US 20060214372A1

(19) United States
(12) Patent Application Publication (10) Pub. No.: US 2006/0214372 A1
Picken
(43) Pub. Date: Sep. 28, 2006

(54) **METHOD OF PLAYING A BLACKJACK CARD GAME**

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(21) Appl. No.: **11/085,527**
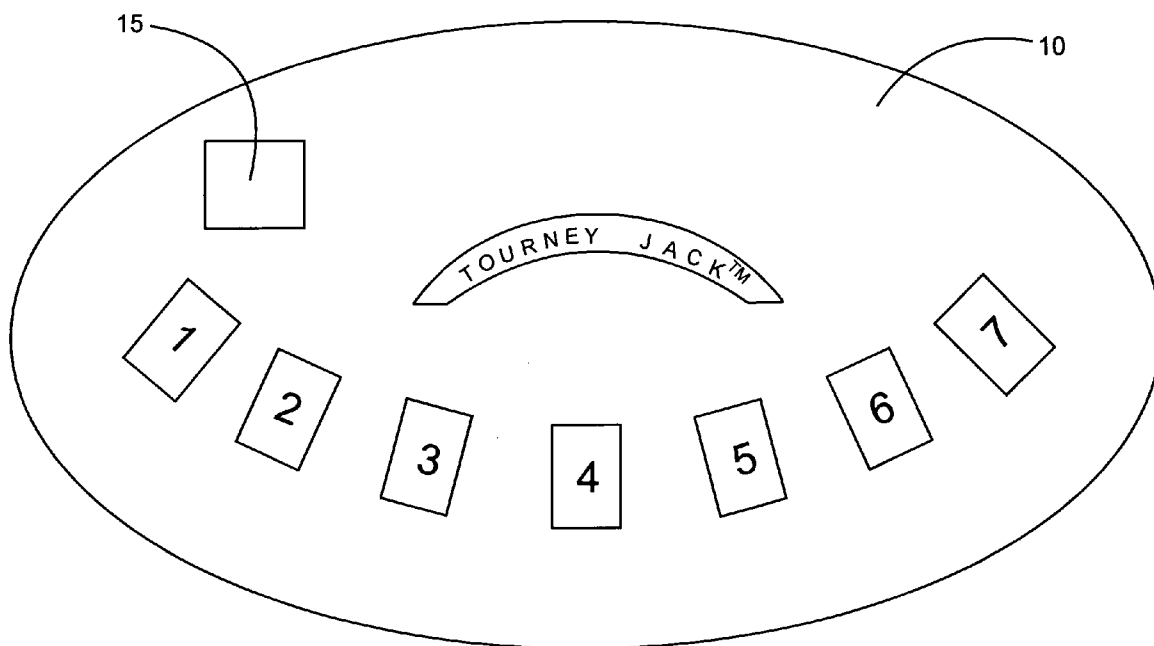
(22) Filed: **Mar. 22, 2005**

