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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **SAMVO STRATEGIC HOLDINGS LIMITED** [GB/GB]; Clifton House, 75 Fort Street, George Town, Grand Cayman (KY).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **WANG, Fai, Wong** [CN/CN]. **CHONG, Man, Kit** [CN/CN]. **CHAN, Shung, Fai** [GB/CN].(74) Agent: **REYNOLDS, Julian**; J.D. REYNOLDS & CO., 1 Friary, Bristol BS1 6EA (GB).

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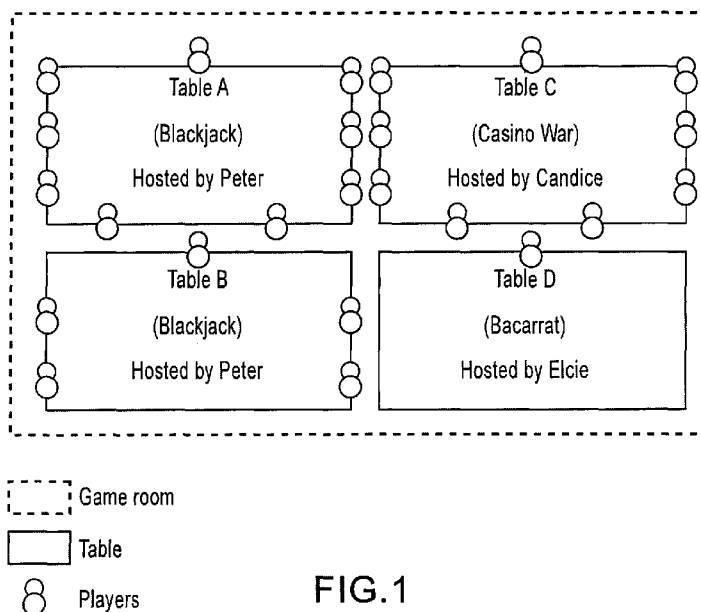


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: Structured peer-to-peer competition, such as on-line betting, can benefit from a method that permits a user to serve as dealer or house for a game room or table. A method can include creating a table. The method can also include appointing a first user as an owner for the table. The method can further include appointing a second user as a player for the table. The method can additionally include conducting a competition at the table. The method can also include distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.

TITLE:

Structured Peer-to-Peer Competition -

BACKGROUND:**Field:**

[0001] Structured peer-to-peer competition, such as on-line betting, can benefit from a method that permits a user to serve as dealer or house for a game room or table.

Description of the Related Art:

[0002] On-line gaming includes a variety of casinos and casino-like operations. In traditional on-line gaming, the customer or user serves the role of a player in the casino games. In contrast, the owner of the web site or other computer system serves as the house and/or dealer. In the case of certain games, such as poker, there was a way for players to compete against each other. However, in the case of games that are ordinarily played against the house, such as blackjack, roulette, craps, and the like, the interaction was limited to playing against the owner of the website.

SUMMARY:

[0003] According to certain embodiments, a method can include creating a table. The method can also include appointing a first user as an owner for the table. The method can further include appointing a second user as a player for the table. The method can additionally include conducting a competition at the table. The method can also include distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.

[0004] A non-transitory computer-readable medium, in certain embodiments, can be encoded with instructions that, when executed in hardware, perform a process. The process can also include appointing a first user as an owner for the table. The process can further include appointing a second user as a player for the table. The process can additionally include

conducting a competition at the table. The process can also include distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.

[0005] According to certain embodiments, an apparatus can include creating means for creating a table. The apparatus can also include first appointing means for appointing a first user as an owner for the table. The apparatus can further include second appointing means for appointing a second user as a player for the table. The apparatus can additionally include conducting means for conducting a competition at the table. The apparatus can also include distributing means for distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.

