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(54) **APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR A SPORTS
CARD LOTTERY GAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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The sports card lottery game apparatus and method described herein is a daily lottery designed to associate tangible sports trading cards of a specific sport with a chance to win money according to a pool-based payout system. This works by providing the purchaser first with a package of quality sports cards that feature players at different positions of each sport, which have a sporting event that same day. Second, depending on the combined amount of success these players have, which is based on scoring and tracking systems, the pack of sports trading cards with the most combined points will be declared the winner and will collect a percentage of the pooled money from the net sales of total packs of sports trading cards sold in the corresponding region for that particular day. This lottery game offers the consumer a fun interactive way to follow the sport they love, by combining the tangible element of a physical "game piece" with an intangible chance to win a prize, which creates an energy of excitement and enjoyment for the consumer.

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APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR A SPORTS CARD LOTTERY GAME

FIELD

[0001] This invention relates to a method and an apparatus for a lottery game, and in particular a lottery game to be played with sports trading cards, such as traditional baseball cards or hockey cards that bear the name and photograph of a player and a list of statistics related to that player.

BACKGROUND

[0002] For the purpose of this description, reference may be made to the sport of hockey, and to the National Hockey League (“NHL”) as one possible sport and one possible sports league, but it should be understood that the invention described herein is not limited to any specific sport or any particular sports league.

[0003] Sports trading cards are well known. They are usually made of laminated cardboard. Printed on these sports cards is a photograph of a specific player, the organization or team for which the player plays, as well as other statistics and information associated with that player.

[0004] Canadian Patent Application No. 2625125, titled “Method and System for Shared Ownership Lottery Plays”, filed on Oct. 4, 2006, describes a pool based lottery, which offers a payout schemata based on a percentage of the total net accumulated sales of that product. This means that consumers who purchase the lottery product generate a gross “pool” of funds that can then be divided by the commissioning officer of the lottery product to the winner(s) based on a percentage of net sales.

[0005] There is an advantage to combine these two successful concepts to create a sports card pool-based lottery as described herein, which will create additional value as its own unique and novel lottery game. This lottery is unlike any other lottery product offered due to its ability to offer a tangible product combined with a lottery.

SUMMARY

[0006] The sports card lottery game apparatus and method described herein is a daily lottery designed to associate tangible sports trading cards of a specific sport with a chance to win money according to a pool-based payout system. This works by providing the purchaser first with a package of quality sports cards that feature players at different positions of each sport, which have a sporting event that same day. Second, depending on the combined amount of success these players have, which is based on scoring and tracking systems, the pack of sports trading cards with the most combined points will be declared the winner and will collect a percentage of the pooled money from the net sales of total packs of sports trading cards sold in the corresponding region for that particular day. This lottery game offers the consumer a fun interactive way to follow the sport they love, by combining the tangible element of a physical “game piece” with an intangible chance to win a prize, which creates an energy of excitement and enjoyment for the consumer.

[0007] The sports card lottery game apparatus and method described herein is a unique gambling game that combines the tangible use of cards of specific sports leagues with the intangible world of sports gambling. A package of sports cards will consist of any specified number of players of various positions, which correspond to the players in the specified sports

league who play on the same day. Based on the combined outcomes of the daily performances by the corresponding players apportioned to each package, winner(s) will be decided and prize(s) will be distributed accordingly.

[0008] The sports card lottery game apparatus and method described herein provides the consumer with a randomized group of sports trading cards that correspond to players in their specified league. These cards are used as game pieces in a lottery for purposes of winning an amount of money.

[0009] The sports card lottery game apparatus and method described herein uses the existing concept of sports trading cards, which are usually made from laminated cardboard. Printed on these cards is a specific player, the organization that they play for, as well as other statistics and information associated with that player.

[0010] The present sports card lottery game apparatus and method combines the concept of sports cards with the concept of a lottery, such as the lottery described in the above-mentioned Canadian Patent Application No. CA 2625125, which discloses a pool-based lottery that offers a payout schemata based on a percentage of the total net accumulated sales of that product. This means that consumers who purchase the lottery product generate a gross “pool” of funds that can then be divided by the commissioning officer of the lottery product to the winner(s) based on a percentage of net sales.