(57)   **ABSTRACT**

A variation on blackjack suitable for tournament play involves at least three players buying a stack of three or more chips for a predetermined buy-in. All of the buy-ins are placed in a pool and the pool is paid out, less a house rake, to the eventual winner of the game. Hands of blackjack are played against a dealer until only one player has remaining chips or until a predetermined time limit expires. The player with the most chips left at the end of the game is the winner of the pool.
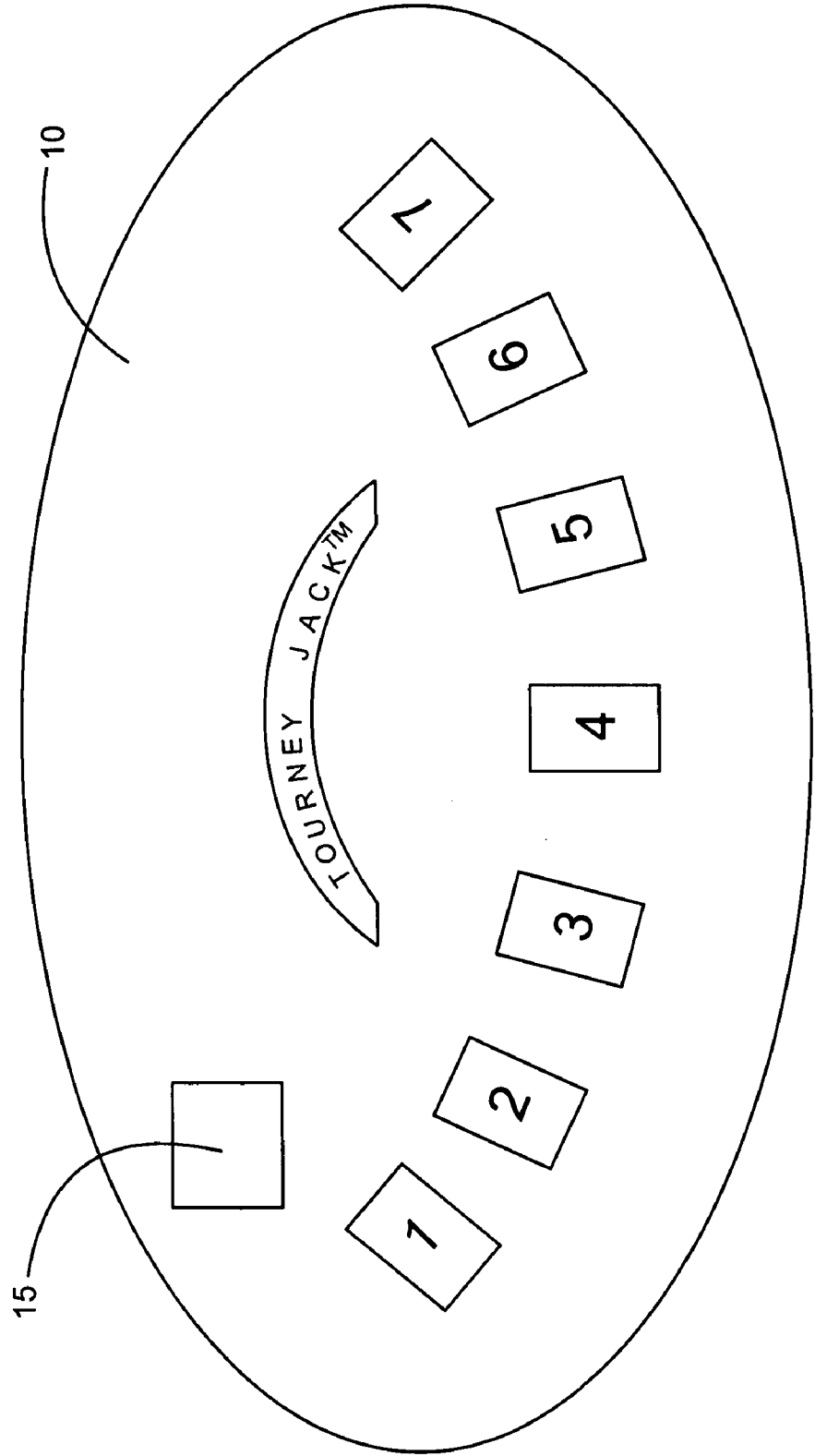
FIG. 1
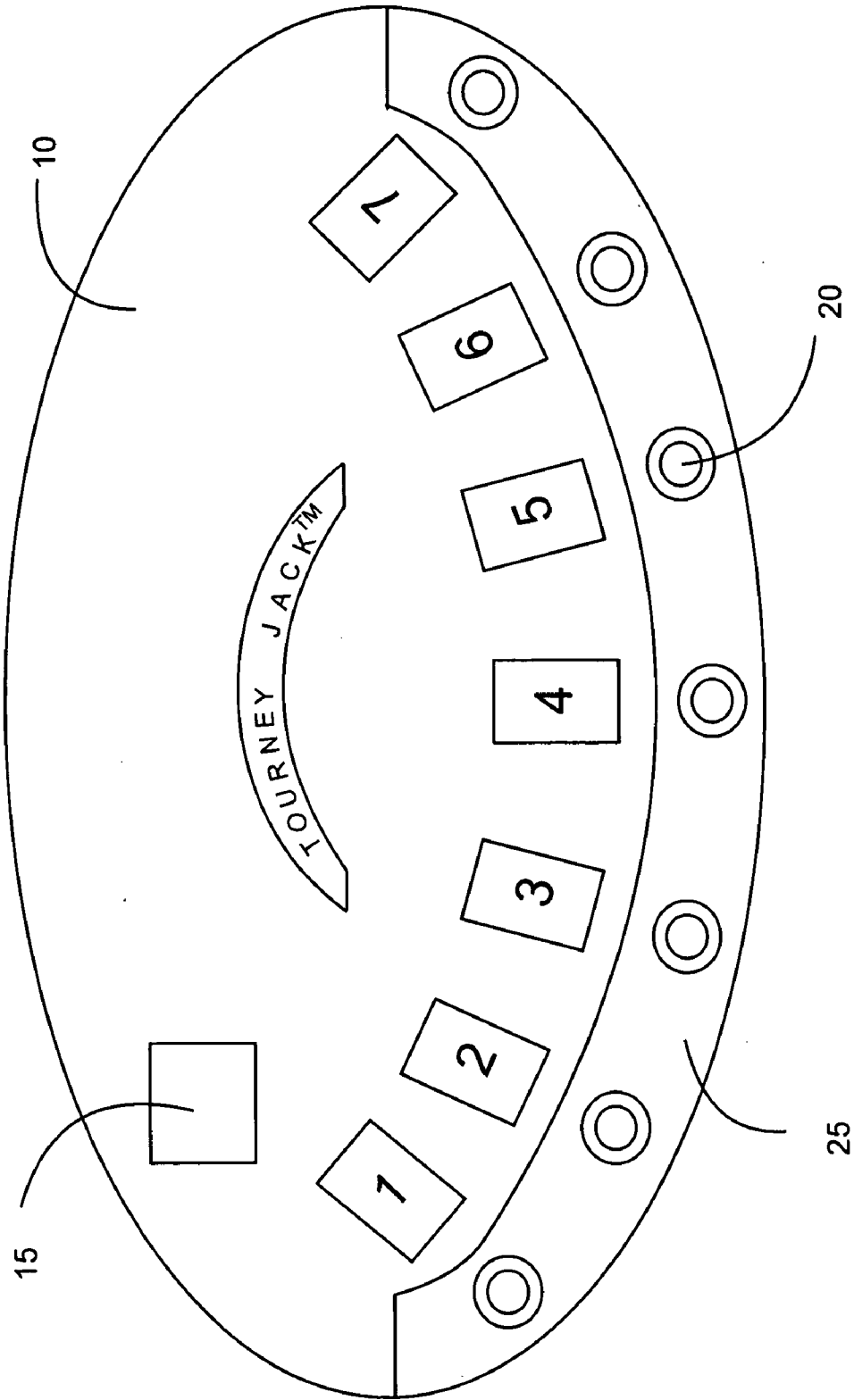
FIG. 2

