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WELFRINGER

(54) **ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND EXECUTION OF TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WITH GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE PARTICIPANTS**

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Publication Classification

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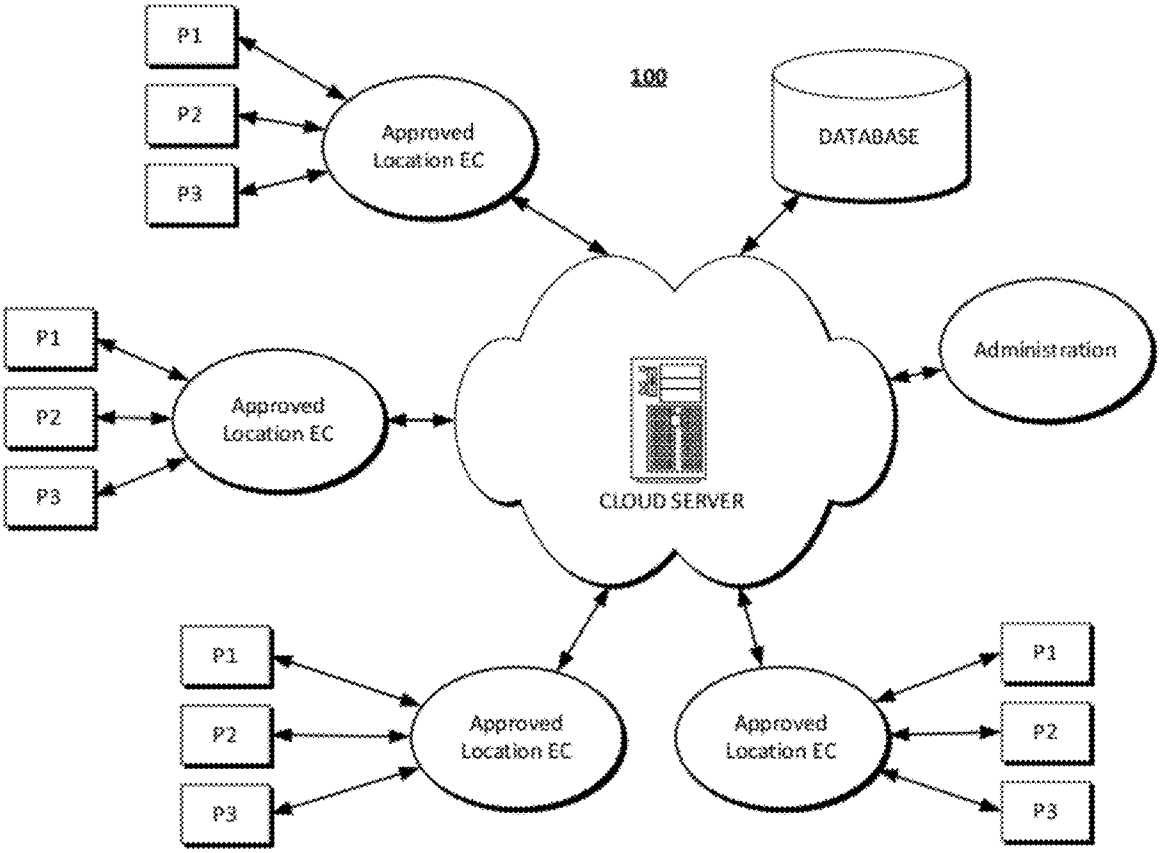
A63F 9/24 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **463/42**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A distributed online billiards tournament allows players to compete individually in a one against many format at geographically diverse remote locations.



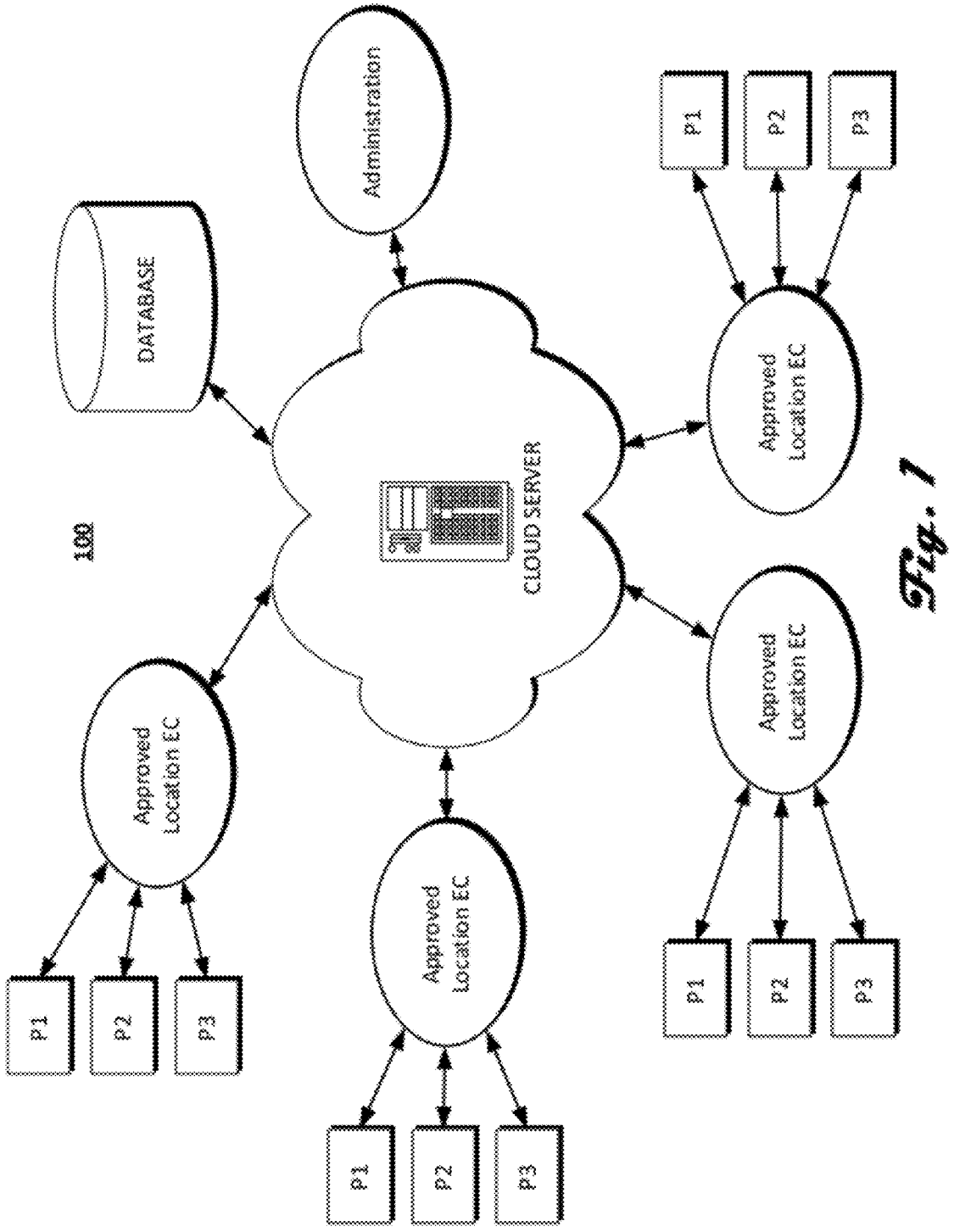

100
DATABASE
Administration
CLOUD SERVER
Approved Location EC
Approved Location EC
Approved Location EC
Approved Location EC
P1
P2
P3
P1
P2
P3
P1
P2
P3
P1
P2
P3

Fig. 1

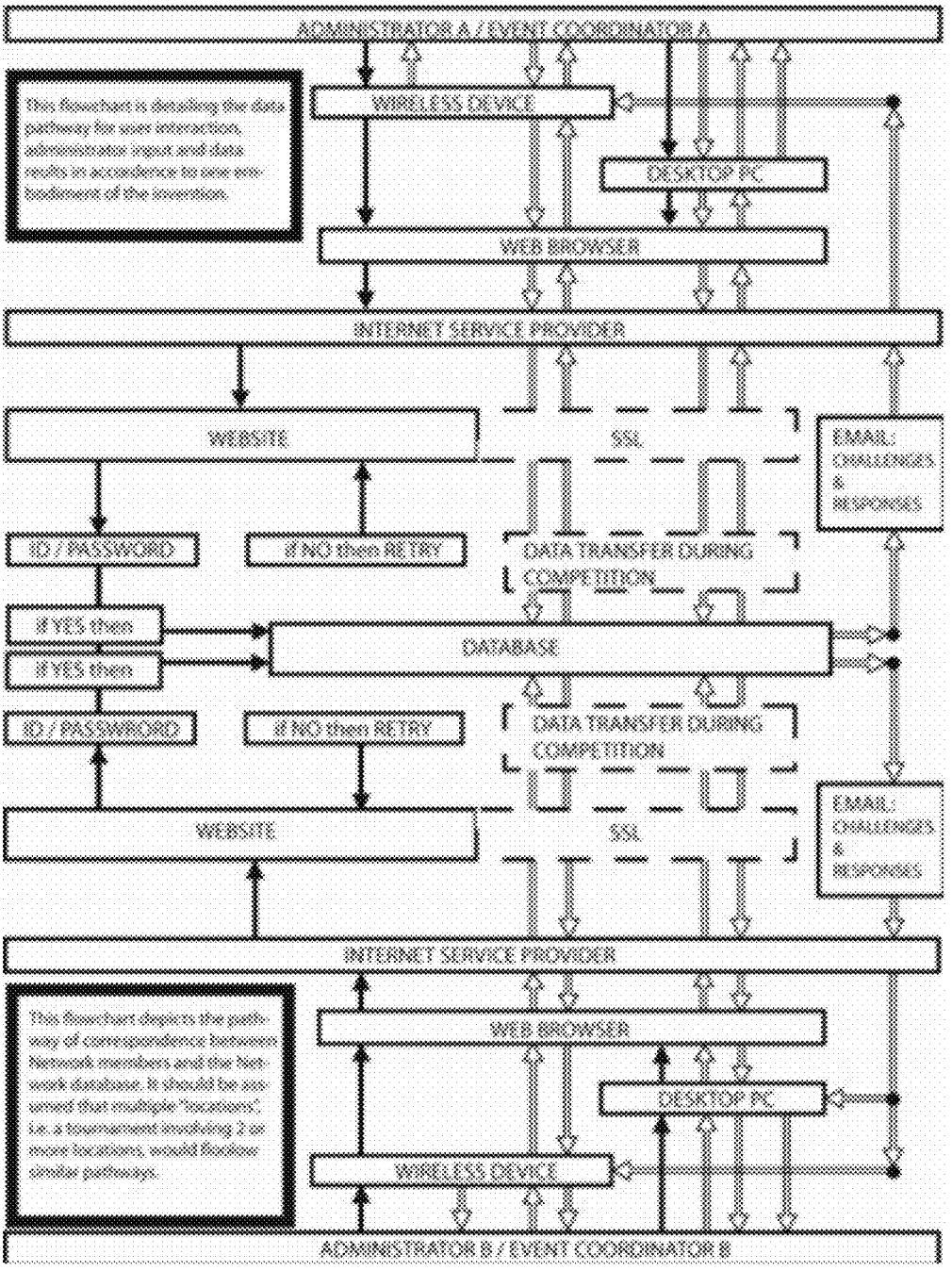

ADMINISTRATOR A / EVENT COORDINATOR A
This flowchart is detailing the data pathway for user interaction, administrator input and data results in accordance to one embodiment of the invention.
WIRELESS DEVICE
DESKTOP PC
WEB BROWSER
INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER
WEBSITE
SSL
EMAIL CHALLENGES & RESPONSES
ID / PASSWORD
IF NO then RETRY
DATA TRANSFER DURING COMPETITION
IF YES then
IF YES then
DATABASE
ID / PASSWORD
IF NO then RETRY
DATA TRANSFER DURING COMPETITION
WEBSITE
SSL
EMAIL CHALLENGES & RESPONSES
INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER
This flowchart depicts the pathway of correspondence between Network members and the Network database. It should be considered that multiple "locations," i.e. a tournament involving 2 or more locations, would function similar pathways.
WEB BROWSER
DESKTOP PC
WIRELESS DEVICE
ADMINISTRATOR B / EVENT COORDINATOR B

Fig. 1A

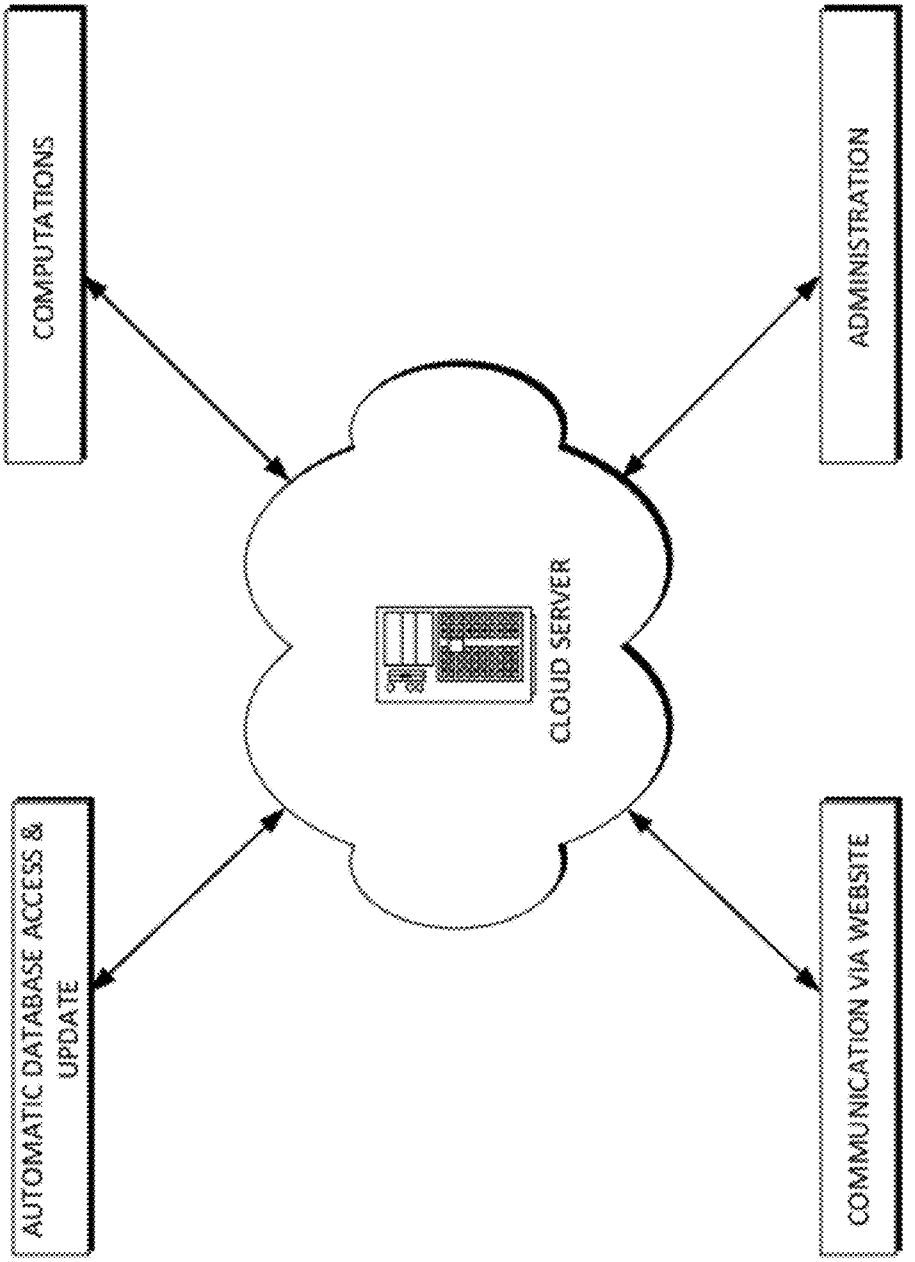

COMPUTATIONS
ADMINISTRATION
CLOUD SERVER
AUTOMATIC DATABASE ACCESS & UPDATE
COMMUNICATION VIA WEBSITE

Fig. 2

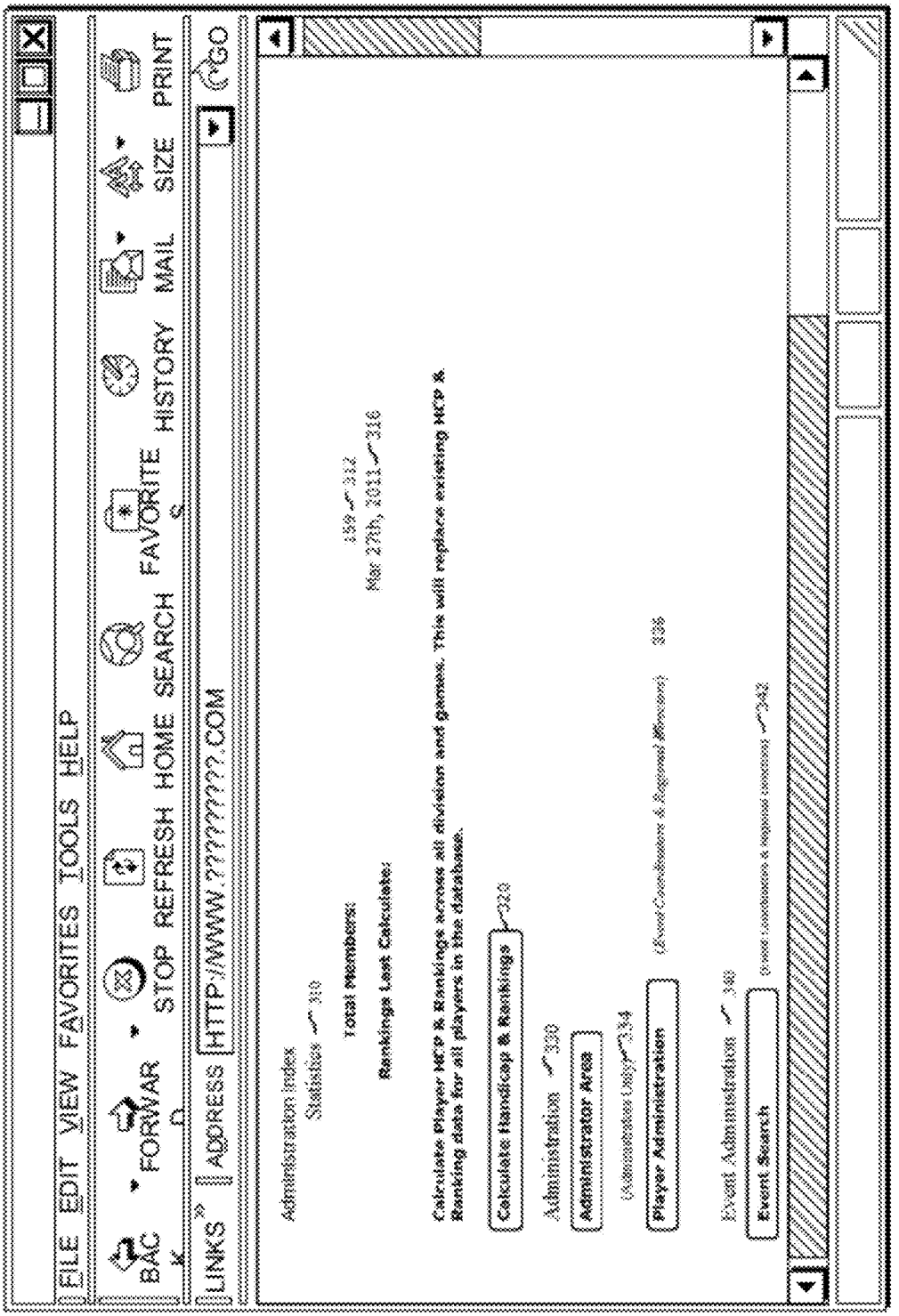

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BAC FORWAR STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITE S HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW.??????????.COM GO
Administration Index
Statistics 310
Total Members:
Rankings Last Calculated:
189 312
May 27th, 2011 316
Calculate Player HCP & Rankings across all division and games. This will replace existing HCP & Ranking data for all players in the database.
Calculate Handicap & Rankings 320
Administration 330
Administrator Area
(Administration Only) 334
Player Administration
(Event Coordinators & Regional Directors) 336
Event Administration 340
Event Search
(Event Coordinators & Regional Directors) 342

