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(54) **CASINO GAMES AND GAMING APPARATUS**

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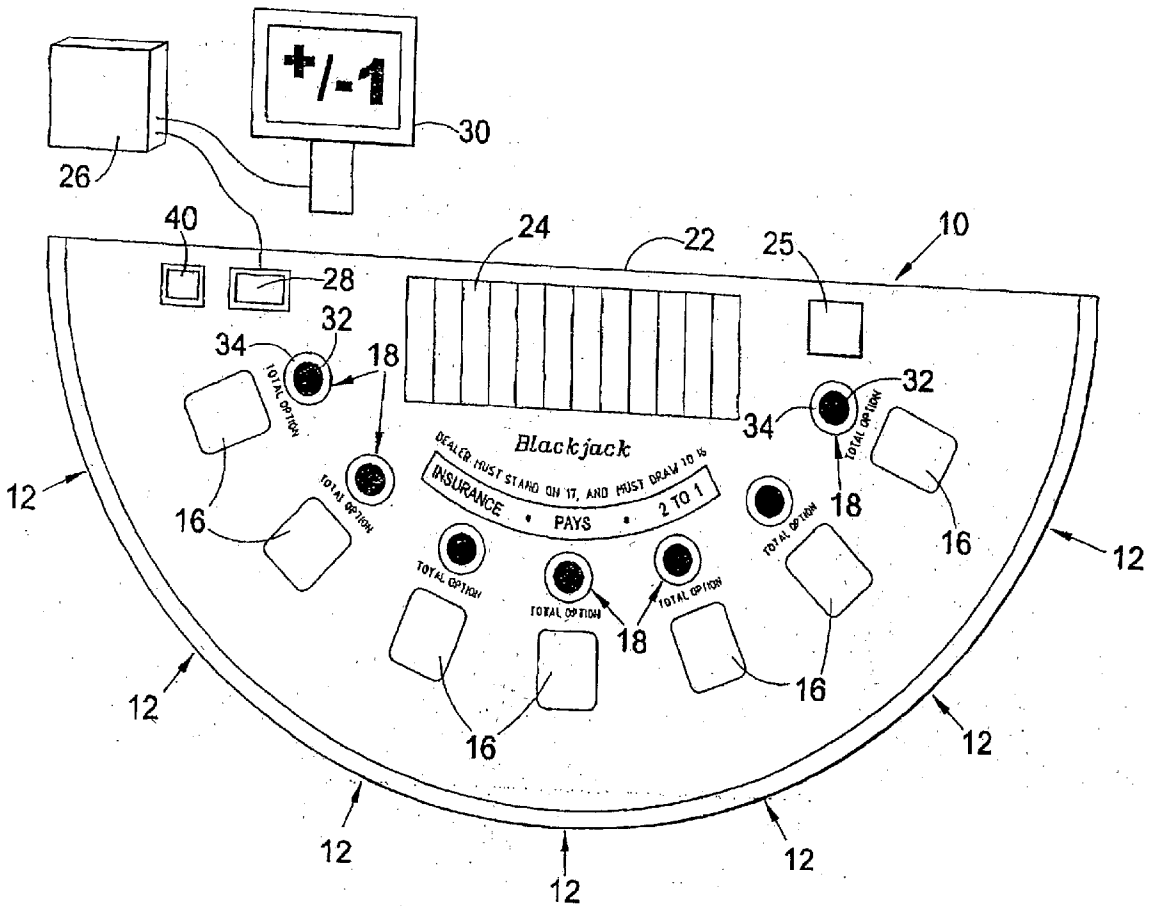
(57) **ABSTRACT**

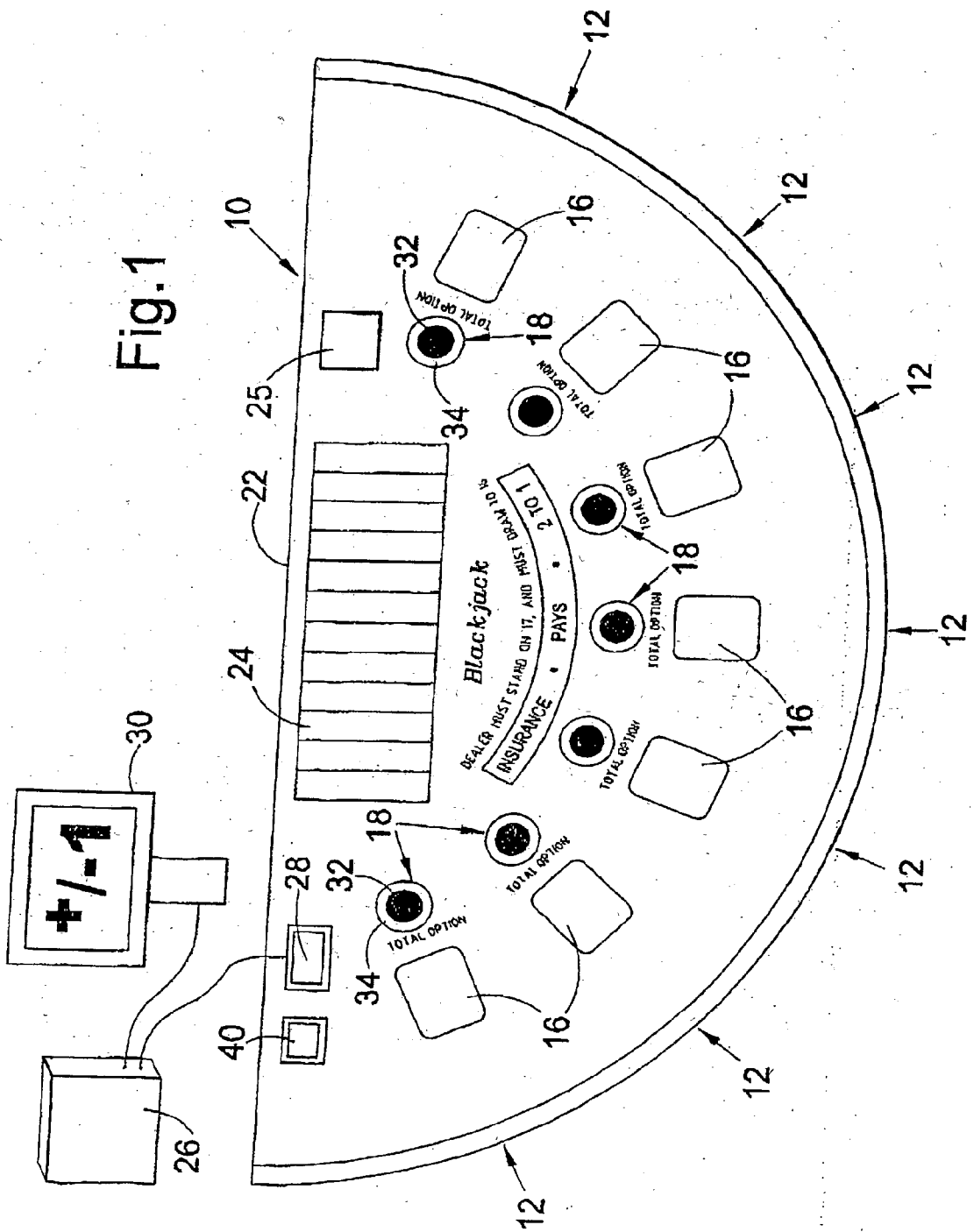
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In a game of Blackjack, a player has the option of increasing or decreasing the point value of his hand by a predetermined amount, e.g. +1 or -1, if this improves the worth of his hand.

