Disclosed is a game and method for a game including a stud poker feature game.
Figure 2

200

210 CURRENCY ACCEPTOR

220 GAME PROGRAM

230 VIDEO DISPLAY SCREEN

240 RANDOM NUMBER GENERATOR

250 BUTTONS

260 PAYOUT MECHANISM

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT (CPU)
FIGURE 4
500

510 Initiate Primary Game Play

520 Pay Player According to Primary Game Outcome

530 Feature Game Trigger?

540 YES Present Stud Poker Feature

550 NO Pay Player According to Stud Feature Outcome

FIGURE 5
GAME AND METHOD HAVING A STUD POKER FEATURE

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

0002. The present invention is directed to gaming games and methods and, more particularly, to games and methods that have a stud poker feature.

0003. In the prior art, various types of gaming machines have been developed with different features to captivate and maintain player interest. In general, a gaming machine allows a player to play a game in exchange for a wager. Depending on the outcome of the game, the player may be entitled to an award which is paid to the player by the gaming machine, normally in the form of currency or game credits. Gaming machines may include flashing displays, lighted displays, or sound effects to capture a player’s interest in a gaming device.

0004. Another important feature of maintaining player interest in a gaming machine includes providing the player with many opportunities to win awards, such as cash or prizes. For example, in some slot machines, the display windows show more than one adjacent symbol on each reel, thereby allowing for multiple-line betting. Some gaming machines offer a player the opportunity to win millions of dollars by providing progressive jackpots. Additionally, feature games of various types have been employed to reward players above the amounts normally awarded on a standard game pay schedule. Generally, such feature games are triggered by predetermined events such as one or more appearances of certain combinations of indicia in a primary game. In order to stimulate interest, feature games are typically set to occur at a gaming machine on a statistical cycle based upon the number of primary game plays. One common method in a reel slot environment is to award the player a certain number of free games using the same reels as the primary or base game or an alternate set of reels. The free games are often enhanced in other ways (e.g. have a bonus multiplier applied to all wins, have a higher hit frequency than the base game reels, etc.). The feature play may require further initiation by the player once triggered, by pressing a button, for example, but beyond that, the free games sequence plays without player interaction. The experience for the player is a fast-paced, exciting round of free games that can be very lucrative. Because the games play automatically, the player is allowed to enjoy the bonus without additional interaction. For draw poker, there exist methods of offering free games using a deck of cards identical to or similar to the base game, and awarding free games in a draw poker style. In these games, the player must interact with each game in the same fashion as they do with the base game; that is, they must choose to hold, discard and draw cards for each free game.

0005. While gaming machines including feature games have been very successful, there remains a need for games that provide a player with enhanced excitement and increased opportunity of winning.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

0006. In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a game includes an interface activatable by a player and a primary game having a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after activation of the interface by the player. The game further includes a feature game having one or more hands of poker dealt to the player, each hand including at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player. The feature game is initiated upon the occurrence of a triggering event.

0007. In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, a method of operating a game includes the steps of initiating play of a primary game by a player and determining at least one of a set of primary game outcomes. Upon the occurrence of a triggering event, a feature game is initiated, the feature game dealing one or more hands of poker to the player, each hand including at least one card. None of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.

0008. Other features and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate by way of example, the features of the various embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

0009. FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a gaming machine in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

0010. FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the physical and logical components of the gaming machine of FIG. 1.

0011. FIG. 3 is a display image associated with a game of one embodiment of the invention.

0012. FIG. 4 is a display image associated with a feature game of one embodiment of the invention.

0013. FIG. 5 is a functional block diagram depicting the steps associated with carrying out a method in accordance of one aspect of the invention.

0014. FIG. 6 is a schematic block diagram showing the hardware elements of a networked gaming system in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

0015. Various embodiments are directed to a game and method for playing a game, wherein the player is provided with a stud poker feature game, that is, a card game in which no cards are discarded and in which the final hand is evaluated against a video poker-style award schedule. Embodiments of the game and method are illustrated and described herein, by way of example only, and not by way of limitation. Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIGS. 1-6, there are shown illustrative examples of a game and a method for playing a game in accordance with various aspects of the invention.