Fig. 3

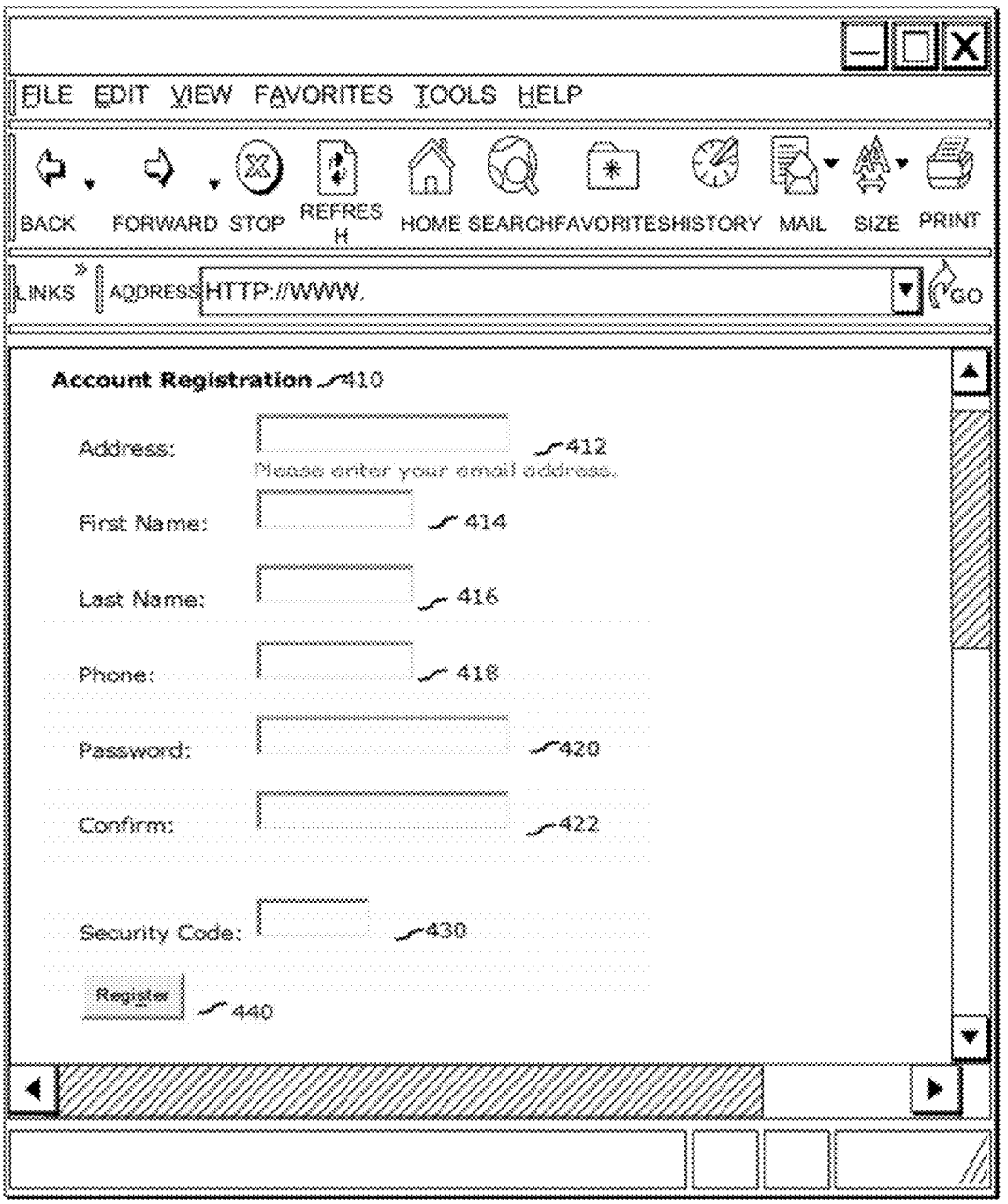

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW. GO
Account Registration 410
Address: 412
Please enter your email address.
First Name: 414
Last Name: 416
Phone: 418
Password: 420
Confirm: 422
Security Code: 430
Register 440

Fig. 4

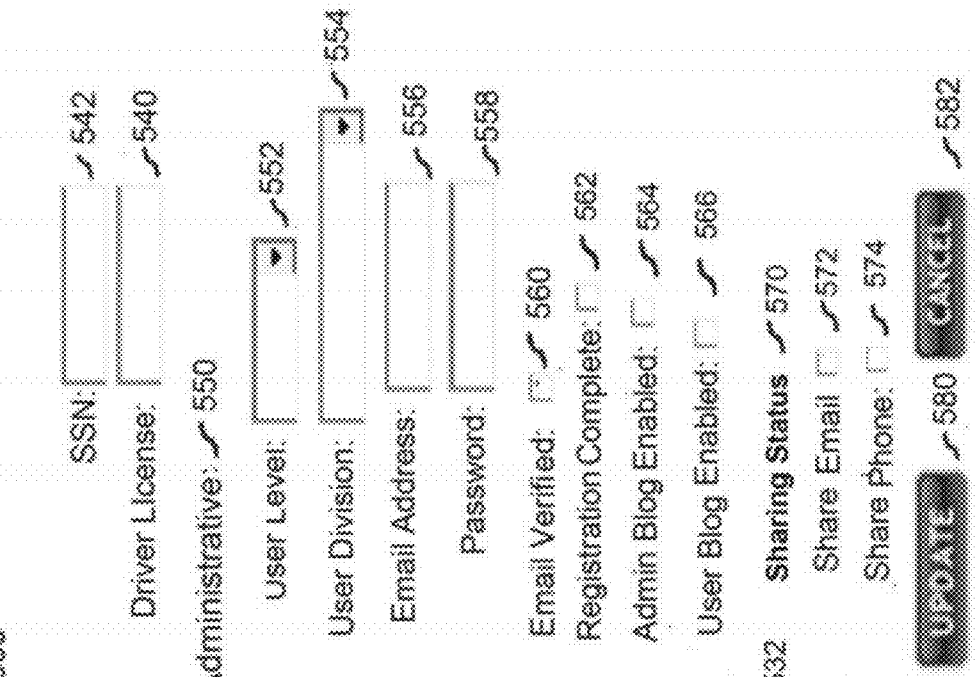

Update User 500
Owner/Player
First Name: 512
Last name: 514
Nickname: 516
Player/Location
Location Name: 522
Street Address: 524
Unit Number 526
City: 528
State, Zipcode: 530
State: 532
Phone: 534
Fax: 536
Cell: 538
SSN: 542
Driver License: 540
Administrative: 550
User Level: 552
User Division: 554
Email Address: 556
Password: 558
Email Verified: 560
Registration Complete: 562
Admin Blog Enabled: 564
User Blog Enabled: 566
Sharing Status 570
Share Email 572
Share Phone: 574
UPDATE 580
CANCEL 582

Fig. 5

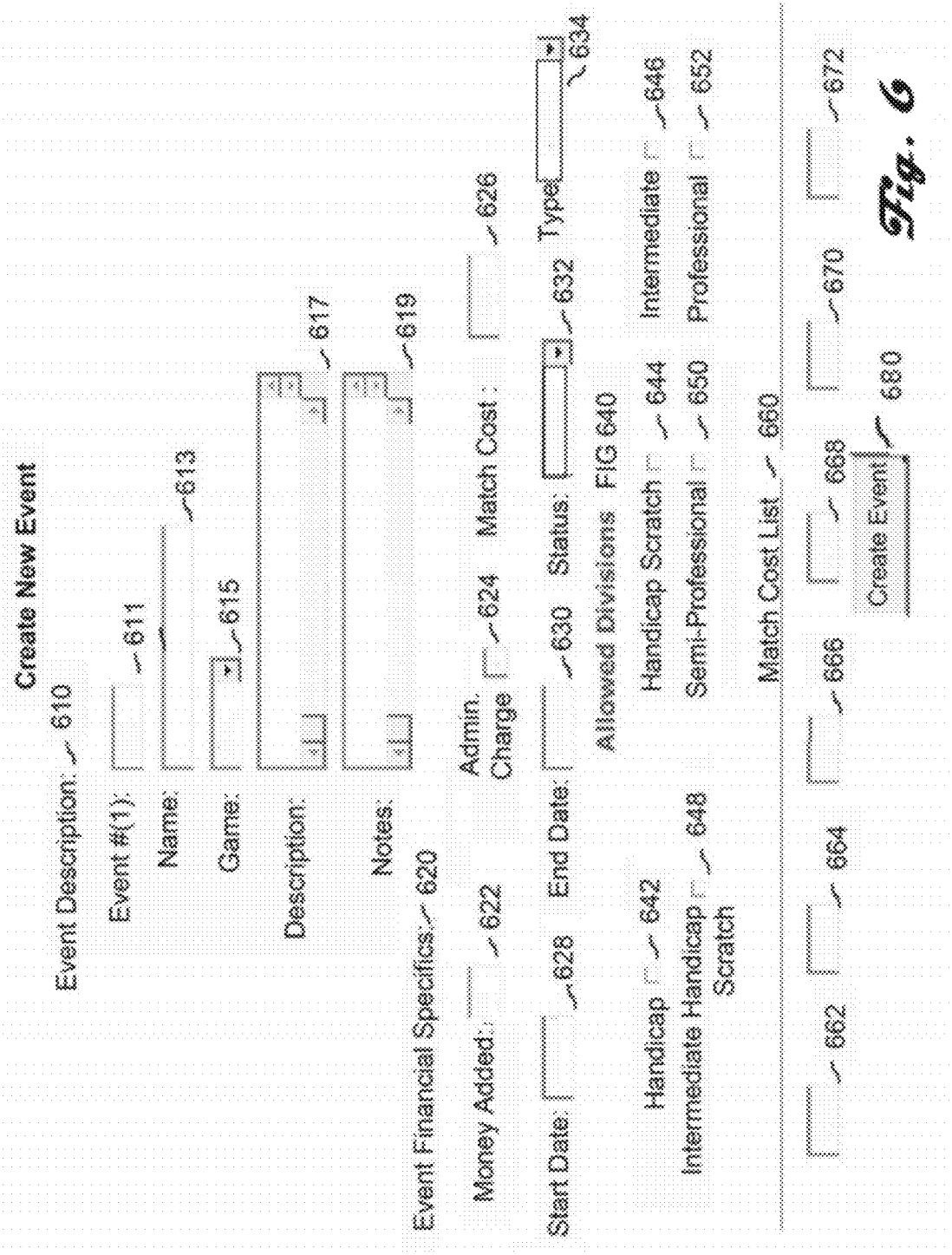

Create New Event
Event Description: 610
Event #(1): 611
Name: 613
Game: 615
Description: 617
Notes: 619
Event Financial Specifics: 620
Money Added: 622
Admin. Charge 624
Match Cost: 626
Start Date: 628
End Date: 630
Status: 632
Type: 634
Allowed Divisions FIG 640
Handicap 642
Handicap Scratch 644
Intermediate 646
Intermediate Handicap 648
Semi-Professional 650
Professional 652
Match Cost List 660
662
664
666
668
670
672
Create Event 680

Fig. 6

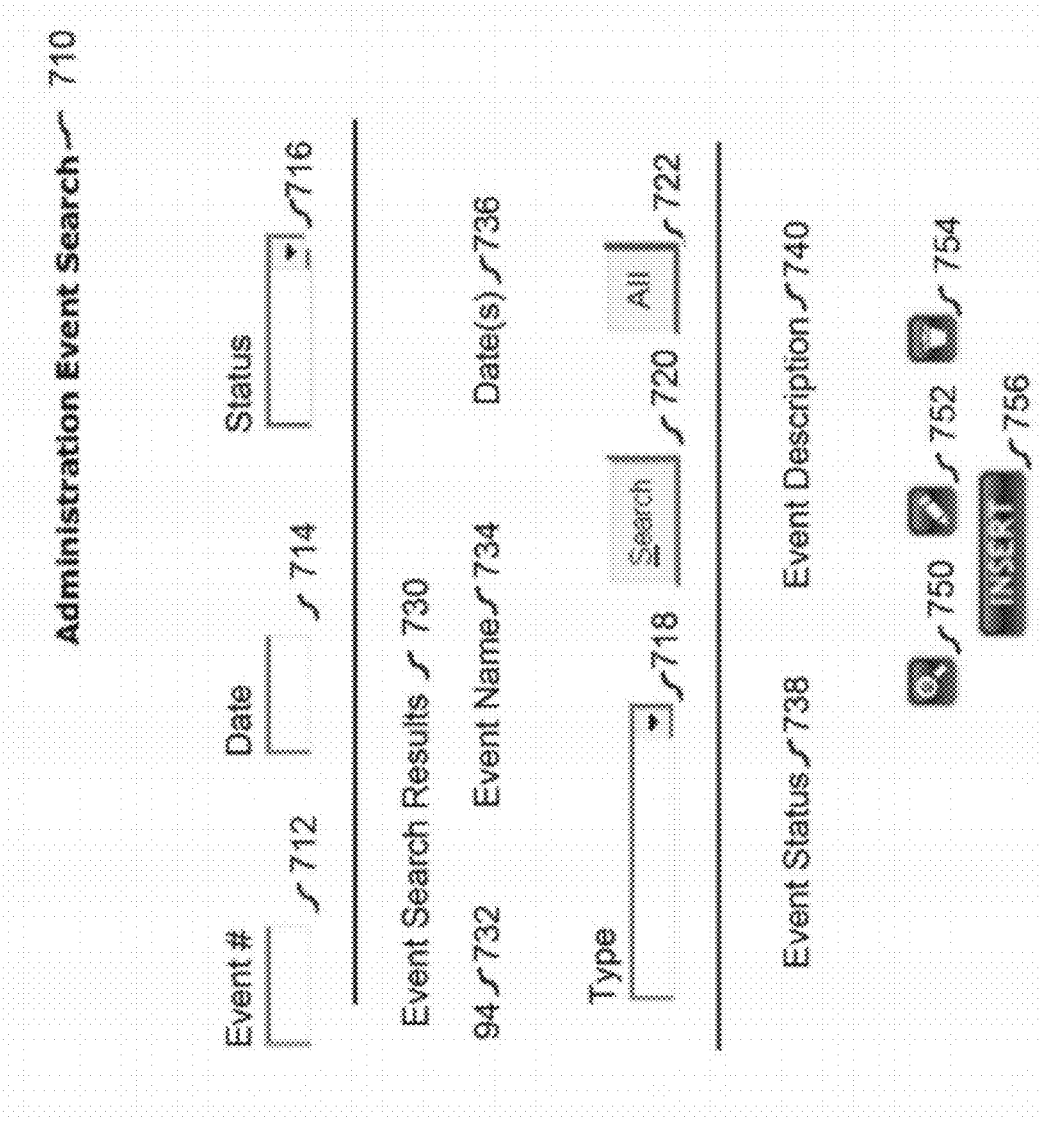

Administration Event Search 710
Event #
712
Date
714
Status
716
Event Search Results 730
94 732
Event Name 734
Date(s) 736
Type
718
Search
720
All
722
Event Status 738
Event Description 740
750
752
754
756

Fig. 7

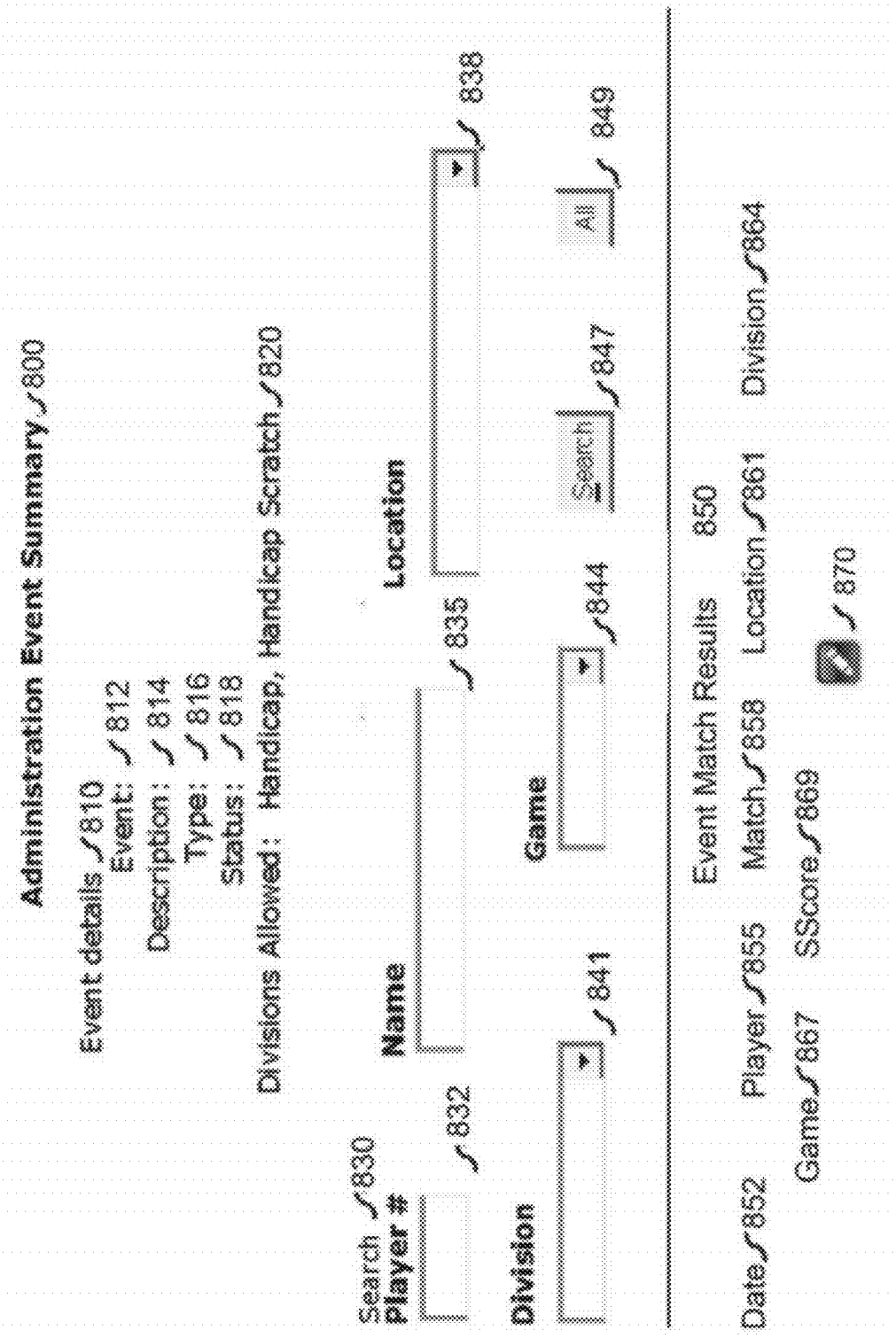

Administration Event Summary 800
Event details 810
Event: 812
Description: 814
Type: 816
Status: 818
Divisions Allowed: Handicap, Handicap Scratch 820
Search 830
Player #
832
Name
835
Location
838
Division
841
Game
844
Search
847
All
849
Event Match Results 850
Date 852
Player 855
Match 858
Location 861
Division 864
Game 867
SScore 869
870

Fig. 8

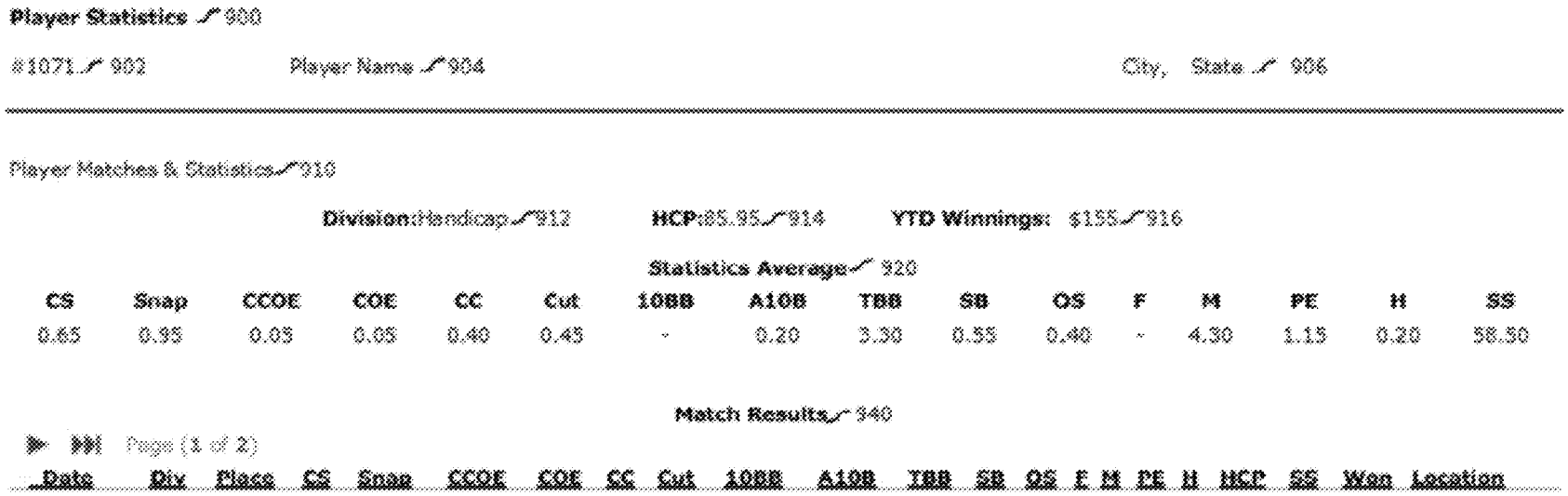

Player Statistics 900
#1071 902
Player Name 904
City, State 906
Player Matches & Statistics 910
Division: Handicap 912
HCP: 85.35 914
YTD Winnings: $155 916
Statistics Average 920
CS Snap CCOE COE CC Cut 10BB A10B TBB SB OS F M PE H SS
0.65 0.95 0.05 0.05 0.40 0.45 - 0.20 3.30 0.55 0.40 - 4.30 1.15 0.20 58.30
Match Results 940
Page (1 of 2)
Date Div Place CS Snap CCOE COE CC Cut 10BB A10B TBB SB OS F M PE H HCP SS Won Location

