ELECTRONIC SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING

A TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER GAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001]   The embodiments of the present invention relate to a Texas Hold'em poker game facilitated by a standalone electronic gaming device, network thereof or online system.

BACKGROUND

[0002]   The popularity of poker has swelled over the last 7-10 years. The popularity is the result of the Internet and television. The Internet has allowed the masses to play poker while television has shown the masses the large pools of money which may be won and the fame which may be achieved. The most popular of the poker games is Texas Hold'em. Texas Hold'em is offered in most poker rooms and card rooms, online poker websites and has even spawned live table games pitting players against the house.

[0003]   Despite the popularity, there lacks a single player, electronic version of Texas Hold'em which captures the attractive attributes of Texas Hold'em. Advantageously, the electronic version should be intuitive and capitalize on the popular features of the well-known poker game of Texas Hold'em.

SUMMARY

[0004]   Accordingly, one electronically-implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em poker game according to the embodiments of the present invention involves revealing on a display multiple pairs of face-up, hole cards from which the player selects one or more players hands on which to place wagers. Odds and payouts associated with each pair of hole cards are displayed proximate to each pair of hole cards. Next, three flop cards are revealed and the player is able to place a second set of wagers on any one or more of the player hands. Next, a turn card is revealed and the player is able to place a third set of wagers on any one or more of the player hands. Lastly, a river card is revealed and the player wagers are resolved based on the two-hole cards which form the strongest poker hand in combination with the three flop cards, turn card and river card.

[0005] Other embodiments include (i) ante wagers placed before revelation of the hole cards and based on final hand strength independent of whether the player hand wins or not; (ii) blind hand wagers; and (iii) the placement of insurance.

[0006] The embodiments of the present invention are well-suited for electronic gaming devices and networks thereof and online systems. Online versions may be accessed using a computer terminal (e.g., desktop or PC) or hand-held device (e.g., smart phone). Live tables may also be used to facilitate live play of the Texas Hold'em variants described herein.

[0007] One benefit of the embodiments of the present invention is that bluffing and bets designed to cause players to fold due to "risk" are eliminated. Instead, the player's ability to identify the hand most likely to be the "winning" hand is the object of the game. Players can change their mind as the common cards are revealed and place bets on other hands, at a reduced payout. From the start, players are given information in which to fully understand their risk, and the payouts associated for taking risks.

[0008] Other variations, embodiments and features of the present invention will become evident from the following detailed description, drawings and claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Fig. 1 illustrates a block diagram of a standalone electronic gaming device for conducting a Texas Hold'em game according to the embodiments of the present invention;

[0010] Fig. 2 illustrates a block diagram of a wireless system accessible by a mobile device for conducting a Texas Hold'em game according to the embodiments of the present invention;

[0011] Figs. 3A-3H illustrate screen shots of a game conducted according to a first embodiments of the present invention;

[0012] Figs. 4A-4K illustrate screen shots of a game according to a second embodiments of the present inventions;

[0013] Figs. 5A-5J illustrate screen shots of a game according to a third embodiments of the present invention; and

[0014] Fig. 6 illustrates a flow chart detailing one method of conducting a Texas Hold'em game according to the embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015]　For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles in accordance with the embodiments of the present invention, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended. Any alterations and further modifications of the inventive feature illustrated herein, and any additional applications of the principles of the invention as illustrated herein, which would normally occur to one skilled in the relevant art and having possession of this disclosure, are to be considered within the scope of the invention claimed.

[0016]　Conventional Texas Hold'em is a game played as follows: (i) two or more players place blind wagers; (ii) each player is dealt two face-down hole cards; (iii) first betting round occurs; (iv) three flop cards dealt; (v) second round of betting occurs; (vi) turn card dealt; (vii) third round of betting occurs; (viii) river card dealt; (ix) fourth and final round of betting occurs; (x) winning player awarded pot.

[0017]　In a first embodiment, the present invention, is facilitated by an electronic gaming device whereby a single player plays one or more hands against the device's processor as described herein. A block diagram of the electronic gaming device 200 is shown in Fig. 1. The exemplary electronic gaming device 200 may include a central processing unit (CPU) also deemed a processor 205 which controls the electronic gaming device 200 based on instructions stored in program read-only memory (ROM) 210 and pay table ROM 215. Program ROM 210 stores executable instructions related to the operation of the gaming device and which are generally permanent. CPU 205 may be connected to a video controller 220 which provides output to one or more video displays 225. Similarly, an audio controller 230 provides audio output as dictated by the CPU 205 through speakers 235. The aforementioned components, and others, may be attached to a circuit board forming a motherboard. In another embodiment, the electronic gaming device may linked to a central game server which allows players to select from a number of games via the electronic gaming device 200. In such an embodiment, one or more processors integrated into the central server control the gaming device 200 based on instructions stored in program read-only memory.

[0018]　A user interface 240 may respond to buttons on button panel or display incorporating touch screen technology or any other devices providing means for users to communicate with, and instruct, the electronic gaming device 200. Wager memory 245 stores an amount of money/credits deposited into the

electronic gaming device 200 by a player and specific wager information related to each play of the electronic gaming device 200. Payout system 250 includes a coupon printer or similar device for receiving money/coupon from the electronic gaming device 200.