[0006] An apparatus, according to certain embodiments, can include at least one processor and at least one memory including computer program instructions. The at least one memory and the computer program instructions can be configured to, with the at least one processor, cause the apparatus at least to create a table. The at least one memory and the computer program instructions can also be configured to, with the at least one processor, cause the apparatus at least to appoint a first user as an owner for the table. The at least one memory and the computer program instructions can further be configured to, with the at least one processor, cause the apparatus at least to appoint a second user as a player for the table. The at least one memory and the computer program instructions can additionally be configured to, with the at least one processor, cause the apparatus at least to conduct a competition at the table. The at least one memory and the computer program instructions can also be configured to, with the at least one processor, cause the apparatus at least to distribute an award based on an outcome of the competition.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

[0007] For proper understanding of the invention, reference should be made to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0008] Figure 1 illustrates a game room according to certain

embodiments of the present invention.

[0009] Figure 2 illustrates a method of creating a room according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0010] Figure 3 illustrates a sequence diagram for an embodiment of the present invention.

[0011] Figure 4 illustrates a front-end for blackjack game settings according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0012] Figure 5 illustrates an example of a warning from a system in response to a user's settings for a game, according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0013] Figure 6 illustrates an operator's configuration menu for a game according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0014] Figure 7 illustrates a notification box according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0015] Figure 8 illustrates a method of game invitation according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0016] Figure 9 illustrates a method of controlling exposure according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0017] Figure 10 illustrates end of round checking for a banker, according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0018] Figures 11A and 11B illustrate a state diagram for a baccarat game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0019] Figure 12 illustrates a state diagram for a baccarat game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0020] Figures 13A and 13B illustrate a state diagram of a blackjack game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0021] Figure 14 illustrates a state diagram of a blackjack game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0022] Figures 15A and 15B illustrate a state diagram of a casino war game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0023] Figure 16 illustrates a state diagram of a casino war game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0024] Figure 17 illustrates a state diagram of a fight the landlord game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0025] Figure 18 illustrates a state diagram of a fight the landlord game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0026] Figures 19A and 19B illustrate a state diagram of a roulette game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0027] Figure 20 illustrates a state diagram of a roulette game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0028] Figures 21A and 21B illustrate a state diagram of a Sic Bo game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0029] Figure 22 illustrates a state diagram of a Sic Bo game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0030] Figure 23 illustrates the betting and settlement flow in a plurality of currencies in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0031] Figure 24 illustrates a gaming platform flow in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0032] Figure 25 illustrates a method according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0033] Figure 26 illustrates a system according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S):

[0034] Certain embodiments of the present invention provide a new

way of game play where customers can choose to be the banker or the player on a game table. A commission rebate mechanism in the game rules can allow competition amongst different game tables, competition between the banker and the player(s), and – at the same time – the players could gain an advantage over traditional casino game play. Thus, not only can a user have the opportunity to experience being a banker, but the rebate setting also creates a self-sustained market place.

[0035] In certain embodiments, an online casino allows individual customers to create/ manage own virtual casino tables online within a game room. This game room can be a website that has one or more tables that are created by individual customers.

[0036] Thus, the game room can be treated as a container that contains all gaming activities/ tables created by individual customers. Each of the customers may be entitled to host a game room. Alternatively, only a subset of customers may be entitled to host a game room. Multiple tables can be found within a single game room, and a system or website may include multiple game rooms. Tables within the game rooms can be hosted either by the customers or by operators.

[0037] Figure 1 illustrates a game room according to certain embodiments of the present invention. The game room shown in Figure 1 has four tables (A-D). This is just one example, as the number of tables can be varied. Table A is a table for Blackjack and is hosted by Peter. It has one host, as well as eight players. Table B is the same as Table A, but there are only four players in addition to the host. Table C is for Casino War and is hosted by Candice. Table D is for Baccarat and is hosted by Elcie.

[0038] Although they have similar characteristics, Table A and Table B are two unique tables of Blackjack. Peter, the dealer for both games, is a customer who owns this game room. Although in this case the dealer is an individual player, multiple players or a consortium could partner to own the table and serve as the dealer. Although Peter is designated as the “dealer,” the

actual dealing of cards to the players may be controlled by a machine that is outside the control of Peter.

[0039] Each of the tables in Figure 1 could have 1-8 players. However, this number of players can be further varied, depending – for example – on the game to be played. Moreover, players in each of these tables could be different or the same. Thus, for example, a single player could play at all four tables, or only at a subset (including one) table.