Fig. 9

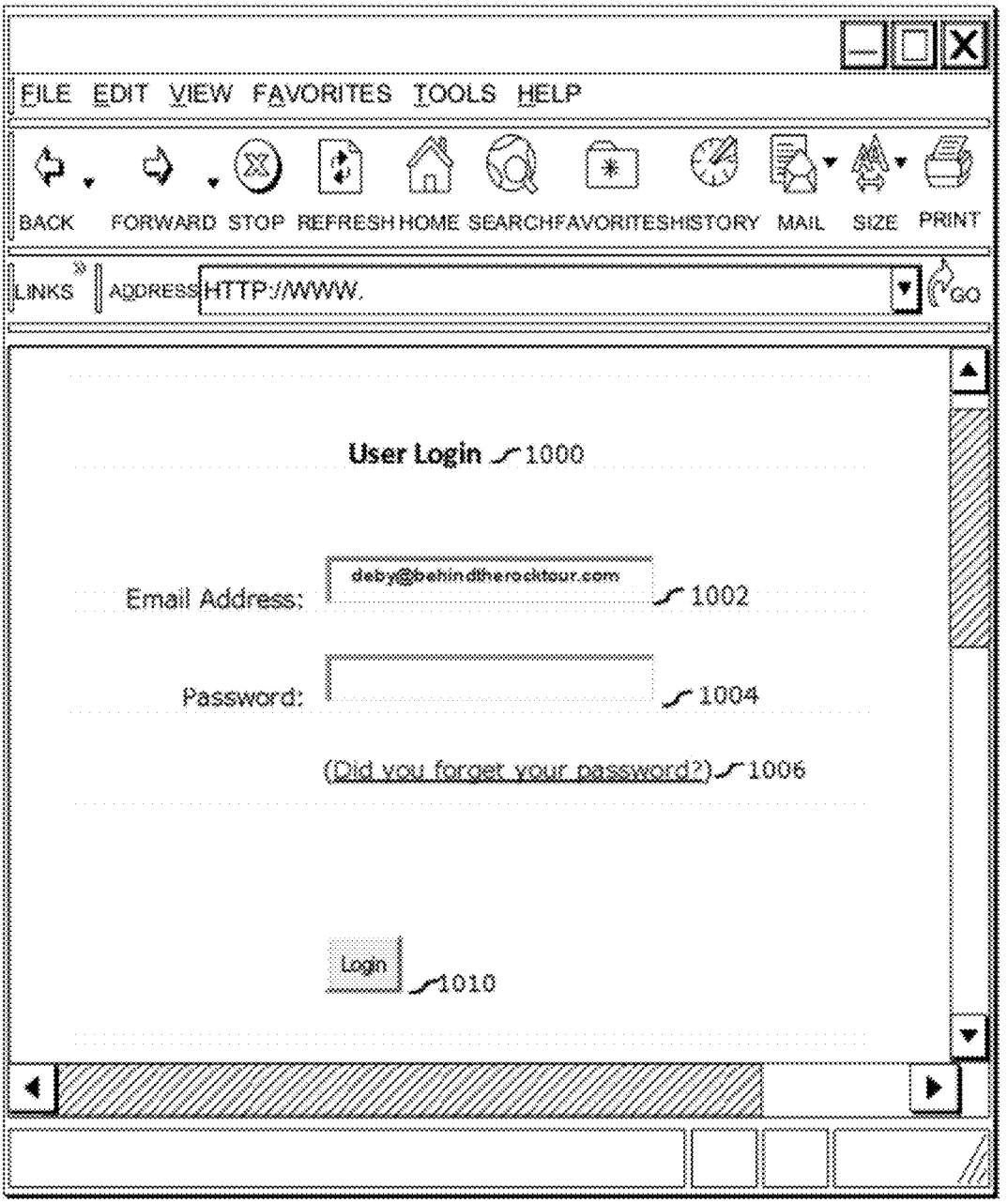

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW. GO
User Login 1000
Email Address: deby@behindtherocktour.com 1002
Password: 1004
(Did you forget your password?) 1006
Login 1010

Fig. 10

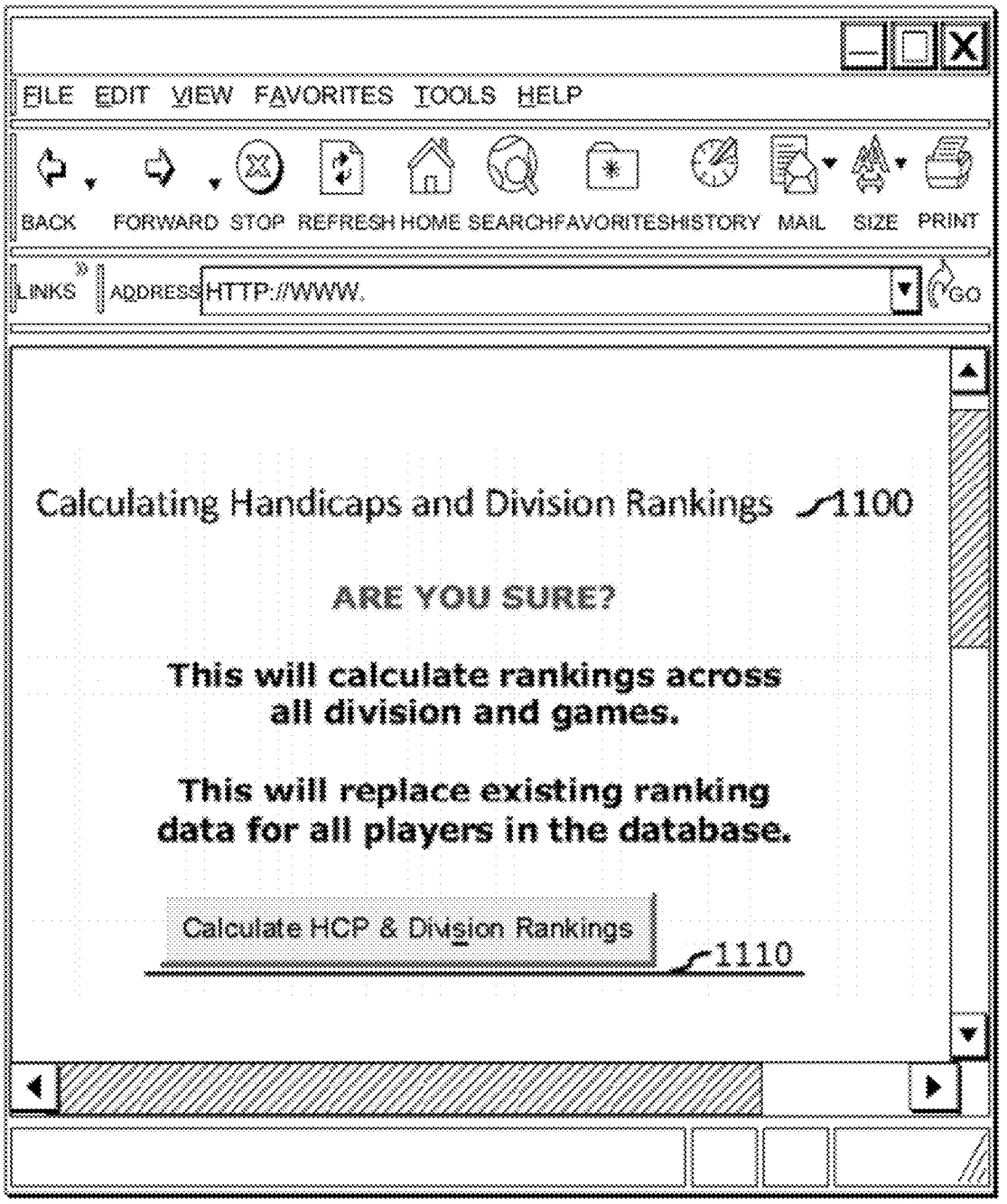

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW. GO
Calculating Handicaps and Division Rankings 1100
ARE YOU SURE?
This will calculate rankings across all division and games.
This will replace existing ranking data for all players in the database.
Calculate HCP & Division Rankings
1110

Fig. 11

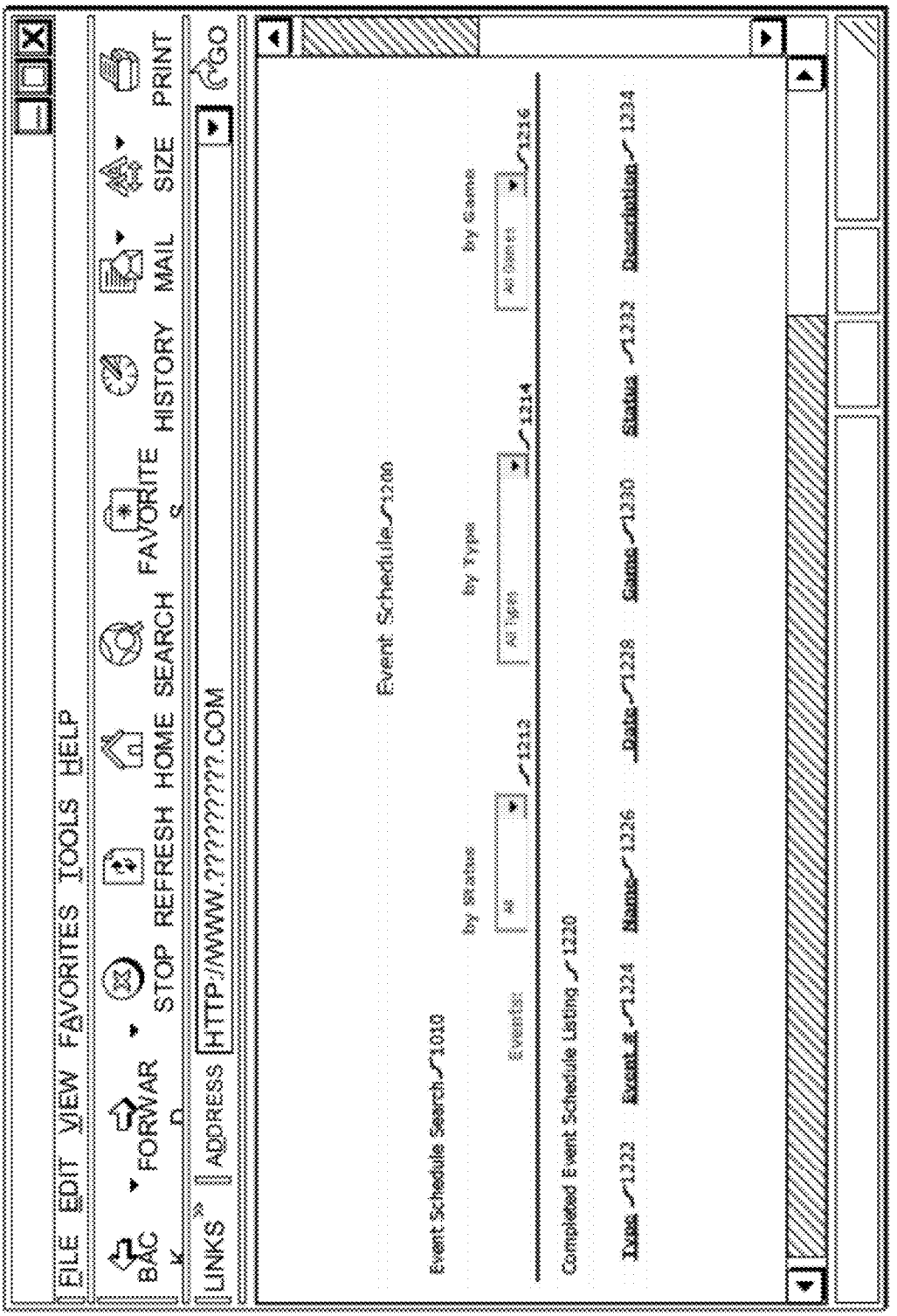

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK
FORWARD
STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS
ADDRESS
HTTP://WWW.?????????.COM
GO
Event Schedule 1200
Event Schedule Search 1010
by Status
by Type
by Game
Events:
All
All Types
All Games
1212
1214
1216
Completed Event Schedule Listing 1220
Type 1222
Event # 1224
Name 1226
Date 1228
Game 1230
Status 1232
Description 1234

Fig. 12

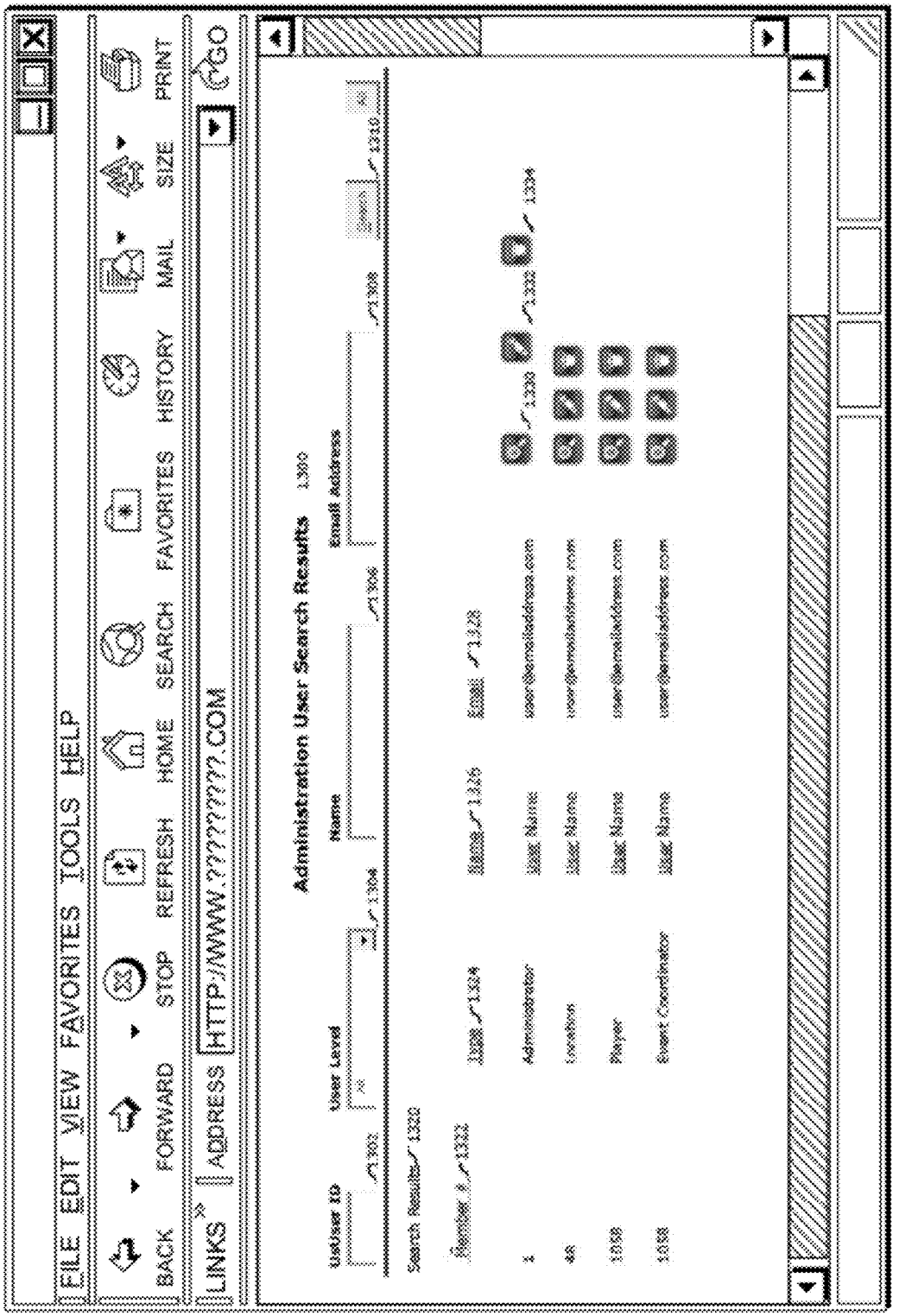

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW.?????????.COM
GO
Administration User Search Results 1300
UsUser ID
User Level
Name
Email Address
Search Results 1320
Administrator
Location
Player
Event Coordinator
User Name
User Name
User Name
User Name
1330
1332
1334

Fig. 13

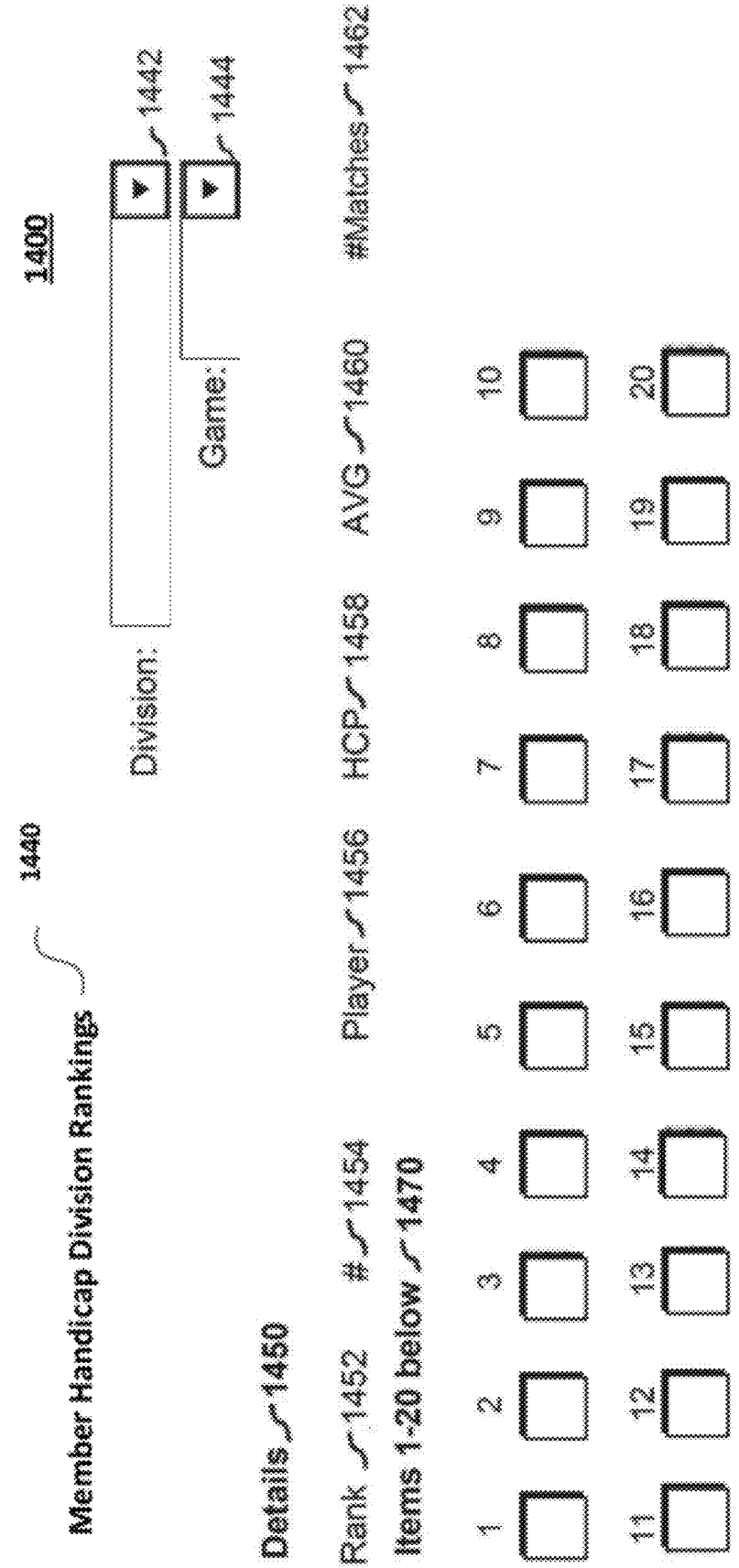

1400
1440
Member Handicap Division Rankings
Division:
1442
Game:
1444
Details 1450
Rank 1452
1454
Player 1456
HCP 1458
AVG 1460
#Matches 1462
Items 1-20 below 1470
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Fig. 14

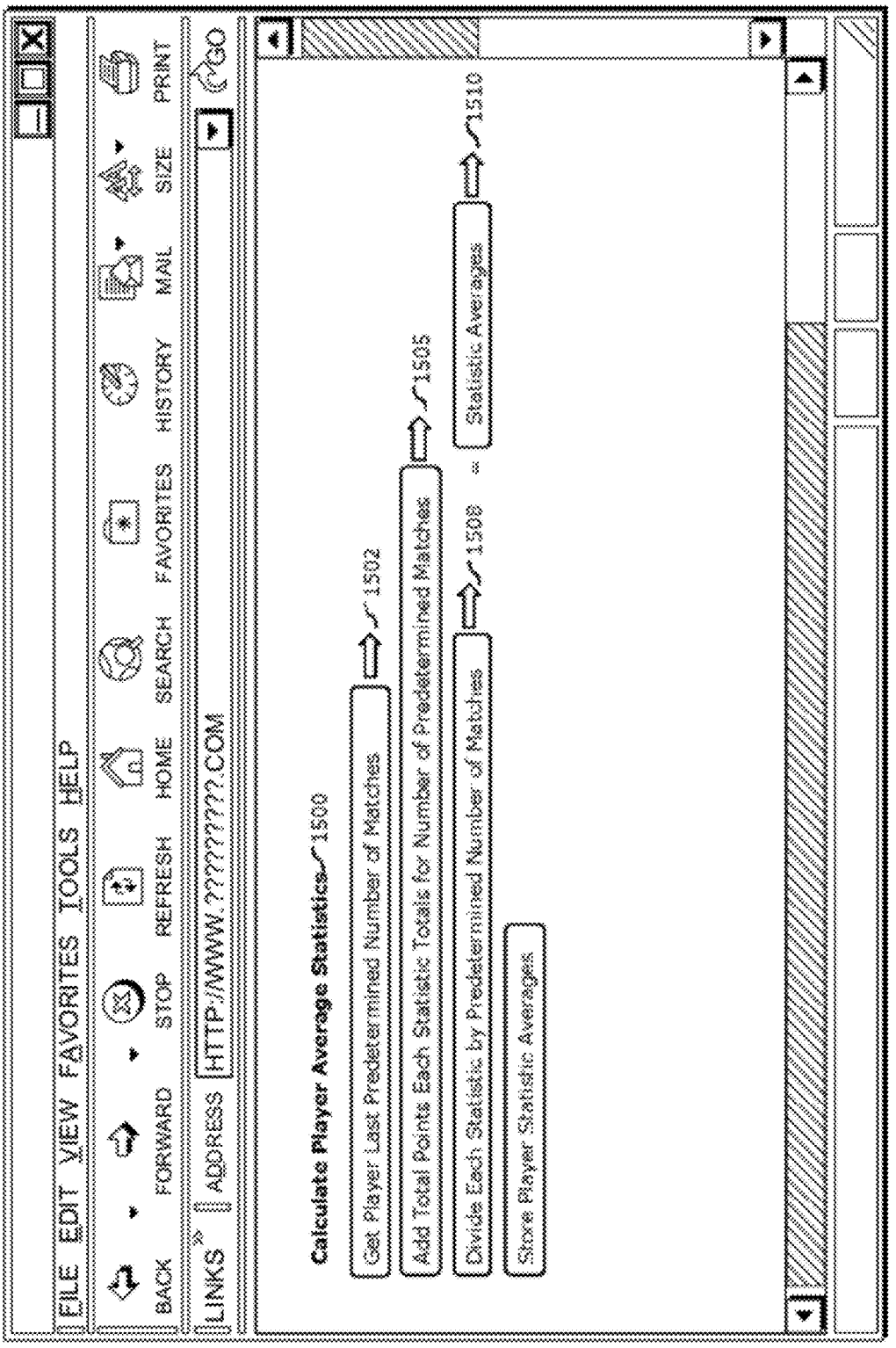

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW.??????????.COM
GO
Calculate Player Average Statistics 1500
Get Player Last Predetermined Number of Matches 1502
Add Total Points Each Statistic Totals for Number of Predetermined Matches 1505
Divide Each Statistic by Predetermined Number of Matches 1508
Statistic Averages 1510
Store Player Statistic Averages

