MULTIHAND POKER GAME

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This invention is a multi-handed poker game where the cards are dealt in one or more patterns. In one embodiment, the cards are dealt in a 13 card diamond pattern with multiple hands formed from five card groups within the pattern. In another embodiment, the cards are dealt in pyramids, each pyramid has one top cards and two or more bottom cards, and a player selects first is required to select a top card before he is allowed to select a bottom card to form a poker hand.
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[0001] This is a continuation in part of application Ser. No. 10/211,063 first filed on Aug. 2, 2002 which claims priority from application Ser. No. 10/015,314 first filed on Oct. 9, 2001 and a continuation in part from application Ser. No. 10/418,829, first filed on Apr. 21, 2003 and now allowed; the disclosures of these applications are incorpo-rated herein in their entirety.

[0002] This invention is for poker games that can be played on electronic devices of the sort typically used in casinos. The game can also be played over the internet or on hand held video games. In short, the patent covers playing the game, on any sort of electronic device, or transmitting electronic signals that represent the game from one computer to another.

[0003] In one embodiment of the game, cards are dealt in a diamond pattern with five cards on a side, with the corner cards common to adjacent hands. The cards are all dealt face up, and the player is given an opportunity to select hold cards. The non-held cards are replaced and the resulting hands are compared to a pay table.

[0004] In another embodiment of the game, the diamond pattern is created with seven cards on a side, and the corner cards are common to adjacent hands. In this embodiment, some or all of the cards can be dealt face up. The player can then swap cards from one hand into another. The resulting hands are then compared to a pay table and the player is paid accordingly.

[0005] In another embodiment of the game, five cards are dealt per side and there is an internal cross of cards made up of three cards in each direction, which makes a horizontal and vertical five-card hand in combination with the corner cards.

[0006] In another embodiment, diamond-shaped hands are made of five cards, four corner cards and a center card. A number of these diamonds can be linked together with the corner cards from one hand also being the corner cards of an adjacent hand, or of adjacent hands. The player can pay for the number of hands he wants to play. For example he can pay four quarters for four hands.

[0007] In another embodiment, two or more pyramids of five cards with one top card and four bottom cards are dealt to a player. The player may form a poker hand from available cards. For the first card selected, the player may choose any top card. For subsequent cards, the player may choose from any remaining top card or the bottom cards from any pyramid from which the top card has already been selected. Once the hand is complete, the player is paid according to a pay table for poker hands.

[0008] In other embodiments, the number of top cards in each pile may vary as well as the number of bottom cards. In further embodiments the number of piles may vary.

[0009] In another embodiment, the bottom cards may be the suit and rank cards of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/418,829.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0010] FIG. 1 shows a five card per side diamond pattern poker game.

[0011] FIG. 2 shows the seven card per side diamond pattern poker game.

[0012] FIG. 3 shows the five card per side diamond pattern game with an internal cross of five cards horizontally and vertically.

[0013] FIG. 4 shows an embodiment of the game which is a series of interlocking five-card, diamond-shaped hands.

[0014] FIG. 5 shows an embodiment of the present invention having four pyramids with four bottom cards and one top card in each pyramid.

[0015] FIG. 6 shows an embodiment of the present invention with one card selected.

[0016] FIG. 7 shows an embodiment of the present invention with two cards selected.

[0017] FIG. 8 shows an embodiment of the present invention with three cards selected.

[0018] FIG. 9 shows an embodiment of the present invention with four cards selected.

[0019] FIG. 10 shows an embodiment of the present invention with five cards selected.

[0020] FIG. 11 shows an embodiment of the present invention with three pyramids of four cards each.

[0021] FIG. 12 shows an embodiment of the present invention with four pyramids of four cards that show less information.

[0022] FIG. 13 shows an embodiment of the present invention with four pyramids of different types of cards.

[0023] FIG. 14 shows an embodiment of the present invention with all cards face up when first dealt.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] FIG. 1 shows a diamond pattern of cards with five cards dealt per side. We have found the most enjoyable way to play the game is to deal the corner cards face down (i.e., 10, 50, 90 and 130) and the three internal cards face up (e.g., 20, 30, 40). In the preferred embodiment, the player is then permitted to swap three pairs of cards. This can be done by placing a screen cursor on the first card, which is then highlighted, then moving the cursor to the card the player wants to swap. After the second card is selected, the two cards exchange positions, giving the player two different, and hopefully better hands.

[0025] In a commercial embodiment, swapping probably would be done with a touch screen. It is also possible to suggest to the player which cards should be swapped to speed-up play of the game. Similarly, it is possible to highlight common cards (e.g., a pair of aces) in different hands to suggest to the player which cards should be exchanged.