[0040] Table C and Table D are tables operated by other customers in the website. Alternatively, Table C and Table D can be operated by a same customer who is using a pseudonym in order to conceal his identity from other customers.

[0041] In addition to operating the tables, Peter may own the game room itself. There is no requirement, however, that Peter both own the game room and operate a table in the room. For example, Peter may only own the game room and others may operate tables, or the game room can be created by the system and Peter can only own a table as the dealer for that table. In each game room, a customer can create new tables or join new games. In certain embodiments, a game room is owned by a particular user and only that user can create tables in that particular room.

[0042] In summary, each of the customers may be entitled to own one game room. Within the room, they will see all the gaming activities, and they will be able to select a game for participation.

[0043] With above-mentioned design, the system can allow numerous (for example, thousands of) tables to be operated simultaneously online. Figure 2 illustrates a method of creating a room according to certain embodiments of the present invention.

[0044] As shown in Figure 2, at 210, a registered customer can log in to the website. Next, at 215, each of the customers can have a wallet that is used in connection with processing all transactions (funds in/out, settlement, and the like). To create a table, customers can deposit money to fulfill an exposure

limit. The exposure limit can control what kinds of rooms or tables the customer can own, and the specific rules for such rooms or tables.

[0045] At 220, the customer can start up a game room for hosting tables. Then, at 225, the customer can choose which game(s) are to be hosted.

The customer, at 230, can set exposure limits and other business parameters. Specifically, for each of the virtual tables, there is an exposure limit, which may be a compulsory configuration parameter to be set up by the table owner.

This limit can protect table owners from suffering losses that they could not afford. Certain other parameters can be configured as well, such as game rules (for example, number of wild cards, appearance of cards, and the like). Players can edit the look and feel of the game room, for example, the wall paper. In certain embodiments, players cannot configure the number of wild cards or the appearance of the cards.

[0046] At 235, the customer can create an invitation list of players to play in table. This is a social community features provided in the system. Each of the customers may be allowed to create a friend list containing the other customers on the website. When a customer creates a table, they can send out invitation to friends to notify them about the existence of table.

[0047] At 240, the system can double check a customer's balance before table creation to validate whether the customer has adequate funds to support the exposure limit they set.

[0048] At 245, once the table is up, the customer will be able to see it in the game room. Other customers in the website, depending on seat availability, will be able to join in.

[0049] Figure 3 illustrates a sequence diagram for an embodiment of the present invention. As shown in Figure 3, the service can be divided into community, chat room, and game categories, and can further be divided by client side and server side implementations. The client side can be running a Flash program or programs. The process flow for a player hosting a game can involve creating a game room, creating a game within the room, beginning a

session within the game, and entering the game room. The process flow for a player who is playing a game can involve joining a game session via a chat room session. This is simply one example embodiment of the present invention, as other processes for implementing a game room may be employed.

[0050] In certain embodiment, the customer or user hosting a table or hosting a room can set table business parameters. The system can allow users to create tables with customized settings or default settings. These settings may help dealers to provide different offers to attract customers. These parameters can include, for example, rebate to customers, maximum exposure, round time, number of skip turns to kick player, and number of betless turns. Under the category of a rebate to customers, a dealer can offer a rebate to players on a stake they place. The dealer can adjust this value within a given range that is pre-set within the system backend. Under the category of maximum exposure, the exposure limit for a table can be set on a "per round" basis. The dealer can adjust this value within a given range that is pre-set within the system backend, and which can be double-checked within the system backend. The round time can be a setting indicating how much time will be allocated per round. The dealer can configure this value to facilitate different customers, namely customers who want more time to play or who want faster play. The value can be adjusted within a given range that is pre-set within the system backend.

[0051] Under the category of the number of skip turn to kick players, a mechanism can be provided to protect the dealer, so that player will not be occupying the seat without any bet placement. Likewise, under the category of number of betless turns, the dealer can set the max number of consecutive rounds that a player does not place any bets. The dealer can adjust this value within a given range that is pre-set within the system backend.