METHOD OF PLAYING A BLACKJACK CARD GAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to casino or card room gaming, more particularly to a method of playing a blackjack card game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The game of blackjack or twenty-one is played with a standard deck of playing cards containing fifty-two cards in four suits. The object of the game is to achieve a count of twenty-one without going over twenty-one (i.e., "busting"). Numbered cards (i.e., 2-10) count as their face value and face cards (i.e., king, queen, jack) count as ten. An ace counts as either one or eleven.

[0003] Blackjack is typically played at a table, either physical or virtual, that includes a dealer and up to seven players. Each player is playing against the dealer or "house". Each player places a bet and along with the dealer initially receives two cards. In order to win his bet, a player must have a higher point total than the dealer without going over twenty-one. A player may draw additional cards (i.e., take "hits") or stand on the cards at his discretion. The dealer, however, must take a hit on any point total of sixteen or less and must stand on any point total of seventeen or more. A Blackjack occurs when a player or the dealer receives an ace and a face card or ten.

[0004] Variations of the standard blackjack game are known in the art. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,413,353 issued May 9, 1995 describes Jack Attack™, which is a variation allowing players to play against each other while the house takes an automatic rake. In Jack Attack™, the dealer receives no cards. U.S. Pat. No. 6,283,474 issued Sep. 4, 2001 describes a variation in which players may make side or second wagers each hand to form a pot from which the house takes a rake. The pot is won when a certain predetermined winning condition is met during that hand.

[0005] Despite the variations known in the art, there is still a need for a fast-paced blackjack game in which the players can win larger pools and which is suitable for tournament style gaming.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] There is provided a method of playing a blackjack game comprising the steps of:

[0007] three or more players buying a stack of three or more chips from a house for a predetermined buy-in, each player buying the same number of chips for the same buy-in, all of the buy-ins forming a pool;

[0008] playing a first hand in which

[0009] (i) each player wagers a number of the player's chips, the number of chips being one or more,

[0010] (ii) a dealer for the house deals two cards to each player and two cards to the dealer, one of the two cards face down and one of the two cards face up for each of the players and the dealer,

[0011] (iii) each player in turn elects to stand or to draw additional cards from the dealer without wagering additional chips,

[0012] (iv) a player card sum is determined for each player, each player whose player card sum is in excess of twenty-one busting,

[0013] (iv) after each player has elected to stand or has busted, the dealer turns up the dealer's face down card, the dealer drawing an additional card when the dealer's cards have a dealer card sum of sixteen or less and standing when the dealer card sum is seventeen or greater, the dealer busting if the dealer card sum exceeds twenty-one,

[0014] (v) comparing the player card sums to the dealer card sum to determine winning players and losing players of the hand, the card sums being determined with cards from 2 to 10 counted at face value, with jacks, queens and kings counted as 10 and with aces counted as 1 or 11,

[0015] the winning players consisting of the players who did not bust with the dealer busting, or, the players whose player card sum does not exceed twenty-one but does exceed the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting,

[0016] the losing players consisting of the players that busted, and, the players whose player card sums are less than the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting, and

[0017] (vi) the house provides each winning player a number of chips equal to the number of chips wagered by the winning player, and the house takes from each losing player the number of chips wagered by the losing player;

[0018] playing one or more other hands until a winner of the game is determined or a predetermined time limit has been reached; and,

[0019] paying the pool minus a predetermined rake to the winner of the game.

[0020] Throughout the following specification, use of the masculine form, for example "he", "him", etc., with reference to a player or the dealer is done for convenience and does not exclude female players and dealers.

[0021] The game is played with three or more players, preferably 3-7 players. More than seven players can slow the game considerably. Before the game starts, each player buys a stack of three or more chips from the house for a predetermined buy-in. The number of chips and the amount of the buy-in are fixed for each table. Preferably, the number of chips is fixed at three or four, more preferably three. The buy-in can be fixed at any amount, for example $50, $100, $500, etc. Thus, in one example, at a $50 table, each player buys three chips for $50. If there are five players, the total of the buy-ins is $250, which is placed in a pool. As indicated below, the house will take a predetermined rake from the pool, therefore, in the example above the winner of the game will be paid somewhat less than $250. If the rake is equal to one buy-in, the winner of the game in the example above would be paid $200.

