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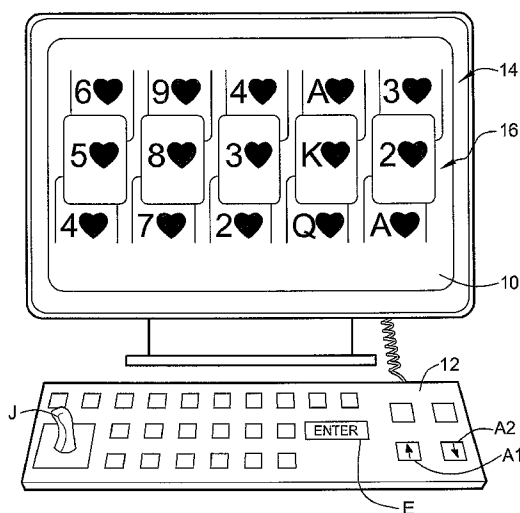
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(54) Title: GAME OF SKILL AND SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PLAYING IT



(57) Abstract: A system for playing a game of skill with rules fashioned on those of poker and uses one suit of a standard deck of playing cards. The system comprises programming allowing a plurality of players to compete against one another, each player provided a screen with the same hand of face-up cards simultaneously. The cards in each hand are of the same suit. Each card is arranged within a circular configuration in sequential numerical and/or value order. The system deals each player a previously unknown and not predetermined initial set of cards as each other player and allows each player to change any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down. Each single step up or down to change a card is considered a step and a predetermined total number of steps is allowed to attempt to achieve the best poker hand.

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## **GAME OF SKILL AND SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PLAYING IT**

### **5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a game of skill fashioned on the rules of poker, particularly suited to playing using electronic venues such as the Internet, cable TV, casino machines, cell phones and the like.

### **10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

There are many games of skill and luck suited for playing on or via the Internet, for example chess, which is a game of skill, and card games, which typically involve a significant amount of luck. Poker is an example of such a card game, which is very popular and typically uses a standard  
15 deck of playing cards.

Numerous variations of poker type card games are also popular. Poker to a large extent relies on luck to win as players do not know what cards their opponents are holding and what cards are to be dealt next. A particular issue with such games is that recently the play of games of luck  
20 for gambling purposes has been restricted in the United States, which has been one of the larger markets for gambling via the Internet.

### **OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION**

It is an object of the present invention to provide a game, system and  
25 method for playing a card game predominantly involving skill that avoids the afore-mentioned issues.

It is a further object of the present invention that it is adapted for play using electronic venues. Examples of electronic venues include the

Internet, a plurality of computer or casino gaming type screens/machines, cable TV, cell phones, PDAs and the like.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a game based on skill and a system and method for playing such a game.

5 It is a further object of the present invention to provide a system and method for playing such a skill game whose rules for winning are fashioned on the rules of the card game poker; i.e. four of a kind beats a full house which beats three of a kind which beats two of a kind, and the like.

10 It is a further object of the present invention that such a system and method are adapted to allow competitive play of the skill card game between a plurality of players, as compared to play against a computer or machine or "house" dealer.

## 15 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention achieves the above-mentioned objects by providing a system for playing a game of skill whose rules for winning are fashioned on the rules of poker and uses one suit of a standard deck of playing cards. The system comprises programming adapted to allow a plurality of players to compete against one another and each player is provided a screen with the same hand of face-up cards at the same time. The cards in each hand are all of the same suit and each card of each hand is arranged within a circular configuration in sequential numerical and/or value order. The system is adapted to deal each player a previously unknown and not predetermined initial set of cards as each other player. The system further comprises a means to allow each player to change any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down. Each single step up or down to change a card is considered a step and the

system allows a predetermined total number of steps in order to attempt to achieve the best poker hand.