Fig. 15

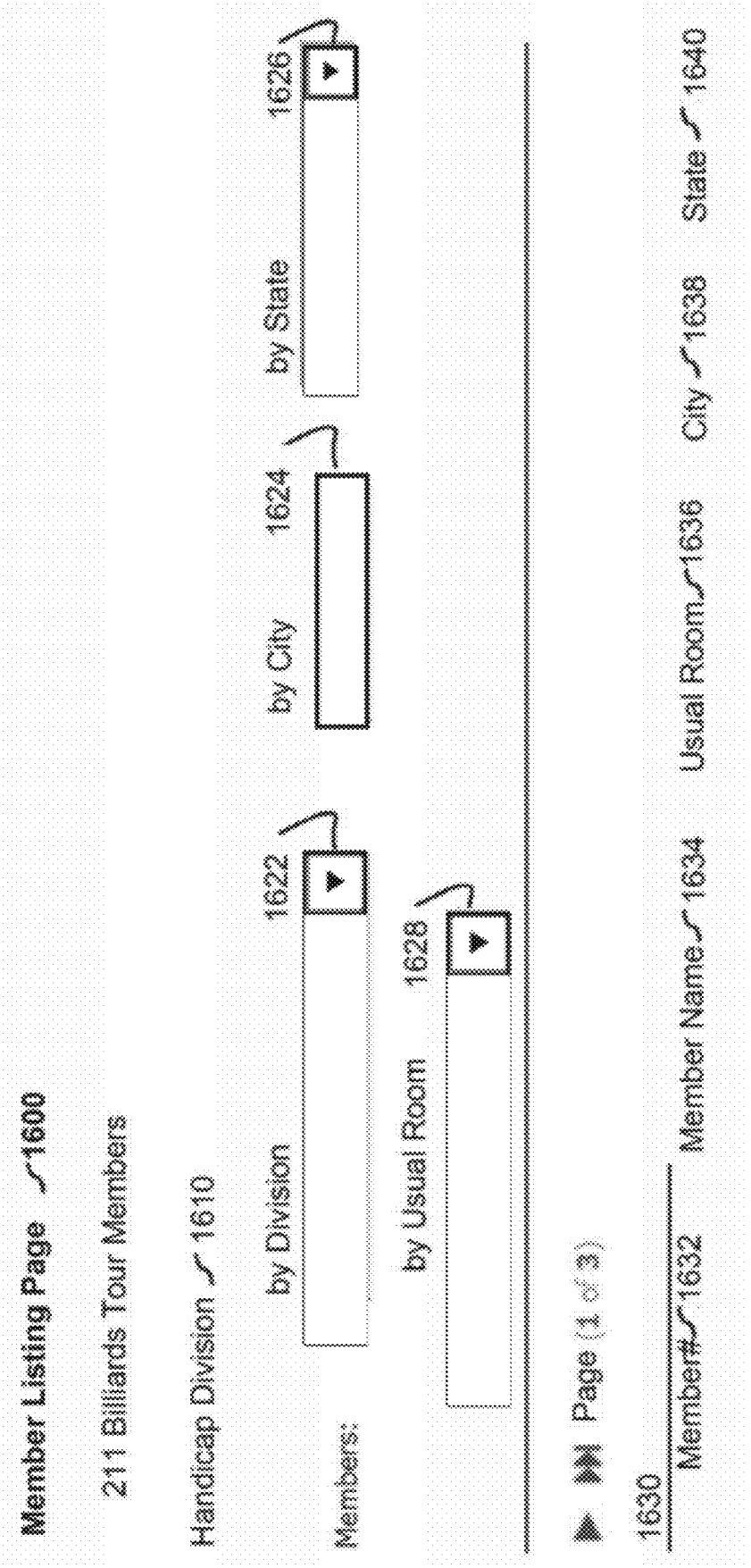

Member Listing Page 1600
211 Billiards Tour Members
Handicap Division 1610
Members:
by Division
1622
by City
1624
by State
1626
by Usual Room
1628
Page (1 of 3)
1630
Member# 1632
Member Name 1634
Usual Room 1636
City 1638
State 1640

Fig. 16

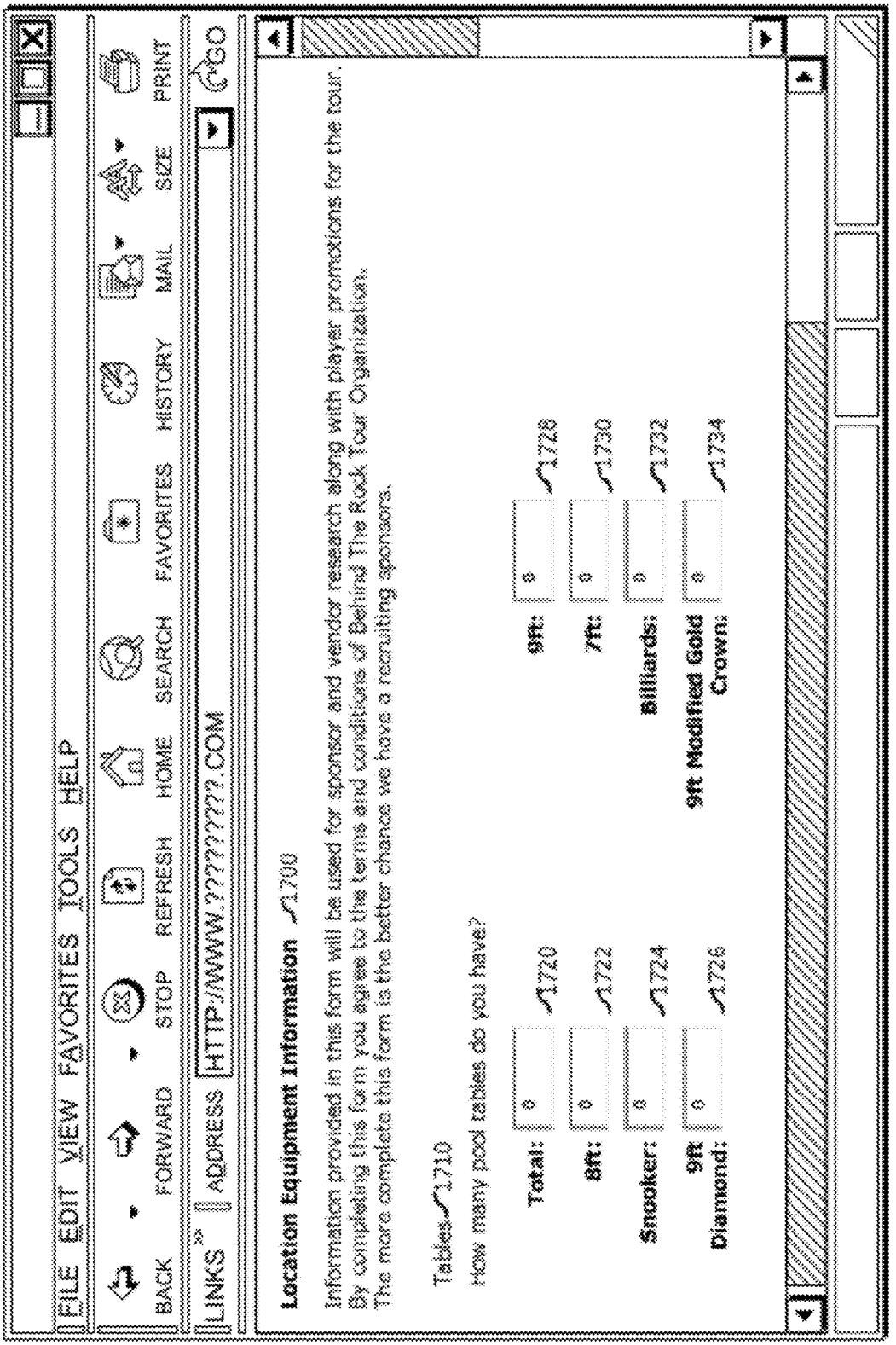

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW.??????????.COM GO
Location Equipment Information 1700
Information provided in this form will be used for sponsor and vendor research along with player promotions for the tour.
By completing this form you agree to the terms and conditions of Behind The Rock Tour Organization.
The more complete this form is the better chance we have a recruiting sponsors.
Tables 1710
How many pool tables do you have?
Total: 0 1720
8ft: 0 1722
Snooker: 0 1724
9ft Diamond: 0 1726
9ft: 0 1728
7ft: 0 1730
Billiards: 0 1732
9ft Modified Gold Crown: 0 1734

Fig. 17

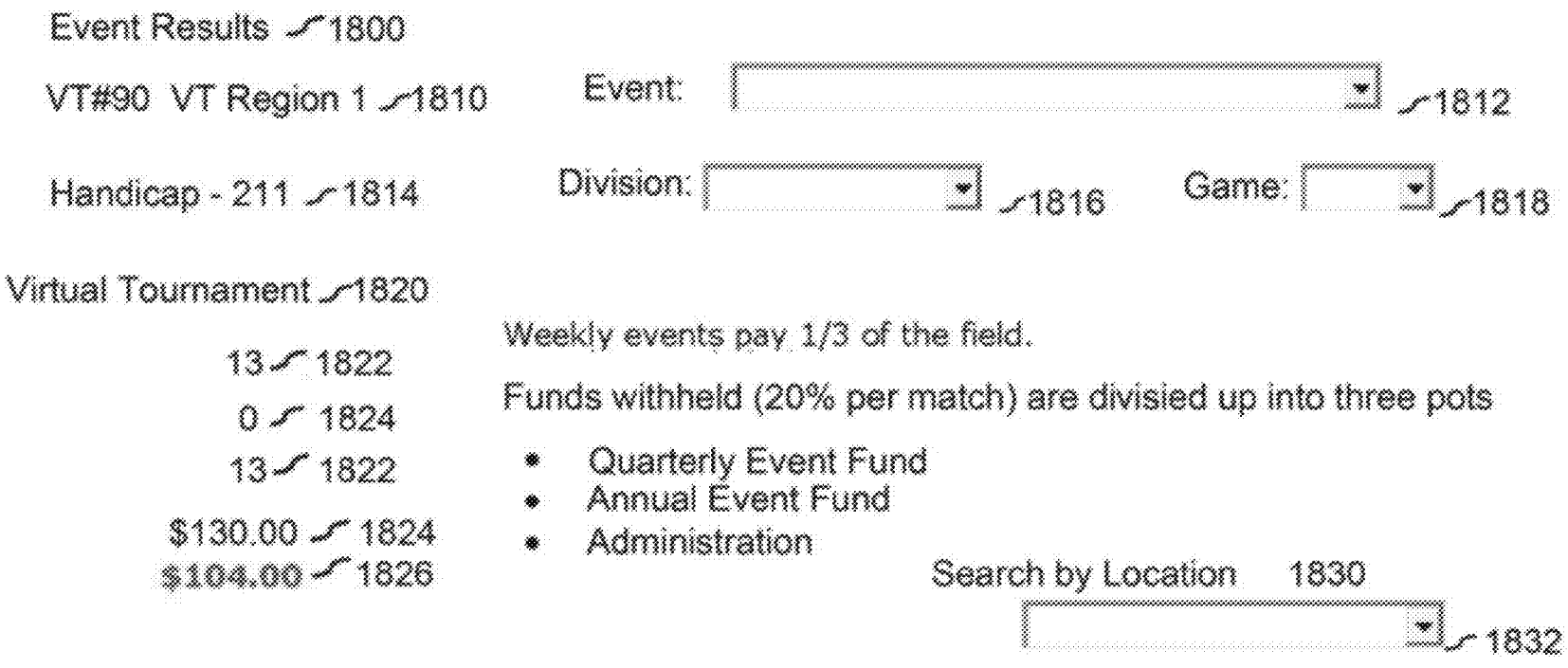

Event Results 1800
VT#90 VT Region 1 1810
Event: 1812
Handicap - 211 1814
Division: 1816
Game: 1818
Virtual Tournament 1820
13 1822
0 1824
13 1822
$130.00 1824
$104.00 1826
Weekly events pay 1/3 of the field.
Funds withheld (20% per match) are divisied up into three pots
Quarterly Event Fund
Annual Event Fund
Administration
Search by Location 1830
1832
Match Results: 1840
Player Name 1842 ID 1844 Run 1846 SScore 1848 HCP 1850 FScore 1852
Place 1854 %Purse 1856 Payout 1858 Location 1860 Date 1862

Fig. 18

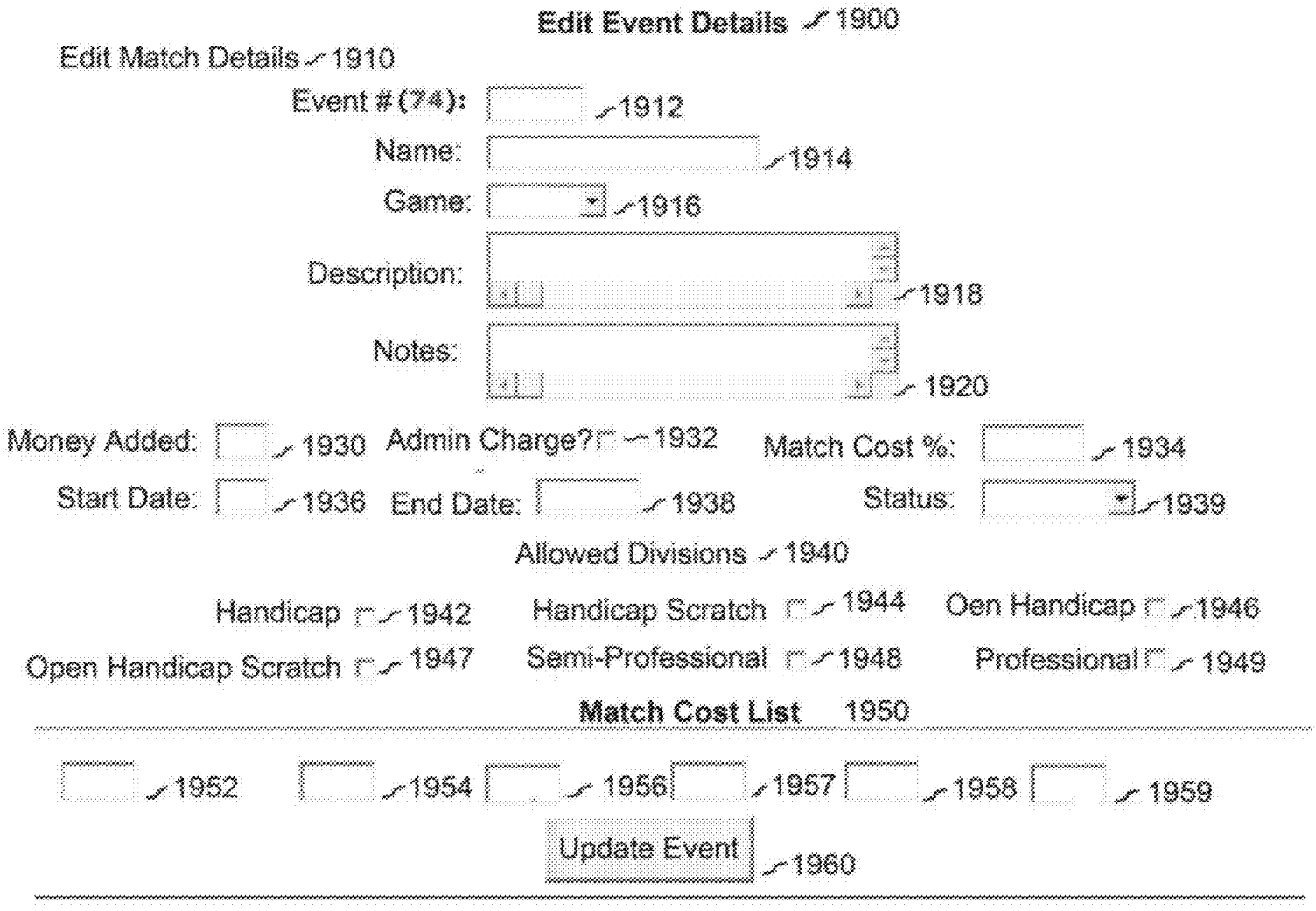

Edit Event Details 1900
Edit Match Details 1910
Event #(74): 1912
Name: 1914
Game: 1916
Description: 1918
Notes: 1920
Money Added: 1930
Admin Charge? 1932
Match Cost %: 1934
Start Date: 1936
End Date: 1938
Status: 1939
Allowed Divisions 1940
Handicap 1942
Handicap Scratch 1944
Oen Handicap 1946
Open Handicap Scratch 1947
Semi-Professional 1948
Professional 1949
Match Cost List 1950
1952
1954
1956
1957
1958
1959
Update Event 1960

Fig. 19

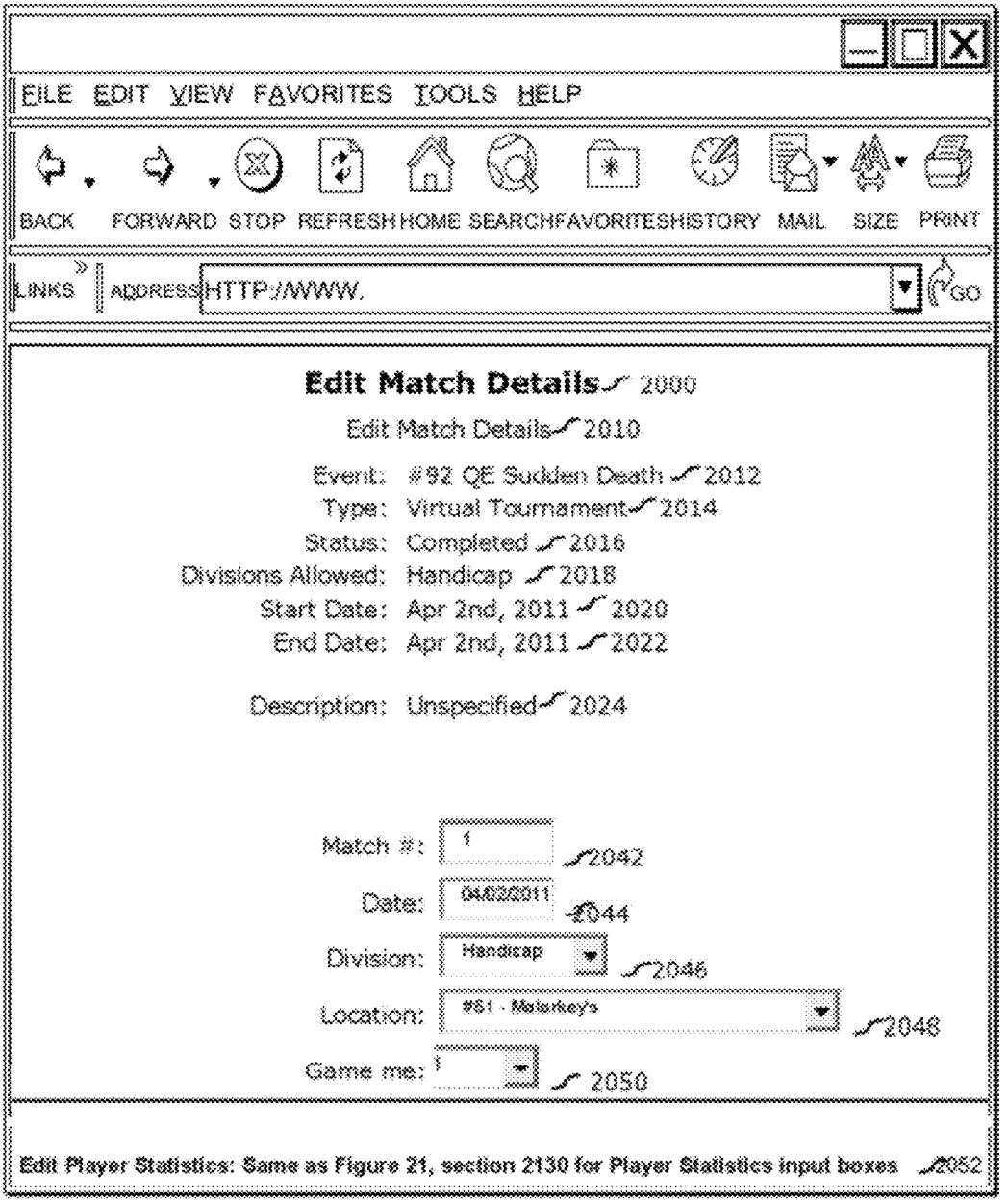

FILE EDIT VIEW FAVORITES TOOLS HELP
BACK FORWARD STOP REFRESH HOME SEARCH FAVORITES HISTORY MAIL SIZE PRINT
LINKS ADDRESS HTTP://WWW. GO
Edit Match Details 2000
Edit Match Details 2010
Event: #92 QE Sudden Death 2012
Type: Virtual Tournament 2014
Status: Completed 2016
Divisions Allowed: Handicap 2018
Start Date: Apr 2nd, 2011 2020
End Date: Apr 2nd, 2011 2022
Description: Unspecified 2024
Match #: 1 2042
Date: 04/02/2011 2044
Division: Handicap 2046
Location: #51 - Malarkey's 2048
Game no: 1 2050
Edit Player Statistics: Same as Figure 21, section 2130 for Player Statistics input boxes 2052

