

fewer than 52 cards. Yet other implementations use a mapping of playing cards in multiple card decks.

[0011] Some aspects of the invention provide a method of conducting a bingo game involving a plurality of players. The method includes these steps: forming a plurality of bingo cards by assigning a plurality of areas of each bingo card to corresponding playing card symbols; mapping bingo numbers to areas of the bingo cards, wherein the mapping differs as to at least some areas of each bingo card; providing at least some of the plurality of bingo cards to players; randomly drawing the bingo numbers; indicating hits on each bingo card when a randomly drawn bingo number corresponds with a bingo number on an area of the bingo card; and determining when a player's bingo card achieves a winning pattern of hits. The pattern corresponds to a hand of playing cards.

[0012] The playing card symbols may be selected from more than one deck of playing cards. In some implementations, a playing card symbol assigned to an area of a bingo card is revealed to a player only after there is a bingo number is drawn corresponding to the area of the bingo card.

[0013] The mapping step may involve mapping more than one bingo number to a selected area of a bingo card. The selected area may be selected by a player or by a gaming system, e.g. by a game server. The selected area may be determined before or after a player receives a bingo card, depending on the implementation. The indicating step may involve indicating when there is a hit on one of the bingo numbers in the selected area.

[0014] In some implementations, a corresponding playing card symbol will be displayed in at least a portion of the selected area only after there is a hit on one of the bingo numbers in the selected area. The player may be required to select or discard the corresponding playing card symbol within a predetermined period of time after indicating when there is a hit on a first one of the bingo numbers in the selected area. Some such implementations of the method also include these steps: receiving an indication that the player has selected the corresponding playing card symbol within the predetermined period of time; and including only the selected playing card symbol when determining whether a winning pattern can be formed, in part, from the selected area. According to some implementations, the selected area will be included in a pattern only when there is a hit on all of the bingo numbers in the selected area.

[0015] The bingo cards may be, for example, $N \times N$ or $N \times M$ bingo cards, where N and M are integers. The pattern may be an interim win pattern, a game-winning pattern or a progressive win pattern.

[0016] Alternative implementations of the invention provide another method of providing a wagering game. This method includes the following steps: providing B bingo cards to each of a first plurality of players; randomly selecting N bingo numbers; indicating hits in areas of the bingo cards, the areas corresponding to at least one of the N bingo numbers; and determining whether a winning pattern can be formed by combining hits in areas of more than one of the player's bingo cards. The method may include the step of presenting the winning pattern when it is determined that the winning pattern can be formed by combining hits in areas of more than one of the player's bingo cards.

[0017] The determining step could involve determining whether a 3-dimensional pattern is formed by combining hits on a plurality of the bingo cards. The indicating step may involve displaying a playing card in each area of the bingo cards where there is a hit.

[0018] The winning pattern may be an interim win pattern or a game-winning pattern. The method may include the step of randomly selecting additional numbers until the determining step determines that a game-winning pattern has been formed by combining hits from at least two of a player's bingo cards.

[0019] In some implementations, at least one selected area of a bingo card corresponds with more than one bingo number. In some implementations, a selected area will be included in a pattern only when there is a hit on all of the bingo numbers in the selected area.

[0020] In some implementations, fewer than B bingo cards are provided to each of a second plurality of players. A first wager may be received from each of the first plurality of players and a second wager may be received from each of the second plurality of players. In some instances, the first wager is greater than the second wager.

[0021] The bingo cards may be provided on a display of a gaming machine. The indicating step may involve displaying the areas that form the winning pattern in a manner that is distinct from areas that do not form the winning pattern. The presenting step may involve: making a simulation of dealing playing cards corresponding to the areas that form the winning pattern; and forming a playing card hand display from dealt playing cards.

[0022] The step of determining whether a winning pattern can be formed can involve combining hits in various ways, e.g., in a single corresponding area of more than one of the player's bingo cards or along a single corresponding line of more than one of the player's bingo cards.

[0023] Yet other methods of providing a wagering game are aspects of the present invention. One such method includes these steps: allowing each of a plurality of players to select a desired number of bingo cards; displaying the selected bingo cards to each player; providing each player with an option of combining hits in areas of more than one of the player's selected bingo cards to form a winning pattern; and determining whether each player has chosen the option. The bingo cards may be displayed on a gaming machine.

[0024] The method may also involve these steps: randomly selecting N bingo numbers; indicating hits in areas of the bingo cards, the areas having numbers corresponding to any of the N bingo numbers; and determining, when a player has selected the option, whether an interim win pattern can be formed by combining hits in areas of more than one of the player's bingo cards.

[0025] The step of determining whether an interim win pattern can be formed may involve combining hits in a single corresponding area of more than one of the player's bingo cards and/or combining hits along a single corresponding line of more than one of the player's bingo cards. In some implementations, the determining step involves determining whether a 3-dimensional pattern is formed by combining hits on a plurality of the bingo cards.