[0026] This game could require the player to pay for each swap, or to pay for swaps above a preset number.

[0027] FIG. 1 also shows a five-card diamond pattern game without swapping. In this embodiment, all cards are dealt face up. The player then decides which cards to hold. The non-held cards are replaced with new cards. In a related
embodiment, it would be possible to return discarded cards to the deck. If this version were used, the player could receive as re-dealt cards the same cards that had already been displayed and had not been held.

[0028] Diamond shapes are shown as the preferred embodiment, but other figures can also be used. For example, a two-line (i.e., two hand) game can be played where the end cards are common to the three-interior cards for each game. Triangles, squares and pentagons, etc. are also contemplated by this invention. Obviously, the display of this game could be rotated 45 degrees so that the shape is a square rather than a diamond without departing from the spirit of the invention. Furthermore, the cards do not have to appear in straight lines for each side of the closed figure. Some curvature would not deviate from the concept of this invention.

[0029] This game can include a feature where the player is required to pay for each hand in the n-sided closed figure. In this embodiment, for example, the player would be required to pay four coins (or betting units) for a diamond pattern, and five units for a pentagon. Players could also bet more on certain hands. This feature is common throughout the various games disclosed in this specification.

[0030] This game could also be played with a bonus or progressive jackpot. For example, if a deck that includes jokers were used, and a Joker were dealt in the corner, the player would be paid a bonus. Another bonus or progressive jackpot could be paid if four aces were dealt in the corner cards. Other bonuses could be paid if lower rank four of a kind were dealt in the corners.

[0031] Diamonds could be linked together, similar to what is shown in FIG. 4, to create additional hands.

[0032] FIG. 2 shows a seven-card version of the game. The game can be played with swapping or it can be played with hold cards and re-dealing. The bonus games can be played as well. Because of the large number of cards on the screen, we have found it somewhat less confusing to deal the corner cards down and the center-side cards face down (e.g., 240). However, this game is very flexible and any number of cards can be dealt face up or down, and the number of swaps can vary.

[0033] FIG. 3 shows an alternative version of the game where each side of the diamond is composed of five cards. Each side is a separate hand and the horizontal line of cards (i.e., 430, 500, 510, 480 and 350) and vertical line (i.e., 310, 470, 510, 490 and 390) each form a separate hand. If a Joker deck is used, a bonus could be paid if the center or corner card were a Joker. The internal diamond (i.e., 500, 470, 480, 490 and 510) could form another hand.

[0034] In another embodiment, shown in FIG. 4, a five-card hand is dealt in a diamond pattern with one card in each corner and a center card. The player can choose how many diamond hands will be dealt. For example, the player could buy one hand for each coin (or betting unit) deposited. For this and all other embodiments, in machines that use electronic cards instead of coins, the player could be charged for each hand. Obviously, dollar bills could substitute for coins.

[0035] In this embodiment, shown in FIG. 4, if the player paid for one hand he would be dealt one hand. For example, cards 4-10, 4-20, 4-40, 4-60 and 4-70. In FIG. 4, there are at least seven hands:

[0036] Hand 2–4-20, 4-30, 4-50, 4-70 and 4-80
[0037] Hand 3–4-70, 4-80, 4-100, 4-120 and 4-130
[0038] Hand 4–4-60, 4-70, 4-90, 4-110 and 4-120
[0039] Hand 5–4-10, 4-40, 4-70, 4-100 and 4-130
[0040] Hand 6–4-30, 4-50, 4-70, 4-90 and 4-110
[0041] Hand 7–4-40, 4-50, 4-70, 4-90 and 4-100.

[0042] The sides could also form hands. For example, cards 4-110, 4-120, 4-130, 4-80 and 4-30 could form a hand. Similarly, hands could be formed from the following arrangements: 4-110, 4-60, 4-10, 4-20, and 4-30; and an internal “X” 4-20, 4-70, 4-1204-60, and 4-80.

[0043] This game enables players to play numerous hands simultaneously, which is very popular in casinos, apparently because it gives players the illusion that they have a better chance of winning. Also, the player can play a large number of hands simultaneously with relatively few cards on the screen.

[0044] In this game, after the cards are dealt, each hand could be immediately compared to a payable to determine winnings. Alternatively, the player could select hold cards and have the non-held cards replaced. In another alternative, the hands could be compared to a dealt hand rather than a payable.

[0045] Also, bonus or progressive jackpot payments could be given. For example, if a Joker deck is used and if a Joker is in one of the outer most corners (i.e., cards, 4-10, 4-30, 4-110 and 4-130), or if four aces are dealt in those four corners a bonus or progressive jackpot could be awarded. Similarly, bonus payments could be made if a Joker is dealt in the center (i.e. card 4-70).