[0022] Each game comprises a series of hands of black-jack. At the beginning of each hand, each player wagers one or more of the chips in the stack received from the buy-in. Preferably, the players are only allowed to wager one chip in the first hand to eliminate the possibility of everyone losing in the first hand. In subsequent hands, each player is preferably allowed to wager as many chips as there are in his stack.

[0023] In a hand, the dealer deals two cards to each player and to himself. One of the cards is dealt face down, the other is dealt face up. Each player in turn reveals his face down card and elects to stand or draw additional cards, preferably using appropriate signals. No further wagering of chips is done at this point. A player card sum is determined for each player and each player whose card sum is in excess of twenty-one busts and loses the hand. After each player has played his turn, the dealer turns over his face down card. The dealer must stand when the dealer's cards have a card sum of seventeen or greater and must draw an additional card when the dealer card sum is sixteen or less. The dealer busts if his card sum exceeds twenty-one.

[0024] If fast play is desired, a time window for wagering and/or playing may be imposed. The time window is preferably from about 5 to 20 seconds, more preferably about 10 to 15 seconds. Failing to wager or play within the time window results in the automatic loss of one or more chips, preferably one chip.

[0025] The dealer always plays last in a hand and the order in which the players take their turns is determined from the dealer button. Preferably, each player plays his full turn before the next player plays. The order of play from one hand to the next changes as the dealer button is moved anti-clockwise or preferably clockwise from one player to the next between hands.

[0026] Card sums for both the players and the dealer are determined as in regular blackjack with cards from 2 to 10 counted at face value, with jacks, queens and kings counted as 10 and with aces counted as 1 or 11.

[0027] For a given player, the player automatically loses a hand when the player busts. If the player stands before busting, the player loses the hand if his card sum is less than the dealer's card sum and the dealer has not busted. If the player stands before busting, and the dealer busts, the player wins the hand. If the player stands before busting, and the dealer does not bust, the player wins the hand if the player's card sum is greater than the dealer's card sum. When the dealer's card sum is equal to the player's card sum, the wager is pushed to the next hand for the player.

[0028] The payout for a winning hand is one-to-one. The loss for a losing hand is equal to the number of chips wagered. Thus, a winning player who wagered two chips would receive his original two chips back plus another two chips from the house. A loser who wagered three chips would lose those three chips to the house.

[0029] Hands are played successively until a winner of the game is determined or a predetermined time limit expires. A player is eliminated from the game when he loses all of his chips. When all but one remaining player is eliminated, the remaining player is the winner of the game. The pool is then paid to the winner of the game, less a house rake. The house rake may be any amount of the pool, preferably no more than half the amount of the pool, more preferably equal to one buy-in. The rake may be taken by the house before the game starts or after the game ends.

[0030] The time limit may be any suitable or agreed upon time. For tournament play where speed is desired, the time limit is preferably from about 5 to 20 minutes, more preferably about 10 minutes. If a winner of the game is not determined before expiration of the time limit, the pool less

the rake is paid out to the remaining player who has the most chips. If more than one remaining player has the most chips, the pool less the rake is divided equally among the remaining players with the most chips.

[0031] In one embodiment of the game, when there are only two players remaining, the two remaining players may split the pool, less the house rake, upon agreement between the two remaining players. The dealer may offer this option when the third last player is eliminated.

[0032] The blackjack game of the present invention is particularly suited for tournament play. All of the players start on an equal basis and game play is fast, as the game time limit prevents excessively long games. The possibility for a number of hands during each game encourages competitive play, permitting players to incur some losses without being eliminated.

[0033] The blackjack game may be played in a physical or virtual setting. Any visual layout of the playing surface that can accommodate the rules of the game may be used. The visual layout may be on a physical tabletop or an electronic tabletop.

[0034] The method of playing the blackjack game may be embodied in software comprising a computer program having computer code for executing the method of the present invention. The software may run on a stand-alone computer or on a network, for example the Internet. On the Internet, the software is preferably run from a central server to which players may logon from remote locations. Software provisions for making buy-ins electronically, for example by credit card, may also be used.

