

WE HOLD'EM QUITE DIFFERENTLY IN TENNESSEE

*Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker is a unique take on a true classic that has only recently received a patent solidifying both its inventiveness and originality. Its creator, **Scott Hill**, sat down with **Jake Graves** for an exclusive interview.*

Starting off, Scott Hill identified the most glaring problem he had found in the Texas and Omaha iterations of Poker - the absurdly high percentage of folding. This is an issue that has been evident as a wide array of studies have reported. Due to this, it's unsurprising that these games lack sufficient inclusivity, damaging their ability to keep players fully engaged mentally and leading to too much "downtime" where players are waiting for a decent hand.

Keeping this in mind, Scott set his sights on creating an innovative new form of the famed card contest that solved this issue specifically. Explaining that, under close analysis of Poker's most popular form, Texas Hold Em, it is clear that over 60% of hole card combinations are unplayable.

"No wonder Texas Hold Em has the lowest participation percentage of all casino games!"

Taking this into consideration, Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker adds phases to the sequence of dealing. Thus the first 2 hole cards do not necessarily determine the playability of the hand. Scott's new form of poker cards may also be discarded which are revealed before the round is concluded, adding another layer of table action, which requires close observation and strategic thought.

More players have higher ranking hands than in its traditional counterparts - meaning that it is more likely that there will be an abundance of tangible competition when every hand reaches the showdown.

"Tennessee Hold'Em® was never intended to undermine current Poker competitions. In fact, it is specifically targeted to expand the market."

Seeking to negate poorer aspects of the Texas game, Scott explains that he wanted to minimise chip-bullying and eliminate side pots found in traditional forms of Poker, by creating a progressive betting system with fast moving table action, increasing player participation and mental concentration.

The "Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker Tournaments" patented "Overdrawn Chips" (ODC) system gives players a last chance to recover when they go "all-in" by maintaining the cumulative nature of the single pot for every hand.

When discussing the granting of the Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker patent, Scott explained why it was a million to 1 long shot. "Top Patent lawyers all told me it couldn't be done... Patents are almost always granted as a result of case law, which consists of previous landmark judgements."

To over simplify, previous judgements had ruled all new 52 card based games were "Abstract ideas". The Supreme Court ruled that "purely conventional steps" associated with the physical act of playing cards do not "supply a sufficiently inventive concept." Therefore, new multiplayer Poker variants were considered "verboten" by specialist patent lawyers.

"Convinced that Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker could disrupt the industry in a positive way, I decided to prosecute the patent myself. No one wanted the job! There were many setbacks. The application was rejected several times. After the Final Action, I had one last chance to resubmit and prove the patent's worth... To my amazement, though I was contesting the judgement, my examiner actually agreed that the entire system holds societal benefits for everyone involved."

访谈之初, Scott Hill提及了自己的发现, 各代的德州和奥马哈德州扑克都有一个最突出的问题——高得离谱的弃牌率。各种类型的文献都记载了这个显著的问题。正因如此, 这些游戏缺乏足够的包容性, 无法吸引玩家全神贯注, 玩家在等待一副有赢面的手牌过程中“待机太久”, 再也提不起劲, 这并不令人惊讶。

以此为镜, Scott将目光放在这著名纸牌游戏的竞争面向, 创造了全新玩法, 打破过往窠臼。Scott对这个问题进行了深度研究。他表示, 在仔细分析目前最流行的扑克游戏——德州扑克——的玩法后, 发现有超过60%的手牌完全无法使用, 这也难怪德州扑克是所有赌场游戏中参与率最低的!

Tennessee Hold'Em® 的设计便针对该问题做出调整, 增加额外的发牌步骤, 降低初始手牌对牌局可玩性的影响。此外, 在Scott所发明的新玩法中, 玩家可以选择在各回合结束前丢弃一些牌, 这为牌局增加了更多张力, 需要玩家密切观察对手行动, 并进行战略思考。

与传统的德州扑克玩法相比, 新玩法让更多玩家拿到更有赢面的手牌——这也表示, 当牌局进入到决胜阶段时, 竞争将会比以往更激烈。

"Tennessee Hold'Em® 从未打算损及目前的扑克比赛。事实上, 游戏的创设目的是专为扩大市场。"

为了最大限度地减少德州扑克负面因素, Scott解释, 他希望通过创建一个累进式投注系统, 玩家在牌桌上迅速动作, 最大限度地降低“筹码霸凌(Chip Bullying)"情形, 同时杜绝传统扑克形式“下边池”的玩法, 提高玩家参与和精神集中度。