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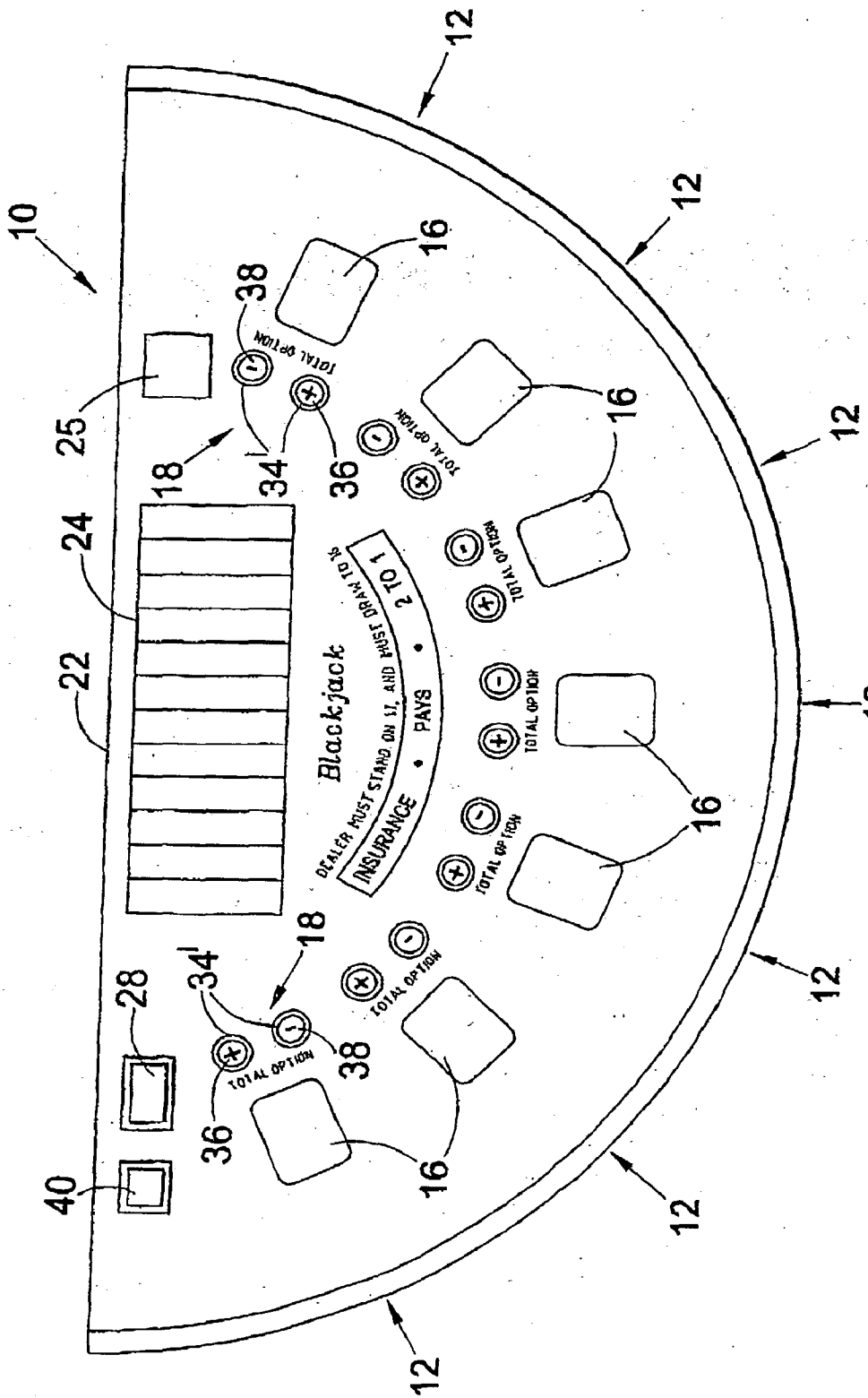


