embodiment, the wager placed on the game could also be selected by the player, or the odds of winning chosen by a player, as a part of playing the game, or such variables may be set by the game distributor, as desired. The placing of a wager by the player may simply comprise buying the lottery ticket.

[0008] These and other advantages and novel features of the present invention, as well as details of an illustrated embodiment thereof, will be more fully understood from the following description and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is an exemplary flowchart of an embodiment of a method of playing a card game, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 2 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a playing surface layout to accommodate betting for a non-virtual version of the method of FIG. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 3 illustrates an exemplary schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a processor-based system for implementing a virtual card game using the method of FIG. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 4 illustrates an exemplary user interface image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 showing an arrangement of dealt cards face down, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.
FIG. 5 illustrates an exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 7 illustrates a further exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 8 illustrates a further exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 9 illustrates a further exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

FIG. 10 illustrates a further exemplary image displayed by the processor-based system of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

FIG. 1 is an exemplary flowchart 100 of an embodiment of a method of playing a card game, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. In step 110, at least one deck of playing cards or representations of cards is provided. In step 120, the at least one deck of playing cards is shuffled, whether actually or virtually, such that the playing cards or representations thereof, are put into a substantially unknown random order. In step 130, at least one wager is placed by betting a monetary amount and attempting to correctly guess a number of points that will be totaled during a current round of play. In step 140, each of the playing cards are dealt in an arrangement and a face of each of the playing cards is revealed. In step 150, a number of points associated with the dealt playing cards is totaled based on at least a number of revealed pairs within the arrangement. In step 160, any winning wager is paid according to the monetary amount bet and odds associated with the winning wager.

As used herein, various terms are used, but are not intended to be limiting in terms of the meaning thereof, with the concepts according to the invention being implemented in any of a variety of ways. For example, the term “playing cards” shall mean actual playing cards or any other representation of playing cards, whether electronically, printed or otherwise. As used herein, the term “shuffling” shall mean any physical or other representation or step of mixing playing cards in a normal random fashion, whether electronically or otherwise. As used herein, the term “dealing or dealt” shall mean any physical or other representation or step of disposing the cards into a desired format to be revealed and/or displaying the playing cards or representations, whether electronically or otherwise.

As used herein, the term “wagering or placing at least one wager” shall mean any physical or other representation or step of placing monetary or pseudo-monetary bets in a normal gambling sense, whether electronically or otherwise. It should also be understood that no wagering is necessary to play or enjoy the game as described according to embodiments herein.

As used herein, the term “paying” shall mean any physical or other representation or step of paying on a monetary or pseudo-monetary bet in a normal gambling sense, whether electronically or otherwise. It should again be understood that no payment is necessary to play or enjoy the game as described according to embodiments herein.

As used herein, the term “cutting” shall mean any physical or other representation or step of reordering playing cards in a normal random fashion, whether electronically or otherwise. It should also be understood that the cutting of the deck of cards may be unnecessary as the cards could be suitably randomized by shuffling alone.

FIG. 2 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a playing surface layout 200 to accommodate betting for a non-virtual version of the method 100 of FIG. 1. The playing surface 200 may be in the form of a casino table or a board game, for example. As seen in FIG. 2, the dealing circle 230 is equipped with fifty-two boxes, generally indicated by the numeral 240. The dealer fills each of the boxes 240 with a playing card until all fifty-two playing cards of a standard deck have been dealt. As discussed hereinbelow, to facilitate point variation, there may be a specific starting point and ending point for the dealing of the playing cards. For example, the dealer can begin dealing at starting box 250, and may deal the playing cards in a clockwise or a counterclockwise direction around the dealing circle 230. The dealer may first deal all cards face down around the circle and then reveal the dealt cards one at a time going around the circle or, to save time, the dealer may simply deal each card around the circle face up directly from the start.

Other non-standard decks may be used as well, in accordance with various alternative embodiments of the present invention, in which case the number of boxes on the playing surface to deal the cards into may be other than fifty-two. Also, multiple decks of playing cards may be used, in accordance with various alternative embodiments of the present invention. Further, the cards may be dealt in some other arrangement such as, for example, the Klondike manner associated with the game of solitaire.