[0035] Further features of the invention will be described or will become apparent in the course of the following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0036] In order that the invention may be more clearly understood, embodiments thereof will now be described in detail by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0037] FIG. 1 is a plan view showing a first embodiment of a playing surface suitable for playing a blackjack game in accordance with the present method; and,

[0038] FIG. 2 is a plan view showing a second embodiment of a playing surface suitable for playing a blackjack game in accordance with the present method.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED
EMBODIMENTS

[0039] A blackjack game of the present invention may be called TOURNEY JACK™. TOURNEY JACK™ may be played on a playing surface as depicted in FIG. 1. Playing surface 10 is oval in shape and comprises player spots numbered 1-7 where players make their wagers. Cards are dealt to the player spots. The pool is placed in area 15 and remains there until a winner of the game is determined. Once the winner of the game is determined, the dealer pays the pool to the winner of the game after taking the house rake.

[0040] FIG. 2 shows a second embodiment of a playing surface in which the playing surface of FIG. 1 further

includes places for setting drinks and/or ashtrays. Thus, playing surface **10** is oval in shape and comprises player spots numbered **1-7** where players make their wagers and receive cards. The pool is placed in area **15**. Drinks or ashtrays may be placed in holders **20** (only one labeled) in raised area **25**, which is raised off the playing surface **10**.

[0041] The playing surface may be incorporated on to a gaming table for use in a card room setting, for example a casino. While a physical form of the playing surface has been described, it is evident that the form may be replicated in a virtual setting on a computer or electronic game monitor.

[0042] One embodiment of TOURNEY JACK™ has the following rules:

[0043] The minimum number of players to commence play is three. The maximum number of players is seven. The game may therefore be considered a multi-user game.

[0044] To start the game, each player must "buy-in" to the game by placing a buy-in on one of the spots provided. The cost of the buy-in may be any amount, for example $50, $100, $500, etc., but each player receives three chips irrespective of the actual buy-in amount. For example, if the buy-in is $100, each player must pay $100 to receive three chips. Each player starts the game with three chips.

[0045] Each buy-in is placed into a pool for the eventual winner of the game. The house will take from the pool an amount equal to one buy-in to cover the table cost of each game, therefore, TOURNEY JACK™ presents no risk to the house. For example, if seven players buy into a $100 game, the house automatically takes $100 leaving the pool with $600. Therefore, each player has the chance of winning $600 in a matter of minutes instead of hours. In another example, if three players buy into a $500.00 game, the house takes $500 leaving the pool with $1000 for a player to win.

[0046] A player is allowed to wager only one chip on his first hand. After the first hand, there is no limit on the number of chips that may be wagered. Each hand is played like a blackjack hand with players betting chips against the dealer's hand. Once a player loses all of his chips, he is eliminated from the game. An eliminated player loses his original buy-in, which remains in the pool.

[0047] The object of the game is to play until only one player remains with chips on the table. The remaining player wins the pool. It doesn't matter how many chips the remaining player is left with since he wins the pool, which is a fixed amount. The chips themselves have zero face value and are ideally just colored with no denomination. Each game may also be subjected to a time limit of no more than 10 minutes, to encourage a fast paced game.

[0048] Each player buys three chips from the dealer at the stated buy-in amount. The money from all the buy-ins is placed in the pool. The dealer will take from the pool an amount equal to one buy-in to cover the house rake.

[0049] Each player must place one chip only in the betting box to start the game. A hand of blackjack is played with the players playing against the dealer's hand. In subsequent hands, each player may wager any number of his remaining chips.