[0052] Figure 4 illustrates a front-end for blackjack game settings according to certain embodiments of the present invention. As shown in

Figure 4, the settings can include a template for the table, which may provide a set of graphical user interface options, such as the appearance of the table, cards, and players. The template may also include other settings, such as controls over the operation of the game or default settings. The settings can also include a commission on a winning bet, a commission on a losing bet, a maximum exposure per round, and a maximum number of game players. The system may provide boundaries for these characteristics, and the user may select options within those boundaries. The system may also allow the user to select whether to allow splits, insurance, doubling-down, and surrender. Additionally, the game rules (for example, hard seventeen versus soft seventeen) can be altered. Finally, the waiting time per card and number of skip turns before kicking off a player can be further set by the user.

[0053] In the front end, dealers can configure the above-mentioned parameters within a certain range. This range can be controlled in the backend by the system operators.

[0054] Figure 5 illustrates an example of a warning from the system in response to a user's settings for a game. As shown in Figure 5, the system may check the validity of user inputs as to the settings. When the user inputs are outside a predefined range, the system may return errors as shown. In this example, the errors are that the user has set "Max Exposure (Per Round)" at 0, but the exposure must be greater than zero; the user has selected a "waiting time per card" outside of the range of 5 – 30 seconds; and the user has selected a "No of skip turns to kick off player" outside the range of 2 – 20 turns.

[0055] Once any errors are resolved, the game can be created. The game can employ a graphical user interface or a text-based user interface. In the case of a graphical user interface, a casino-style gaming table can be illustrated.

[0056] Figure 6 illustrates an operator's configuration menu for a game. The operator can configure the parameters for each of the peer-to-peer or player-to-player (p2p) games (such as commission payable to company,

maximum exposure limit, and game rules). Configurations can be saved as profile templates to facilitate different offers in the games. The configurations can be saved with names such as “high commission”, “low commission”, “high exposure”, “low exposure”, and customers can be permitted to choose these templates when they would like to create a new game table.

[0057] As shown in Figure 6, operators can see a list of template options to fill in. The operator can click on a game that they want to create, choose a profile from the drop down list and input the value and update.

[0058] The type option in this menu can refer to the type or name of the game. There may be a number of game specific settings, as different games have different payout settings and game settings. The host settings can refer to settings that can be changed by banker in the front end

[0059] The maximum exposure/ante amount can refer to the maximum amount that a banker risks for the round, inclusive of all commissions/the amount that all players have to reserve in the pot before the round start. The settings can be entered in various currencies, such as Great Britain Pounds (GBP), Chinese Yuan (CNY), U.S. Dollar (USD), Hong Kong Dollar (HKD), Japanese Yen (JPY), Singapore Dollar (SGD) Canadian Dollar (CAD), Australian Dollar (AUD), Norwegian Krone (NOK), and Danish Krone (DKK). Other currencies, such as Pesetas or Perras, can also be used. Alternatively, the settings can be entered with respect to points.

[0060] There can be three fields under the maximum exposure/ante amount: default, which can be a preset number for front end user (changeable from the front end); min, which can be a minimum number that the user can fill in from front end (display only, rather than being user-changeable, in front end); max, which can be a maximum number that the user can fill in from the front end (display only, rather than being user-changeable, in the front end)

[0061] Additionally, there can be setting for banker to player commission (player wins), which can be a percentage that the banker will pay to the player from the player's stake when player win the bet. Under this

option, the default is a preset commission rate for front end user, the “min” is a minimum commission rate that user can fill in from front end, and the “max” is a maximum commission rate that user can fill in from front end.

[0062] The setting for banker to player commission (player loses) can be a commission rate that the banker will pay to the player from the player’s stake when the player loses the bet. The “default,” “min,” and “max” settings may be similar to those for banker to player commission (player wins).

[0063] The setting for maximum players, can determine a number of maximum players that can be present in this game. This may refer to the number of active players, although additional inactive players can be permitted as observers. The default can be preset number for front end (changeable from the front end), whereas the min can be a minimum number that the user can fill in from the front end (which may be only displayed but not changeable from the front end) and the max can be the maximum number that the user can fill in from the front end (which may be only displayed but not changeable from the front end).