Referring to FIG. 2, players may place bets (i.e., wagers) by positioning chips in any of the boxes 221-227, typically before the cards are dealt. Placing chips in the box 221 indicates that a player is betting that the total accrued points for the current round of play will be one. Placing chips in the box 227 indicates that a player is betting that the total accrued points for the current round of play will be seven. The boxes 222-226 correspond to bets corresponding to total accrued points of two through six. The layout 200 of FIG. 2 accommodates players on two sides of the betting circle 230. Other bet layout arrangements are possible as well, in accordance with contemplated embodiments of the present invention. At the same time, the circular type of dealing arrangement as shown provides a unique display of the cards or representations. As each card may be dealt consecutively, the circular type of layout enables easy view-
ing and anticipation in a player as the cards are dealt. Any winning pairs are easily identified as the cards are dealt, as well as positions of bonus points and the like. The circular type of configuration also is an aesthetically pleasing arrangement, particularly as the cards are being dealt in the configuration as shown, in that the cards overlap one another slightly, but reveal the face values sufficiently to view the cards easily.

[0029] During a round of play, after all bets are placed and the cards have been dealt in a consecutive arrangement and the faces of the cards are revealed, the resultant total number of points are accrued and compared to the bets (i.e., wagers). In step 150 of FIG. 1, the number of points accrued during the round is totaled and a determination is made if the player has won the wager placed on the round. The number of points accrued during a round depends on the number of pairs that appear during the specific deal of the cards.

[0030] For example, a pair is two cards of the same denomination in consecutive order (i.e., contiguous to each other in the circle). For example, the five of hearts being next to the five of clubs constitutes a pair, the seven of diamonds being next to the seven of spades constitutes a pair, the queen of clubs being next to the queen of hearts constitutes a pair, etc.

[0031] Points are awarded, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, when two cards of the same denomination appear in consecutive sequence which have been dealt from a standard deck of fifty-two playing cards placed around the dealing circle arrangement 230, creating a pair. For example, if consecutively dealt playing cards are a ten, a ten, and a ten, the player is credited with two points because the first and the second ten constitute a pair, and the second and the third ten constitute an additional pair.

[0032] In addition, if consecutively dealt playing cards are, for example, a seven of hearts, a seven of clubs, a six of hearts, and a six of diamonds, the player in such an instance is credited with three points. In such an instance, when two consecutive pairs appear during the round, a bonus point may be awarded, thus accounting for the extra third point in this case.

[0033] To facilitate point variation, bonus points may be awarded in various ways. For example, the starting box 250 and the boxes 251 and 252 on either side of the starting box 250 may be highlighted. Bonus points may be awarded when the combination of playing cards placed in the starting box 250 and the box 251 and/or the combination of playing cards placed in the starting box 250 and the box 252 equals a pair. For example, when the dealer is dealing in a counterclockwise direction, the first playing card dealt is placed in the starting box 250 and the second playing card dealt is placed in the box 251. If the combination of the two playing cards respectively positioned in the starting box 250 and the box 251 constitute a pair, a bonus point may be added to the total number of points accrued. Furthermore, if during the round the combination of the first playing card placed in starting box 250 and the last playing card placed in the box 252 constitutes a pair, an additional bonus point may be added to the total number of points accrued.

[0034] Additionally, if during a round the first two playing cards dealt constitute a pair, and the first playing card and the last playing card constitute a pair, another bonus point (in addition to the two bonus points already awarded) may be added to the total number of points accrued. It should be evident that many variations of awarding bonus points could be provided, as well as allowing other methods of accruing points and bonus points, in accordance with various embodiments of the present invention.

[0035] Additionally, one ordinarily skilled in the art can appreciate, and it is contemplated that the method of play described herein may be adapted to a computerized format (i.e., a processor-based system) including, but not limited to, the Internet and servers, personal computers, and video games (e.g., a handheld device or a video poker system). It is further contemplated that the method of play described herein may be adapted to a mechanical apparatus including, but not limited to, a slot machine-type apparatus.