Fig. 2

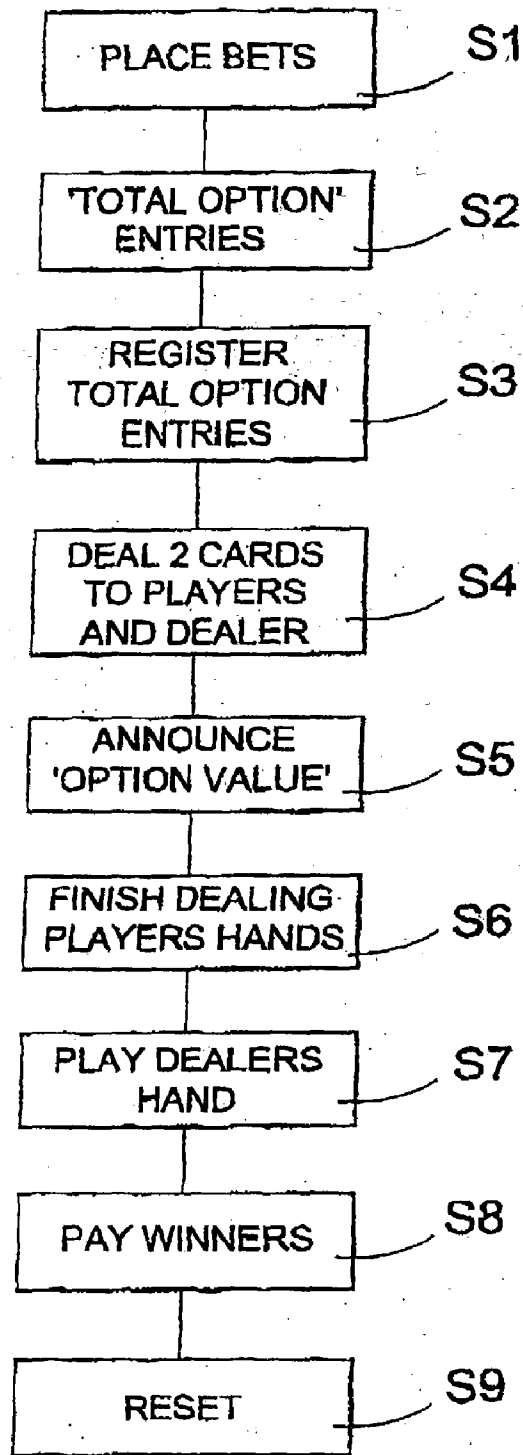


Fig.3

Fig.4

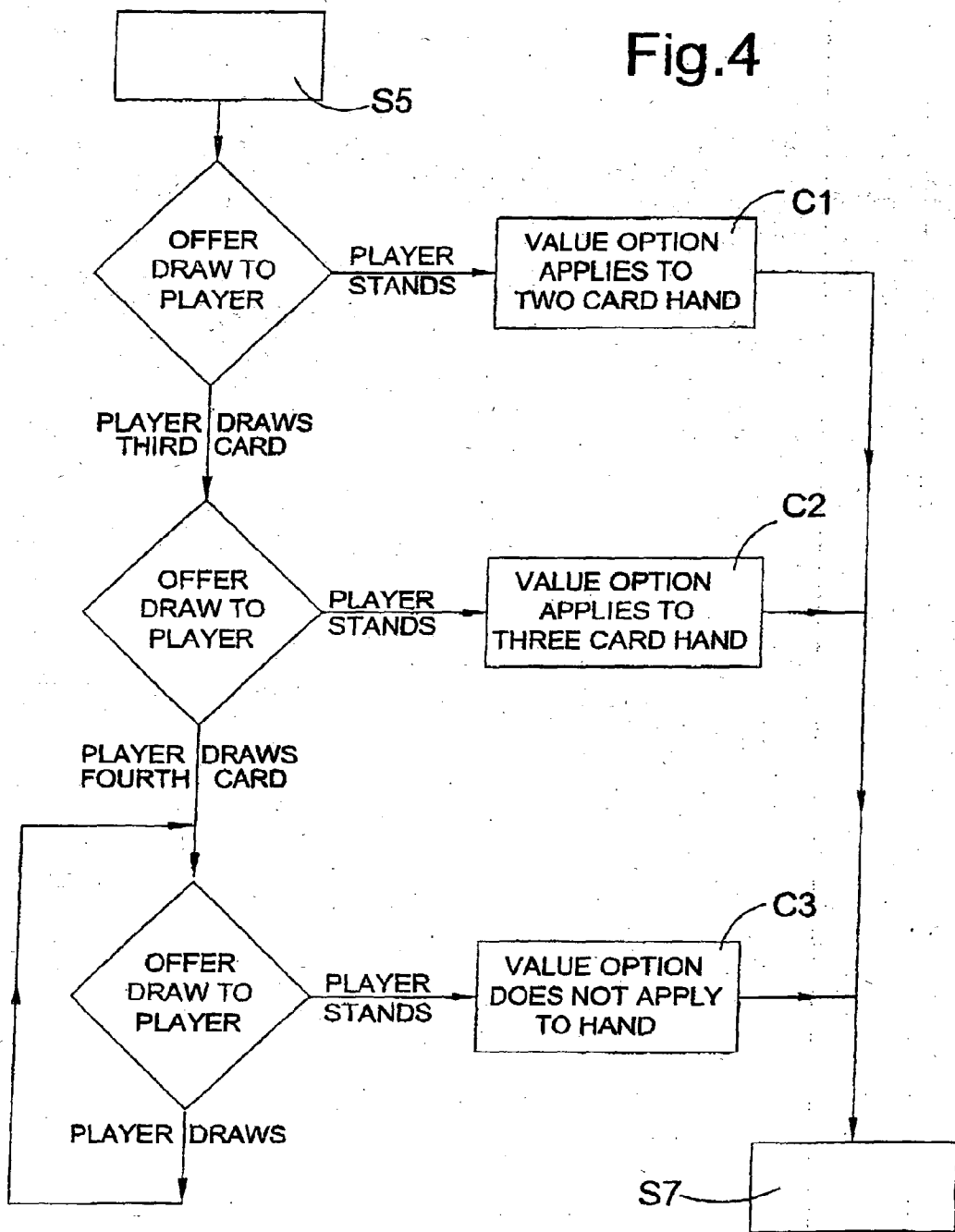


Fig.5

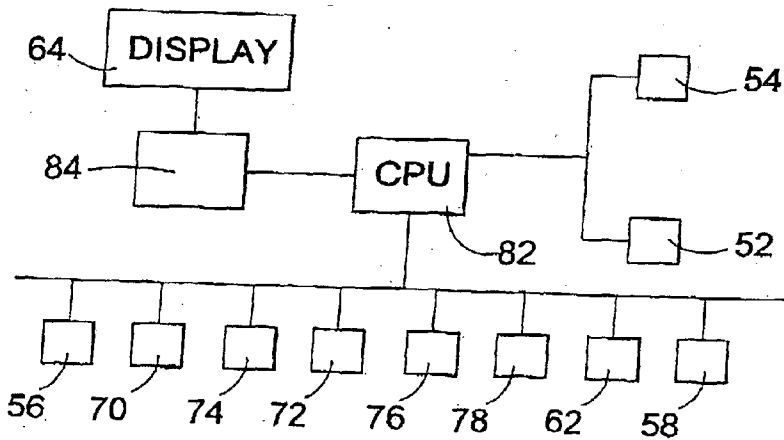
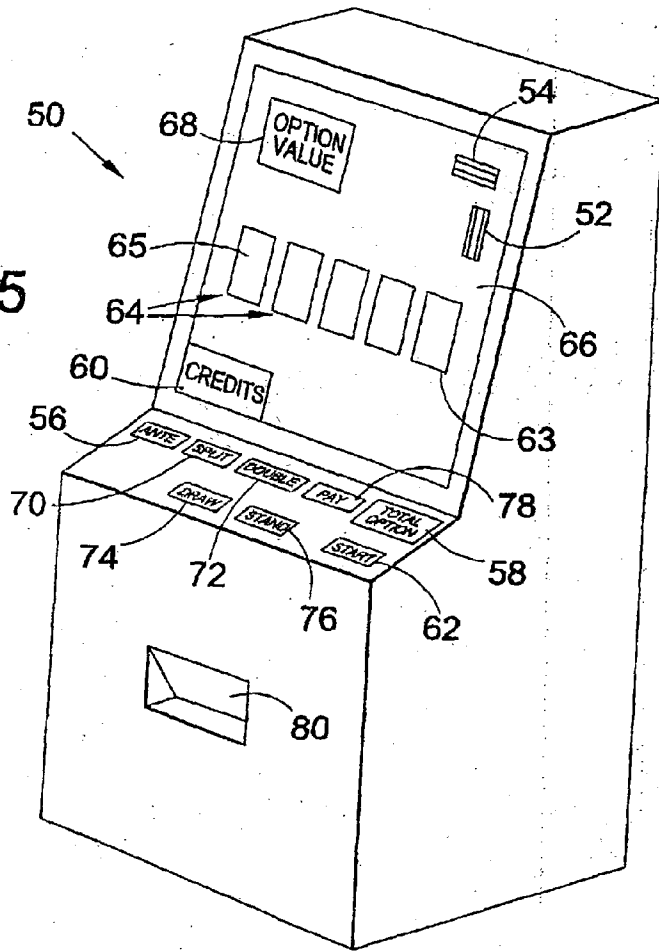


Fig.6

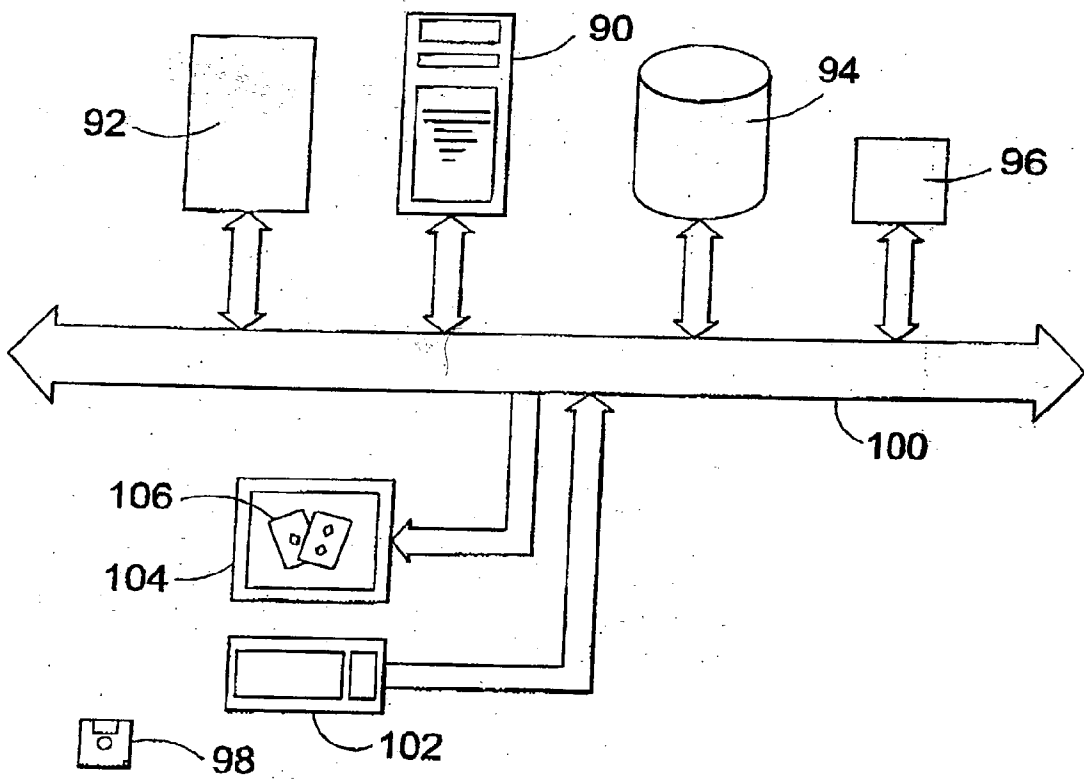


Fig.7

CASINO GAMES AND GAMING APPARATUS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to casino games and gaming apparatus. In particular the invention relates to a method and apparatus for playing the game of Blackjack.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Blackjack, also known as "21", has been played in casinos for many years. The rules of the game are well known to those in the art but a brief outline will be given here by way of introduction. The basic rules are universal with some minor variation of rules from country to country or casino to casino. All players are dealt two cards face up, with the dealer dealing himself two cards, one face up. Usually the play is against the dealer. A player makes an initial stake governed by the table limit.