[0064] The settings can also include a setting for long wait time (check result time). This setting can determine the time gap from one round to the next round. The result of the round can be checked during this same time. The “default” can be a user-changeable value, whereas the “min” and “max” can be minimum and maximum values displayed to the user.

[0065] The setting for waiting time if no player is ready/wait for players time can determine the initial round time if there is no player ready or the wait time for a player to join the game. As with other settings, the values of “default” can be user-changeable, whereas the “min” and “max” can be minimum and maximum values displayed to the user.

[0066] The setting for waiting time when player is ready/ build hand time can set the new round time after a player is ready or the wait time for each player to think about whether to continue with the game. The “default,” “min,” and “max” can have the same sense as in the previous settings.

[0067] There can also be a category of company's setting, which are the settings for each game for the company. The risk factor setting can be an allowance rate for a player to place a bet that exceeds the system calculated max bet. The rake from the winning bets setting can indicate a percentage of winning amount that the company will take from each of the winning bets. The maximum rake amount setting can indicate a maximum amount of rake taken from winning players. For example, if the rake from the winning bets is set to be 10%, max rake can be set to be 10(USD). Thus, if a player wins \$300 for a certain bet, the rake taken should be $\$300 * 10\% = \30 , based on the percentage rake. However, the max rake is set to be \$10, so the final rake taken is \$10.

[0068] The banker to company commission (player wins) setting can set the commission paid to the company when player wins the bet, whereas the banker to company commission (player loses) can set the commission paid to the company when player loses the bet.

[0069] The banker to company commission offer max (player wins) setting allows the commission maximum offer for banker (to company). A value of 0 for this setting means that this feature is to be disabled.

[0070] The max continuous sit out for retail customer setting determines the maximum number of games before changing players, *e.g.* before removing players to permit other players to play.

[0071] Various mechanisms can be employed to help the table-owners to announce or broadcast the existence of their tables. A notification system can be a general communication system within the website that notifies a user about what is happening on the website, prompts the user to take new actions, acts as a user-to-user interaction channel, or some combination thereof.

[0072] Figure 7 illustrates a notification box according to certain embodiments of the present invention. The notification box can be displayed in a user's home page to notify the user about the latest event and/or to prompt the user for a response. Figure 7 illustrates a notification box in which a user

named "ctest008" has invited the user who is viewing the notification box to join a group called "test." The user has an option to accept or decline the invitation by clicking an appropriate button. The notification window also shows that previously ctest008 posted a message on a wall and that ctest008 had attempted to add the user as a friend and that this had been accepted by the user. These are just some examples of social interactions. Other interactions, such as challenges to compete at a particular table, are also possible.

[0073] Figure 8 illustrates a method of game invitation according to certain embodiments of the present invention. By using notification, a table owner can send out a game invitation to notify other users the existence of a table.

[0074] As shown in Figure 8, at 810, a user can activate a game room. Then, at 820, the user can choose a game for a virtual table in the game room. Next, at 830, the user who created the table can create an invitation list of players to play at the table. The list of players to invite can be drawn from a "friend list" of the user who created the table. Alternatively, the list of players to invite can be taken from a list of players on the system. Although the list can include a plurality of players, in certain embodiments the list can include only a single player. The players can be identified using a search engine in certain embodiments.

[0075] At 840, the table can be created, game invitations can be sent targeted user(s) through a notification system. Then, at 850, the invited players can receive notifications. Finally, at 860, the players can join the table. The players can join the table by navigating through the system to locate and join the table. Alternatively, the players can join by clicking on a button or link within the notification. The notification can be presented as a challenge, and the notification can express the terms of the challenge in terms of betting parameters, game, and the like.

[0076] Virtual table owner's protection, exposure limit, can be variously configured. A maximum exposure amount can be configured by the

table creator. It is the maximum exposure a dealer bears in each round of games. The maximum exposure amount can work in connection with an additional volume amount.