[0050] In a hand of blackjack, each player and the dealer is dealt two cards, one face down ("hole card") and one face up. The dealer then goes around the table and asks each player if he would like to draw another card ("hit") or if he would like to stand. The dealer keeps asking each player if he wants to hit until each player decides to stand. The player must indicate hit or stand by the proper use of hand signals. After each player takes his turn, the dealer turns up his hole card. If the dealer has sixteen or less, he must hit until he reaches seventeen or more.

[0051] Each player's objective in each hand is to get a card sum of 21 or as close to 21 as possible without going over 21 (i.e. without going "bust"). Each player also wants his hand to be closer to 21 than the dealer's hand. If a player's card sum is closer to 21 than the dealer's hand, he wins. If the player's card sum is less than the dealer's, the house wins. In the event of a tie with the dealer, the player "pushes", i.e. neither the player nor the house wins or loses the hand.

[0052] A winning hand pays even. Thus, each player who has a hand with a higher value than the dealer's hand without going over 21 will be awarded back a number of chips equal to the same amount betted. For example, on a wager of two chips, a winning player would get back his original two chips plus two more.

[0053] There is no insurance offered and a 21 constitutes a normal win. There is no payment of one and a half for a 21 or blackjack. It is an equal payout.

[0054] A player may not split and double-down.

[0055] Numbered cards are counted at their face value. Kings, Queens, and Jacks count as ten. Aces count as one or eleven.

[0056] If the first two cards a player is dealt have a card sum of 21, then the player has a blackjack. If the player busts (i.e. the card sum exceeds 21), the player loses the hand immediately.

[0057] If the dealer busts, the house must pay all the players still in the hand.

[0058] A player has only 15 seconds to place a bet. Failure to do so will result in automatically losing one chip from the total amount of chips the player has.

[0059] A player has 15 seconds to stand or to draw an additional card. Failure to do so will result in automatically losing one chip from the total amount of chips the player has.

[0060] When a player has no chips remaining, he is eliminated from game.

[0061] When the table is down to two players only, the two remaining players may choose to split the pool if so desired. The dealer will ask this, however, both players must agree. If the two remaining players split the pool, the game ends.

[0062] When the table is down to one player only, the remaining player wins the pool and the game is over.

[0063] If there is more than one player remaining in the game after 10 minutes of play, the player with the most chips wins the pool. In the event of a tie, the pool is split equally among the players with the most chips.

[0064] Once all the money is in the pool and the game has begun, the money may be touched only by the dealer. A player touching the money in the pool is disqualified.

[0065] Any number of decks of cards may be used in the card shoe, however, four decks with a marker is recommended. After the marker has been found, the cards must be re-shuffled.

[0066] A player cannot occupy more than two spots per game. A player may play as if he were 2 players by placing a buy-in on two spots.

[0067] Other advantages which are inherent to the structure are obvious to one skilled in the art. The embodiments are described herein illustratively and are not meant to limit the scope of the invention as claimed. Variations of the foregoing embodiments will be evident to a person of ordinary skill and are intended by the inventor to be encompassed by the following claims.

1. A method of playing a blackjack game comprising the steps of:

three or more players buying a stack of three or more chips from a house for a predetermined buy-in, each player buying the same number of chips for the same buy-in, all of the buy-ins forming a pool;

playing a first hand in which

(i) each player wagers a number of the player's chips, the number of chips being one or more,

(ii) a dealer for the house deals two cards to each player and two cards to the dealer, one of the two cards face down and one of the two cards face up for each of the players and the dealer,

(iii) each player in turn elects to stand or to draw additional cards from the dealer without wagering additional chips,

(iv) a player card sum is determined for each player, each player whose player card sum is in excess of twenty-one busting,

(iv) after each player has elected to stand or has busted, the dealer turns up the dealer's face down card, the dealer drawing an additional card when the dealer's cards have a dealer card sum of sixteen or less and standing when the dealer card sum is seventeen or greater, the dealer busting if the dealer card sum exceeds twenty-one,