[0003] Players in turn elect whether to "hit", that is to draw a further card or cards. The aim is to reach a total closer to 21 than the dealer, but not above 21 (with Aces counting as 1 or 11). A hand over 21 is "bust" and the player loses. A number of other options are available depending on house rules, for example a player may "split" a pair of cards (to form two hands), he may "double" his stake when the initial two cards are of a certain value. When all players hands at a table are finished, the dealer reveals (or deals) his second card and draws further cards until he has a total of 17 or greater. If the dealer "busts" (goes over 21) he pays even money to all players who have not bust. If the dealer does not bust, he also pays even money 1:1 to all players with a higher value hand, and returns the stake ("pushes") to players with an equal value hand.

[0004] A player with "Blackjack", (an Ace and 10 or picture card) is paid 3:2 unless the dealer also has blackjack, in which case this is a push.

[0005] Typically a dealer deals from a deck of cards comprising six or eight packs of 52 cards which are shuffled, and the deck is reshuffled after about two thirds of the cards have been played.

[0006] The odds for a player, i.e. the chance of a player winning, can be calculated from the initial two cards dealt to the player and the exposed card of the dealer. Strategies for when to draw, split, double etc., are well known. For a skilled player, Blackjack offers the highest return on his stake compared to other casino games. If a player is able to "count" the cards as a deck is dealt from, or at least discern whether the number of 10 value cards remaining in the deck is higher or lower than the expected average, he can alter his strategy and improve his chances of winning. Conversely, house rules often limit the player's opportunity to split or double in order to protect less skilled players from making unwise choices.

[0007] Despite the skill element in Blackjack, there is still a need to offer improved versions of the game to attract players. Many variations on the basic theme of Blackjack have been proposed, for example a side or additional wager to take part in a progressive jackpot, such as described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,615,888; to play for a side wager against other players (as well as the dealer) as described in WO/0044454; to wager on whether the player or dealer will obtain the winning hand as in U.S. Pat. No. 5,649,705; or to wager on the type of initial two card hand dealt to the player, as in U.S. Pat. No. 5,632,485.

[0008] These prior art variations on the Blackjack game introduce an additional concept to the game which can attract players, but do not alter the player's perception of his chance of winning at the main game, i.e. Blackjack.

[0009] The present invention aims to provide a Blackjack gaming method and apparatus in which the player's perception of the chance of winning can be increased, whilst seeking to retain the fundamental rules of the game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] In a first aspect, the invention provides a method of playing Blackjack in which a player can add or subtract a predetermined number from the total value of his hand. The predetermined number may be determined at the start of the coup, that is the hand being dealt, at the end of the coup, or it may be fixed for a period of time at the table. Since the ability to vary the total of the hand should increase the players chances of winning, an additional stake may be required from the player at the start of the coup, in order to take up the option.

[0011] Very preferably the predetermined number is 1, but another number may be used. Also, it is preferred to give the player the choice of only adding the value (i.e. +1) or only subtracting the value (i.e. -1).

[0012] The attraction for a player is that when the number is +1, and player reaches 20 he can be deemed to be on 21 and so he cannot lose the hand unless the dealer has a Blackjack. Conversely, when the value is -1, a player who "busts" on 22 will be deemed to have a point total of 21, and hence will win or draw the hand, unless the dealer has a Blackjack

[0013] The ability to vary the point total is particularly useful to a player when deciding whether to draw a card. For example, a player dealt two cards of total 12 would normally risk "busting" on drawing a third card, because 4 cards in 13 are value 10. With the option to subtract 1, he can draw with impunity.

[0014] Other advantages of such a system to players will be apparent to those in the art.

[0015] In another aspect of the invention, a gaming apparatus for playing Blackjack includes means for a player to elect whether to have the option of changing the total of his hand by a predetermined amount.

[0016] The invention also provides processor controlled apparatus such as a slot machine embodying the modified Blackjack game. Other advantages and feature of the invention will be apparent from the following description and the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which

[0018] **FIG. 1** is a first embodiment of a gaming apparatus in accordance with the invention;

[0019] **FIG. 2** is a second embodiment of a gaming apparatus in accordance with the invention;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a flow chart for a first method of playing a game in accordance with the invention;

[0021] FIG. 4 is a flow chart for a second method of playing a game in accordance with the invention;

[0022] FIG. 5 illustrates a slot machine embodying a game in accordance with the invention,

[0023] FIG. 6 illustrates a control apparatus of the machine of FIG. 5, and

[0024] FIG. 7 illustrates processor controlled apparatus such as a computer embodying a game in accordance with the invention.

[0025] FIG. 1 of the drawings shows in plan view a Blackjack table layout of typical format, but modified to form an embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION

[0026] The table 10 has seven player positions 12. In front of each player position 12 is a betting area 16 where a player places his stake. Typically a table will operate with a minimum and/or maximum stake limit. Beyond the betting area 16 is an entry acceptor 18 which forms a particular feature of this invention and will be described in more detail hereinafter. The Blackjack dealer stands at position 22 and has a tray 24 for the storage of gaming chips and a shoe 25 for drawing playing cards.

[0027] Also shown in the drawing is a CPU 26 which is coupled between the entry acceptors 18, a dealer operated switch 28 and a display screen 30.

[0028] The entry acceptors 18 detect when a player has placed a chip of predetermined value on the central area 32 and an outer ring 34 is illuminated. The entry acceptors 18 are electronically controlled by the CPU 26.

[0029] The operation of the gaming apparatus of FIG. 1 will be described with reference to the flowchart of FIG. 3. At step S1 the dealer invites players to place their bets in the betting area 16, and at step S2 also invites them to take part in the "total option", that is the modified form of the Blackjack game, by inviting the players to place a chip of specified value, say \$1, on the central entry acceptor area 32.