0016. In accordance with one embodiment, FIG. 1 illustrates a gaming machine 100 including cabinet housing 120, primary game display 140, player-activated buttons 160, player tracking panel 136, bill/voucher acceptor 180 and one
or more speakers 190. Cabinet housing 120 is a self-standing unit that is generally rectangular in shape and may be manufactured with reinforced steel or other rigid materials which are resistant to tampering and vandalism. Cabinet housing 120 houses a processor, circuitry, and software (not shown) for receiving signals from the player-activated buttons 160, operating the games, and transmitting signals to the respective displays and speakers. Any shaped cabinet may be implemented with any embodiment of gaming machine 100 so long as it provides access to a player for playing a game. For example, cabinet 120 may comprise a slant-top, bar-top, or table-top style cabinet. The operation of gaming machine 100 is described more fully below.

[0017] The plurality of player-activated buttons 160 may be used for various functions such as, but not limited to, selecting a wager denomination, selecting a game to be played, selecting a wager amount per game, initiating a game, or cashing out money from gaming machine 100. Buttons 160 function as input mechanisms and may include mechanical buttons, electromechanical buttons or touch screen buttons. Optionally, a handle (not shown) may be rotated by a player to initiate a game.

[0018] In other embodiments, buttons 160 may be replaced with various other input mechanisms known in the art such as, but not limited to, a touch screen system, touch pad, track ball, mouse, switches, toggle switches, or other input means used to accept player input. For example, one input means is a universal button module as disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/062,122, entitled “Universal Button Module,” filed on Apr. 14, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference. Generally, the universal button module provides a dynamic button system adaptable for use with various games and capable of adjusting to gaming systems having frequent game changes. More particularly, the universal button module may be used in connection with playing a game on a gaming machine and may be used for such functions as selecting the number of credits to bet per hand.

[0019] Cabinet housing 120 may optionally include top box 150 which contains “top glass” 152 comprising advertising or payout information related to the game or games available on gaming machine 100. Player tracking panel 136 includes player tracking card reader 134 and player tracking display 132. Voucher printer 130 may be integrated into player tracking panel 136 or installed elsewhere in cabinet housing 120 or top box 150.

[0020] Game display 140 presents a game of chance wherein a player receives one or more outcomes from a set of potential outcomes. For example, one such game of chance is a video poker game, an example of which is entitled Free Play Poker, further described below. In other aspects of the invention, gaming machine 100 may present a video or mechanical reel slot machine, a video keno game, a lottery game, a bingo game, a Class II bingo game, a roulette game, a craps game, a blackjack game, a mechanical or video representation of a wheel game or the like. In alternative embodiments, it may further be appreciated that games of skill or games of chance involving some player skill may be implemented with gaming machine 100.

[0021] Mechanical or video/mechanical embodiments may include game displays such as mechanical reels, wheels, or dice as required to present the game to the player. In video/mechanical or pure video embodiments, game display 140 is, typically, a CRT or a flat-panel display in the form of, but not limited to, liquid crystal, plasma, electroluminescent, vacuum fluorescent, field emission, or any other type of panel display known or developed in the art. Game display 140 may be mounted in either a “portrait” or “landscape” orientation and be of standard or “widescreen” dimensions (i.e., a ratio of one dimension to another of at least 16:9). For example, a widescreen display may be 32 inches wide by 18 inches tall. A widescreen display in a “portrait” orientation may be 32 inches tall by 18 inches wide. Additionally, game display 140 preferably includes a touch screen or touch glass system (not shown) and presents player interfaces such as, but not limited to, credit meter 144, win meter 142 and touch screen buttons 146. An example of a touch glass system is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,942,571, entitled “Gaming Device with Direction and Speed Control of Mechanical Reels Using Touch Screen,” which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0022] Game display 140 may also present information such as, but not limited to, player information, advertisements and casino promotions, graphic displays, news and sports updates, or even offer an alternate game. This information may be generated through a host computer networked with gaming machine 100 on its own initiative or it may be obtained by request of the player using either one or more of the plurality of player-activated buttons 160; the game display itself; if game display 140 comprises a touch screen or similar technology; buttons (not shown) mounted about game display 140 which may permit selections such as those found on an ATM machine, where legends on the screen are associated with respective selecting buttons; or any player input device that offers the required functionality.