[0046] In another embodiment of the present invention, the cards in this arrangement may be replaced by symbols typically used in reel-type slot machines such as, e.g., fruits, bars, or other objects. For such an embodiment, the hands are now the paylines of a slot machine. As with the arrangement of hands, seven or more paylines can be formed using symbols on a slot machine display at the same positions of the cards in FIG. 4.

[0047] In another embodiment of the present invention, the set of five cards that is dealt to a player may be arranged as a pyramid with the center card now appearing to be on top of the other four cards and will now be referred to as a top card. The remaining cards will now be referred to as bottom cards. They may then be presented with two or more independent pyramids of cards. The number of such pyramids may vary in different embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments, there may be one or more top cards, and two or more bottom cards, i.e., the number of cards in each pyramid may not always be five. The number of top and bottom cards may vary in different embodiments of the present invention. In some embodiments of the invention top cards may be face up, while in other embodiments top cards may be face down. Furthermore, in some embodiments bottom cards may be face up, while in other embodiments bottom cards may be face down.

[0048] FIG. 5 illustrates one embodiment of the present invention having an arrangement of four pyramids of cards 5-10, 5-20, 5-30, and 5-40 when the cards are first dealt to
the player. As described for the embodiment of FIG. 5 and for other subsequent embodiments presented herein, a card may be considered a top card of a pyramid if one or more of its corners cover one or more corners of the other cards in its respective pyramid. In the embodiment of FIG. 5, each pyramid consists of five cards with four bottom cards face down and the top card face up. Pyramid 5-10 consists of bottom cards 5-11, 5-12, 5-13, and 5-14 and top card 5-15. Pyramid 5-20 consists of bottom cards 5-21, 5-22, 5-23, and 5-24 and top card 5-25. Pyramid 5-30 consists of bottom cards 5-31, 5-32, 5-33, and 5-34 and top card 5-35. Pyramid 5-40 consists of bottom cards 5-41, 5-42, 5-43, and 5-44 and top card 5-45. FIG. 1 also illustrates a typical pay table 5-60 and where a five card poker hand 1-50 will be displayed with cards being placed in locations 5-51, 5-52, 5-53, 5-54, and 5-55.

Game play will be presented next using the embodiment of FIG. 5 with the specific set of cards as shown. In playing the game, the player’s goal is to form a poker hand by selecting cards from one or more of the pyramids. Although a five card poker hand is used in the following description, it should be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the poker hand may include any other number of cards, e.g. seven or three, without departing from the scope of the present invention. Once presented with set of card pyramids, the player’s first decision is to select a card to begin forming his poker hand from any of the available cards. Initially, the available cards may be the top cards of all of the pyramids; i.e., none of the bottom cards in any pyramid are available until the player has selected the top card of that pyramid for his hand.

When the player selects his first top card, that card will become the first card of the player’s poker hand. After selecting a first card, the player then may pick the second card of his poker hand from the cards available to him. At this point, the player has a choice of either the bottom cards corresponding to the pyramid of the first top card picked or of the remaining top cards. If a player chooses a second top card, the bottom cards of that second corresponding pyramid then become available as possible cards to be picked for the poker hand.

This novel feature makes the game more challenging than conventional poker because the player might see several high scoring hand possibilities in the bottom cards once revealed. But he cannot see and use those cards unless he first takes the top card. Once he takes the top card, that top card will fill one of the five spaces in his final poker hand and will leave only four left if it is the first card taken. If he takes a second top card to reveal more bottom cards, he has only three spaces left in his final poker hand. It should be noted that selecting the top card of any pyramid may not necessarily obligate the player to take any other cards from that pyramid.

After the player has picked five cards to build his poker hand, the hand may be compared to a pay table of winning poker hands, and the player may be paid accordingly. Although a pay table that includes commonly used winning poker hands is shown in FIG. 5, it is to be understood that other possible winning card combinations, e.g. two pair with only jacks or better in each hand, may be incorporated as winning hands in the pay table without departing from the scope of the present invention.

These rules create complex and interesting new decisions not found in prior art poker games that require entirely new strategies for optimal play. Some of these decisions are illustratively described below.

In the embodiment of FIG. 5, a player can choose the first card of his poker hand from cards 5-15, 5-25, 5-35, and 5-45 which are the jack of hearts, the ten of diamonds, the three of hearts, and the queen of hearts respectively. In deciding which card to choose, a player may consider which card will maximize the likelihood of forming a winning hand. Of these four cards, card 5-15, the jack of hearts, and card 5-45, the queen of hearts each may result in a possible jacks or better, straight, flush, straight flush, or royal flush hand.