[0030] Typically, the chip value which must be placed on area 32 would be fixed by the casino operator and will depend, inter alia, on the stake limit for the table, but preferably will also depend on the amount wagered. For example, a one dollar chip may be required for any value wager, or required for each wager of five dollars. Thus in the latter case, five dollars would be required to take part in the "total option", if the amount wagered is \$25. In another variation the entry fee may be made equal to the table minimum bet, i.e. \$5 for a \$5 table minimum, \$100 for a \$100 table minimum.

[0031] The chip acceptor 18 may detect the placing of the relevant chip(s) by optical means, a hall effect sensor, etc. Such devices as well known in the art. Once a chip or entry fee has been placed on the area 32, the CPU detects the chip and illuminates area 34 to signify acceptance of the player's entry to the "total option" variation of the game.

[0032] After all the players have been invited to place their bets and enter the "total option" variation, the dealer presses

the dealer operated switch 28 (step S3) which will register the total option stakes placed by the players, keeping the relevant areas 34 illuminated and turning off the other chip acceptors. The dealer then collects up the chips which have been placed on areas 32. The stakes placed in area 16 remain on the table.

[0033] In the particular embodiment shown the CPU 26 then operates a random number generator program to decide whether the number (the option value) to be applied to the players who have entered for the "total option" is +1 or -1. It will be appreciated that this number could be fixed before players have placed a stake on area 32, or could be fixed for a period of time. For example, the table may alternate hourly between operating +1 and operating -1 as the total varying option. Also, another number, such as zero, two and/or three could be selected. The system may be configured to choose from a range of numbers, such as 0, +1, -1, +2, -2 and apply a weighting factor so that some numbers, preferably +1, -1, occur more frequently.

[0034] When CPU 26 operates a random number generator or quasi random number generator, the display of the result can be delayed to allow the dealer time to deal the initial two cards to each player. Or the result could be displayed after actuation of a switch by the dealer.

[0035] At step S4 the dealer deals two cards face up to each player followed by one card face up and one card face down for himself. In some jurisdictions the dealer will not deal his second card until all the players' hands have finished but he will deal his first card, face up.

[0036] The dealer announces the result of the number to be used for the total option variation of the game (the option value), which is displayed on screen 30 by CPU 26, at step S5.

[0037] At step S6 the dealer then completes the deal to each player in turn, starting with the player on his left. Depending on the two cards which have been dealt to the player, the player may elect to "stand", draw one or more cards, double his stake, split a pair of cards, etc. As a player's hand is finished, the dealer is able to announce immediately the optimum total for that player. Thus, if the option value selected for that hand by CPU 26 is +1, and a player has been dealt cards to the total 20, he can announce that the player has a total of 21. Conversely, if the option value is -1, a player who has been dealt a hand to total 20 would remain on 20, but a player who has been dealt a hand of total 22 would have a total of 21 (22-1). This option value is used only for players who have placed the requisite stake on the chip acceptor 18. All other players must play to the face value of the cards dealt to them.

[0038] After dealing with each player hand in turn, the dealer then completes his hand according to the normal house rules, step S7. Typically a dealer cannot split a pair of cards, and must always draw a card until reaching a total of seventeen or greater. The dealer plays to the face value of the cards dealt, he does not use the value option.

[0039] The dealer then pays out to all winning players, bearing in mind those players who have selected the "total option", at step S8.

[0040] Thus, if the dealer deals himself a hand to total 17, and the option value is +1 he would pay out to player 1 who

has cards of total value 17 but has also selected the “total option”, he would “push” to player number 2 who has cards of total 16 and has selected to the “total option” (giving a final total of 17), but player 3 who has cards of total “16” but has not selected the “total option” would lose his stake.

[0041] If the option value is -1 , then a player with a total of 22 would be deemed to be on 21, and all other players (including players who have not selected the total option) would play to the actual value of the cards dealt to them.

[0042] Finally the dealer presses a reset button 40 to turn off the illuminated areas 34 and reset the chip acceptors 18 ready for the next hand, at step S8.

[0043] In place of the random number generator operated by CPU 26, the dealer could draw a card to decide whether the total option is to be $+1$ or -1 . Thus, a card of value 1 to 7 could fix the option as $+1$, and value 8 to King could fix the option at -1 . In order to achieve a more even spread of probability, drawing a seven could result in “no option”, with the option stake being returned to each player. Alternatively, when a seven is dealt the house could take all of the option stakes which have been placed and declare a “zero point option”. The card drawn by the dealer could be discarded, or it could be the first card of the dealers hand.

[0044] FIG. 2 shows another embodiment of the invention in which the player himself can select whether to have an option value option of $+1$ or -1 , or both $+1$ and -1 . The Blackjack table shown is similar to the table of FIG. 1, except that the chip acceptor 18 is in two parts 36, 38 designated $+1$ and -1 respectively. When a player places the required entry chip onto an area 36, 38 the surrounding ring 34 is illuminated. In this embodiment there is no need for the CPU 26 and display 30 for calculating the option value. However, the dealer operated switch 28 is still provided in order to lock in the option value(s) chosen by the players and turn off the other acceptors 18 prior to removal of the stakes by the dealer.

[0045] In this embodiment, when dealing to each player in turn (step F6 of FIG. 3), the dealer will observe which option or options the player has selected and total the players cards accordingly. Thus, a player who has selected both options ($+1$ and -1) and is dealt a total of “22” will be deemed to be on “21”. Conversely, the player who has selected both option values and achieves a total of “20” would be deemed to be on “21”.

[0046] A player who has selected only one option value, $+1$ or -1 , would be able to use only that option to improve the total of his hand.

[0047] As mentioned above, the “total option” is expected to increase the chance of winning for a player who has selected the option. This, in turn, decreases the expected house take or vigourish, on a game. To compensate for this, the total option entry payments (step S2 of FIG. 3) are collected from players, and the amount of the entry payment is preferably linked to the amount wagered, e.g. 20%.

[0048] Another approach may be to alter the winnings paid to a player. Thus, a player selecting the total option may be paid out at only 1:2 instead of 1:1 (evens), for example.