[0036] FIG. 3 illustrates an exemplary schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a processor-based system 300 for implementing a virtual card game using the method 100 of FIG. 1, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The system 300 comprises a processor 310, a program memory 320 storing virtual card game software 325, a user interface 330, an image memory 340, a display controller 350, and a display 360.

[0037] The processor 310 interfaces to the program memory 300 and executes the virtual card game software 325. The user interface 330 connects to the processor 310 to allow a player of the virtual card game to select various functional inputs of the virtual card game. The image memory 340 interfaces to the processor 310 to store image data to be displayed. The display controller 350 interfaces to the image memory 340 to extract image data from the image memory in a controlled manner and convert the image data to video data. The display 360 interfaces to the display controller 350 to accept video data from the display controller 350 such that the video data is presented to a player on the display 360.

[0038] The virtual card game software 325 is the executable program to run the virtual card game. The user interface 330 may comprise, for example, a keyboard, a mouse, a touch-screen (i.e., the user interface 330 is combined with the display 360), or push buttons. The functional inputs controlled through the user interface 330 include, for example, an ability to select a monetary amount per wager, an ability to select at least one guessed number of points for wagering, and an ability to select that a virtual deck of playing cards be shuffled and/or cut and dealt.

[0039] FIG. 4 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a user interface image 400 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 showing an arrangement of dealt cards 410 face down, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. The arrangement 410 is a substantially circular arrangement of fifty-two playing cards. In an embodiment of the present invention, the cards are electronically dealt and displayed in a clockwise direction. The first card dealt is card 420 and the last card dealt is card 430. In the non-virtual or virtual game according to the invention, the manner of "dealing" the cards or representations thereof in the circular form shown, provides an unique and visually interesting manner of revealing the cards. In the circular form, the cards are sequentially revealed in a slightly overlapping fashion, similar to card trick presentations used by magicians. The sequential revealing of cards also increase
the anticipation and excitement of the game, as a player reviews the cards as they are revealed, searching for winning combinations.

[0040] Certain cards are in designated or highlighted bonus positions, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. For example, the first and last cards 420 and 430 are in bonus positions. The second card 421 is in a bonus position. The cards 440, 441, and 442 on the right-hand side of the arrangement 410 are in bonus positions. The cards 450, 451, and 452 on the bottom of the arrangement 410 are in bonus positions. The cards 460, 461, and 462 on the left side of the arrangement 410 are in bonus positions. Other bonus positions can be selected as desired.

[0041] Bonus points are awarded when pairs appear in predetermined designated bonus positions. For example, if a pair appears in the designated bonus positions 461 and 462, a point is awarded for the pair and an extra bonus point is awarded since the pair is in designated bonus positions. Similarly, if a pair appears in designated bonus positions 440 and 441, a point is awarded for the pair and an extra bonus point is awarded since the pair is in designated bonus positions.

[0042] When a player uses, for example, a mouse to click on the “Deal” button 470, the cards are electronically turned over one by one, sequentially, starting with card 420 and ending with card 430 (when going clockwise). The total number of pairs and bonus points are automatically and individually totaled and are displayed to the player. If the total number of pairs totaled equals the wagered number of pairs, then a won amount is credited to an account of the player and is displayed to the player based on a bet amount and odds associated with the bet, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0043] FIG. 5 illustrates an example image 500 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. As can be seen from FIG. 5, three pairs appear in the revealed arrangement of cards including a pair of sixes 510, a pair of Jacks 520, and a pair of Queens 530. However, since the pair of Queens 530 appear in the bonus positions 461 and 462 (see FIG. 4), an extra bonus point is awarded. As a result, the total number of accrued points for the current round is four 540, one point for each of the pairs and a bonus point. If a player wagered on the total number of pairs being four, then the player’s wager is a winning wager. For example, during the current round, a player may have wagered $20 that the total number of accrued points would be four for the current round. If the odds of the total points being four are, for example, 3-to-1, then the player will win $60 (based on the $20 bet and the 3-to-1 odds). A wagered dollar amount is entered in box 550 and a wagered number of points is entered in box 560. The current odds are displayed in box 570 and the resultant total winnings, if any, are displayed in box 580, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Other embodiments showing, for example, a current account with a total dollar amount, are possible as well. For example, the total account value may have a bet amount automatically deducted (debit the account value) when placing a bet, and have a winning amount credited to the account upon winning.