In accordance with another aspect, the invention provides a method for playing a game of skill comprising (a) accessing a system providing a game of skill on a screen, the game fashioned on the rules of poker and using one suit of a standard deck of playing cards arranged face-up and each card of each hand is arranged within a closed circle of cards configured in a circular sequential numerical/and value order and the system is adapted to deal each player a previously unknown and not predetermined initial set of cards as each other player and is further adapted to allow each player to exchange any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down, utilizing a predetermined total number of exchanges; (b) receiving an initial poker hand; and (c) exchanging cards of the hand with the goal of achieving the optimal poker hand utilizing said predetermined total number of exchanges.

It should be understood that the game can be played with a series of numbers, e.g. 1 through 13, 1 through 10, etc.; or a series of symbols or pictures, and as such, in the specification and claims the term "*cards*" will be used in a broad sense to include such options. However, for simplicity of description, the term "*cards*" will be used exclusively.

Likewise, the term "*poker hand*" in the specification and claims should be considered to include game variations that may arise when using symbols or pictures and the like instead of a deck/suit of standard playing cards.

In light of the above features, in particular that the cards are of one suit, it should be understood that the phrase "*fashioned on the rules of poker*" includes at least the stipulation that the hand of "flush" (and its

variations of "straight flush" and "royal flush") lacks meaning in regards to determining the best hands, as all hands are of the same suit.

Furthermore, as each card in the hand is arranged in a circular configuration or "wheel", the cards in the hand cannot be physically moved  
5 around as with regular cards held in one's hand (i.e. physically arranged). Thus additional options for a "straight" are available. For example, rules for the poker hand of a "straight" according to the present invention may be stipulated to be any one or combination of where the straight runs right to left, left to right, in either direction or as with a typical cards where the  
10 cards can be arranged.

In the latter example, obviously the cards are not physically arranged in order (e.g. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), rather, the cards are present such that they could be arranged into a "straight". In other words, according to particular embodiments only a hand with sequential cards ascending from left to right  
15 (e.g. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) might be considered a "straight". According to other embodiments such a hand would not be considered a "straight". According to yet another embodiment only a hand with cards shown in ascending order from right to left (e.g. 6, 5, 4, 3, 2) would be considered a "straight". According to other embodiments, a hand with cards shown in non-  
20 sequential order, but which could be put in sequential order if only they could be arranged (e.g. 2, 3, 4, 6, 5) may be considered a "straight". Obviously the odds of achieving the different types of straights and the difficulty involved in achieving it are affected and need therefore be taken into account. In fact, the odds of achieving a "straight" wherein the cards  
25 are in sequential order from left to right (or, analogously from right to left; and even from either direction) are particularly low and should thus be given a very high place in the hierarchy of poker hands for the game of the present invention.

According to a particular embodiment, the total number of predetermined steps is any particular number of steps, and it has been borne out from trials that allowing either four, five or six steps tends to facilitate a game of reasonable challenge and fun.

5 According to another embodiment, the system may be adapted so that its programming comprises a predetermined time constraint for each playing each hand, as compared to where the players have as much time as they wish and wherein, for example, the best hand is the one which achieves the best possible (optimal) hand in the quickest elapsed time.

10 According to still another embodiment, the system may be adapted so that the game is played with a five-card hand and further that the initial hand has at best two of a kind – again, the former features tend to facilitate a game of reasonable challenge and fun.

15 According to yet another embodiment, the system may be adapted wherein the players compete for a predetermined amount of money in each hand played and moreover that a manager or facilitator of the system receives a predetermined percentage of wagers, if any, or a given sum from/for each hand played.

20 According to still yet another embodiment, the system may be adapted so that more than one player is the winner and the top “n” hands are winning hands (and “n” is obviously greater than one in this embodiment) and play can commence when there are at least “n+1” players. It is envisioned that a game consisting of ten players, wherein the best or top three hands are winning hands tends to facilitate an interesting  
25 and fun game.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

The invention may be more clearly understood upon reading of the following detailed description of non-limiting exemplary embodiments thereof, with reference to the following drawings, in which:

**Fig. 1** is a front view of a computer screen and keyboard with an exemplary initial display produced by a system for playing a card game of skill via the Internet according to the present invention; and

**Fig. 2** shows a view of a display of the computer screen as in Fig. 1, however with an exemplary final hand, being an optimal hand under the stipulations of the game's rules.