[0023] Cabinet housing 120 incorporates a single game display 140. However, in alternate embodiments, cabinet housing 120 or top box 150 may house one or more additional displays or components (not shown) used for various purposes including additional game play screens, animated “top glass,” progressive meters or mechanical or electromechanical devices such as, but not limited to, wheels, pointers or reels. The additional displays may or may not include a touch screen or touch glass system.

[0024] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the interconnection of physical and logical components 200 of gaming machine 100. Currency acceptor 210 is typically connected to central processing unit (“CPU”) 205 by a serial connection such as RS-232 or USB. CPU 205 executes game program 220 that causes video display screen 230 to display a game. In one embodiment, game program 220 is a game entitled Free Play Poker.

[0025] When a player has inserted a form of currency such as, for example and without limitation, paper currency, coins or tokens, cashless tickets or vouchers, electronic funds transfers or the like into currency acceptor 210, a signal is sent to CPU 205 which, in turn, assigns an appropriate number of credits for play. The player may further control the operation of gaming machine 100, for example, to select the amount to wager via electromechanical or touchscreen buttons 250. The game starts in response to the player pushing one of buttons 250. Random number generator 240 responds to instructions from CPU 205 to provide a display of randomly selected indicia on video display screen 230. Thereafter, the player may or may not interact with the game through electromechanical or touchscreen buttons 250 to change the displayed indicia. Finally, CPU 205 under con-
control of game program 220 compares the final display of indicia to a pay table. The set of possible game outcomes may include a subset of outcomes related to the triggering of play of free games. In the event the displayed outcome is a member of this subset, CPU 205, under control of game program 220, causes additional game play to be presented on video display screen 230 as will be described further below.

[0026] Predetermined payout amounts for certain outcomes, including feature game outcomes, are stored as part of game program 220. Such payout amounts are, in response to instructions from CPU 205, provided to the player in the form of coins, credits or currency via payout mechanism 260, which may be one or more of a credit meter, a coin hopper, a voucher printer, an electronic funds transfer protocol or any other payout means known or developed in the art.

[0027] In embodiments of gaming machine 100, game program 220 is stored in a memory device (not shown). By way of example, but not by limitation, such memory devices include external memory devices, hard drives, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and flash memory cards. In an alternate embodiment, the game programs are stored in a remote storage device. In one embodiment, the remote storage device is housed in a remote server. The gaming machine may access the remote storage device via a network connection, including but not limited to, local area network connection, a TCP/IP connection, a wireless connection, or any other means for operatively networking components together. Optionally, other data including graphics, sound files and other media data for use with gaming machine 100 are stored in the same or a separate memory device (not shown).

[0028] In various embodiments of the invention, one or more stud poker feature games are available to a player. In one embodiment, a set of possible outcomes for game program 220 includes a subset of outcomes related to the triggering of stud poker feature games. In an alternate embodiment, other elements of game program 220 trigger feature games. For example, game program 220 may maintain a counter that tracks how many games have been played since a feature game was last triggered. The game program compares that value to a predetermined threshold. Once the threshold has been met or exceeded, the game program 220 may immediately trigger the feature game or optionally trigger it based on a random factor. Once triggered, the game program 220 resets the counter. In some embodiments, the threshold is one. In other words, a feature game may be randomly triggered during any game play.