FIG. 6 illustrates the display of cards in the same game as FIG. 5 after the first card, the queen of hearts, has been selected. Individual card numbering is the same as FIG. 5, except for cards that have been selected for the player’s poker hand. For this example, the player’s selection of the queen of hearts is now shown as card 6-51, the first card of the poker hand 6-50.

For his next card, the player may now choose from among top cards 6-10, 6-20, and 6-30 as well as the bottom cards from the same pyramid as card 6-81, e.g., cards 6-41, 6-42, 6-43, and 6-44. Picking a top card of a different pyramid, e.g. 6-10, 6-20, or 6-30 may provide the player with the benefit of revealing the values of the corresponding bottom cards. However, some of the top cards may substantially limit what winning hands can be obtained. Similarly, picking a bottom card may improve a player’s hand but does not yield any new information for subsequent card selection decisions.

Most, if not all of the same set of winning hand combinations can still be formed as before his first card selection. For example, if the player wishes to pursue the royal flush, i.e. the hand with the highest payout in the pay table, he must choose among the ace of hearts (6-41), the king of hearts (6-42) and the jack of hearts (6-10) for his next card selection. The only card necessary for a royal flush that is not visible is the ten of hearts. If the player takes the jack of hearts (6-15) next, he may learn the identities of the bottom cards of pyramid 6-10. Picking either the ace or king of hearts may give the player no new choices for subsequent card selection. For this example, the player picks the jack of hearts, card 6-10 as the second card of his poker hand.

FIG. 7 illustrates the resulting card display with the jack of hearts shown as card 7-52, the second card of the poker hand. The bottom cards of pyramid 7-10 are now revealed as the queen of spades (7-11), the ace of spaces (7-12), the ace of clubs (7-13) and the five of diamonds (7-14). Because the ten of hearts is not present among these cards, the player may no longer obtain a royal flush. His choices are to pick among the available bottom cards 7-11 through 7-14 and 7-41 through 7-44 or the two remaining top cards 7-25 and 7-35. However, the following winning hands may still be possible by picking 5 cards from those that appear: flush in hearts (by picking 7-41, 7-42 and 7-44), straight, (by picking 7-41, 7-42 and 7-25), three aces (by picking 7-41, 7-12, and 7-13), two pair (by picking 7-11, 7-14, and 7-44), two aces and two queens.

FIG. 8 shows the game after the next card is selected. For the third card, 8-53, the player has selected the
king of hearts. At this point, the two best winning hand possibilities are the flush and the straight. FIG. 9 shows the game with the ace of hearts selected as the fourth card, 9-54.

[0061] FIG. 10 shows the final hand of the game with the player having selected the ten of diamonds, shown as 10-55, for the fifth card of the poker hand. The player may now be paid according to the pay table in the amount corresponding to the winnings for a straight.

[0062] Other demonstrative embodiments of the present invention may vary in how cards appear. FIG. 11 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention having an arrangement of 3 pyramids of cards 11-10, 11-20, and 11-30 when the cards are first dealt to the player. Each pyramid consists of four cards all face down. Pyramid 11-10 consists of bottom cards 11-11, 11-12, and 11-13 and top card 11-14. Pyramid 11-20 consists of bottom cards 11-21, 11-22, and 11-23 and top card 11-24. Pyramid 11-30 consists of bottom cards 11-31, 11-32, and 11-33 and top card 11-34. FIG. 11 also illustrates where a five card poker hand 11-50 will be displayed with cards being placed in locations 11-51, 11-52, 11-53, 11-54, and 11-55.

[0063] FIG. 12 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention having an arrangement of four pyramids of cards 12-10, 12-20, 12-30, and 12-40 when the cards are first dealt to the player. Numbering of individual cards follows the same numbering system as in the embodiment shown in FIG. 5. In this embodiment the top card of each pyramid conventionally shows both the rank and suit of the respective top card. However, the bottom cards of these pyramids are the novel cards of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/418,829 where a first view of the cards shows the rank or the suit but not both when first dealt. Once a player selects one of these cards, both the suit and rank of the card appear as with a conventional card. The bottom cards of pyramids 12-10 and 12-20 show only the rank of the bottom cards. The bottom cards of pyramids 12-30 and 12-40 show only the suit of the bottom cards.

[0064] FIG. 13 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention having an arrangement of four pyramids of cards 13-10, 13-20, 13-30, and 13-40 when the cards are first dealt to the player. Numbering of individual cards follows the same numbering system as in the embodiment shown in FIG. 5. In this embodiment, the top card of each pyramid conventionally shows both the rank and suit of the respective top card when selected. The bottom cards are a mix of cards showing suit and rank and cards show suit or rank.