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## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

Fig. 1 shows a computer screen **10** and keyboard **12** with an exemplary initial display **14** produced by a system for playing a card game of skill. The system can be played via the Internet, wherein the screen **10** and keyboard **12** typically resides in the home of a player (not shown) or at an Internet café (not shown) or the like; or the screen and keyboard could be a machine, or part thereof in which a plurality thereof are disposed at a one location so that all of the players are in the same proximity (e.g. at a gaming facility – not shown); or a combination of the aforementioned. A wide variety of electronic venues are possible. Examples of additional alternatives for the display include where the screen **10** is part of a television set, a personal digital assistant, an electronic game, a cell phone and so on (all not shown).

The screen **10** shows an exemplary initial hand **16**, in this embodiment, a five-card hand, although the game could be played with a hand comprising other numbers of cards (e.g. seven, as in seven card stud). The hand shown comprises the following cards, all in the suit of hearts: 5, 8, 3, king and 2. Each ca . . . . . teen cards in a suit of a standard

deck of cards and is disposed in a closed circle, or "wheel" of cards in numerical sequence. Thus, just below the first card on the left, 5, is 4 (partially seen) and below that (unseen) is 3 and so on; and just above the 5 is 6 (partially seen), and so on. The other cards are analogously arranged.

5           The object of the game is to move/change any or all of the cards in the hand in order to achieve the best possible poker hand using a predetermined number of moves or steps. For the sake of explanation, it will be assumed that the system is programmed so that four steps are allowed. One or more steps can be used to exchange, up or down, each of  
10 the cards in the hand. The exchange may be performed by a variety of means, for example, wherein the screen is a touch-screen (in which case the keyboard **12** is not required), or wherein the keyboard **12** is programmed to move/change cards up and down, for example by using arrow keys **A1** and **A2**, a joystick **J** or other such means for actuating a change of cards; and to  
15 actuate suitable commands such as "start" and "finish", a key such as an "enter" key **E** may be used.

In the present example, the best/optimal hand **18** (shown in Fig. 2) can be achieved by exchanging the third card from the left, initially a 3, downward for a 2 and then an ace (utilizing two steps); exchanging the  
20 fourth card from the left, initially a king, upward for an ace (utilizing one step); and exchanging the fifth card from the left, initially a 2, downward for an ace (utilizing one step). Thus, utilizing a total of four steps, a hand of three aces and 8 and a 5 is achieved. Through trial and/or inspection it can be determined that no better hand is achievable utilizing four and thus  
25 the optimal hand **18** has been achieved. In fact, if five steps were allowed, the best hand would still comprise three aces – and a 9 and a 5 (i.e. with the extra step it would be best to exchange the 8 for a 9.



Thus, a player who used his four steps to change the cards in any other manner would not achieve as good a poker hand as shown in Fig. 2.

If for example ten players were competing, one manner of determining the winner may occur if only one of the players achieved the optimal hand **18** and only that player is deemed the winner. If more than  
5 one player achieved such a hand, the winner could be deemed as the player who achieved the optimal hand in the shortest amount of time. According to another alternative, a predetermined number of players with the best hands could be deemed winners. According to yet another alternative, all  
10 players who achieve the optimal hand **18** could be deemed winners.

The winners could all receive a portion of wagers made, if any. In this regard, the system could be programmed such a predetermined percentage of any wagers or a predetermined sum is deducted from the wagers, i.e. pool of possible winnings, and directed to a manager or  
15 facilitator of the system.

According to a preferred embodiment, the system's programming imposes a predetermined time constraint for playing each hand. Alternatively, the system may allow the players to choose a time constraint, for example, among a list of times. Furthermore, it is a preferred mode of  
20 the present invention that the initial hand **16** (as exemplified in Fig. 1) has at best the poker hand of two of a kind.