[0029] In other embodiments, the stud poker feature game is one of a set of primary games randomly selected for play following initiation of play by the player. For example, one such means is disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/428, 220, entitled “Multiple Primary Games Triggered by Random Number Generator,” filed on Jun. 30, 2006, which is hereby incorporated by reference. A gaming machine has at least two distinct primary games. After receiving a wager, the gaming machine determines which primary game to activate. The selected primary game is activated and a game outcome is presented to the player on a game display. A payout may be awarded according to the game outcome.

[0030] Turning to FIG. 3, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, the Free Play Poker game is implemented on video display 300. The game is based on a five-card single hold-and-draw poker game. Optionally, any poker-based game may be used. For example, the game could be based on a stud poker game.

[0031] A simulated standard deck of fifty-two cards is used. The deck comprises four subsets of cards identified as two through ten, jack, queen, king, and ace. Each of the four subsets of cards is identified by one of four suits: spades, clubs, hearts or diamonds. In some embodiments, one or more jokers may also be included for use according to the rules of the game being played, for example, as a wild card. In other embodiments, the playing cards used by the game may include one or more standard or non-standard decks of playing cards.

[0032] In FIG. 3, a player selects the number of credits or coins wagered on the game using touch screen controls BET ONE 321 or BET MAX 320 or corresponding buttons in the set of gaming machine control buttons 160 (FIG. 1). The player may optionally control the speed at which cards are dealt by touching SPEED control 350 or the volume of game sound by touching VOLUME control 360 until the desired settings are achieved.

[0033] Credit meter 315 displays the player’s current balance, while other meters may display, for example, the number of credits or coins wagered 317 and the last amount paid 316. Other meters containing other information may be displayed. The amount wagered may additionally be indicated by highlighting the corresponding column 325 of pay table 350.

[0034] The player initiates game play by pressing REBET/DEAL button 335. Five simulated cards 301-305 are dealt to the player. While cards 301-305 are shown face-down, in one embodiment, the cards are all initially dealt face-up, or alternatively, the cards are dealt in a combined fashion such that some of the cards are dealt face-down and some are dealt face-up. In other embodiments, the number of cards dealt may vary; any number of cards may be dealt.

[0035] Once the cards have been dealt, the player is allowed to view and discard as few as none and as many as five of cards 301-305 by touching the cards he wished to hold or by pressing buttons (not shown) corresponding to the cards. For example, the buttons may be in the set of buttons 160 illustrated in FIG. 1. When the player presses a DRAW button (not shown), cards not elected to be held are discarded and replaced by cards remaining in the original deck. It is important to note that the player is not required to discard any of the cards dealt in the initial hand, and may choose to hold all of the originally dealt cards. In alternate embodiments, the number of allowed discards will vary depending on the rules of the game. In one embodiment of the invention, the player may be required to discard at least one of the dealt cards.

[0036] The player’s final five-card hand is compared to the outcomes based on a poker hand ranking scheme shown on pay table 330. For each winning combination, the game would pay the player the award in the pay table corresponding to both the achieved winning poker hand and the number of units wagered on the game. For example, according to pay table 330, in the event the player had wagered three units, an outcome of “Four Aces” would result in an award of 480 units. In some embodiments, winning outcomes may be indicated on pay table 330 by highlighting the row of the table corresponding to the winning outcome. Still further embodiments may highlight the rectangle at the intersection of the winning row and appropriate wager column. Additional information about the game may be
In various embodiments of the invention, one or more stud poker feature games are available to the player. In one embodiment, the primary game outcomes may include a subset of outcomes related to the triggering of feature games. For example, in lieu of, or in addition to, receiving an award for a flush hand, the stud poker feature may be initiated. In an alternate embodiment, other elements of the primary game trigger feature games. For example, the primary game may maintain a counter that tracks how many primary games have been played since a feature game was last triggered. The primary game compares that value to a predetermined threshold. Once the threshold has been met or exceeded, the primary game may immediately trigger the feature game or optionally trigger it based on a random factor. Once triggered, the primary game resets the counter. In some embodiments, the threshold is one. In some embodiments, the player must wager at least a certain amount in order to be eligible for the feature, while in other embodiments, any wager amount is eligible, but the awards paid by the feature game is adjusted based on the wager size. Once a feature game has been triggered, the player is awarded a certain number of feature game plays.