[0065] FIG. 14 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention having an arrangement of four pyramids of cards 14-10, 14-20, 14-30, and 14-40 when the cards are first dealt to the player. Numbering of individual cards follows the same numbering system as in the embodiment shown in FIG. 5. In this embodiment, all of the cards are shown face up when dealt. Although FIGS. 5 and 11-10 show a number of embodiments with varying numbers of card pyramids, cards in each pyramid, face down cards, conventional card displayed face up, and suit and rank cards, it should be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that numerous other variations of these game display elements are within the scope of the present invention.

[0066] Although the descriptions above contain many details, these details should not be interpreted to limit the scope of the invention. Examples of additional applications of this invention include, but are not limited to other styles of playing indicia or playing cards. The presently invented games may be played not only using a regular deck of playing cards, but also with a variety of electronic gaming instruments such as mobile gaming platforms including but not limited to cellular telephones and personal digital assistants, electronic video poker game platforms, video lottery terminals, scratch off games, reel-type slot machines, internet gambling, and casino tables using electronic displays of cards rather than actual playing cards.

[0067] While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled-in-the-art that the foregoing and other changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

1. An arrangement of at least seven poker hands using a total of thirteen cards wherein each hand has five cards and all of the at least seven hands share one common card, comprising:

   four hands comprising four pairs of hands, wherein each pair shares two common cards;
   
one hand that shares at least one of its five cards with each of the other six hands, shares three of its cards with a sixth hand, and three of its cards with a seventh hand; and
   
two hands that each share three of its five cards with two of said four hands.

2. The arrangement of claim 1 having at least seven pay lines instead of at least seven hands and using a total of thirteen symbols instead of using a total of thirteen cards.

3. An arrangement of at least seven hands using a total of thirteen cards wherein each hand has five cards and all of the at least seven hands share one common card, comprising:

   a first hand, a second hand, a third hand, and a fourth hands comprising four pairs of hands, wherein each pair shares two common cards;
   
a fifth hand that shares at least one of its five cards with each of the other six hands, shares three of its cards with a sixth hand, and three of its cards with a seventh hand; and
   
the sixth hand and the seventh hand that each share three of its five cards with two of said first, second, third, and fourth hands.

4. A method to play a game comprising the steps of:
   
   a) allowing a player to place a wager on one or more hands of cards in a pattern of cards to be dealt;
   
b) dealing to the player an arrangement of at least seven five card hands using thirteen cards wherein each hand has five cards, one card is common to all hands, and the cards are displayed in a pattern of five rows and where the five rows comprise one card in the first row, three cards in the second row, five cards in the third row, three cards in the fourth row and one card in the fifth row, the center cards in each row form a column, and where one or more hands are comprised of
one center card and four surrounding cards in a diamond pattern, and different hands may have up to four cards in common;
c) comparing one or more of the hands to a paytable;
d) and paying the player according to the paytable.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein two cards are common among four hands.
6. The method of claim 4 wherein one of the five card hands has each of its five cards common to at least two hands.
7. The method of claim 4 wherein the number of diamond shaped hands is five, wherein the center card of each of four of the five diamond shaped hands represents the corner card of the fifth hand.
8. The method of claim 4 wherein dealing an arrangement of at least seven hands is comprised of:
dealing twelve cards face up to the player, where the only card not dealt is the card that the at least seven hands have in common; and
dealing the thirteenth card after allowing the player to increase his wager on one or more of the hands.
9. A method of playing a card game comprising the steps of:
dealing two or more pyramids of cards to a player, each pyramid comprising one or more top cards and two or more bottom cards;
selecting a first card from among the top cards as the first card in a poker hand;
selecting subsequent cards one at a time to form a poker hand from available cards, available cards being any remaining top card or any bottom cards in a pyramid for which the top card has already been selected;
when the poker hand is complete, comparing the poker hand to a pay table; and
paying a winning hand according to a pay table.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the top cards are dealt face up and the bottom cards are dealt face down, and further comprising the step of turning the bottom cards face up in a pyramid after the respective top card is selected for the poker hand.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein the number of top cards in each pyramid is one.
12. The method of claim 9 wherein the first view of one or more bottom cards shows the rank or the suit associated with the card but not both, and where, after the corresponding top card has been selected, a second view of the one or more bottom cards shows both the suit and the rank associated with the card.
13. The method of claim 11 wherein the number of cards in each pyramid is five and the number of pyramids is four.