[0044] In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, a notification may be displayed to the player when the player wins a wager. Similarly, a notification may be displayed to the player when the player loses a wager.

[0045] FIG. 6 illustrates a second example image 600 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. As can be seen from FIG. 6, four pairs appear in the revealed arrangement of cards including a pair of fives 610, a pair of Aces 620, a pair of Kings 630, and a pair of sixes 640, totaling to 4 points. However, the pair of sixes 640 appear in the bonus positions 430 and 420 (see FIG. 4) accounting for a first bonus point. The positions 420 and 430 are also the first and last positions dealt, accounting for a second bonus point. Therefore, the total number of accrued points is six 650 (i.e., a winning wager for the current round corresponds to a bet of 0 points).

[0046] FIG. 7 illustrates a third example image 700 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play. As can be seen from FIG. 7, no pairs appeared in the current round and, therefore, the total number of pair hits is zero 710. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a player may bet on zero pairs coming up.

[0047] FIG. 8 illustrates a fourth example image 800 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play. As seen in FIG. 8, three fives 810 appear consecutively. The first two of the three fives constitute a pair and the second two of the three fives also constitute a pair. Therefore, the total points accrued is two 820.

[0048] FIG. 9 illustrates a fifth example image 900 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. As seen in FIG. 9, a pair of nines 910, a pair of Kings 920, and a pair of twos 930 appear in the dealt arrangement. However, the pair of nines 910 appear in the bonus positions 440 and 441 (see FIG. 4) accounting for a first bonus point, and the pair of twos 930 are immediately after the pair of Kings 920 accounting for a second bonus point. Therefore, the total number of accrued points is five 940 (3 pairs plus two bonus points).

[0049] FIG. 10 illustrates a sixth example image 1000 displayed by the processor-based system 300 of FIG. 3 after a current round of play, in accordance with various aspects of the present invention. As seen in FIG. 10, there are a pair of eights 1010, three consecutive twos 1020, a pair of nines 1030, three consecutive Kings 1040, and a pair of Aces 1050 in the dealt arrangement. The number of basic pairs is seven. However, the first pair of Kings of the three Kings 1040 appear in bonus positions 451 and 452 (see FIG. 4) and constitute a first bonus point. Also, since the pair of Aces 1050 immediately follow the second pair of Kings of the three Kings 1040, a second bonus point is awarded. Therefore, the total number of points accrued is nine 1060.

[0050] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, which may be incorporated into any of the embodiments discussed herein, the game may provide a doubling feature, wherein the player’s payout on a given bet is doubled in the following circumstances. As an example, in a processor-based system such as described herein, the doubling feature may be automatically invoked upon the playing of multiple game rounds by a player. In an embodiment, the player...
doubles the winning from a previous hand or the bet on a current hand in the event that successive rounds result in the same number of winning pairs. Thus for example, in the round shown in the example of FIG. 10, there were nine points based upon winning pairs and/or bonus points. With the doubling feature, when the next hand or round is played, if the points achieved equals none, the player will obtain double winnings based on the current bet or another basis. If desired, the game may be implemented such that the doubling feature is only invoked if a player bets the last rounds winnings, for example. Alternatively, the game may include a doubling button, such as shown at 1070, which is selected by the player to invoke this feature or may be a separate bet placed by the player in a given round, related to a previously played round.

[0051] Alternatively, the game may be played using representations of cards, which may be “shuffled” or randomized for use in playing the game. For example, the game may be played in the style of an instant lottery game, where representations of cards are printed on a ticket or other medium, such as in the format shown in prior embodiments, and selectively revealed to play the game. Such representations may typically be masked or covered in some way, and subsequently selectively revealed, such as by scratching, to play the game. In such an embodiment, the wager placed on the game could also be selected by the player, or the odds of winning chosen by a player, as a part of playing the game, or such variables may be set by the game distributor, as desired. The placing of a wager by the player may simply comprise buying the lottery ticket, or different pricing for tickets could be provided for differing odds games. In any event, the wagering scheme used may make instant winning possible. Such an embodiment constitutes a non-virtual version of the method of FIG. 1.