[0077] An additional volume amount can control the maximum amount that a player can place as a bet for a particular selection at a particular time. This amount can be calculated on an on-going or real time basis, based on the risk of each of the selections of the player.

[0078] Figure 9 illustrates a method of controlling exposure according to certain embodiments of the present invention. As shown in Figure 9, a starting point, at 910, may be that the system is waiting for a bet. Then, at 920, a bet can be offered, and the system can check whether the bet amount is ok. In particular, the additional volume due to this bet can be calculated. If the bet amount is ok, then the system can permit the bet to be placed, and the system can update the additional volume for each selection. The process can then return to, at 910, waiting for a bet. If the bet amount is not ok, the user can be prompted, at 940, to place a bet within a limit that is based on the additional volume. Then, the system can, at 910, return to waiting for a bet.

[0079] To illustrate the operation of this method further, consider an example of a game of Sic Bo. The settings can be as follows: max exposure: \$1000, number of player: 1. To simplify the example, Sic Bo will be simplified so that only three selections are possible in the game, namely, "Big", payout = 1, "Small", payout = 1, and "1", payout = 1.

[0080] If the player attempts to place a \$1100 bet on "Big" with the above-described settings, the system will prompt the user that this bet will not be put through, as it exceeds the max exposure for the dealer (\$1000). Alternatively, if the player attempts to place a \$900 bet on "Big," the bet may be placed successfully. The dealer will bear a \$900 risk for this bet. The additional volume for "Big" is now \$100. This implies that the dealer can still accept \$100 more for "Big." However, the additional volume for "Small" is now \$1900. This is because a bet with "Small" has a hedging effect with

respect to the bet on “Big.”

[0081] If, after the first bet is placed above, a player attempts to place a bet for \$2000 for “Small,” the system can prompt to user that this bet will not be put through, as it exceeds the maximum exposure for the dealer (which is \$1000). On the other hand, if instead the player attempts to place a \$1900 bet on “Small,” the bet can be placed successfully. The dealer will now bear a \$1900 risk for this bet. Moreover, the additional volume for “Small” is now \$0, which implies that the dealer cannot accept any more bets for “Small.” However, the additional volume for “Big” is now \$1000. This is because the bet on “Small” has a hedging effect with respect to “Big.”

[0082] In this example, no more bets are placed, and a time to place additional bets expires. Then the dice are rolled. If the result is 2, 2, 2 (a “Small” outcome), then the dealer’s overall profit/loss (P/L) can be calculated based on the fact that the dealer will win the amount that the player bet on big = \$900 and the dealer will lose the amount that the player bet on small = \$1900. Thus, the overall P/L = \$900-\$1900 = -\$1000, which does not exceed the maximum exposure limit.

[0083] The system can facilitate table owners’ operation of their respective tables. Such facilitation may reduce the effort and monitoring required of the table owner. The table owner can let the system automatically continue with new rounds, as long as there are sufficient funds, and can let the system complete and automatically settle a running game in case of an accidental disconnection. The system can also allow the table owner to resume a disconnected table in a given timeframe to continue the operations.

[0084] A game room can be closed in various ways. For example, a user can click “log out” or otherwise log out of the system, a user can close a browser or otherwise unexpectedly disconnect from the system, and a user can manually close a specific game.

[0085] When a banker logs out, the system can check whether there are any existing games running. If yes, the system can alert the user that the

game(s) will be closed. The user can then press “OK” – or take some equivalent action – and the banker can log out. If there are no existing games, the banker can simply be logged out. The same principle can apply to a user who is a player. The system can check for running games, provide an alert and wait for acknowledgment of the alert, finally logging out the user when either there are no running games or the user has acknowledged the alert that the game(s) will be closed.

[0086] When a banker closes a browser window or otherwise unexpectedly disconnects from the server, the current round can continue on. The game room can then be closed automatically after the round. Moreover, when the game ends, the system can send an alert to the players in the room, notifying them that the game has ended. The players can then click “ok,” or otherwise take action to acknowledge the alert and leave the room. Essentially the same actions can be taken when the banker manually closes the room, except that the system may further keep track of the fact that the banker closed the room.