Once triggered, the stud bonus feature game may wait for the player to initiate further initiate it by pressing a button or otherwise interacting with the game. Once initiated, however, the feature game deals and evaluates a predetermined number of stud poker hands. Though preferred embodiments deal hands of five or seven cards, any number of cards may be dealt. The cards may be dealt face-up one card at a time, or some cards may be dealt face down and subsequently revealed to the player, either individually or as a group.

The pay table against which the hands are evaluated is not necessarily a pay table that has a mathematical expectation favoring the player. Some embodiments use modified decks for the stud feature games. For example, a deck of fewer than five suits and/or fewer than 13 ranks, enhanced decks with certain ranks defined as wild, enhanced decks with additional jokers and/or additional wild cards, modified decks with additional copies of certain ranks and/or suits, etc. may be used without deviating from the scope and spirit of the invention.

Turning to FIG. 4, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, an example of the stud poker feature game is shown on video display 400. The player has just been dealt a hand in the third of ten free stud poker hands. The cards have been dealt from a “standard” deck composed of 52 cards. The hand consists of a three 402, two jacks 401 and 403, a five 404 and an queen 405. The hand shown is an example; any cards from the deck could have been dealt to the player in any order.

The awards in pay table 440 are based on the player’s wager size at the time the feature games were triggered. Pay table column 450 indicates the set of awards available to the player under the rules of the “Free Play Poker” feature game.
Referring to FIG. 6, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, gaming system 600 includes server 610, gaming machines 650, and network 640 connecting gaming machines 650 to server 610. Additionally, gaming display computer 630 is shown connected to network 640. Server 610 may be selected from a variety of conventionally available servers. The type of server used is generally determined by the platform and software requirements of the gaming system. Examples of suitable servers are an IBM RS/6000-based server, an IBM AS/400-based server or a Microsoft Windows-based server, but it should be appreciated that any suitable server may be used. It may also be appreciated that server 610 may be a single "logical" server that comprises multiple physical servers.

Gaming machines 650 operate similar to conventional peripheral networked terminals. Gaming machines 650 have a player interface such as a display, a card reader, and selection buttons through which gaming machines 650 interact with a player playing a wagering game having a stud poker feature game. The player interface is used for making choices such as the amount of a bet or the number of lines to bet. Gaming machines 650 also provide information to server 610 concerning activity on gaming machines 650 and provide a communication portal for players with server 610. For example, the player interface may be used for selecting different server-related menu options such as, but not limited to, transferring a specified number of credits from a player account onto the credit meter of the gaming machine, or for transferring credits from the gaming machine to a central player account.

In various embodiments, any of the gaming machines 650 may be a mechanical reel spinning slot machine, video slot machine, video poker machine, keno machine, video blackjack machine, or a gaming machine offering one or more of the above described primary games offering a stud poker feature game. Alternately, gaming machines 650 may provide a stud poker feature game as one of a set of multiple primary games selected for play by a random number generator. Networking components (not shown) facilitate communications across network 640 between the system server 610 and game management units 620 and/or gaming display control computers 630 that control displays for carousels of gaming machines. Game management units (GMU's) 620 connect gaming machines to networking components and may be installed in the gaming machine cabinet or external to the gaming machine. The function of the GMU is similar to the function of a network interface card connected to a desktop personal computer (PC). Some GMU's have greater capability and can perform such tasks as presenting and playing a game having feature games with multiple sets of indicia using a display 625 operatively connected to GMU 620. Displays related to games offering a stud poker game on gaming machines 650 or GMU displays 625 may also be presented on gaming display 635 by gaming display control computer 630. In one embodiment, GMU 620 is a separate component located outside the gaming machine. Alternatively, in another embodiment, the GMU 620 is located within the gaming machine. Optionally, in an alternative embodiment, one or more gaming machines 650 connect directly to the network and are not connected to a GMU 620. A gaming system of the type described above also allows a plurality of games in accordance with the various embodiments of the invention to be linked under the control of server 610 for cooperative or competitive play in a particular area, casino, or between casinos located in geographically separate areas.