[0019]   Those skilled in the art will recognize that the configuration and features of the electronic gaming device 200 disclosed herein are exemplary and may be altered in any number of ways without impacting the embodiments of the present invention.

[0020]   Fig. 2 shows a block diagram of a wireless system 300 which may be used to facilitate remote play of the Texas Hold'em game according to the embodiments of the present invention. The wireless system 300 comprises a game server 305, including one or more processors 310 running game software, and remote devices (e.g., smart phones) configured to access said game server 305 facilitating game play on the remote devices 315.

[0021]   Figs. 3A-3H show screen shots of a game conducted according to a first embodiments of the present invention. Fig. 3A is a screen shot 100 showing eight pairs of face-up, hole cards 115 with corresponding wager odds 120, face-down, flop cards 125, face-down, turn card 130 and face-down, river card 135. From screen shot 100, the player selects one pair of face-up, hole cards 115 to wager upon. Fig. 3B is a screen shot 101 showing that the player has placed a $5 wager 140 on the pair of hole-cards 115-1 comprising a pair of 7s. Fig. 3C is a screen shot 102 showing the three flop cards 125 revealed and a current high hand indication 145. The current high hand indication 145 notifies the player that the identified pair of hole cards at this stage of the game has the highest rank (two pair as shown). Fig. 3D is a screen shot 103 showing a second $3 wager 150 on the pair of hole cards 115-2 comprising a Queen and King. Fig. 3E is a screen shot 104 showing the turn card 130 revealed and a current high hand indication 155. Fig. 3F is a screen shot 105 showing a third $2 wager 160 on the pair of hole cards 115-3 comprising a pair of 9s. Fig. 3G is a screen shot 106 showing the river card 135 revealed. Fig. 3H is a screen shot 107 showing a winning hand indication 165. Wagers 140, 150 and 160 now appear as losing wagers.

[0022]   Figs. 4A-4K illustrate screen shots of a game according to a second embodiments of the present inventions. Fig. 4A is a screen shot 400 showing ante space 410, eight pairs of face-down, hole cards 415, along with face-down, flop cards 425, face-down, turn card 430 and face-down, river card 435. From screen shot 400, the player selects one pair of face-down, hole cards on which to place an

ante. Fig. 4B is a screen shot 401 showing that the player has placed a $5 ante 440 on the pair of hole-cards 415-1. The ante 440 is a bet on the ultimate strength of the poker hand formed with the two selected face-down hole cards 415-1 in combination with the flop cards 425, turn card 430 and river card 435. The ante 440 is paid independent of whether the hands wagered upon win or lose. An ante pay table defines a minimum hand rank (e.g., 2 pairs) and a maximum hand rank (e.g., Royal Flush) with increasing payouts therebetween. Fig. 4C is a screen shot 402 showing the hole cards 415 revealed. Fig. 4D is a screen shot 403 showing corresponding hand odds and wager payouts 445. Fig. 4E is a screen shot 404 showing that the player has placed a $5 wager 450 on the pair of hole cards 415-1 comprising a J♣ and 8♣ and a $5 wager 455 on the pair of hole cards 415-2 comprising an A♣ and 3♣. Fig. 4F is a screen shot 405 showing potential payouts 460-1, 460-2 representative of the wagers 450, 455. Fig. 4G is a screen shot 406 showing the three flop cards 425 revealed and a current high hand indication 465 Fig. 4H is a screen shot 407 showing the player has placed two $3 wagers 465 on the same pair of hole cards 415-3 comprising the Q♥ and 2♦. Fig. 4I is a screen shot 408 showing the turn card 430 revealed and a high hand indicator 470. Fig. 4J is a screen shot 409 showing the player has placed two $2 wagers on the same pair of hole cards 415-3 comprising the Q♥ and 2♦ resulting in a $10 total wager 472. Fig. 4K is a screen shot 410 showing the river card 435 revealed and the winning hand identified 475 and associated payout 480.

[0023]   Figs. 5A-5J illustrate screen shots of a game according to a third embodiments of the present inventions. Fig. 5A is a screen shot 500 showing ante space 510, eight pairs of face-down, hole cards 515, along with face-down, flop cards 525, face-down, turn card 530 and face-down, river card 535. One of the eight pairs of face-down, hole cards 515-1 is identified as a blind hand. From screen shot 500, the player selects one pair of face-down, hole cards on which to place an ante. Fig. 5A shows that the player has placed a $5 ante 540 on the pair of hole-cards 515-2. As set forth above, the ante 540 is a bet on the ultimate strength of the poker hand formed with the two selected face-down hole cards 515-2 in combination with the flop cards 525, turn card 530 and river card 535. Fig. 5B is a screen shot 501 showing the hole cards 515 revealed, except for the blind hand 515-1. Fig. 5B also shows corresponding hand odds and wager payouts 545. Fig. 5C is a screen shot 502 showing that the player has placed a $5 wager 550 on the pair of hole cards 515-3 comprising a 10♦ and K♦ and a $5 wager 555 on the pair of hole cards 515-3 comprising an 7♠ and 2♣. Fig. 5C also shows potential payouts 560-1, 560-2 representative of the wagers 550, 555. Fig. 5D is a screen shot 503 showing the three flop cards 525