[0049] The two possibilities, requiring a total option entry payment and varying the pay out ratio could be used in combination. However, the requirement for a total option

entry payment only is particularly preferred as it provides a minimal variation of the manner of playing the game, whilst prima facie appearing attractive to the players.

[0050] FIG. 4 illustrates a further modification of the method of playing a game of the invention. In this variation the ability of a player to use the total option is restricted to the first two cards only. Thus, after step S5 of FIG. 3, a player can stand on two cards, at C1, or he can draw a third card. If he stands with three cards at C2, he still has the opportunity to use the total option. Hence a player who has been dealt three cards of face value 22, when the option value is -1 , would stand on 21. Conversely, a player who has been dealt a third card to give a total value 15, must either stand at 15 or choose to draw a fourth card, but then the total option is no longer available to him. Hence, if the fourth card is a 7, giving a total of 22, the player will bust.

[0051] Similarly, if the total option is $+1$, a player must stand on two or three cards. If he draws a fourth card, then the $+1$ option is no longer available to him.

[0052] This scheme can be readily monitored by the dealer because he knows that any player with more than three cards cannot make use of the total option, even though he had placed a initial entry for doing this.

[0053] If a player chooses to split a pair of cards, or to double his stake, then the house rules will decide whether he should pay an additional entry fee for the total option, or apply the option to only one hand in the case of a split. For simplicity, an additional fee would not be required.

[0054] Other variations will be apparent to those in the art. The requirement is that a player be allowed to vary the total face value of his cards by a predetermined amount preferably in return for a payment additional to his bet.

[0055] The house rules could require that all players at a table take part in the total option variation. Also, additional house rules may be required to determine, for example, whether an Ace/Nine combination, with a $+1$ option, is “Blackjack”, i.e. 21 with two cards.

[0056] The game of this invention can also be implemented in electronic form at a dealer table and in a slot machine, in a computer and over a network such as the Internet.

[0057] Dealer tables in which the cards are dealt electronically, that is displayed on a display screen at a player location, are known and may be readily adapted to operate the game of this invention. These may take the form of single player machines where a player plays alone, similar to the slot machine described above, or a machine where several players play with a “virtual” dealer having a central display to display the dealer’s hand.

[0058] Slot machines embodying the Blackjack game are also well known in the art, particularly single player machines. The method of operation of the machine can be readily altered to allow the player to make an additional payment in order to give the player the “total option”. The machine operated game will proceed in the usual fashion, with the player being invited to place an initial bet, and also to elect whether to take the “total option”. Again, the option value for the total option could be fixed at the machine, or could be calculated by the machine using a random number

generator. Again, a variety numbers could be elected, but the preferred option values are +1 and -1, and perhaps the option of 0.

[0059] FIG. 5 illustrates the slot machine embodying the game of the invention. Referring to FIG. 5, a slot machine 50 is configured to play the game of blackjack. The machine 50 operates in virtual reality, as is well known, and deals a hand from a single pack of 52 cards, shuffling the pack after each hand.

[0060] A player inserts coins through slot 52 or bills through slot 54. A slot for a player loyalty card may also be provided. The player enters his stake by pressing an "ante" button 56, each press increasing the stake by a predetermined amount and decreasing his credit shown at 60. If the player wishes to select the "total option" then he presses button 58, and his credit is deducted by the requisite amount, say \$1. The player then presses Start button 62 and two cards 64 are dealt to the player, and one card 65 to the "dealer" by being displayed on screen 66. The option value is also displayed on screen 66, at 68. The option value may be fixed for the machine, e.g. at +1, or it may be generated randomly from a limited number of value, e.g. +1, 0, -1. The display can then prompt the player to make further decisions, such as "SPLIT", "DOUBLE", or "DRAW" depending on the value of the cards shown and a playing strategy based on the odds of a favourable outcome. The play elects a strategy by pressing the appropriate button "SPLIT", "DOUBLE", "DRAW" or "STAND" 70, 72, 74, 76. The display then reconfigures the cards or "deals" further cards to match the players instructions, as is well known in the art.

[0061] Once the player elects to "STAND" the machine displays the total of his hand, allowing for the option value. The dealer's hand is then completed and any winnings, or the original stake in the event of a "push" are credited to the player. The player can retrieve his credit by pressing pay button 78 and collecting from the tray 80.

[0062] As seen in FIG. 6, the slot machine 50 is controlled by a central processor 82 which controls display 64 via a display driver 84. CPU 82 receives an electronic input from the player activated buttons 56 to 78, and coin and bill acceptors 52, 54.

[0063] It will be appreciated that buttons 56 to 78 may be virtual buttons or icons displayed on a touch sensitive screen.

[0064] Referring to FIG. 7, a computer apparatus embodying the invention will be described. A computer processor 90 is coupled to a program store 92, a data store 94, and a memory 96 via a bus 100. Also connected to the bus 100 is a keyboard 102 for inputting instructions and a display 104. The apparatus need not be at a single location. In particular the keyboard 102 and display 104 may be remote and connected to the processor 90 via a network, such as the Internet. Instructions are passed to the processor 90 via an appropriate protocol, and processor 90 sends display instructions to display 104 also via an appropriate communication protocol, as well known in the art.

[0065] Also shown in FIG. 7 is a carrier medium in the form of a disc 98 which carries the processor implementable instructions for example for them to be input to a computer such as a personal computer or a games machine. The carrier

may also be any other medium for temporarily storing for transporting the instructions, such as a wire, optic fibre or a radio signal.

[0066] In operation of the apparatus of FIG. 7, a player inputs instructions via keyboard 102 in order to play the blackjack game as described above with reference to FIGS. 1 to 6, including, for example, to use the "total option", and also a total option entry and a bet or wager. Where the game is implemented commercially, so that money transfers to or from a gaming operator, who will have control of computer processor 90, the player may have an account with operator, pay by a payment card or other system as well known in the art of "internet gaming". The game proceeds in a manner similar to the games described above, particularly with reference to FIG. 6, the processor 90 operating in accordance with instructions received via keyboard 102 based on the instructions stored in store 92 and selecting and displaying cards 106 based on the data held in data store 94. The value of cards dealt may be temporarily stored in memory 96, for processor 90 to calculate a hand value.