"Tennessee Hold'Em® 扑克锦标赛"的专利: 超额筹码(Overdrawn Chips, ODC)系统——通过保持每手牌的单注累积性质, 当玩家“全下”(All In)时, 系统会提供玩家收回筹码的机会。

讨论到Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker的专利权授予, Scott表示, 这是百万分之一机会。他说道:

"所有的顶尖专利律师都告诉我, 我们不可能申请到.....专利几乎一向都是根据判例法所授予的, 判例法的基础则是过往具有相当标志性的判决。"

简而言之, 根据过往的判决, 裁定所有新设计的52张牌游戏为“抽象概念”。最高法院裁定, 玩牌这样的行为“单纯为操作步骤”, “并不具充分开创性”。因此, 长期以来, 新的多人扑克变体皆被专业专利律师认为是“专利禁地”。

"但我深信, Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker 将能以十分积极的方式颠覆行业, 因此我决定自己申请专利。没有人想要接这份工作! 过程中遇到了很多挫折, 申请也被驳回了好几次。在最终驳回后, 我只剩最后一次机会重新提交并证明专利的价值.....结果令我大吃一惊, 在我对判决提出异议的程序中, 负责的审查员竟然同意这个系统能为每个参与者带来社会效益。"

"能够受到美国专利商标局授权别具历史意义的专利权, 我真的感到非常荣幸。许多发出的专利, 是针对改进计算机和人工智能——我们的专利能算得上是人类脑力提升的一个真正里程碑。"

从整体系统的角度来看, Tennessee Hold'Em® 扑克锦标赛实质上惠及玩家以及整个博彩业。事实上, 从长远来看, 相关的社会效益可以为整个美国原住民带来积极成果。

Tennessee Hold'Em® 扑克锦标赛要求玩家在短时间内迅速做出多个决定。在特殊的“落水者(Men Overboard)"阶段, 玩家必须决定是要继续持有手中的5张底牌, 还是丢弃1或2张牌。坚持保留目前所有5张底牌的玩家, 可以选择“不转牌”和“不河牌”。保





"I am truly honoured to receive this monumental document from the USPTO. Many patents are granted for the improvement of computers and AI. This is a genuine landmark for Patents that improve human brain power."

When viewed as a total system, Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker Tournaments were judged to be beneficial for participants as well as the gaming industry as a whole. In fact, in the long term, related societal benefits could produce positive results for Native Americans as a whole. The myriad of diversely unique systems that constitute Tennessee Hold'Em® Poker Tournaments were deemed sufficiently original and beneficial, marking it a monumental achievement as well as comprising a landmark case in patent law.

With official approval of the US Patent Office, now this brand new variant of exciting, strategic and highly inclusive Poker is on the playing field, the opportunity for contests and tournaments is a thrilling and viable reality. This is not lost on Scott who has developed detailed plans to stage multiplayer tournaments with the support of affiliates around the globe.

"Regional and National winners will be decided through these tournaments, who will then be invited to participate in online World Championship tournament events. Additionally, top players at land-based affiliated casinos will also have the option to compete at these regional, National and ultimately World Championships."

This is a rare opportunity for sponsors to be associated with dynamic new skill based World Championships. Scott projects that these plans will come to full fruition on a 5 year time scale. When questioned on governance and regulation within the tournaments and Tennessee Hold'Em®'s variety of contests, Scott paints an intriguing picture that frames this iteration of Poker and the higher levels of observation and understanding of probabilities and permutations required.

"Games that activate your mind and sharpen mental acuity don't have the same addiction problems as RTP 'push the button' games."

He clarified, "Since your success or failure is more aligned with conscious decision making and active brain function, players soon understand that their results are related directly to their own autonomous actions."

Scott postulates that when players experience significant setbacks or a lack of success they are likely to limit play time, or even stop playing altogether. Alternatively, players may choose to analyse and study the game's mechanics, then practise their strategies and hone their skills before playing more experienced players. Drawing similarities to individuals who practise other sports or games that are widely accepted as highly skilled endeavours, Scott suggests there is evidence that with practice, players tangibly improve their results.

Ever exuberant about his innovation, Scott showed great enthusiasm when describing the assistance and support he has received on his momentous journey to Tennessee Hold'Em®'s landmark patent.