Fig. 20

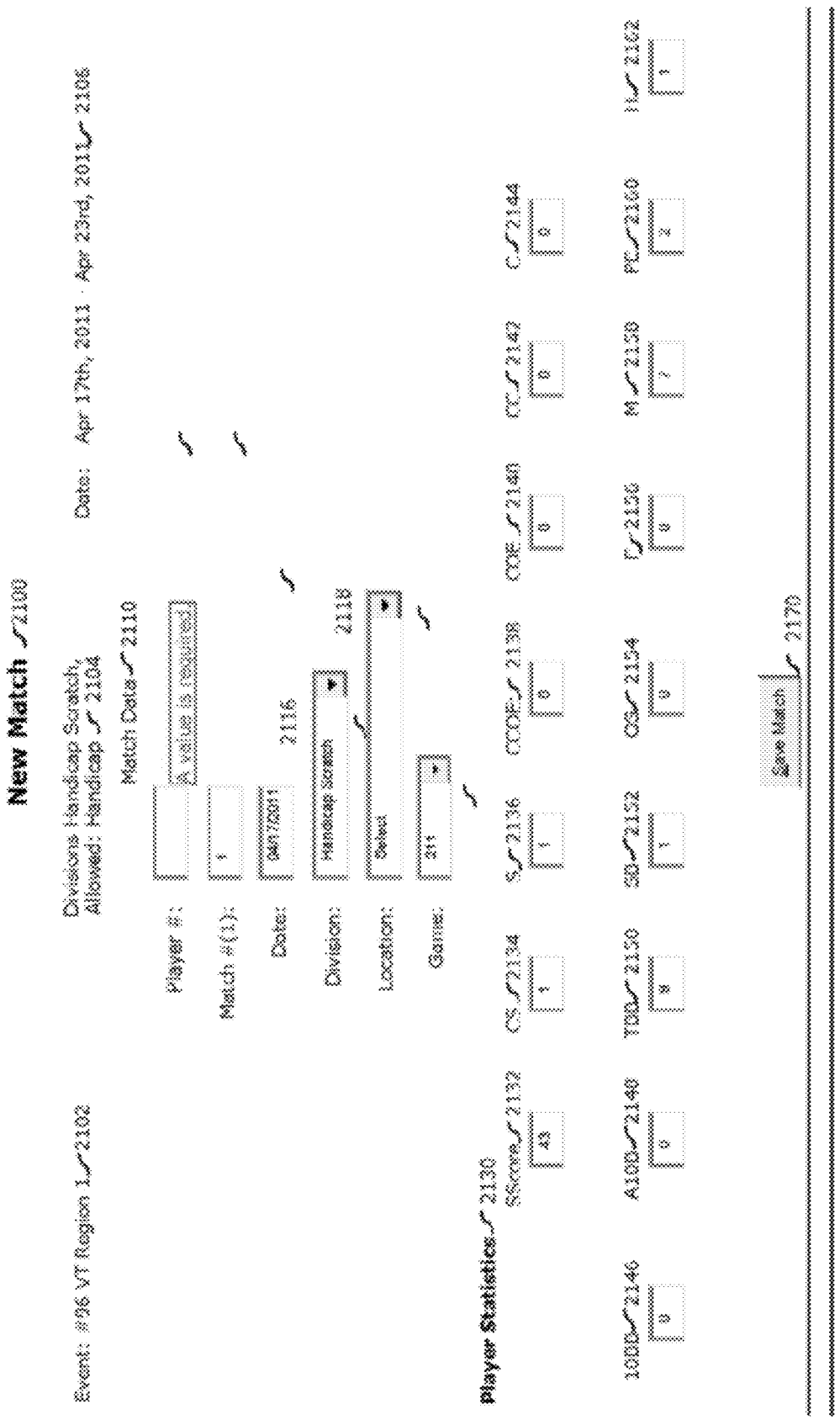

New Match 2100
Event: #96 VT Region 1 2102
Divisions Handicap Scratch, Allowed: Handicap 2104
Date: Apr 17th, 2011 - Apr 23rd, 2011 2106
Match Data 2110
Player #:
A value is required
Match #(1):
Date:
Division:
Location:
Game:
2116
2118
Player Statistics 2130
SScore 2132
CS 2134
S 2136
CCOE 2138
COE 2140
CC 2142
C 2144
10DD 2146
A10D 2148
TDD 2150
SD 2152
OS 2154
F 2156
M 2158
PC 2160
H 2162
Save Match
2170

Fig. 21

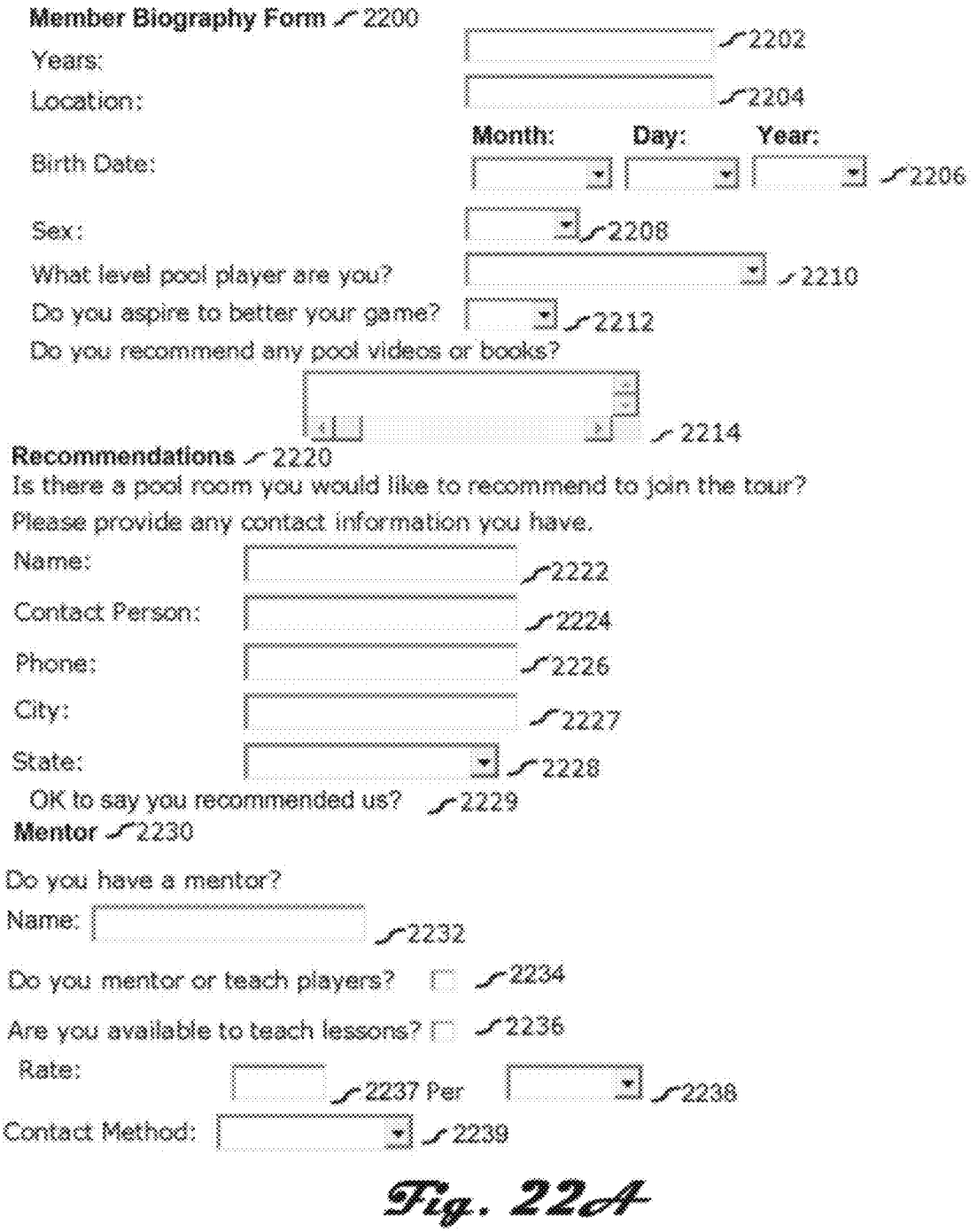

Member Biography Form 2200
Years: 2202
Location: 2204
Birth Date: Month: Day: Year: 2206
Sex: 2208
What level pool player are you? 2210
Do you aspire to better your game? 2212
Do you recommend any pool videos or books? 2214
Recommendations 2220
Is there a pool room you would like to recommend to join the tour?
Please provide any contact information you have.
Name: 2222
Contact Person: 2224
Phone: 2226
City: 2227
State: 2228
OK to say you recommended us? 2229
Mentor 2230
Do you have a mentor?
Name: 2232
Do you mentor or teach players? 2234
Are you available to teach lessons? 2236
Rate: 2237 Per 2238
Contact Method: 2239

Fig. 22A

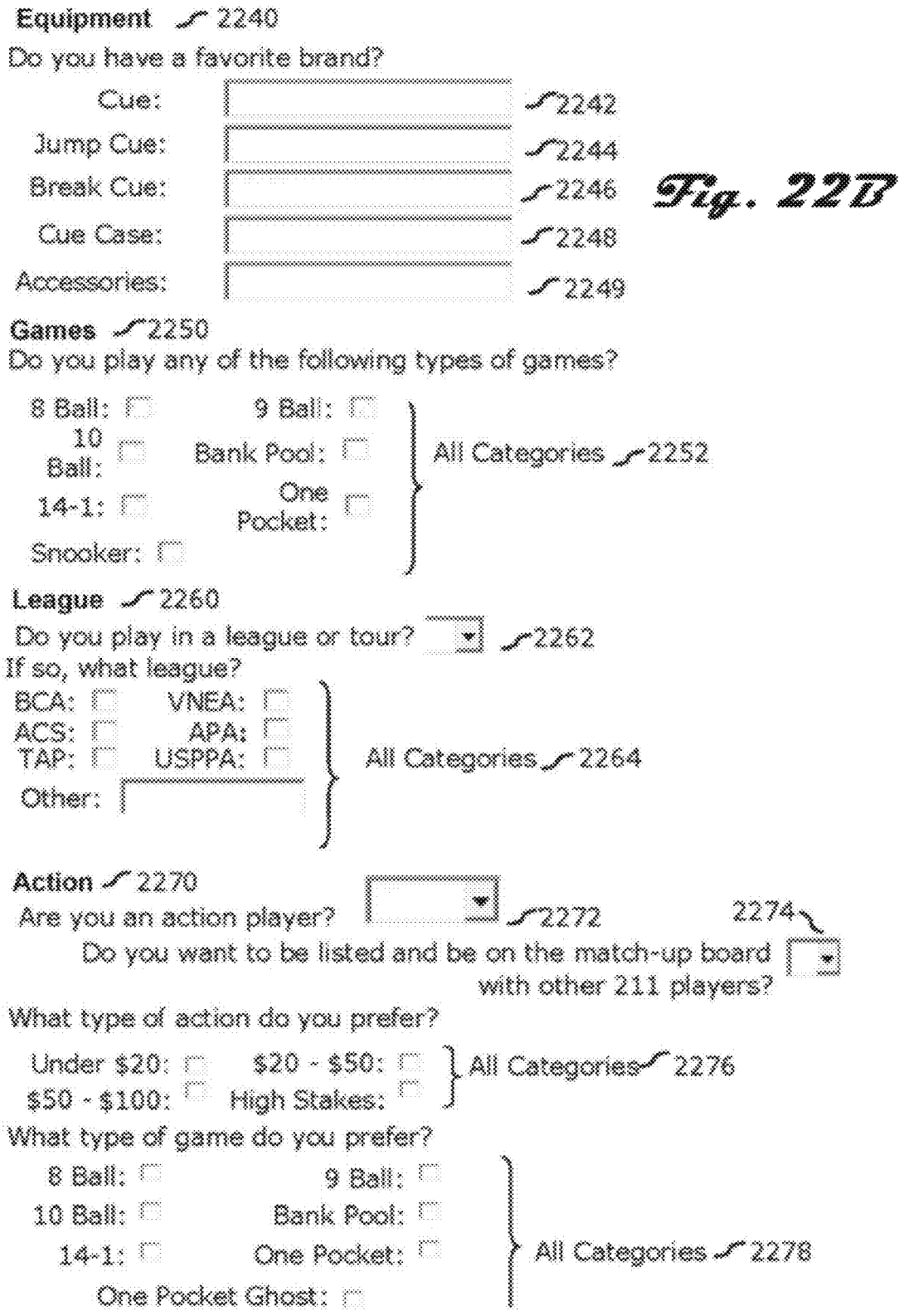

Equipment 2240
Do you have a favorite brand?
Cue: 2242
Jump Cue: 2244
Break Cue: 2246
Cue Case: 2248
Accessories: 2249
Games 2250
Do you play any of the following types of games?
8 Ball:
9 Ball:
10 Ball:
Bank Pool:
14-1:
One Pocket:
Snooker:
All Categories 2252
League 2260
Do you play in a league or tour? 2262
If so, what league?
BCA:
VNEA:
ACS:
APA:
TAP:
USPPA:
Other:
All Categories 2264
Action 2270
Are you an action player? 2272
2274
Do you want to be listed and be on the match-up board with other 211 players?
What type of action do you prefer?
Under $20:
$20 - $50:
$50 - $100:
High Stakes:
All Categories 2276
What type of game do you prefer?
8 Ball:
9 Ball:
10 Ball:
Bank Pool:
14-1:
One Pocket:
One Pocket Ghost:
All Categories 2278

Fig. 22D

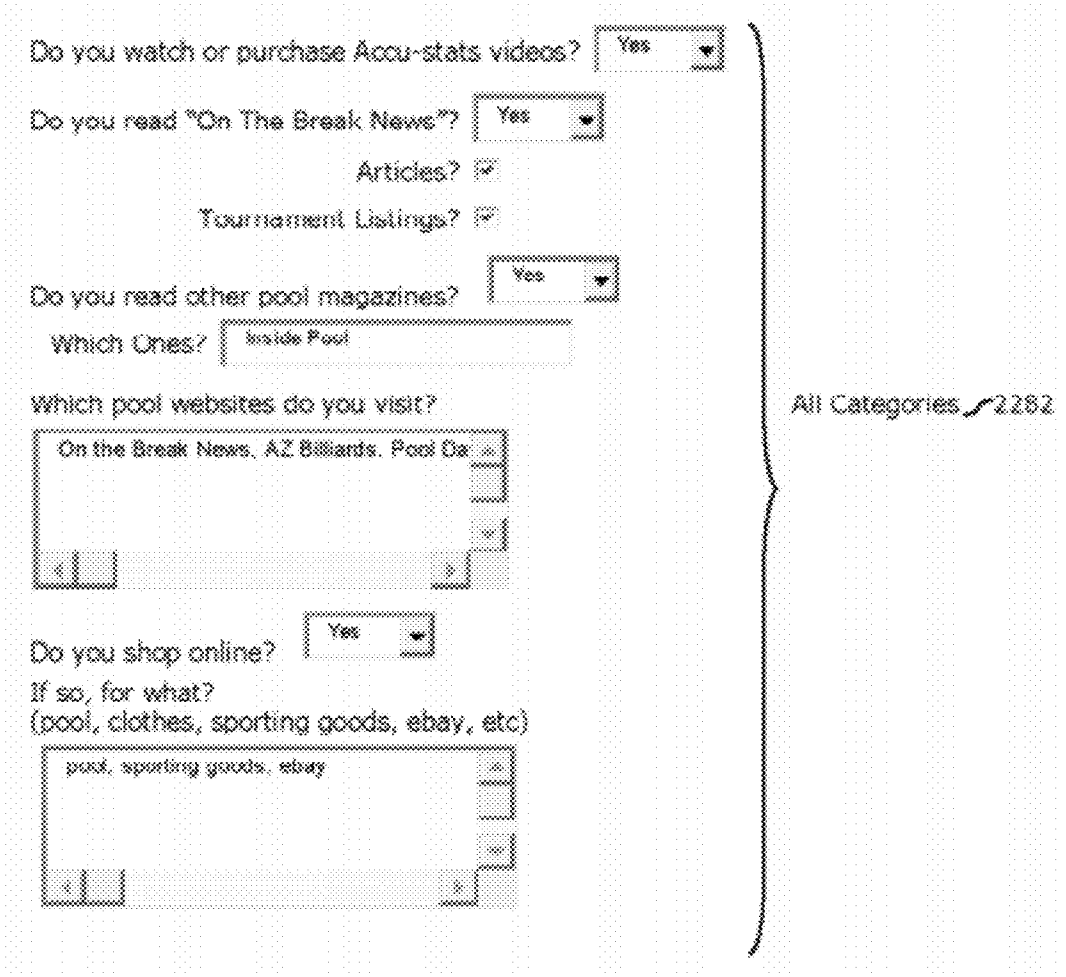

Do you watch or purchase Accu-stats videos?
Yes
Do you read "On The Break News"?
Yes
Articles?
Tournament Listings?
Do you read other pool magazines?
Yes
Which Ones?
Inside Pool
Which pool websites do you visit?
On the Break News, AZ Billiards, Pool Da
Do you shop online?
Yes
If so, for what?
(pool, clothes, sporting goods, ebay, etc)
pool, sporting goods, ebay
All Categories
2282

Fig. 22C

Player Biography 2300
Member # Member Name 2302
City, State 2304

Following Biography Paragrpah 2310
Debbie has been playing pool for 35 years and aspires to improve her game.
Likes to play 8 Ball, 9 Ball, 10 Ball, 211.
My mentor is Ed Nagel, Glenn Atwell, Don Wirtaman.
My favorite brand(s) of equipment are...
Cue: Hern.
Jump Cue: Larry's home made special.
Break Cue: Duffrin.
Cue Case: In Stroke.
2312

Player Matches & Statistics 2320

Division: 2322 **HCP:** 2324 **YTD Winnings:** 2326

Statistics Average 2330
CS 2332
Snap 2334
CCOE 2336
COE 2338
CC 2340
Cut 2336
10BB 2338
TBB 2340
SB 2342
OS 2344
F 2346
M 2348
PE 2350
H 2352
SS 2354

Match Statistics 2360
Date 2362
Division 2364
Place 2366
CS 2368
Snap 2370
CCOE 2372
COE 2374
CC 2376
Cut 2378
10BB 2380
TBB 2382
SB 2384
OS 2386
F 2388
M 2390
PE 2392
H 2394
SS 2396

Fig. 23

Location Biography 2400
Location Address 2412
Location Name 2410
City, state Zip 2414
Total Tables: 2420
9' Diamond Tables: 2422
9' Tables: 2424
7' Tables: 2426
Billiards Tables: 2428
9' MGC Tables: 2430
8' Tables: 2432
Snooker Tables: 2434
Map 2460
Satellite Hybrid
League Play: League Names Listed 2442
Tournaments: Tournament description 2445
Amenities: List of Amenities Location Offers 2448
We Sell: 2452
Scou-Stats: No/Yes 2455
Pool Videos: NO/Yes 2458
Behind The Rock Tour Qualified Locations 2470
Name 2472
Address 2474
City 2476
State 2478
Location 1
Address
City
State
Location 2
Address
City
State
Location 3
Address
City
State

Fig. 24

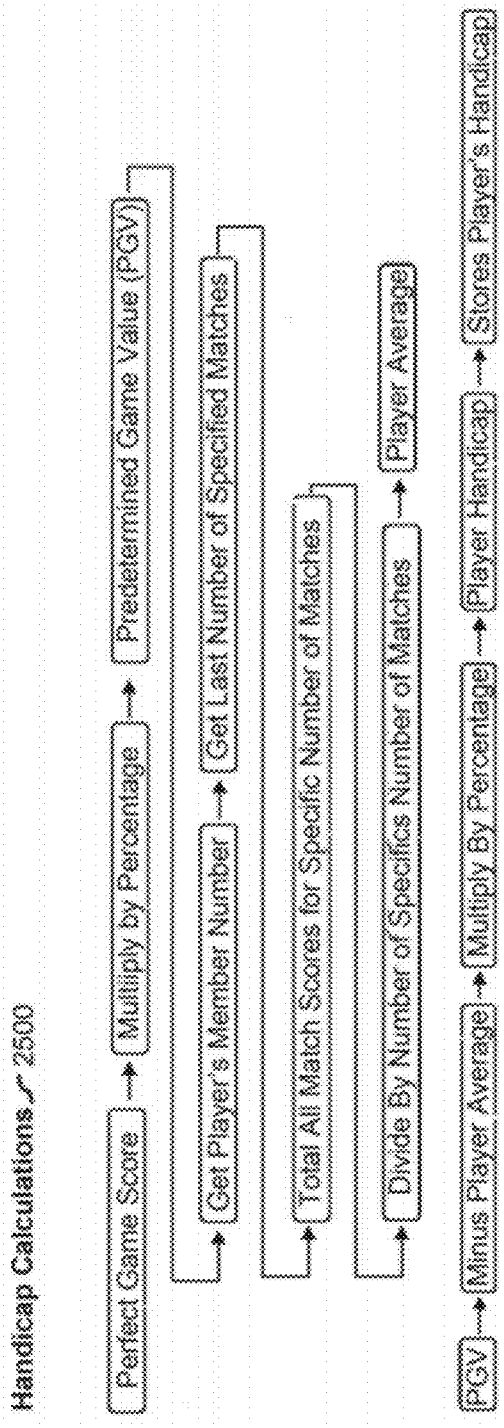

Handicap Calculations 2500
Perfect Game Score
Multiply by Percentage
Predetermined Game Value (PGV)
Get Player's Member Number
Get Last Number of Specified Matches
Total All Match Scores for Specific Number of Matches
Divide By Number of Specifics Number of Matches
Player Average
PGV
Minus Player Average
Multiply By Percentage
Player Handicap
Stores Player's Handicap