[0011] Combining these two successful concepts will create additional value as a new, unique and novel lottery game. This lottery is unlike any other lottery product offered due to its ability to give the consumer a tangible product (the sports trading card) as well as providing a chance to participate and win in a lottery game.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] The Pack—Contents—The pack comprises an enclosed package containing a pre-determined amount of sports trading cards, which have been packaged using randomization sorting software. The randomized sorting software uses algorithms to prevent duplicates as well as to ensure each player in the pack is in fact playing on a specified day. Current software used by sports card manufacturers does an acceptable job of preventing duplicates. Since the schedule for the upcoming season of any sport is generally available in advance, it is possible to manufacture sets of packs of sports trading cards that correspond to any given day during the season. Injuries and back-up or replacement players, along with trades and suspensions are problematic because their occurrence is unpredictable. Therefore, for the purpose of pack production, it may be advantageous to divide the season into several short segments, to limit the problems caused by the unavailability of certain players.

[0013] Each sports card in a particular pack of sports trading cards must bear an identical and unique code. This unique code will ensure that only the correct pack of sports cards bearing the winning code for that day of competition will be used to claim prizes.

[0014] The Pack—Design—Sports trading cards generally have different designs to identify the particular type of sports trading card. Sports trading cards associate with the lottery game describe herein will have a unique design to identify that they are “game pieces” in a unique lottery game. The sports trading cards should be made of quality laminated cardboard to enhance their value. The sports trading cards must include the current team and player name, and should show the player’s relevant statistics. The sports trading cards

may also have additional distinct qualities such as described below under Bonus/Special Cards.

[0015] The Pack—Bonus/Special Cards—An example of an exclusive feature of the sports card lottery described herein is that certain sports cards may be deemed “special” cards. Special cards may have gold lettering written across the face of the card describing an outstanding achievement for that specific player. For instance, a shutout for a goalie in hockey or a homerun in baseball. If the goalie gets a shutout, or the hitter gets a homerun this could result in either additional points added to the total points for the pack, or the purchaser of the pack could receive a free pack or other such rewards. Other possibilities for special cards are Gordie Howe hat tricks, regular hat tricks, team wins or shoot-out related events.

[0016] Scoring—Point System—Each player in the pack gets points for various achievements that they accomplish during a given game day. A pre-determined weighting system will generate what each achievement is worth. For example in hockey, these achievements could be the number of goals, assists, shutouts, saves, penalty minutes, shots, fights, blocked shots, or the like. The achievements are then accumulated by all players in each pack of sports trading cards and the highest accumulated point total becomes the winning package(s) of cards for that given day in that particular sport.

[0017] Scoring—Bonus Scoring—As mentioned above bonus sports cards may offer extra scoring or free packs. If bonus sports cards are not offered, an optional scoring system could be used to offer free packs for any player having an outstanding achievement, such as a shutout or a hat trick within a given pack of sports cards, limited to one free pack per pack, or as desired.

[0018] Tracking—A barcode or some other type of coding system could be printed on or attached to each package of sports trading cards to provide the unique code to determine which players are in each pack of sports cards and to provide a unique identification code to each pack. This will allow the distributor to link the scoring system with each player and generate an up-to-date point total for each pack. Each unique code could then be uploaded to an online and mobile application so that the purchaser of a particular pack of sports cards would be able to track in real time how their pack of sports cards is performing in comparison to other packs of sports cards.

[0019] Prizes and Payouts—The main prize is accumulated by a percentage of sales that “pools” a gross amount of prize money. The purchasers(s) with the highest point total for their purchased package of sports trading cards wins a percentage of the pooled prize money. This method is currently used in the lottery game PROLINE™ Pools and is described in the above-noted Canadian Patent Application No. CA 2625125. Exact prizes are unknown and dependent upon the number of packs of sports cards sold within a particular jurisdiction. Estimates can be generated using previous year’s payouts regarding pool sales.