[0052] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, the various wagering options may be implemented on a physical playing surface layout where real playing cards and chips are used to place wagers. Such an embodiment provides a dealer to shuffle, cut, and deal the cards, and at least one player to place wagers. Such an embodiment constitutes a non-virtual version of the method of FIG. 1. In such an embodiment, a player “buys in” or purchases chips of a specific color or pattern distinct from any other player currently playing.

[0053] Certain embodiments of the present invention contemplate distinct chip patterns for each player. However, another embodiment includes standard color chips corresponding to a specific monetary denomination. The rationale behind the distinct chip patterns of certain embodiments is to permit the players, dealer and staff to easily distinguish one player’s wagers from the others.

[0054] It may be appreciated that numerous playing variations and combinations could be applied to the fundamental principles of the present invention. The method of the present invention may be practiced by a single player or by multiple players, wherein the player(s) play against a house dealer, against a player banker, or each other in a no bank format.

[0055] Although certain embodiments suggest payoff odds for specific wagers, it is contemplated that the odds may be modified to accommodate variables and preferences of individual casinos or houses. For instance, a specific casino may choose to structure the odds to attract players where others may choose to hold back on the odds giving the house an edge over the players.

[0056] It is further contemplated in another embodiment of the present invention that a player may use other forms of wagers including, but not limited to, cash and coins while playing the game of the present invention.

[0057] In still another embodiment of the present invention, one ordinarily skilled in the art would realize that the present invention could be played using more than one deck of cards. Additionally, it is understood that custom cards may be used in lieu of standard conventional playing cards. Accordingly, the odds of each wager would change to correspond to the probability of a specific wager in light of the use of multiple decks or custom cards.

[0058] As in the commonly known casino game of roulette, a “red-black” betting option may also be added to increase the wagering alternatives. This option will allow a player to bet solely on the number of pairs of same colored cards. Similarly, wagering could be performed based on pairs of the same suit.

[0059] In summary, embodiments of the present invention provide a system and method for playing a card game based on revealed pairs of cards. Normal points and bonus points are totaled based on a number of revealed pairs in an arrangement of dealt cards and based on whether or not the revealed pairs appear in pre-designated bonus positions in the arrangement. The card game may be played manually on a non-virtual playing surface, such as a game board or instant lottery ticket, or may be played as an electronic game on a processor-based platform.

[0060] While the invention has been described with reference to certain embodiments, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes may be made and equivalents may be substituted without departing from the scope of the invention. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the invention without departing from its scope. Therefore, it is intended that the invention not be limited to the particular embodiment disclosed, but that the invention will include all embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of playing a card game, said method comprising:
   providing at least one deck of playing cards or representations of cards;
   shuffling said at least one deck of playing cards such that said playing cards in said deck are put into a substantially unknown random order;
   dealing each of said playing cards in an arrangement and revealing a face of each of said playing cards;
   totaling a number of points associated with said dealt playing cards based on at least a number of revealed pairs within said arrangement.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each of said playing cards are dealt consecutively face down to form said arrangement and subsequently revealed sequentially maintaining said arrangement.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the playing cards are dealt in an overlapping arrangement, and selectively sequentially revealed from a beginning card in the arrangement to an ending card.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the arrangement is a circular type of arrangement, and the ending card is adjacent to the beginning card.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising cutting said shuffled deck at least once to change an order of said cards.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said deck of playing cards comprises a conventional deck of fifty-two playing cards.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein any one of said revealed pairs comprises any two consecutive cards within said arrangement having a same face number value.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein any one of said revealed pairs comprises any two consecutive cards within said arrangement having a same face value and color.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein any one of said revealed pairs comprises any two consecutive cards within said arrangement having a same suit.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of placing at least one wager and attempting to chose the number of points that will be obtained during a current round of play, and paying on any winning wager.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said winning wager includes any wager whose guessed total number of points corresponds to and/or is greater than an actual number of total number of total points for said current round of play.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein a doubling or point increasing feature is provided upon successive rounds of play wherein the same point totals were obtained.