Fig. 25

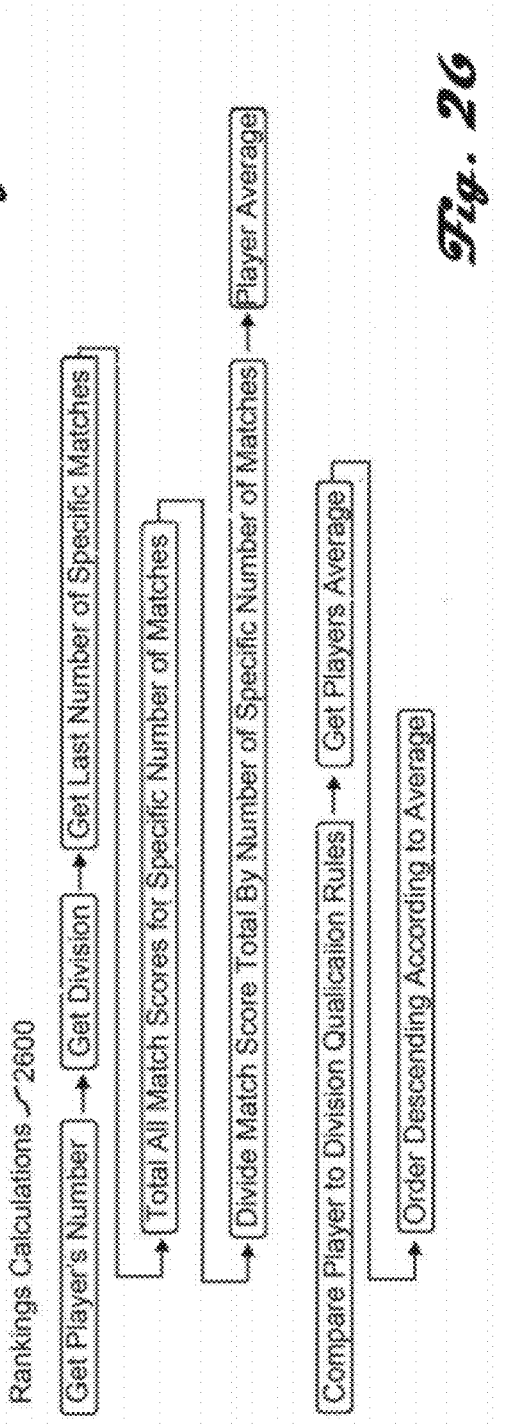

Rankings Calculations 2600
Get Player's Number
Get Division
Get Last Number of Specific Matches
Total All Match Scores for Specific Number of Matches
Divide Match Score Total By Number of Specific Number of Matches
Player Average
Compare Player to Division Qualication Rules
Get Players Average
Order Descending According to Average

Fig. 26

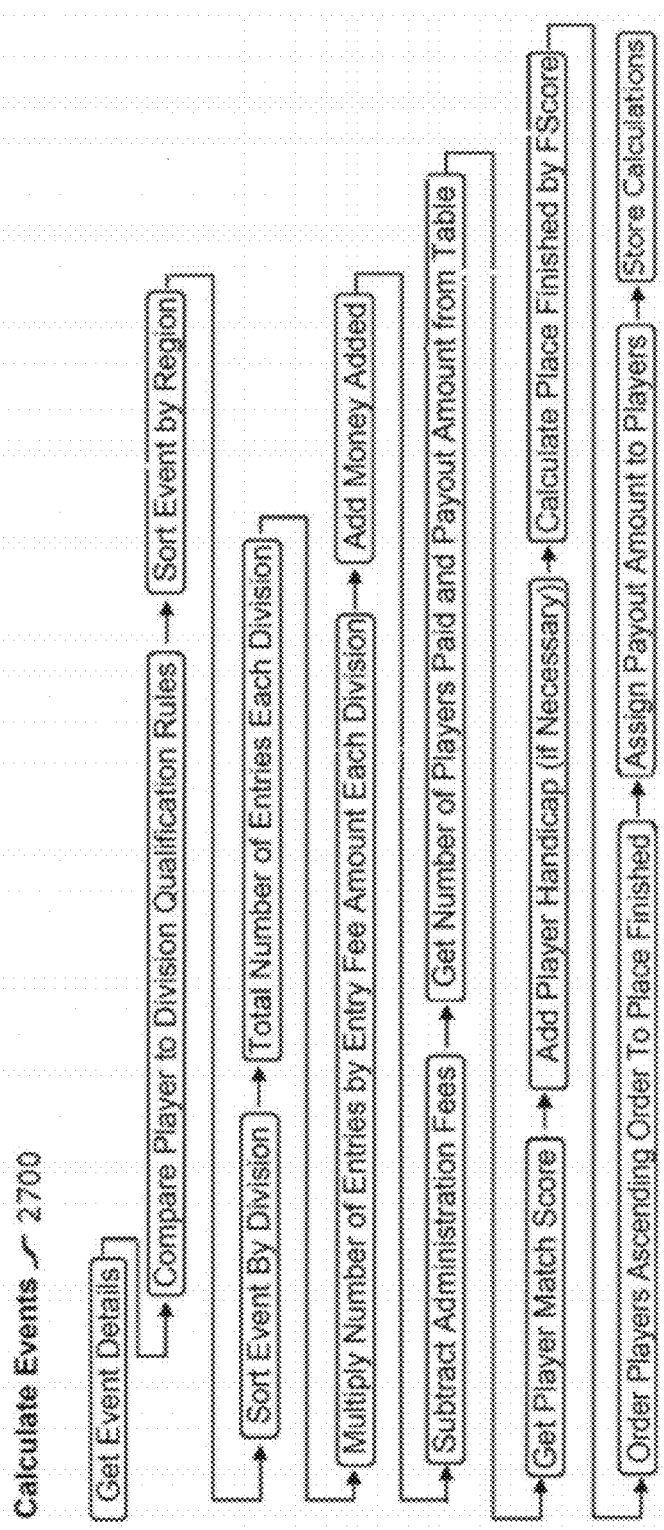


Fig. 27

Fig. 28

Fig. 29

Fig. 30

Fig. 31

Fig. 32

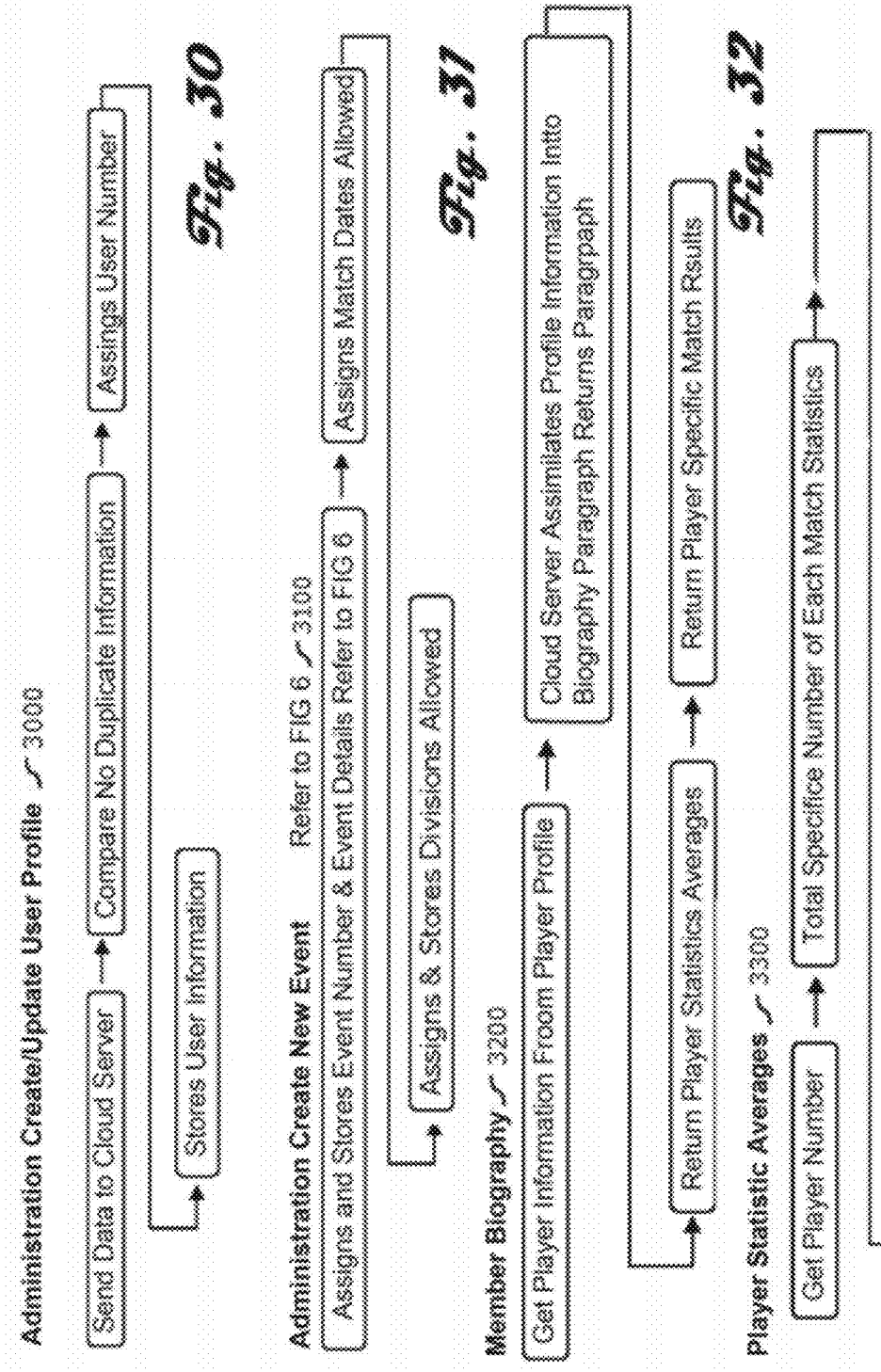


Fig. 33

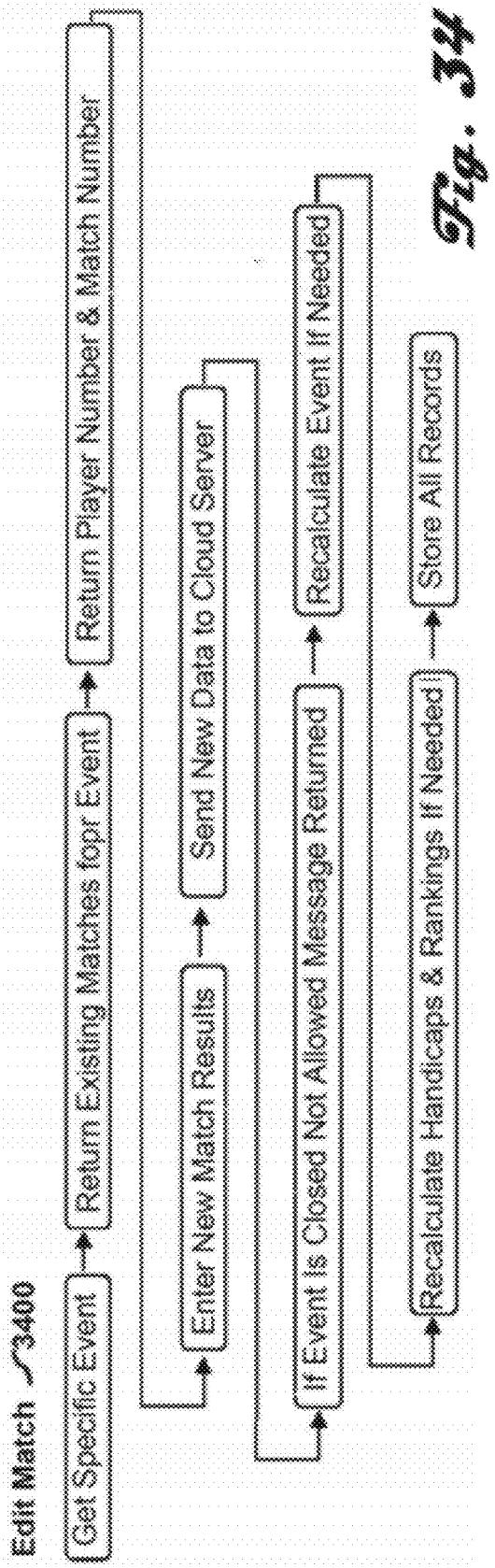

Edit Match
3400
Get Specific Event
Return Existing Matches fopr Event
Return Player Number & Match Number
Enter New Match Results
Send New Data to Cloud Server
If Event Is Closed Not Allowed Message Returned
Recalculate Event If Needed
Recalculate Handicaps & Rankings If Needed
Store All Records

Fig. 34

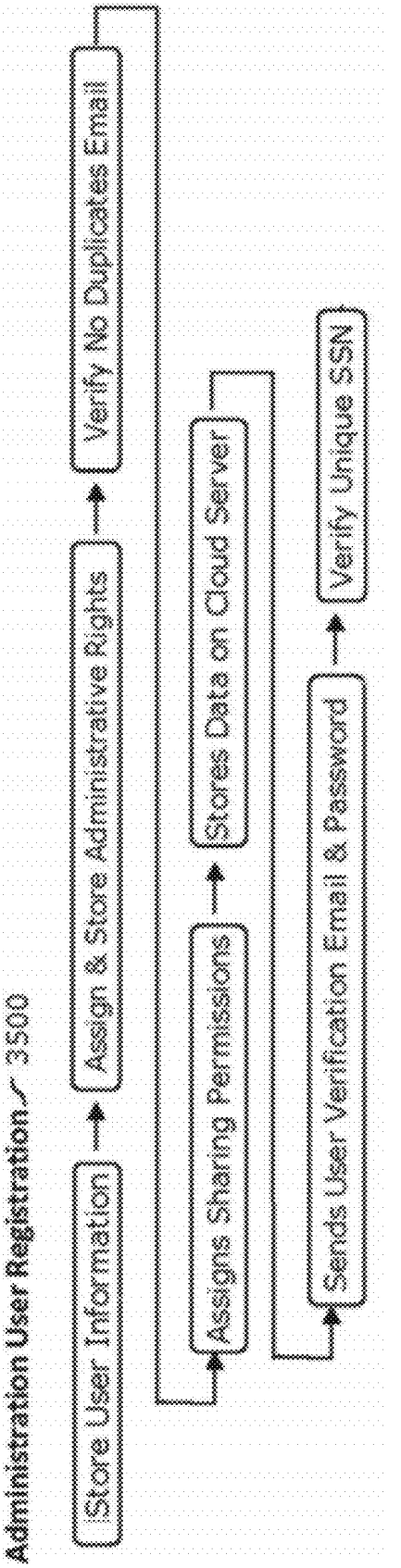

Administration User Registration
3500
Store User Information
Assign & Store Administrative Rights
Verify No Duplicates Email
Assigns Sharing Permissions
Stores Data on Cloud Server
Sends User Verification Email & Password
Verify Unique SSN

Fig. 35

ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND EXECUTION OF TOURNAMENT COMPETITION WITH GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE PARTICIPANTS

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a novel method of tournament competition for skill-based sports and/or games executed on standardized equipment under established rules by selectively monitoring and collecting player performance information from one or more players from multiple geographic locations over a pre-determined time period, and which may be implemented electronically through an interconnected network, such as an on-line server with an accessible database through a website to remote terminals. Using a modified sport or game scoring system that allows individual players to generate numerical scores within a set of standard rules on standard equipment to allow performance comparisons and the establishment of handicaps to allow equal opportunity for player competition, this method and system allows sport competition to occur over a broader geographic area and over a specified time period which allows an increased volume of participants. This invention effectively allows players to play locally and compete with other players across a much broader geographic area and can be applied to a variety of games and sports.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] Throughout history all competition has been limited to one-against-one battles between two individuals or teams. To determine a victor the competition required participants to be in the same location at the same time. The concept of tournament play allowed multiple competitions to occur offering the chance for competitors to determine who was the best in that location, time, and environment. Tournament play also introduced the notion of standardized or agreed upon rules and field of play in order to offer a fair opportunity for all competitors. Tournaments and the like also developed the invention of handicapping participants to provide more equal competition. The fundamental aspects of sports competition have been in place throughout history. However, tournaments and similar gatherings for competition have always been limited to those participants with the wherewithal to attend.

[0003] For a vast majority of sports participants, because of the requirement for competition to occur at one location and at the same time, a primary challenge for competitive play is having enough players in one area to have quality competition on a regular basis. A secondary challenge is the expense of travel, lodging, food, etc. to compete in tournaments that can draw a higher number of quality participants from broader areas. A third challenge is finding equally matched participants. A fourth challenge is that tournament venues are typically limited in space, accommodations, resources, and amenities thereby limiting the number of participants. The aggregate result of these limitations is that tournaments are relatively small with the consequences that awarded purses are relatively small, further burdening the participants in that only the victors receive a net benefit. The result is that virtually all tournaments are feasible for only a relatively small number of participants, generally only those with higher degrees of skill, financial ability, and extensive time available to make the effort of tournament participation worthwhile.

[0004] Tournaments often offer different levels of competition to accommodate those players with differing skills. Unfortunately, there is usually no format that accurately provides representative measures of player skill so that unfair advantages within the different levels of competition can be the result.

[0005] One form of competitive play are leagues where participants compete on a regular basis in structured formats. Unfortunately, competition is limited to members again within a limited geographical area which again limits the number of participants. Further, because of the format of play (ie. one-against-one at a specific time and location), measured skill levels are commonly determined by judgment which can often be inaccurate or manipulated.

[0006] Ultimately, the sum of the limitations described above invites participation of only a very small percentage of participants in organized tournament or league play.

[0007] The internet currently hosts some gaming opportunities in games of chance, such as poker, fantasy sports leagues, and the like. However these are games of chance as opposed to games of skill. The distinction is that games of chance are based on probabilities of outcomes and statistical realities, where games of skill are determined by a participant's ability to control a physical outcome.

[0008] Similarly, the internet also hosts real-time computer-based gaming competition through console devices (i.e., Microsoft's X-Box, Play Station's PS systems, etc.), however all competition requires "real time" competition. That is, while competitors may compete from a large geographic area, they have to play at the same time in order to establish a winners.

SUMMARY

[0009] The present invention provides a unique system and method that enables multiple players of a sport to compete from different geographic locations at different times for one tournament. The invention is a competition system and method combining: 1. a modified set of rules for a sport played on standardized equipment or field of play to allow players to individually achieve a numerical score for a match; and 2. a computer-based, internet-connected management system that controls: a. comparison of scores for determining tournament victors; b. participant statistics, data, and handicap computing; c. prize money distribution; d. communication with members, venues, sponsors, and all other stakeholders; and e. all other relevant systems and methods for coordinating and running competitive tournament play. The net result is a system and method that allows players to compete against a large number of participants in non-similar geographic locations on standardized equipment or fields of play at non-similar moments in time thus allowing larger tournaments offering larger benefits for participation.

[0010] The invention allows for multiple variations of competition (i.e., different game formats, different equipment formats, etc.), multiple areas (i.e., regions, states, countries, etc.), as well as level of play (i.e., handicapped, non-handicapped, etc.), and because of the potentially high volume of participants may incorporate a series of tie-breaking means.

[0011] The invention provides a method where one or more actual scores, i.e., scores achieved by a player playing a match on real equipment, not electronic gaming, may be compared based on various factors, such as statistics from their matches, the player's division, the venue, equipment, location, time, etc. This is achieved through an interconnected computer

server system and method through an internet-based server that adequately and accurately receives player data from remote terminals, calculates the data, displays the calculated data, returns the results and re-calculates player statistics for the next event. This invention allows players to participate from locations worldwide in real one-against-many tournament competitions for a predetermined time frame established by a tournament administrator. By using a unique combination of game rules, numerical match results, and computer- and internet-based communication, the invention offers a method and system for tournament play on a massive scale. The system collects match results, converts scores, posts results, calculates player rankings, posts players statistics via the internet, uses a calculation process from remote server for the tournament results and calculates the data for the time period's competition. This data is then assimilated for each player and each player's unique statistics are posted from the server and accessible by players through remote terminals and access the interconnected server. Results of each event and player's statistics can be researched and viewed by assisted navigation for each event and player's statistics that make up each event. This ability for worldwide competition from multiple locations and time frames makes this system novel and unique in the industry of sports competition.

[0012] It is anticipated that the advantages of the invention can be further enhanced by a variety of technological applications. For instance, existing technology such as global positioning system (GPS), electronic scoring, digital video and photographic scanning and/or monitoring can all be applied depending on the sport, game, venue, and equipment to improve the security, accuracy, and utilization of the invention. By reference, these and all other technological applications as developed are included as part of this invention.

[0013] In addition to the unique tournament format, a unique scoring system is used to be used in conjunction with the matches and statistics from the scoring system is used in the system calculations and enhance the unique tournament format. The scoring system generates statistics for the players and the match score is used for a final score in the scratch division or can be used in calculations in the handicap divisions to calculate final tournament results.

[0014] The invention lifts the restrictions of same-location and same-time competition thereby allowing participants to play at a location and time of their choosing. This lifting of key restrictions will allow many more participants to enjoy tournament play. Considering the potentially large number of participants, it may be desirable for tournament administers to develop game and/or tournament rules that incorporate a high number of tie-breaking determinations.

[0015] Unless explicitly specified a system or a computer system, as used herein, implies a system with the capabilities of a machine based on the Von Neumann architecture. Further term device refers to a system that need not have this capability. Furthermore, a computer system may also be referred as a node in discussions below. Moreover, player system implies a system owned/used by a player to register for a competition and to check results, participating vendor system implies a system owned/used by a vendor at a competition location, and competition supervision and monitoring system implies a system owned/used by a competition to collect information from players and vendors.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] The following drawings in conjunction with the Detailed Description may be used to understand how the various embodiments of the present invention provide the stated and further advantages.

[0017] FIG. **1** shows the basic system architecture for the operation configuration that incorporates players, competition locations, communication and management devices, database, and administrator functions in accordance with one embodiment.

[0018] FIG. **1**A shows the basic system architecture for the operation configuration that incorporates players, competition locations, communication and management devices, database, and administrator functions in accordance with one embodiment.

[0019] FIG. **2** shows the basic system operation of the basic server management functions in accordance with one embodiment.

[0020] FIG. **3** shows a system interaction for administration index in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment.

[0021] FIG. **4** shows a system interaction for account registration in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment.

[0022] FIG. **5** shows a system interaction for administration to create and update user profiles in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment.

[0023] FIG. **6** shows a system interaction for creating a new event in the system in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment.

[0024] FIG. **7** shows a system interaction for an event search in accordance with one embodiment.

[0025] FIG. **8** shows a system interaction for an event summary and details in accordance with one embodiment.