One will appreciate that a gaming system may also comprise other types of components, and the above illustrations are meant only as examples and not as limitations to the types of components or games having a stud poker feature game. Additionally, it may further be appreciated that each of the games could be operated on a remote host computer such that a player initiates play with the host computer over a network via the player interface and gaming machine 650 plays the respective gaming and video displays in conjunction with the game whose play is controlled by the remote computer.

The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the claimed invention. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize various modifications and changes that may be made to the claimed invention without following the example embodiments and applications illustrated and described herein, and without departing from the true spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

1. A game comprising:
   a primary game having a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after activation of the interface by the player;
   a feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to the player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player; and
   a triggering event that initiates play of the feature game.

2. The game of claim 1 wherein the triggering event comprises the occurrence of a specific primary game outcome.

3. The game of claim 1, further comprising a predefined value associated with the game:
   wherein the triggering event comprises the predefined value matching a randomly determined value.

4. The game of claim 1 further comprising a wager, wherein initiation of the feature game is restricted by the amount of the wager.

5. The game of claim 1 wherein the player further initiates the feature game following the occurrence of the triggering event.

6. The game of claim 1 wherein the feature game requires no player input following the initiation of the feature game.

7. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a poker game.

8. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a slot machine game.

9. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a keno game.

10. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a blackjack game.

11. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a bing game.

12. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a keno game.
13. A method of operating a game, the method comprising the steps of:
   initiating play of a primary game by player;
   determining at least one of a set of primary game outcomes;
   upon the occurrence of a triggering event, initiating a feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to the player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein the triggering event comprises the occurrence of a predefined game outcome.
15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:
   predefining a value associated with the game; and randomly determining a value;
   wherein the triggering event comprises the randomly determined value matching the predefined value.
16. The method of claim 13 further comprising the steps of:
   accepting a wager; and
   restricting initiation of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.
17. The method of claim 13 wherein the feature game requires player input following the occurrence of the triggering event.
18. The method of claim 13 wherein the feature game requires no player input following the initiation of the feature game.
19. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a poker game.
20. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a slot machine game.
21. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a keno game.
22. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a blackjack game.
23. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a bingo game.
24. The method of claim 13 wherein the primary game comprises a roulette game.
25. The game of claim 1, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game and a roulette game.
26. The method of claim 13, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game and a roulette game.
27. A gaming machine comprising:
   a processor operatively coupled to a set of player-operable controls;
   a primary game and a feature game operable by the processor in accordance with the player-operable controls, each game having a set of possible outcomes;
   upon a triggering event, the feature game activatable over a sequence of one or more plays, the feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to the player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.
28. The gaming machine of claim 27 wherein the triggering event comprises the occurrence of a specific one of the set of possible primary game outcomes.
29. The gaming machine of claim 28, further comprising a predefined value associated with the game;
   wherein the triggering event comprises the predefined value matching a randomly determined value.
30. The gaming machine of claim 27 further comprising a wager input mechanism operatively coupled to the processor, wherein play of the feature game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed through the wager input mechanism.
31. The gaming machine of claim 27 wherein the feature game is activatable through the player-operable controls following the occurrence of the triggering event.
32. The gaming machine of claim 27 wherein the feature game is operable independent of the player-operable controls.
33. The gaming machine of claim 27, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, and a roulette game.
34. The gaming machine of claim 27, wherein the player operable controls include a speed control.
35. The gaming machine of claim 27 wherein the player operable controls include a volume control.
36. The gaming machine of claim 27 further comprising a video display operatively coupled to the processor.
37. The gaming machine of claim 36 wherein the video display is a wide-screen display.
38. The gaming machine of claim 27 further comprising a cabinet enclosing the processor.
39. The gaming machine of claim 38 wherein the cabinet is one of a bar-top cabinet, a slant-top cabinet, an upright cabinet or a table-top cabinet.
40. The gaming machine of claim 27 further comprising a memory operatively coupled to the processor.
41. The gaming machine of claim 40 wherein the memory is at least one of a hard drive, a CDROM, a DVD or a flash memory.
42. A method of operating a gaming machine played by a player, the method including the steps of:
   determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a primary game;
   upon an occurrence of a triggering event, determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a feature game, the feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to a player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.
43. The method of claim 42 wherein the triggering event comprises a predefined one of the set of primary game outcomes.
44. The method of claim 42, further comprising the steps of:
   predefining a first value associated with the primary game; and randomly determining a second value;
   wherein the triggering event comprises the first value matching the second value.
45. The method of claim 42 further comprising the steps of:
   accepting a wager from the player; and
   restricting initiation of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.
46. The method of claim 42 further comprising the steps of requiring and accepting player input following the occurrence of the triggering event in order to activate the feature game.
47. The method of claim 42 wherein the feature game requires no player input associated with activation of the feature game.