(v) the player card sums are compared to the dealer card sum to determine winning players and losing players of the hand, the card sums being determined with cards from 2 to 10 counted at face value, with jacks, queens and kings counted as 10 and with aces counted as 1 or 11,

the winning players consisting of the players who did not bust with the dealer busting, or, the players whose player card sum does not exceed twenty-one but does exceed the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting,

the losing players consisting of the players that busted, and, the players whose player card sums are less than the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting, and

(vi) the house provides each winning player a number of chips equal to the number of chips wagered by that

winning player, and the house takes from each losing player the number of chips wagered by that losing player;

playing one or more other hands until a winner of the game is determined or a predetermined time limit has been reached; and,

paying the pool minus a predetermined rake to the winner of the game.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the three or more players is three to seven players.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the number of chips that each player may wager in the first hand is one, and wherein the number of chips that each player may wager in the other hands is only limited by the number of chips that the player possesses.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the stack of three or more chips is a stack of three chips.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the rake is equal to one buy-in.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein if the player card sum of one or more players is equal to the dealer card sum, and the one or more players and the dealer do not bust, the one or more players neither wins nor loses the wagered chips, the wagered chips being pushed to a next hand.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the time limit is ten minutes.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein each player has a wagering time window in which to make the wager on each player's respective turn, the player losing one chip for failing to make the wager within the wagering time window.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein each player has a drawing time window in which to stand or draw an additional card on each player's respective turn, the player losing one chip for failing to stand or draw an additional card within the drawing time window.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein players who lose all of their chips are eliminated from the game.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the players may not be offered insurance, the players may not split or double-down, and any one player may not occupy more than two spots in the game.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the player having a remaining chip after all of the other players have been eliminated, is the winner of the game.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the player having the largest number of chips when the time limit expires is the winner of the game.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein more than one player have the largest number of chips and the pool minus the predetermined rake is divided equally among all of the players who have the largest number of chips.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein before expiration of the time limit two remaining players divide the pool equally between them provided there are no other remaining players and provided that the two remaining players both agree to divide the pool.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is played in a virtual setting.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is played in a physical setting.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the game is played with four decks of cards and a marker.

19. A method of playing a blackjack game comprising the steps of:

three to seven players buying a stack of three chips from a house for a predetermined buy-in, each player buying the same number of chips for the same buy-in, all of the buy-ins forming a pool;

playing a first hand in which

(i) each player wagers one of the player's chips,

(ii) a dealer for the house deals two cards to each player and two cards to the dealer, one of the two cards face down and one of the two cards face up for each of the players and the dealer,

(iii) each player in turn elects to stand or to draw additional cards from the dealer without wagering additional chips,

(iv) a player card sum is determined for each player, each player whose player card sum is in excess of twenty-one busting,

(iv) after each player has elected to stand or has busted, the dealer turns up the dealer's face down card, the dealer drawing an additional card when the dealer's cards have a dealer card sum of sixteen or less and standing when the dealer card sum is seventeen or greater, the dealer busting if the dealer card sum exceeds twenty-one,

(v) the player card sums are compared to the dealer card sum to determine winning players and losing players of the hand, the card sums being determined with cards from 2 to 10 counted at face value, with jacks, queens and kings counted as 10 and with aces counted as 1 or 11,

the winning players consisting of the players who did not bust with the dealer busting, or, the players whose player card sum does not exceed twenty-one but does exceed the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting,

the losing players consisting of the players that busted, and, the players whose player card sums are less than the dealer card sum with the dealer not busting, and

(vi) the house provides each winning player a number of chips equal to the number of chips wagered by that winning player, and the house takes from each losing player the number of chips wagered by that losing player;

playing one or more other hands in which the players may wager any number of their remaining chips until a winner of the game is determined or a predetermined time limit of 5 to 20 minutes has been reached; and,

paying the pool, minus a house rake equal to one buy-in, to the winner of the game.

20. A computer program comprising computer code for executing the method defined in claim 1.

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