13. The method of claim 13, wherein the player places a wager, and the wager is doubled in the event that successive rounds of play result in the same point totals.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said deck of playing cards is virtual and said method is implemented as an electronic game.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein said deck of playing cards is virtual and said method is implemented as a computer-based card game.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said card game is played virtually on a processor-based apparatus, and wherein said processor-based apparatus comprises a personal computer which is programmed, via software, to implement said method.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein said card game is played virtually on a processor-based apparatus, and wherein said processor-based apparatus comprises a handheld electronic device which is programmed, via software, to implement said method.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein said card game is played virtually on a processor-based apparatus, and wherein said processor-based apparatus comprises a standalone video-poker type of electronic system which is programmed, via software, to implement said method.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein said card game is played virtually by accessing a software implementation of said card game from a server, via the Internet, using a personal computer.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising debiting an account for each placed wager.

21. The method of claim 1 further comprising crediting an account for each winning wager.

22. The method of claim 1 further comprising notifying a player of said card game when said player wins a wager.

23. The method of claim 1 further comprising notifying a player of said card game when said player loses a wager.

24. The method of claim 1 wherein said number of points includes bonus points.

25. The method of claim 1 wherein said arrangement is provided on an instant lottery ticket, which is initially covered and selectively revealed by the user.

26. A processor-based system for implementing a virtual card game, said processor-based system comprising:

- at least one processor to execute playing of said virtual card game, and wherein said playing of said virtual card game comprises the steps of providing at least one virtual deck of playing cards, electronically shuffling said at least one virtual deck of playing cards such that said playing cards are put into a substantially unknown random order, electronically placing at least one wager by betting a monetary amount, electronically dealing each of said playing cards consecutively to form an arrangement and revealing a face of each of said playing cards, electronically totaling a number of points associated with said electronically dealt playing cards based on at least a number of revealed pairs within said arrangement, and electronically paying any winning wager according to said monetary amount bet and odds associated with said winning wager;

- a program memory interfacing to said at least one processor to store software associated with said virtual card game;

- an user interface connecting to said at least one processor to allow a player of said virtual card game to select various functional inputs of said virtual card game;

- an image memory interfacing to said at least one processor to store image data of said virtual card game to be displayed;

- a display controller interfacing to said image memory to extract image data from said image memory in a controlled manner and to convert said image data to video data; and

- a display interfacing to said display controller to accept said video data from said display controller such that said video data is presented to said player on said display.

27. The system of claim 26 wherein said wager is based upon the user choosing how many points will be totaled during a current round of play.

28. The system of claim 26 wherein said user interface comprises at least one of a keyboard, a mouse, a touchscreen, and push-buttons.

29. The system of claim 26 wherein said various functional inputs include at least one of an ability to select a monetary amount per wager, an ability to select a total number of points per wager, and an ability to select that a virtual deck of playing cards be shuffled and/or cut.

30. The system of claim 26 wherein each of said playing cards are dealt consecutively face down to form said arrangement and subsequently revealed sequentially maintaining said arrangement.
31. The method of claim 30 wherein the playing cards are dealt in an overlapping arrangement, and selectively sequentially revealed from a beginning card in the arrangement to an ending card.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein the arrangement is circular, and the ending card is adjacent to the beginning card.

33. The system of claim 26 wherein a notification of a winning wager is displayed to a player of said virtual card game on said display when said player wins a wager.

34. The system of claim 26 wherein a notification of a losing wager is displayed to a player of said virtual card game on said display when said player loses a wager.

35. An instant lottery card game system comprising: at least one game piece on which to execute playing of said card game, wherein the game piece has thereon a dealt representation of at least one deck of playing cards which have been placed in randomized order, with said representation being selectively revealed by a player, such that a face of each of said playing cards is revealed, wherein upon revealing said playing cards, a total number of points associated with said revealed cards is obtained, based on the number of revealed pairs within said revealed playing cards arrangement, upon which any winnings for the game are based.

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