[0087] When a user unexpectedly disconnects from the server, the system can autoplay for the user for the current round. For example, confirmed bets can remain effective, waiting for the results of the game. The user can then be removed from the table and room after the round is complete. Essentially the same actions can be taken when the player manually closes the room, except that the system may further keep track of the fact that the player closed the room.

[0088] If after a banker has left the room, the banker attempts to rejoin the room before the round has ended, the system can halt the process of closing the room and, if appropriate, remove the “manual close” status for the room. The same principle applies to a player who rejoins a round after having left the room.

[0089] If the banker or player logs in after having logged off, but while a previously existing round is still going, the system can prompt the user by a

pop up that states the current games that the user is associated with. The system can also auto-join the user to those games. The system can include an exception to the auto-joining for rooms that have been marked as “manual close.” The system can also or alternatively provide a link or other shortcut in the notification to allow the user to open the appropriate game room and/or table.

[0090] Figure 10 illustrates end of round checking for a banker. Initially, a game will be started, game playing will commence, and there will be generation of results and calculation as well as adjustment of balances upon completion of the game playing. Then, as shown in Figure 10, there can be checking for game room continuity.

[0091] For example, as shown in Figure 10, at 1010, the system can check for the banker's session. If `isAlive = 0` (meaning that the banker's session is not “alive”), the system can end the game at 1095. If `isAlive = 1`, the system can, at 1020, check whether the game has been manually closed. If `isManualClose = 1` (meaning that the game has been manually closed), the system can end the game.

[0092] If `isManual close = 0`, the system can, at 1030, check whether the user has enabled auto continue. If the user has enabled auto-continue, the system can attempt to next round without prompting user. If the user has not enabled auto-continue, the system can, at 1090, prompt the banker with a pop up message to confirm whether to continue. This prompt can have a time limit or timeframe within which a confirmation is to be made.

[0093] If no response is provided, or if the banker choose “NO” (or otherwise declines to continue), game room will be closed at 1095. The system can generate an alert to players in this banker's room, indicating that the game ended.

[0094] If, however, confirmation of continuing is made within any appropriate time limit, or if auto-continue is enabled, the system can proceed to, at 1040, determine whether a minimum balance is present in the banker's

account. If the minimum balance is not present, the banker can be prompted at 1080 to make sure that an adequate balance is maintained.

[0095] If a minimum balance is present, or once a minimum balance is present, the system can, at 1050, check whether the balance is lower than a maximum exposure setting. If the balance is lower than the maximum exposure setting, the system can send a “low balance” alert that includes an instant deposit button (which optionally can have a special color/highlight). Alternatively, the system can prompt the user to decrease the maximum exposure setting or the system can end the game and prompt user that his balance is too low for the maximum exposure setting. Thus, for example, when customer’s balance runs to below the maximum exposure setting, before the next game starts, customer will receive an alert to deposit; if the game is about to start, then the player will be forced out of the game due to insufficient balance.

[0096] Figures 11A and 11B illustrates a state diagram for a baccarat game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 11 specifically shows how a process involving a player (on the left side, *i.e.* Figure 11A) and a dealer (on the right side, *i.e.* Figure 11B) can flow from the standpoint of the client.

[0097] Figure 12 illustrates a state diagram for a baccarat game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 12 specifically shows how a process involving players and a dealer can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0098] Figures 13A and 13B illustrate a state diagram of a blackjack game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 13 specifically shows how a process involving a player (on the left side, *i.e.* Figure 13A) and a dealer (on the right side, *i.e.* Figure 13B) can flow from the standpoint of the client.

[0099] Figure 14 illustrates a state diagram of a blackjack game from a

server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 14 specifically shows how a process involving players and a dealer can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0100] Figures 15A and 15B illustrate a state diagram of a casino war game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 15 specifically shows how a process involving a player (on the left side, *i.e.* Figure 15A) and a dealer (on the right side, *i.e.* Figure 15B) can flow from the standpoint of the client.