revealed and a current high hand indication 565. Fig. 5E is a screen shot 504 showing the player has placed a $3 wager resulting in an $8 total wager 570 on the pair of hole cards 515-3 comprising a 10♦ and K♦ and a $3 wager 575 on the pair of hole cards 515-4 comprising an K♥ and J♣. Fig. 5F is a screen shot 505 showing the turn card 530 revealed and a high hand indicator 580. Fig. 5G is a screen shot 506 showing the player has placed two $2 wagers on the same pair of hole cards 515-4 comprising the K♥ and J♣ resulting in a $7 total wager 585. Fig. 5H is a screen shot 507 showing the river card 535 revealed and a high hand indicator 590 (i.e., not the winning hand because the blind hand 515-1 has not been revealed). Fig. 5I is a screen shot 508 showing the player being offered insurance against the blind hand 515-1. Fig. 5J is a screen shot 509 showing the blind hand 515-1 revealed. As shown, the winning hand indicator 595 is proximate the blind hand 515-1 comprising a full house. In one embodiment, the insurance costs as much as the initial wager. If the insurance is purchased and the player wagers on the highest hand excluding the blind hand and the blind hand wins, the player is returned the wagers on the highest hand. As shown in Fig. 5J, the player would have been returned the $14 on the highest hand 515-4 prior to revelation of the blind hand 515-1.

[0024]   Fig. 6 shows a flow chart 600 detailing one method of conducting a Texas Hold'em game according to the embodiments of the present invention. At 605, players place an ante. The ante relates to the final strength of the selected hand independent of whether the selected player hand is the winning hand. That is, the ante is paid according to a pay table based on hand strength. At 610, the hole cards are revealed and winning odds displayed. At 615, wagers/bets are accepted on one or more player hands and potential payouts are displayed. At 620, the flop cards are revealed. At 625, new odds displayed. At 630, wagers/bets are accepted on one or more player hands and updated odds (reduced given the revelation of the flop cards) and potential payouts on new wagers displayed. At 635, turn card revealed. At 640, new odds displayed. At 645, wagers/bets are accepted on one or more player hands and updated odds (reduced given the revelation of the turn card) and potential payouts on new wagers displayed. At 650, the river card is revealed. At 655, the ante and wagers are resolved. As detailed above, the odds associated with wagers/bets decrease as more common cards are revealed.

I CLAIM:

1.   An electronically implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em card game comprising:

displaying on an electronic gaming device multiple face-down player hands comprising a pair of hole cards, and common cards comprising three flop cards, a turn card and a river card;

accepting a wager on one or more of said multiple face-down player hands responsive to selection inputs by a player via an electronic gaming user interface;

revealing on said display said multiple face-down player hands;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said three flop cards;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said turn card;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said river card; and

resolving said bets by determining which player hand in combination with the common cards forms the strongest five-card poker hand.

2.   The electronically implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em card game according to claim 1 further comprising accepting an ante prior to revealing said player hands, said ante resolved based on a final strength of the corresponding player hand independent of whether the corresponding player hand is the winning hand.

3.   The electronically implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em card game according to claim 1 further comprising displaying updated payout odds and/or wining percentage associated with each player hand.

4.   The electronically implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em card game according to claim 1 further comprising displaying a high hand indicator.

5.   An electronically implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em card game comprising:

displaying on an electronic gaming device multiple face-down player hands comprising a pair of hole cards, and common cards comprising three flop cards, a turn card and a river card;

accepting a wager on one or more of said multiple face-down player hands responsive to selection inputs by a player via an electronic gaming user interface;

revealing on said display all but at least one of said multiple face-down player hands thereby maintaining one or more player hands as blind hands;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said three flop cards;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said turn card;

accepting one or more bets on one or more of said player hands;

revealing on said display said river card;

revealing said one or more blind player hands;

offering player option to take insurance against one or more blind hands beating a player hand on which a bet has been accepted; and

resolving said bets by determining which player hand in combination with the common cards forms the strongest five-card poker hand.

ABSTRACT

An electronically-implemented method of conducting a Texas Hold'em poker game involves revealing on a display multiple pairs of face-up, hole cards from which the player selects one or more player hands on which to place wagers. Odds and payouts associated with each pair of hole cards are displayed proximate to each pair of hole cards. Next, three flop cards are revealed and the player is able to place a second set of wagers on any one or more of the player hands. Next, a turn card is revealed and the player is able to place a third set of wagers on any one or more of the player hands. Lastly, a river card is revealed and the player wagers are resolved based on the two-hole cards which form the strongest poker hand in combination with the three flop cards, turn card and river card. Other variations include (i) ante wagers placed before revelation of the hole cards and based on final hand strength independent of whether the player hand wins or not; (ii) blind hand wagers; and (iii) the placement of insurance.