It should be understood that there are various systems and methods for playing a game of skill that can be devised according to the present invention and that the above description is merely explanatory. Thus, the  
25 present system and method can be embodied in a variety of aspects falling within the scope of the present invention, *mutatis mutandis*.

**CLAIMS**

1. A system for playing a game of skill whose rules for winning are fashioned on the rules of poker and uses one suit of a standard deck of playing cards and comprises programming adapted to facilitate a plurality  
5 of players to compete against one another and each player is provided a screen with the same hand of face-up cards at the same time, the cards in each hand all being of the same suit and each card of each hand is arranged within a circular configuration in sequential numerical and/or value order and the system is adapted to deal each player a previously unknown and not  
10 predetermined initial set of cards as each other player and the system further comprises a means to allow each player to change any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down, where each up or down step toward changing cards is considered a step and the system allows a predetermined total number of steps in order to attempt to achieve  
15 the best poker hand.
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein it is adapted so that the game can be played in a mode comprising one of: via the Internet; using a screen or machine for each player disposed at a gaming establishment; and a combination thereof.
- 20 3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the means to allow each player to change cards comprises one of a touch-screen means and a keyboard means.
4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the players place a predetermined wager for each hand played.
- 25 5. The system according to claim 4, wherein it is adapted to deduct a predetermined percentage or sum from a total of the wagers and to direct that percentage or sum to a manager or facilitator of the system.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein the best “n” hands are winning hands whereby play can commence when there are at least “n+1” players.
7. The system according to claim 6, wherein “n” is at least two.
- 5 8. The system according to claim 1, wherein it is adapted to allow ten players to play.
9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the total number of predetermined steps is at least four.
- 10 10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the poker hand of a straight is considered according to one of the following: the cards are in sequential ascending order from right to left; the cards are in sequential ascending order from left to right; the cards are in sequential ascending order from either right to left or left to right; the cards could be arranged to be in sequential order although they are not in order as they appear on the  
15 screen; and suitable combinations thereof.
11. The system according to claim 1, wherein it imposes, or allows the players to choose, a playing time constraint for each hand.
12. The system according to claim 1, wherein the game is played with a hand comprising five cards.
- 20 13. The system according to claim 1, wherein the initial cards dealt comprises at best the poker hand of two of a kind.
14. A game of skill whose rules for winning are fashioned on the rules of poker and uses one suit of a standard deck of playing cards; allows either one or a plurality of players to compete against one another; each player is  
25 provided a screen with the same hand of face-up cards at the same time; the cards in each hand are all of the same suit; each card of each hand is arranged within a circular configuration in sequential numerical and/or value order; each play previously unknown and not

predetermined initial set of cards; each player may change any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down, where each up or down step toward changing cards is considered a step; and a predetermined total number of steps is allowed in order to attempt to  
5 achieve the best poker hand.

**15.** A method of playing a game of skill comprising the following steps:  
(a) accessing a system providing a game of skill on a screen, the game fashioned on the rules of poker and using one suit of a standard deck of playing cards arranged face-up and each card of each hand is arranged  
10 within a closed circle of cards configured in a circular sequential numerical/and value order and the system is adapted to deal each player a previously unknown and not predetermined initial set of cards as each other player, if any, and is further adapted to allow each player to exchange any one or more of his cards in sequential numeric/value order, up or down,  
15 utilizing a predetermined total number of exchanges; (b) receiving an initial poker hand; and (c) exchanging cards of the hand with the goal of achieving the optimal poker hand utilizing said predetermined total number of exchanges.

**16.** The method according to claim **15**, wherein step (a) comprises  
20 involves one of: accessing an Internet site and accessing a gaming establishment.

**17.** The method according to claim **15**, wherein prior to step (b), each player makes a predetermined wager.

**18.** The method according to claim **15**, wherein step (c) comprises  
25 utilizing at least four exchanges.

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