[0026] FIG. **9** shows a system interaction for player statistics accordance with one embodiment.

[0027] FIG. **10** shows a system interaction for user login in accordance with one embodiment.

[0028] FIG. **11** shows a system interaction for calculating player handicaps and player rankings in accordance with one embodiment.

[0029] FIG. **12** shows a system interaction for event schedule in accordance with one embodiment.

[0030] FIG. **13** shows a system interaction for administration user search results in accordance with one embodiment.

[0031] FIG. **14** shows a system interaction for player rankings in accordance with one embodiment.

[0032] FIG. **15** shows a various query routine to calculate player statistics server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0033] FIG. **16** shows a system interaction for member listing in accordance with one embodiment.

[0034] FIG. **17** shows a system interaction for participating location for meeting equipment criteria in accordance with one embodiment.

[0035] FIG. **18** shows a system interaction for specific event results in accordance with one embodiment.

[0036] FIG. **19** shows a various query routine for use in editing event details in accordance with one embodiment.

[0037] FIG. **20** shows a various query routine for use in editing match details in accordance with one embodiment.

[0038] FIG. **21** shows various query processes for use to create a new match routine in accordance with one embodiment.

[0039] FIG. **22** shows query process to determine member biography form server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0040] FIG. **23** shows query process to determine member biography results server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0041] FIG. **24** shows a system interaction to determine location and biography listing in accordance with one embodiment.

[0042] FIG. **25** shows query process for handicap calculations server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0043] FIG. **26** shows query process for player rankings calculations server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0044] FIG. **27** shows query process for event calculations server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0045] FIG. **28** shows query process for division calculations server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0046] FIG. **29** shows query process for administration index calculating handicaps server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0047] FIG. **30** shows query process for administration creating and updating user profile server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0048] FIG. **31** shows query process for administration creating new event server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0049] FIG. **32** shows query process for member biography server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0050] FIG. **33** shows query process for player statistics and averages server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0051] FIG. **34** shows query process for editing matches server in accordance with one embodiment.

[0052] FIG. **35** shows query process for administration user registration server in accordance with one embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0053] The present invention provides a unique system and method that enables multiple players of a sport or game to compete from different geographic locations at different times for one tournament. The invention is a competition system and method combining: 1. a modified set of rules for a sport played on standardized equipment or field of play to allow players to individually achieve a numerical score for a match; and 2. a computer-based, internet-connected management system that controls: a. comparison of scores for determining tournament victors; b. participant statistics, data, and handicap computing; c. prize money distribution; d. communication with members, venues, sponsors, and all other stakeholders; and e. all other relevant systems and methods for coordinating and running competitive tournament play. The net result is a system and method that allows players to compete against a large number of participants in non-similar geographic locations on standardized equipment or fields of play at non-similar moments in time thus allowing larger tournaments offering larger benefits for participation.

[0054] Reference is now made in detail to the description of the embodiments as illustrated in the drawings. While embodiments are described in connection with the drawings and related descriptions, there is no intent to limit the scope to the embodiments disclosed herein. On the contrary, the intent is to cover all alternatives, modifications, and equivalents. In alternate embodiments, additional devices, or combinations of illustrated devices, may be added to, or combined, without limiting the scope to the embodiments disclosed herein.

[0055] Various aspects of the illustrative embodiments will be described using terms commonly employed by those skilled in the art to convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. However, the embodiments described herein may be practiced with only some of the described aspects. For purposes of explanation, specific numbers, materials, and configurations may be set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the illustrative embodiments. However, the embodiments described herein may be practiced without the specific details. In other instances, well-known features are omitted or simplified in order not to obscure the illustrative embodiments.

[0056] Further, various operations and/or communications may be described as multiple discrete operations and/or communications, in turn, in a manner that may be helpful in understanding the embodiments described herein; however, the order of description should not be construed as to imply that these operations and/or communications are necessarily order dependent. In particular, these operations and/or communications need not be performed in the order of presentation.

[0057] Definitions: A "player" is a participant in a tournament. A "member" is a registered participant in the database. An "Event Coordinator" is the entity, whether individual, corporate, or other functioning body, responsible for coordinating tournament matches at a particular geographic location. A "Tournament Administrator" is the entity, whether individual, corporate, or other functioning body, responsible for the applied tournament for any sport. "Cloud" computing is internet-based computing software. "Virtual Tournament" or similar terms refers to sports tournaments utilizing the components of the invention. "Handicap" (abbreviated as HCP) is the numerical advantage applied to a participant's unadjusted match score.

[0058] The specific information detailed within the referenced drawings and descriptions provided herein have been developed for use in a specialized billiard game environment (i.e., "211") with an established Tournament Administrator (i.e., "Behind The Rock Tour") and may reference specific information or equipment (i.e., Brunswick "Gold Crown") relevant to the industry of billiards competition. However, the applications to all other sports using this invention can and shall modify the information as appropriate and related to the game, sport, venue, etc.

[0059] The phrase "in one embodiment" is used repeatedly. The phrase generally does not refer to the same embodiment; however, it may. The terms "comprising," "having" and "including" are synonymous, unless the context dictates otherwise. One embodiment of the invention includes a distributed online tournament system and method as shown and described in the specification and drawings.

[0060] Administration access to the interconnected server is done through remote terminals. Event Coordinators (EC's) and administrators are assigned access passwords to access this form. Depending on the level of authorization determines which data each individual is allowed to access. Once an EC logs into the server they have restricted capabilities to add new players, edit some player information, accessing event information and data entry forms connected to the server. Persons with administration rights have complete access to all information in the database residing on the interconnected server. From the administrator's form, EC's input player and event data into the server from remote terminals which populate the server database. This data is then used to calculate and produce results for each player and each event. Unrestricted access to data is allowed by nodes for the purpose of viewing results from events and player's statistics.

[0061] A player may play from any approved or certified location. Each certified location identifies a Participating Vendor. The Participating Vendor will monitor any matches played out of their assigned certified location. In one embodi-

ment of the present invention, prior to an event the administrator to the system will enter from a remote terminal the event data which includes: start date and close date for the event, entry fee amount, division allowed to play, administration fees to be deducted, game being played, event number, region, event description, notes and entry fee for each division allowed to play. Once the event time is concluded, the event is closed on the server. Participating Vendors will enter the data through a remote terminal to the server via the system. The system then calculates the tournament results which include; each player's statistics, the order in which the players finished according to their score, calculate tie breakers using the match statistics, eliminates any ties calculating in the player statistics for that match, totals all the entries fees, deducts administration fees, adds any money added for the event, calculates total purse payout, determines winners and the payout for each player that has earned money for that event.

[0062] The figures will describe the process for player administration and event administration.

[0063] FIG. **1** and FIG. **1**A show the basic system architecture for the operation configuration that incorporates players, competition locations, communication and management devices, database, and administrator functions in accordance with one embodiment. Players enter the tournament and play their qualifying match at the Approved Location. Event Coordinators manage and run the tournament at the Approved Location and are responsible for all aspects of play at the location. At the conclusion of play, the EC enters player scores at the website access to the server. The server stores the information at the Database. The server sorts the information, displays results, and recalculates handicaps if used. The Administrator may access the server and database and uses the server for communication with Approved Locations, Players, and EC's. The Administrator is responsible for payouts to the players, possibly via the EC's.

[0064] FIG. **2** shows the basic system operation of the basic server management functions in accordance with one embodiment. The server is a key for the management of the tournament. All communications from all stakeholders can be routed through the server. The server is responsible for all calculations, score management and display, and database access with automatic updating. The Administrator has direct access to the server.

[0065] FIG. **3** shows a system interaction for administration remote access in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes statistic queries **310**, handicap and ranking calculation queries **320**, administration queries **130** and event search and event administration queries **340**. In one embodiment, only users with administrator's rights have access to the "Administrator Area" which includes the ability to "Calculate Player HCPs & Rankings" query **120** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0066] Access to input data entry from a remote terminal is done through a restricted login page. From this page, data can be input and modified according to administration rights by the user. According to users rights access to administration options which may include: add new players, enter player match results to specific events, access and edit player information and post to the administration and home page blog. Restricted access is given through the administration level to allow or disallow access to specific information to the EC's in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0067] In one embodiment of the invention administration queries **310** include query fields **312** and **116** to display the current status of the total members **312** and handicap and rankings calculations **316**. Query **316** displays the last date the handicaps were calculated. Importance of this is to ensure that the current handicaps are calculated correctly prior to calculating events in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0068] Calculate handicap and rankings query **320** requests interaction from the user to calculate handicaps and rankings Query **320** is critical to the outcome of an event when calculating a handicap division. Query **320** is run prior to the start of a new event and is used in determining event winners when playing in a handicap division in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0069] Administration queries **330** include administration area **334** and player administration **336**. Query **334** requests interaction for access to the administration area which allows users with administrative rights to edit player, EC and location information in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0070] Event Administration **340** includes query **342**. Members with administrative, EC or location rights are allowed and requested interactive action to edit and add players matches to events, research and evaluate status of events an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0071] In another operating environment in accordance of the invention query **342** requests interaction by an administrative user to add and edit events.

[0072] FIG. **4** shows a system interaction for Account Registration in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes owner/player queries **410** to **440**.

[0073] In accordance with one embodiment of the invention account registration includes queries **410** which embody query fields **412**, **414**, **416**, **418**, **420**, **422**, **430** and **440** for nonregistered user to input valid registration information. Information includes email address **412** used for communications, login information and user validation. First name **414**, last name **416** used to identify the user and generate user account, which can be used to create location, EC or player accounts. Phone number **418** is used for communication and player verification while participating in an event. A password of their choosing **420** is created to be used for user login confirmation and then a confirmation of the password to confirm the user has inputted the password with no errors query **420**. In one embodiment, the user inserts a security code **430** to prove that they are a real human being and not a digital program. The assigned security code will be displayed in some unconventional text format that the user must verify by retyping the unconventional text format in the box displayed in **430**. The system interaction query **440** is the confirmation button for the information submitted. The server verifies the password and security code and then issues login information to the user via email from the server in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0074] FIG. **5** shows a system interaction for an administrator to edit a player's, EC's or location's information in an

operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes owner/player queries **510**, player location queries **520**, and administrative queries **530**.

[0075] Owner/player queries **510** include query fields **512**, **514**, and **516** for collecting registering person to input a valid first name **512**, last name **514** and nickname **516** for each player. In one embodiment, each player is assigned a unique nickname **516** to distinguish the players. The assigned nickname may be a suggested nickname based on the first name **512** and last name **514**. Alternatively, the player may suggest a nickname **516**.

[0076] Player location queries **520** include location name **521**, street address **523**, unit number **525**, city **527**, and state, zip code **529**. Player location queries **520** allow for editing a player, EC or location of their usual place of play. This information provides the Tournament Administrator with information on how to find a player, contact a player and the type of equipment the player is playing on in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Individual player location queries **520** are configured for editing a physical address of a player, EC or location. Information collected from player location queries **520** may be used for communication with the Tournament Administrator, player verification and for tax purposes in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0077] Administrative queries **530** include user level **532**, user division **534**, email address **536**, password **538**, email verification **542**, registration completion **544**, administrative blog access **546**, and user blog access **548**. User level query **532** allows for editing access on the server of a player, EC or location. Each user level query **532** is administered different access rights to information in the database. Player User Division query **534** determines the division the player is participating in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Email address query **536** is for editing a player's email address. The email address may then be used to verify a member, member login and transmit Tournament Administrator communications with the member in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The email address **536** is also used to verify a player, for tax purposes and Tournament Administrator communications in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Password **538** is for editing a player's passwords that is used by the player to access their personal information and player restricted access on the server from a remote node in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0078] FIG. **6** shows a system interaction for creating new event in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes event description query **610**, Event financial and specifics query **620**, allowed divisions query **640**, match cost list query **660** and submit information command query **680**.

[0079] Event description queries **610** include query fields **611**,**6413**, **615**, **617**, and **619** to describe the new event. In one embodiment, assigning details and specifics to an event are done by assigning the event an event number query **611**, assigning an event name query **613**, assigning the game to be played at the event query **615**, including additional details by entering the description of the event query **617** and notes that may be needed i.e. specific instructions or criteria for the event query **619**.

[0080] Event financial and specific queries **620** include queries money added to the event **622**, administration charge assigned to the event **624**, match cost to the participating player **626**, event state date **628**, event end date **630**, status of the event **632** and type of tournament for this event **634**.

[0081] Money added query **622** is to be input from a remote terminal the amount of money to be added to an event. This money could be from a sponsor, location or the Tournament Administrator itself.

[0082] Administration charge query **624** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, is identified by a check box to identify the event as having or not having an administration fee attached in the event a percentage of the entry fee paid in by players is deducted from the payout purse.

[0083] Allowed Division query **640** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention identifies which division is allowed to play in this event. Queries **642** handicap division, **644** handicap scratch division, **646** intermediate handicap division, **648** intermediate handicap scratch division, **650** semi-professional division and **652** professional division are check boxes to identify the divisions allowed.

[0084] Match cost list queries **660** allow for assigning an entry fee cost to be paid by the player at the time of the event. In one embodiment of the invention this cost is assigned according to division the player participates in. The entry fee cost is used to calculate the total payout and place payout for an event.

[0085] Create event command query **660** button in accordance with one embodiment, is used to send form information from a remote terminal to the cloud server.

[0086] FIG. **7** shows a system interaction for an administration event search in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes event search queries **710** and search results queries **730**.

[0087] Event search queries **710** include query fields **712**, **714**, **716**, **718**, **720** and **722** for administration searching for specific events. In one embodiment, a user interacts with the server query **712** to enter the event number to search for the server to display. Event search may also be search by other event descriptions such as the date the event was played or closed query **714**, status of the event including running or completed query **716**, the type of event including virtual, special event, quarterly or annual event or all events query **718**. Command button query **720** sends the specific search entries to the online server and the server then displays the results. If all criteria **712**-**718** queries are used then the command button query **722** is used to return all criteria results in one embodiment of the invention.

[0088] Administration search result queries **730** include event number query **732**, event name query **734** which is an active link to the event matches, event date(s) query **736**, event status query **738** and event description query **740**. This information provides the user with all events that meet the criteria from the search event query **710** above. If no criteria are entered, then all event results are displayed when accessing the page from the main menu command query.

[0089] Administrative queries **750** a command button that returns match results from the online server, a command edit match button which allow users with access rights to edit an event, a command delete button to delete events and a command button query **754** that allows users with access rights to insert a new event in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0090] FIG. **8** shows a system interaction for event summary from the administration login in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system event summary includes event details query **810**, search query **830** and event match results queries **850**. This information is used to describe the event and to display all the players that participated in the event and allows access for editing the match from this page.

[0091] Event detail queries **810** include query fields **812**, **814**, **816**, divisions allowed **820** for identifying the event in which the match results are displayed. In one embodiment the event name **812** shows the event number and the event name. Description query **814** shows any details that were entered for the event when the event was created. Type query **816** shows the type of event. Status query **818** returns the status of the event either being completed, running or archived. Divisions allowed query **820** shows which divisions were allowed to participate in the event.

[0092] Search queries **830** include Player **832**, name **835**, location **838**, division **841**, game **844**, search and all **849**. Search queries **820** allow for the user to search for an event. This information was input when creating the event and any edits to the event that have been made in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Event query **812** shows the event number and the name of the event. Description query **814** shows the description of the event entered at the time of the event creation. Type query **816** shows the type of event to detail if the event was a special event, virtual tournament, quarterly event, annual event or other type. Status query **818** shows the current status of an event completed, running or archived. If the event is in process or coming up in the future the event displays as running If the event has been finished and results have been posted then the event shows as completed and if the event has been displayed for a certain period of time the event is archived and will only displayed is entered into the search boxes. Divisions allowed query **820** describes which divisions were allowed to participate in the event.

[0093] Event match results queries **850** in one embodiment of the invention include date **852**, player **855**, match **858**, location **861** division **864**, game **867** and SScore **869**. Date query **852** shows the date(s) in which the event was run. This date(s) could be one day or it could be over a period of time. Player query **855** displays the player's member number for that match. Match query **858** is the match number for that player in this event. A player may play multiple matches and the match number identifies if this was the first, second, third etc. match played in this event by this player in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Location query **861** displays the location in which the player played the match. Location also identifies the brand of equipment that the match was played on. Division query **864** displays the division that the match was entered in. Game query **867** displays the game that was played in that match. SScore query **869** displays the scratch score for that match. In an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention scratch score is the results of the match of the points earned for a player during a match. Points earned are defined in the game rules.

[0094] Edit match command button query **870** in one embodiment of the invention allows the user to access and edit a particular match providing the user as certain access rights to do so.

[0095] FIG. **9** shows a system interaction to access player statistics including queries **900** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes player queries **902** & **904**, player matches and statistics **910**, statistic averages **920** and match results **940**.

[0096] Player statistic results **900** include query fields for returning player identification and to verify the player's statistics that are displayed on the page in one embodiment.

[0097] Player matches and statistics query **910** include queries player division **912**, player handicap **914** and player year to date earnings **916**. The player division **912** shows which division the player is currently playing in. Player average handicap **914** (refer to FIG. **9** for calculations) shows the current handicap that the players is using and year to date winnings by the player **916** shows current status of the player or financial payouts the player has earned for the current year.

[0098] Statistics average queries **920** include all the statistics for the last match or a searched match in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0099] Match results queries **940** includes the date of the match, the division the match was played in, what place the player finished in the event, all the player statistics for that match, the amount of money won in that event and the location in which the player played in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. This information allows users to view and monitor the match and event results. This also allows transparency of the tournament so players may monitor matches played from their location to ensure they are correctly posted on the website. This is one of the methods used by the Tournament Administrator to ensure accuracy for reporting tournament results.

[0100] FIG. **10** shows a system interaction for user login including queries **1000** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0101] User login query form, **1000** includes query fields **1002** and **1004** for collecting user login information. Query **1006** allows user to retrieve and change their password if lost. Login command button **1010** submits login data to cloud server in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0102] FIG. **11** shows a system interaction for calculating handicaps and division rankings including queries **1110** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0103] In one embodiment, calculate HCP & division rankings command query **1110** sends user to a confirmation page to confirm the action the user has just initiated.

[0104] FIG. **12** shows a system interaction for an event schedule including queries event schedule **1200** which includes queries **1210** and **1220** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0105] Event schedule search query **1210** includes query fields **1212**, **1214** and **1216** for requesting specific event criteria. In one embodiment, select data may be chosen in queries **1012**, **1214** and/or **1216** requesting specific detailed information about the event in search. Once a selection has been made that defines the search, the request is sent and event search results are returned.

[0106] Completed event schedule listing **1220** includes type **1222**, event number **1224**, name **1226**, date **1228**, game **1230**, status **1232** and description **1234**. Type **1222** query describes the type of tournament. In an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention the

tournament type can be all events, special event, virtual tournament, in-house event, quarterly event or annual event. Event number query **1224** return results from the query to display the event number in a specific listing for an event. Name query **1226** return results from the query to display the event name in a specific listing for an event. Date query **1228** return results from the query to display the date a specific event was played on. Game query **1230** return results from the query to display the name of the game that was played in a specific listing for an event. Status query **1232** return results from the query to display the status of an event. The status may state the event is running, completed or archived. Description query **1232** return results from the query to give a description of an event in a specific listing in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0107] FIG. **13** shows a system interaction to command a user search from the administration area including queries **1300** search criteria and **1320** search results in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0108] User search queries include query fields **1302**, **1304**, **1306** and **1308** for defining user search criteria. User ID to input a valid membership number assigned to the user that is being searched for **1302**. Other search criteria are query fields are user level **1304**, name **1306** and email address **1308**. In one embodiment, each player is assigned a membership number. Query field **1302** allows user to search the database for members according to the player's membership number. Query field **1306** allows user to search the database for members by the player's name and/or query field **1308** allows user to search the database for members by the player's email address in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0109] Search result queries **1320** include member # (number) **1322**, type **1324**, name **1326**, email **1328**, search **1330**, edit member information **1332** and delete member **1334**. Member # (number) **1322** query lists the member number for one type of identification in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Type query **1324** lists the type of user. In one embodiment, the type of user could be an administrator, location, player, visitor or event coordinator. Name query **1326** returns the name of the user. Email query **1328** returns the email address used by the user in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Query **1330** allows the administrator to view the user profile. Edit query **1332** dependent on the administrator's right access allows the administrator to edit the user's profile in part or in all. Delete user query **1332** allows administrators with rights to delete a user in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0110] FIG. **14** shows a system interaction for member handicap and division rankings including queries **1440**, **1450** and **1470** that shows a system interaction for returning handicap and division rankings for the players.

[0111] Handicap and division ranking search **140** include queries **1442** and **1444** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Division search query **1442** selects the division criteria and returns the handicaps and rankings for the specified division. Game query **1444** allows the user to select the game in which the event was played that the user would like to display.

[0112] Handicap and division ranking details query **1450** include queries **1452**, **1454**, **1456**, **1458**, **1460** and **1462** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Rank query **1452** returns a list in ascending order the ranking order of the player's status in one embodiment. # (number) **1454** returns the member number that corresponds to the ranking #. Player query **1456** returns the player's name that corresponds to the member number. HCP query **1458** returns the handicap that corresponds to the member number. Avg query **1460** returns the average score for the player that corresponds with the member number. Refer to FIG. **31** for Avg calculations. # Matches query **1462** displays the number of matches that corresponds to the player number for the current quarter and for the year which is used for event qualifications in one embodiment of the invention.

[0113] Items query **1470** includes 20 number items numbered 1-20 in one embodiment. Items 1-20 list the match scratch scores corresponding to the player's member number.

[0114] FIG. **15** shows a system interaction for calculation for player average statistics including the formula set forth by **1502**, **1505**, **1508** and **1510**. In one embodiment, a predetermined number of matches are identified and are retrieved. The total scores of all the predetermined number of matches are added together. This total number is then divided by the predetermined number used. The total calculation is the player's current average.

[0115] FIG. **16** shows a system interaction for listing members **1600** including queries **1610** **1620** and **1630** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes division details query **1610**, player search queries **1620** and queries **1630** member detail listing.