[0020] Projected Market—Market Type—The sports card lottery game described herein is projected to appeal to sports fans of all kinds, including hockey, baseball, football, tennis, golf, soccer, horse racing and the like. The sports card lottery game described herein gives the purchaser the opportunity to buy a tangible product with additional value that includes the chance to win a lottery prize. It gives the sports fan and groups of fans the opportunity to have a physical commodity in front of them as they watch the sports event and cheer for the

players in the pack of sports cards purchased. Advantageously, it allows a parent who purchases a pack of sports trading cards for the purpose of playing a lottery game, to then give the pack of sports trading cards to their child as a keepsake or object of enjoyment, after the conclusion of the day’s sporting events. The sports card lottery game described herein does not take away from other products offered as it provides an additional element to the world of sports gambling. It is rejuvenating the market based on a new unique and exciting product. It is unlike any other lottery product on the market today.

[0021] Projected Market—Estimated Size—The size of the market will, of course, depend on where the sports card lottery game described herein is sold. For example, if the sports card lottery game is commissioned and sold in Ontario, Canada, the previous year’s sports season sales for other similar lottery games in Ontario, Canada, could be analyzed to determine total potential sales.

[0022] Projected Market—Marketing Strategies—Timing—two weeks before the opening game for a particular sport is essential for this product to generate the greatest returns because people are the most excited about their sport at the beginning of the season.

[0023] T.V.—Television commercials informing fans of the new sports card lottery game should be aired on sports related channels such as on The Sports Network (“TSN”) or Sportscenter, during sports events such as Hockey Night in Canada or Canadian Football League games.

[0024] Retail Placement—Once distributed, sports trading card packs for the sports card lottery game could be placed in the same enclosed cases used to hold and distribute other lottery tickets, such as scratch tickets.

[0025] Manufacturing—Outsource—Outsourcing to existing local sports trading card manufacturing companies would be the most cost effective method of production. Small changes in design to ensure authenticity and to include the unique coding required for the sports card lottery game would need to be established for security purposes.

[0026] Manufacturing—Packaging—Sports trading cards to be used in this sports card lottery game must be packaged according to date, thus only sports trading cards of players that play on the same day may be manufactured and packaged at the same time.

[0027] Manufacturing—Returns of Used Cards—To help alleviate over production, used cards may be returned for a set price per card. These used sports cards could then be re-coded and re-inserted into other packages for other days for which that player participates.

[0028] Distribution—Existing distribution channels will be used to deliver the packs of sports trading cards to retailers. The biggest issue is gauging how many packs of sports trading cards need to be delivered to each retail outlet. The positives are that excess packs of cards can be returned and to be re-coded and re-packaged into other packs of cards for future use.

[0029] Estimated Costs—The following will need to be taken into consideration when it comes to determining the cost of implementing the herein described sports card lottery game: manufacturing, marketing, distribution, repackaging, legal fees and rights, and prize money.

[0030] Legal Obligations—There may be legal obligations that need to be taken into consideration, such as those of the various professional sports players associations, such as the

National Hockey League Players Association (“NHLPA”), and other similar player’s associations in other sports leagues.

[0031] Future Possibilities—Future possibilities include, expanding the sports card lottery to additional sports, incorporating new playoff features, as well as domestic or international sale/licensing.

[0032] The previous detailed description is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the applicant’s apparatus and method for a sports card lottery game. Various modifications to the embodiments described herein will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without departing from the scope of the applicant’s apparatus and method for a sports card lottery game described herein. Thus, the present apparatus and method for a sports card lottery game is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein, but is to be accorded the full scope consistent with the claims, wherein reference to an

element in the singular, such as by use of the article “a” or “an” is not intended to mean “one and only one” unless specifically so stated, but rather “one or more”. All structural and functional equivalents to the elements of the various embodiments described throughout the disclosure that are known to those of ordinary skill in the art are intended to be encompassed by the elements of the claims.

1. A package of sports trading cards intended for use in a lottery game, the package comprising:

a collection of said sports trading cards, wherein each sports trading card in the collection represents a player performing on a specific predetermined day, wherein the specific predetermined day is the same day for each of the sports trading cards in the collection;

and wherein the package of sports trading cards is intended for use in the lottery game in accordance with rules for playing the lottery game.

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