[0067] As indicated above, if the player has elected to use the total value option the instructions on store 92 will cause processor 90 to adjust the total value of cards 106 by the predetermined amount (+1, -1, etc) before determining whether the player's hand is a winning hand and if the adjustment benefits the player.

[0068] Various modifications will be apparent to those in the art and it is desired to include all such modifications as full within the scope of the invention described herein. For example, while it is preferred that a player be given the choice of whether to participate in the total option variation of the game, or play the traditional game, the option may be made compulsory at a table or machine. In the latter case it may be desirable not to levy an entry fee, and the payout odds could be varied in lieu of the entry fee.

[0069] Also, the selection of the predetermined number could be made at the end of "normal play". In this case the player could not have been able to base his strategy on the option value, thus introducing a more random or "lucky" element into the game.

[0070] Subsidiary rules regarding the entry fee, use of the option on splits, doubles etc. may be introduced to balance the advantage given to the player and allow a fair return for the casino.

1. Gaming apparatus for playing a modified game of Blackjack, the apparatus comprising

a table having a player area, the player area having a first area for a player to place a stake indicating his participation in the game, and a second area for a player to place an entry fee indicating his participation in the modified game, the modification being the option of varying the total of the players hand by a predetermined number.

2. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein a selector is provided to select the predetermined number from one of a range of numbers.

3. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the selector selects the predetermined number random.

4. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein a selector is provided for the player to select the predetermined number.

5. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the predetermined number used in a hand of the game has more than one value.

6. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the predetermined number is constant for a sequence of games.

7. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein an indicator is provided to indicate placement of the entry fee.

8. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein the indicator is a light.

9. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein a display is provided for displaying the predetermined number.

10. Gaming apparatus for playing a modified game of Blackjack, the modification being the option of varying the total of a player's hand by a predetermined number, the apparatus comprising a table having a player area, the player area having a first area for a player to place a stake indicating his participation in the game, and a display for displaying the predetermined number.

11. A method of playing a modified game of blackjack, the method comprising dealing a hand of cards to a player according to a normal set of rules of blackjack, summing the point value of the cards dealt to the player, and modifying the total point value of the cards by a predetermined amount, if that modification provides a more favourable outcome to the player.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the player indicates that he wishes to participate in the modified game by paying an entry fee in addition to a wager.

13. A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the predetermined amount is selected from a plurality of predetermined amounts.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the player selects the predetermined amount from the plurality of predetermined amounts.

15. A method as claimed in any one of claim 11, wherein the total point value is modified by more than one predetermined amount and the most favourable modification is utilized, if that modification provides a more favourable outcome to the player than no modification.

16. A method of playing blackjack in which method the game is modified by a player being given an option to vary the value of his hand by a predetermined amount.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the predetermined amount is selected from +1 and -1.

18. A method as claimed in claim 17 wherein an entry fee is paid by a player to participate in the modified game.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the entry fee is paid in addition to a wager on the game.

20. A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the pay-out odds are reduced for a player who participates in the modified game, as compared to a player who does not participate.

21. Electronic gaming apparatus for playing Blackjack, the apparatus comprising

inputs for a player to input instructions from the player, the instructions corresponding to wagers made and instructions issued by a player in the game of blackjack,

an input for a player to input an instruction indicating that he wishes to take part in a modified form of the game, in which the total value of the cards dealt to the player may be varied by a predetermined amount if the variation is favourable to the player,

sensors for sensing the instructions input by the player, a display,

a computer processor for randomly selecting and then displaying cards from a deck of cards, to simulate dealing to the player and to a notional dealer a hand of cards at blackjack, in response to sensing a wager and an instruction from the player,

a total option sensor for sensing an instruction from the player to take part in the modified form of Blackjack,

the processor being configured to calculate the value of the hands dealt to the player and to the notional dealer, to vary the value of the player's hand by the predetermined amount if the total option sensor has sensed an instruction from the player to take part in the modified game if favourable to the player, and to pay a winning amount to a player if the player has a winning hand.

22. Electronic gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 21 and wherein the predetermined amount is selectable by the player.

23. Electronic gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 22, wherein the predetermined amount is determined by the processor.

24. Electronic apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the predetermined amount is selected from +1, -1 and ± 1 .

25. Electronic gaming apparatus for playing Blackjack, the apparatus comprising

a wager acceptor for accepting a wager from a player,

inputs for a player to input instructions from the player, the instructions corresponding to instructions made and issued by a player in the game of blackjack,

sensors for sensing the instructions input by the player,

a display,

a computer processor for randomly selecting and then displaying cards from a deck of cards, to simulate dealing to the player and to a notional dealer a hand of cards at blackjack, in response to sensing a wager and an instruction from the player,

the processor being configured to calculate the value of the hands dealt to the player and to the notional dealer, to vary the value of the player's hand by the predetermined amount if favourable to the player, and to pay a winning amount to a player if the player has a winning hand.

26. Gaming apparatus for playing Blackjack, the apparatus comprising

a data store storing data representing one or more decks of 52 playing cards having respective card values,

a memory,

a program store storing processor implementable instructions,

a processor coupled to the program store, the data store and the memory for implementing the stored instructions in response to instructions input to the processor, and providing an output based on the implemented action of the stored instructions, wherein the stored instructions comprise instructions for:

the random selection of one or more cards from the deck(s) of cards to form a player's hand;

calculation of a total value of the cards forming the player's hand;

comparing the total value to another value and/or varying the total value by a predetermined amount and comparing the value to another value and providing an outcome of the comparison.

27. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein the processor implementable instructions include instructions for selecting the predetermined amount from a range of predetermined amounts.

28. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 27, wherein the processor implementable instructions include instructions to enable a player to select the predetermined amount.

29. Gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 26, wherein the processor implementable instructions enable a player to elect whether or not the instructions to vary the total value by the predetermined amount is to be implemented.

30. Electronic apparatus as claimed in claim 20, wherein the predetermined amount is selected from +1, -1 and ± 1 .

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