48. The method of claim 42, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game and a roulette game.

49. A networked gaming system including: a plurality of gaming machines connected through a network to a host computer, at least one of the gaming machines including a game operable by a player, the game comprising a primary game and a feature game, upon a triggering event, the feature game activatable over a sequence of one or more plays, the feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to the player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.

50. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein the triggering event comprises the occurrence of a specific one of a set of possible primary game outcomes.

51. The gaming system of claim 49, further comprising a predefined value associated with the game; wherein the triggering event comprises the predefined value matching a randomly determined value.

52. The gaming system of claim 49 further comprising a wager input mechanism operable by the player wherein play of the feature game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed by the player by way of the wager input mechanism.

53. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein the player further activates play of the feature game following the occurrence of the triggering event.

54. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein play of the feature game does not require player input.

55. The gaming system of claim 49, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

56. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein the gaming machines are connected for competitive play.

57. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein the gaming machines are connected for cooperative play.

58. The gaming system of claim 49 wherein a random outcome is associated with each play of the game.

59. A method of operating a networked gaming system, the method including the steps of: connecting a plurality of gaming machines comprising a game; for one of the games, selecting at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a primary game; upon an occurrence of a triggering event, determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a feature game, the feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to a player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.

60. The method of claim 59 wherein the triggering event comprises a predefined one of the set of primary game outcomes.

61. The method of claim 59, further comprising the steps of: predefining a first value associated with the primary game; and randomly determining a second value wherein the triggering event comprises the first value matching the second value.

62. The method of claim 59 further comprising the steps of: accepting a wager from the player; and restricting initiation of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.

63. The method of claim 59 further comprising the steps of requiring and accepting player input following the occurrence of the triggering event in order to activate the feature game.

64. The method of claim 59 wherein the feature game requires no player input associated with the feature game.

65. The method of claim 59, the primary game comprising at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

66. A networked gaming system including: a network computer; one or more gaming machines; a network connecting the network computer to the one or more gaming machines; a game operable with at least one of the gaming machines and having a set of possible outcomes; and a trigger operable in conjunction with the game for causing the game to play a feature game, the feature game comprising one or more hands of poker dealt to a player, each hand comprising at least one card, wherein none of the cards may be discarded or replaced by the player.

67. The networked gaming system of claim 66 wherein the game is controlled by the host computer.

68. The networked gaming system of claim 66 wherein the game is controlled by at least one of the gaming machines.

69. The networked gaming system of claim 66, the game comprising a random outcome associated with each play of the game.

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