He cites the annual conferences available in his hometown, London, where ICE and iGB at the Excel Centre were essential to getting the ball rolling. Michael Caselli, the founder of iGB, has also been a great supporter of Scott's skill based gaming concepts, recognising him with an award at iGB's Amsterdam event for "Solitaire of the Gods", an application that highlights Scott's skill based ideas for iGaming, and, unlike slots, is especially attractive to female players, for more inclusive competition.

He would also recall attending an edition of SIGMA's European Summit on the Mediterranean shores of Malta where he encountered the group's founder, Eman Pulis, "who has given me (him) fantastic encouragement and advice which has been essential to getting Tennessee Hold'Em® launched!"

留4张底牌的玩家不允许河牌,而丢弃2张底牌的玩家则被允许在被发给的7张牌中,选择最佳的5张牌同时使用转牌及河牌。仅在该阶段,就增加了无数个战术机会;其还纳入目前市面上最流行的游戏不存在的全新唬牌方式。”

Tennessee Hold'Em® 扑克锦标赛独具特色的各种系统,最终被法院认定具有足够的原创性和效益,游戏方得创下这一里程碑式的成功,同时也成为专利法突破性的一个典范。

随着美国专利局正式批准,这样一个令人期待、极具战略性质且高度友善的全新扑克玩法现已出现推出市面,不排除将举办各种令人热血沸腾的比赛及锦标赛。Scott并没有忘记这一点,并向我们详细介绍了在全球代理商支持下举办多人比赛的计划。

对于赞助商来说,这是一个难得的机会,能与充满活力的新技能型世界锦标赛形成联系。Scott预计这些计划将在5年内实现,并全面运作。

当被问及Tennessee Hold'Em® 各种比赛中的管理和相关规定,Scott为我们描述了这代扑克游戏饶有趣味的景况,该游戏要求玩家对概率和排列组合拥有更高层次的观察和理解。

“所有能够激活你的思维,并提高精神敏锐度的游戏,不会产生像‘玩家回报率主控一切’类型游戏的上瘾问题。”

他解释道:“既然胜利与否取决于玩家有意识的决策和清晰的大脑思路,玩家很快就能明白,最终的游戏结果掌握在他们自己的每一步行动之中。”

Scott推断,在遭遇大挫败或是鲜少赢牌时,玩家会减少游戏时间,甚至完全停止游戏。另外,玩家可能会选择对游戏的机制进行分析和研究,接着在与更有经验的玩家比赛之前,练习他们的策略并磨练自身技能。Scott表示,与那些被公认需要投入高技能训练的运动或游戏有着相似之处,已经有许多例子可以证明,只要通过练习,玩家就能够扎实地提高他们的成绩。

事实上,这项专利涵盖有7种变体,更甚者,该游戏标志着世上第一个真正的技能扑克,真金不怕火炼,是学习者和技能游戏者的理想游戏。玩家必须在异步比赛中与AI机器人玩上一系列同的牌,无论对哪个在线赌场来说,这样的设计都很完美,因为不需要提供定制的扑克大厅!

在谈论这项创新的过程中,Scott始终充满精力,当分享到Tennessee Hold'Em® 获得这历史性的专利过程中所得到的帮助和支持时,他更难以抑制激动的情绪。

他选择参加在伦敦的家乡举办的年度会议,Excel中心举行的ICE/iGB会议让他的事业有了起色。iGB的创始人Michael Caselli也一直高度支持Scott这项技能型游戏的概念,在iGB的阿姆斯特丹活动中,他为Scott的“Solitaire of the Gods”游戏颁发了奖项,这个应用彰显出Scott基于技能的iGaming理念,而且与老虎机不同的是,该应用对女性玩家特别有吸引力,使竞争更加包容。

他更回顾了参加SIGMA欧洲博览会的经验,在马耳他的地中海沿岸,他会面了活动主办单位创始人Eman Pulis,他说到:“他(Eman)相当支持我,也给了我许多受用的主意,没有他,Tennessee Hold'Em® 不可能顺利推出!”

当被问及iGaming行业未来的扩展领域,Scott说明道:“现在,博彩获得了吸引技能型玩家的独特机遇,这是整个游戏市场中扩展最快的领域。这项专利标志iGaming新时代的到来,将真正的技能面纳入博彩框架——通过主动决策、增加对大脑额叶的使用,该游戏将提高参与玩家的精神敏锐度。”