[0116] **1610** query in one embodiment returns the division in which the results are displayed within the current page.

[0117] In one embodiment, **1620** includes query fields allowing searches for members by selecting the division in which the player participated in an event, by city, by state or by location. In query **1622** allows a search by the division the player played an event. In one embodiment, searches are allowed by query **1624** to search by the city in which the player participated in an event, the state in which the player played an event query **1626** or the usual room, referring to the location, in which the player may have played an event query **1628**.

[0118] Member listings queries **1630** include member #**1632**, member name **1634**, usual room **1636**, city **1638** and state **1640** in one embodiment of the invention. Query **1630** displays the member's number, member's name, usual room, city and state to give the user enough information about a player that the user may identify the member. In one embodiment member # query **1632** shows the member's number. Member name query **1634** shows the member's name that is hyperlinked to the player's personal profile page. Usual room query **1436** shows the usual room that the player usually plays out of. City query **1638** shows the city in which the player is registered under and the state query **1640** the state in which the player is registered in one embodiment of the invention.

[0119] FIG. **17** shows a system interaction for a location to input their table information including query **170** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes table query **1710**.

[0120] Tables queries **170** include query fields **1712**, **1714**, **1716**, **1718**, **1720**, **1722**, **1724** and **1726**. In one embodiment, tables query **1712** identifies the total number of tables a location has on site. 8 ft. query **1714** shows the number of 4'×8' tables a location has on site. 9 ft. Diamond query **15118** shows

the number of 4½'×9', brand name Diamond tables a location has on site. 9 ft. query **1520** shows the number of 4½'×9' tables a location has on site. 7 ft. query **1522** shows the number of 3½'×7' tables a location has on site. Billiards query **1524** shows the number of Billiards tables a location has on site. 9 ft modified Gold Crown query **1526** shows the number of 4-4½'×9' brand name Brunswick Gold Crown modified tables a location has on site. This information is used to determine what type of event a location can host as well as if the equipment qualifies for certain divisions for play.

[0121] FIG. **18** shows a system interaction for an event search including queries **1800** in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction VT # and event description query **1810**, virtual tournament queries **1820**, search by location query **1830**, and match results queries **1840**, **1850** and **1860**.

[0122] Event description and event search includes queries **1810**, **1812**, **1814**, **1816** and **1818**. The event description **1810** returns the information for the current event displayed on the page giving the event type, the event number and a description of the event currently displayed on the page. Event search query **1812** allows the user to select from a list of closed and calculated events to refresh and display on the page. Handicap and game query **1814** displays the division and the game played at the event for the event currently being displayed on the page. Division query **1816** and game query **1818** are selection boxes that the user may select from a list of either the division and/or the game in which they are searching for. These search items return the specific list that meets the search criteria.

[0123] The match results list contains queries **1840** in one embodiment, which includes player name query **1842**, ID query **1844**, RGN query **1846**, SScore query **1848**, HCP query **1850**, FScore query **1852**, place query **1854**, payout query **1858**, location query **1860** and date query **1862**. In one embodiment, each player's name query **1642** that participated in the event is displayed. With each player the details of event are included to describe how the player finished. The details show the player's ID query **1844** which shows the player's member number. RGN query **1844** is the region in which the event was played. SScore query **1848** shows the scratch score the player earned during the match. HCP query **1850** shows the handicap that the player played with that week. FScore query **1852** shows the final score the player earned in the event. Place query **1854** shows the place in which the player finished in the event compared to all the players that participated. Payout **1858** shows the amount of money the player earned for the event. Location query **1860** shows the location the player played during the match and the date query **1862** shows the date the match was played in one embodiment of the invention.

[0124] FIG. **19** shows a system interaction for administration editing an event including queries **1900** in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes edit match details queries **1910**, description queries **1930** and **1940** and player statistics **1950**.

[0125] Edit match details queries **1910** and **1920** include query fields **1912**, **1914**, **1916**, **1918**, **1920**, and **1922** for listing the event in which the user intends is to make event detail changes. In one embodiment query **1910** includes queries event name **1912**, type **1914**, status **1916**, divisions allowed **1918**, start date **1920**, end date **1922** and description **1924**. In one embodiment, each event is assigned a unique name to distinguish the event. Event query **1912** includes the event number and event name to distinguish each event. Type query **1914** shows the type of tournament that has been assigned to the event. Status query **1916** shows the status of the event which may be any one of the following: completed, running, archived. Divisions Allowed query **1918** defines which divisions are allowed to play in the event. State date query **1920** and end date query **1922** shows the dates in which the event was open for competition. All matches must be entered into the system by midnight of the end date of the event. Description query **1924** gives the description of the event for further event details.

[0126] In one embodiment, edit match details queries **1930** include match # query **1932**, name query **1934**, division query **1936** and scratch score **1938**. Match # query **1932** lists all the matches that are entered for that player that event. Name query **1934** lists the player for those matches. Division query **1936** is the division in which that player is playing during that event and scratch score query **1938** lists the scratch scores for each of those events listed for that player. This information is used to verify that you have the correct player and event that they user is wanting to edit.

[0127] In one embodiment, edit match details query **1940** include match # query **1942**, date query **1944**, division query **1946**, location query **1948** and game query **1950**. In one embodiment of the invention, a player is allowed to play multiple matches in each event. The match number is used to order the matches in the correct order that the match was played so when calculating handicaps the order is correct in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Date query **1944** is the date in which the match was played. If the match date does not fall within the dates allowed then the match is rejected for entry. Division query **1936** is the division in which the entry is to be entered in. If the member number does not match the allowed division then the match is rejected. Location query **1938** is the location in which the match was played and game query **1940** is the game that was played in that match in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0128] Player statistics **1960** are the same queries run in FIG. **21**. Refer to FIG. **21** queries **2130** through **2170** for detail description.

[0129] FIG. **20** shows a system interaction for an administration editing match details in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes user search queries **2000**, user listing queries **2020** and search and editing tools **2030**.

[0130] User Search query **2000** include query fields **2002**, **2004**, **2006**, **2008**, **2010** and **2012** for collecting information on a member that the user is looking for which could any or all of the query fields which may include user ID query **2002**, user level query **2004**, name query **2006** and/or email address **2008** in one embodiment of the invention. Once the desired queries are entered the search command search query **2010** or all command query **2012** may be used to return results that lists within the page upon command.

[0131] User listing queries **2020** include player #**2022**, type **2024**, name **2026** and email **2028**. User search is used to locate a member and allow user access to the member's information for editing, viewing and/or deleting in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Member # queries **2022** identifies the member. Type query **2024** shows the type of member. In one embodiment, a member could be a player, location, EC or administrator. Each of these member types are assigned different user

access rights. Name query **2026** shows the member name for identification. Email query **2028** show the members email address for identification verification and for communications purposes. View icon command button query **2032** allows the user to view the members profile and personal information dependant on the access rights assigned to the user. Edit command button query **2034** is to access and edit the member's information and delete icon command button query **2036** is to permanently delete a member from the data base.

[0132] FIG. **21** shows a system interaction for an administrator for entering new matches in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes event details queries **2100**, match data **2110**, player statistics queries **2130** and save match command **2170**.

[0133] Event details queries **2100** include query fields **2102**, **2104** and **2106** for event shows the unique event name and details **2102**, divisions allowed in the event **2104** and date(s) of the event in one embodiment.

[0134] Match data **2110** include player # (number) **2112**, match # (number) **2114**, date **2116**, division **2118**, location **2120**, and game **2022**. Player #**2112** shows the unique member number assigned to the player playing the match. Match #**2114** is the match number the player played in that event. A player is allowed to play one or more matches in each event. The match number is the order in which the match was played so when calculating handicaps the correct match is used in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Date **2116** is the date in which that particular match was played. Division **2118** is the division the player is entering their match in. Players are allowed to play up in divisions, but not down in divisions. If a division lower than the player division is entered the match is rejected. Location **2120** is the location in which the player played their match. The location is cross checked with the event equipment criteria and if the equipment criteria does not meet the criteria for the division the match is rejected. Game **2122** is the game that was played for the match. If the game does not match the event criteria the match is rejected in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0135] Player statistics **2130** include SScore **2132**, CS **2134**, S **2136**, CCOE **2138**, COE **2140**, CC **2142**, C **2144** **10**BB **2146**, A**10**B **2148** TBB **2150**, SB **2152**, OS **2154**, F **2156**, M **2158** and PE **2160**. Each of the queries shows statistics used to score a player's match. Each game has unique statistics, but we are using these statistics for the purpose of the patent, but queries **2030** does not define all the statistics used in all game played. The definition of a snap game applies to certain games, but not all games in one embodiment of the invention. SScore query **2132** is the scratch score that the player scores. A scratch score is the score with no handicap added to it. CS query **2134** is consecutive snap games. S query **2036** identifies how many snap games were made in the match. CCOE query **2138** identifies how many consecutive cut options executed in the match. COE query **2140** shows how many cut options were executed within the match. CC query **2142** shows the number of consecutive cut games executed during the match. C query **2144** shows the number of cut games executed during the match. **10**BB query **2146** shows the number of 10 balls pocketed on the break. A**10**B query **2148** shows the number of additional 10 balls pocketed during the match. TBB query **2150** shows the total number of balls pocketed on the break. SB query **2152** shows the number of scratches that were committed on the break. OS query **2154** shows the number of other scratches other than the break that were committed during the match. F query **2156** shows the number of fouls committed during the match. M query **2158** shows the number of misses committed during a match. PE query **2160** shows the number of position errors committed during the match. Statistics are game specific. The statistics shown here are used on one of the games and is shown here for demonstration purposes only. In the event of a tie in the SScore the tie is broke by using the statistics in the order described above and calculated either in ascending order or descending order depending on the statistic. If the tie cannot be broken by using the statistics then the payout out for both places are added together and then split between the tying players in one embodiment of the invention.

[0136] Save match query **2170** is the command to save the entries and record the data entered to the remote server.

[0137] FIG. **22** shows a system interaction for member biography form in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes member biography form queries **2200**, recommendations queries **2220**, member queries **2230**, equipment **2240**, games queries **2250**, league **2260**, action **2270**, and other interests. This form is used to collect data about the member, use are referrals and marketing statistics.

[0138] Member biography form queries **2200** include query fields **2202**, **2204**, **2206**, **2208**, **2210**, **2212** and **2214** for collecting registering person to input valid years they have been playing pool query **2202** which will be used in our player research relating to skill level, location query **2204** for another verification of identification and used as a security question to verify player identification, birth date query **2206** used for age brackets and user identification, sex query **2208** for collecting demographics for players, what level pool player are you query **2210** give a general idea of what to expect and an understanding of how much players understand their game, do you aspire to better your game query **2212** tells administration the ambition and goals of the player and may be used in one embodiment for marketing, do you recommend any pool videos or books query **2214** used for marketing purposes and merchandise research in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0139] Recommendations **2220** includes queries **2222**, **2224**, **2226**, **2227**, **2228** and **2229** which are used to generate names of new pool rooms and contact information for new pool rooms for the tour in one embodiment of the invention. Name query **2222**, contact person query **2224**, phone query **2226**, city query **2227** and Ok to say you recommended us query **2229** gather information to identify and provide contact information for possible new rooms for the tour in an environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0140] Mentor queries **2230** includes form queries mentor name query **2232**, do you mentor or teach players query **2234** helps to identify members that may have initiative, motivation, or business minded for the possibility or becoming an event coordinator, are you available to teach query **2236** will be used as for the educational portion of the tour, rate query **2237** for the rate in which the member charges for lessons, hour query **2238** is to identify the portion the rate is charges and contact method query **2239** if for additional contact information the member may want to provide.

[0141] Equipment query **2240** includes queries **2242**, **2244**, **2246**, **2248** and **2249** to collect date about the type and brand of equipment the member is using for marketing and research purposes in one embodiment of the invention. Name query **2222**, contact person query **2224**, phone query **2226**, city query **2227** and Ok to say you recommended us query **2229** gather information to identify and provide contact information for possible new rooms for the tour in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0142] Games query **2250** includes queries **2252** for collecting data about the type equipment the player uses for marketing purposes in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0143] League query **2260** includes queries **2262** and **2264** for collecting data about the type of participation a player has in billiards and for marketing purposes. Do you play in a league or tour query **2262** gives an indication of the commitment a player makes and type of competition the player enjoys and all categories query **2264** identifies the associations and name of association the player participates in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0144] Action query **2270** includes queries **227**, **2274** and **2274** for collecting data about the type activity a player has in billiards and for marketing purposes. Are you an action player query **2272** gives an indication of the mindset that a player has for the sport. Do you want to be listed and be on the match up board with other 211 players query **2274** provides data about how serious the player is about the sport and what type of action do you prefer query **2276** provides more information about how serious the player is about the sport and what type of game do you prefer query **2278** provides information about the interest players have in which games in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0145] Other interests query **2280** includes queries **2282** for collecting data about the type media the player may be interested in for marketing purposes in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0146] FIG. **23** includes queries **2300**, **2320**, **2331** and **2340** which shows query process for comprising a player's biography utilizing data from the server in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment

[0147] Player biography **2300** includes member name query **2302** comprising the player biography information to create member biography summary paragraph about the player in one embodiment.

[0148] Player matches & statistics query **2320** includes queries **2322**, **2324** and **2326**. Division query **2322** defines the division that member is associated to. HCP query **2324** comprises the current handicap for the player and YTD Winnings query **2326** returns the winnings the player has won for the current year in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment.

[0149] Statistics Average query **2330** includes queries **2332**, **2334**, **2336**, **2338**, **2340**, **2342**, **2344**, **2346**, **2348**, **2350**, **2352** and **2354**. Queries **2332** through **2354** are abbreviations defined in FIG. **8**. The statistics are the player's averages verses their current statistics complied over a specific number of matches in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0150] Match statistics query **2360** are defined in FIG. **16** and comprised the player's statistics earned for a particular match in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0151] FIG. **24** shows a system interaction for reviewing location's information in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The system interaction includes location biography query **2400** which include queries **2410**, **2420**, **2440**, **2450**, **2460** and **2470**

[0152] Location biography **2400** includes query fields location name query **2410**, location address query **2412**, location city state and zip code query **2414**. This allows user to easy reference to locations that participate in the tour an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0153] Location specifics query **2410** include queries **2421**, **2422**, **2424**, **2426**, **2428**, **2430**, **2432** and **2434**. Total tables query **2420** identifies how many tables a location has. 9' Diamond tables query **2422** shows how many Diamond tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. 9' tables shows how many 9' tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. 7' tables query **2426** shows how many 7' tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. Billiards tables query **2428** shows how many billiards tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. 9' MGC tables query **2430** shows how many 9' modified Brunswick Gold Crowns tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. 8' tables query **2432** shows how many 8' tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location. Snooker tables query **2434** shows how many snooker tables a location has which is used to determined which divisions may or may not play out of this location an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0154] League play query **2440** includes queries **2442**, **2445** and **2448**. League play query **2442** shows the type of leagues that are offered at a location in one embodiment. Tournaments query **2445** shows the type of tournaments that a location runs out of their location and the frequency in which they run. Amenities query **2448** shows the amenities that a location offers such as food, beverages and entertainment in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0155] League play query **2440** includes queries **2442**, **2445** and **2448**. League play query **2442** shows the type of leagues that are offered at a location in one embodiment. Tournaments query **2445** shows the type of tournaments that a location supports or offers. Amenities query **2448** shows the merchandise that a location my sell. This is used to help promote product sales for the locations and for the tour's marketing a research development in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0156] League play query **2450** includes queries **2452**, **2455** and **2458**. We Sell query **2452** shows the type of merchandise offered by a participating location in one embodiment. Accu-Stats query **2455** shows if Accu-Stats videos are available at this participating location. Pool videos query **2448** shows if pool videos are offered by the participating location. These queries will be used in the marketing and

research for educational and merchandise marketing in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0157] Map query **2460** shows the location of a participating location in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0158] Tour qualified locations query **2470** includes queries **2472**, **2474**, **2476** and **2478** in one embodiment. Name query **2472** shows the location name that participates in the tour. Address query **2474** shows the address of the participating location. City query **2476** shows the city in which the participating location resides and state query **2478** shows the state of the participating location is registered in an operating environment in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0159] FIG. **25** shows query process to determine handicap calculations **2500** for server in accordance with one embodiment. Calculating handicaps starts with what is deemed by the rules of the game to be a perfect score for any particular game. The number is then multiplied by a percentage, set forth by the rules, for a base number called the game score. Once calculations are started the player's scratch scores for a specified last number of games is retrieved and added together. An average for the player is found by dividing this total number by the number specified games retrieved, thus giving the player an average in one embodiment. The player's average is then deducted from the game score, multiplied by a percentage determined by the rules and produces a handicap for the player. The handicap is then stored for later use for competition in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0160] FIG. **26** shows query process to determine rankings calculations **2600** for server in accordance with one embodiment. To calculate rankings the player's member number must be retrieved, next the current division for the player is retrieved. In one embodiment the player's total match scratch scores for a specific number of matches in accordance to the rules is returned. That total number is divided by the number of specific matches to calculate the player's average. The player's averages are compared and ordered in descending order to determine the player's ranking in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0161] FIG. **27** shows query process for calculating event results **2700** for server in accordance with one embodiment. To calculate event results the event details must first be retrieved. Next the current division and region for the player is returned and player division qualifications are verified. The players are then sorted by region and division.

[0162] Once the players are sorted the money payout is determined. The number of entries for each division are totaled and multiplied by the entry fee for the event in one embodiment.

[0163] The administration fees are determined by a percentage of the entry fees. The entry fee money is multiplied by a percentage and then deducted from the entry fee amount. If any money is to be added to the event, the added money is added to the entry fee less the administrative fees total in accordance to one embodiment of the invention.

[0164] The player entries are ordered in descending order after the handicaps in one embodiment and match scratch scores in one embodiment are calculated and a Fscore is assigned to each player participating in the event.

[0165] The Fscore is ordered in descending order and assigned a place finished number in one embodiment in ascending order. Dependent on the number of players in the event determines the payout amount and refers to a payout table calculated by percentages of the payout money according to the place finished by each player in accordance to one embodiment of the invention.

[0166] FIG. **28** shows query process for division calculations **2800** for server in accordance with one embodiment. A player is assigned a division upon registration. Each time a player plays a match and their average is calculated, in one embodiment the player's average is compared to the rules of one embodiment to determine and move a player to a new division if specific division criteria are met.

[0167] FIG. **29** shows administration query process **2900** for command button to calculate handicaps and rankings for server in accordance with one embodiment. The handicap and rankings command button is used to calculated handicaps and rankings at the close of each event in accordance in one embodiment. Once this command button is initiated, the server will recalculate and update player's handicaps and rankings for the upcoming events in one embodiment of the invention. Refer to FIG. **25** & **26** for calculations process.

[0168] FIG. **30** shows query process for creating and updating user profiles **3000** for server in accordance with one embodiment. A user registers or when an administrator registers a user the data is sent to the database in accordance to one embodiment of the invention. The database then compares the new information with the existing database and determines if the information is valid or duplicate in one embodiment. If the data is found to be new and valid data a user number is assigned and the data is stored.

[0169] FIG. **31** shows query process for administrator to create new event **3100** for server in accordance with one embodiment. In one embodiment the administrator has user rights to create new events.

[0170] In one embodiment the administrator creates new event, refer to FIG. **6**, the new data is compared and verified for no duplicates in one embodiment. If duplicate found error returned to user and data is not allowed. If yes, no duplicates, the money is assigned to the event and determines if there is an administration fee to be charged to the event in one embodiment. If yes, the percentage is multiplied by the entry fee amount and deducted from the payout amount. Dates, type, divisions allowed and cost per match are assigned in one embodiment. The information is used to compare new entries for the events to ensure that the event criteria are met in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0171] FIG. **32** shows query process for member biography **3200** for server in accordance with one embodiment. When requested by the user to view a profile the server returns the profile information in an assimilated paragraph format and displays the information. This includes records such as the player profile, current player statistics and all match results for player on record in one embodiment.

[0172] FIG. **33** shows query process for player statistic averages **3300** for server in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. To calculate player averages the player number is retrieved. Total scratch scores are added together for a specific number of matches and that number is divided by the specific number of matches used thus returning a players average used in handicap and average calculations, refer to FIG. **15** in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0173] FIG. **34** shows query process for editing matches **3400** for server in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. In editing a match the event details are retrieved

and existing matches for the event are returned that include the player's number and match number in the event in one embodiment. A player is selected and new match data is entered and sent to the server. The server checks to verify the status of the event in one embodiment. If the event is closed the new data is not stored and an error message is returned to the administrator. If the event is open the new data is stored in one embodiment. With the new match data event results, handicaps and averages can then be recalculated in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0174] FIG. **35** shows query process for user registration **3500** for server in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The user information is entered and sent to the database. The database then verifies no duplicate email or SSN to eliminate duplicate registration. If user information is validated, information and is stored in one embodiment on the server. Administration assigns user rights, assigns password for access to the user's profile, assigns division and sends email verification to user in accordance in one embodiment of the invention.

[0175] Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, a whole variety of alternate and/or equivalent implementations may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown and described without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. This application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of the embodiments discussed herein.

1. A distributed online tournament system and method as shown and described.

2. A computer-implemented method to organize, to manage, and to put on a tournament competition with geographically diverse participants as shown and described.

3. A system for implementing a network tournament competition, the system comprising:

a server in network communication with at least one approved location terminal, each terminal having a display and an interface, the server including:

a memory upon which is resident the following:

a players table having at least one player;

a tournament table having at least one tournament, each tournament having at least one tournament location associated with the at least one approved location terminal and a link to any participating players in the players table; and

an administration table including handicap and division definitions based on location equipment information associated with the at least one approved location terminal; and

a processor for calculating handicaps and division rankings based in part on information collected from the players table, the tournament table, and the administrative table generating in memory at least one relation between the participating players to determine a tournament outcome;

a network interface for communicating a player page, a tournament page, a location page, and/or a results page for display at each terminal, the player page, the tournament page, the location page, and/or the results page configured to allow a player selected from the player table to direct the processor to create a relation between the player page and the tournament page the location page, and/or the results page.

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