[0101] Figure 16 illustrates a state diagram of a casino war game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 16 specifically shows how a process involving players and a dealer can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0102] Figure 17 illustrates a state diagram of a fight the landlord game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Specifically, Figure 17 shows a process involving a player only.

[0103] Figure 18 illustrates a state diagram of a fight the landlord game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 18 specifically shows how a process involving the player can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0104] Figures 19A and 19B illustrate a state diagram of a roulette game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 19 specifically shows how a process involving a player (on the left side, *i.e.* Figure 19A) and a dealer (on the right side, *i.e.* Figure 19B) can flow from the standpoint of the client. Although, of course, nothing is dealt, strictly speaking, at a roulette table, the owner of the table can be referred to as the dealer.

[0105] Figure 20 illustrates a state diagram of a roulette game from a

server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 20 specifically shows how a process involving players and a dealer can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0106] Figures 21A and 21B illustrate a state diagram of a Sic Bo game from a client side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 21 specifically shows how a process involving a player (on the left side, *i.e.* Figure 21A) and a dealer (on the right side, *i.e.* Figure 21B) can flow from the standpoint of the client. Although, of course, no cards may be dealt in a game of Sic Bo, the owner of the table can be referred to as the dealer.

[0107] Figure 22 illustrates a state diagram of a Sic Bo game from a server side according to certain embodiments of the present invention. Figure 22 specifically shows how a process involving players and a dealer can be managed from a server side, including the processes of game play and end game.

[0108] Other optional features may also be included. For example, table owners may be able to take bets with various different currencies at the same time. The dealer may be capable of seeing a player's bet amount in his own currency (even the player placed bet with different currency). Additionally, the dealer may be able to receive the winning amount in his own currency regardless of the currency in which the bets were made. Furthermore, the player may be able to receive his winning amount in his own currency, regardless of the dealer's currency.

[0109] These currency-related features can be implemented in various ways. For example, the player's bet can be converted to dealer's currency with the latest exchange rate. The latest exchange rate can be provided by the system before the start of the game. Thus, the dealer's risk is subject to the displayed value on the dealer's screen. From the standpoint of the player, the player's profit/loss is subject to the actual bet amount in the player's own currency.

[0110] The system can handle the exchange rate and differences induced by the exchange rate, and can collect from and pay to the dealers/players respectively. For the dealer's receivables/payables: all players' bets in their currency can be converted to dealer's currency rounded to the nearest 2 decimal points, and can be displayed to the dealer for the referenced stake. All receivables/ payables to dealer can be processed by system reference to this display value.

[0111] For the player's receivables/ payables, all players' can bet with their own currency, and their bets will be displayed on their screen. All receivables/ payables to players can be processed by system reference to this value.

[0112] Figure 23 illustrates the betting and settlement flow in a plurality of currencies in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention. As shown in Figure 23, at 2301, a player can place bet in the player's own currency. That bet data can be sent to the system which can, at 2320, take the bet in the player's currency and assign the bet an id (in this case, 0). The system can then send confirmed bet data to the player. At 2330, the player can see the bet amount that has been placed.

[0113] Meanwhile, at 2340, the system can take the bet data and convert the amount of the bet into the dealer's currency, rounding to the nearest two decimal points (d.p.) and storing this as another bet with another bet id (in this case, 1). The converted bet data can then be sent to the dealer. The dealer can, at 2350, see the converted amount as the referenced stake.

[0114] When the game is concluded, the system can, at 2360 and 2370, settle bet id 0 and bet id 1 with the dealer and player, as appropriate. The results of bet id 1 can be provided to the dealer and the dealer can, at 2380, pay to or receive from the company. Likewise, at 2390, the player can pay to or receive from the company.

[0115] Although the discussion above has primarily focused on traditional casino games, other games are also permitted. For example, games

that combine skill and chance such as Monopoly or Risk or even games that involve only skill, such as chess or racing games, could be hosted by a table owner. The owner of the system could divide a house rake with the table owner, or the owner of the system could simply charge a per-game fee to the table owner, which could be recovered by the table owner from a house rake of the winnings of the table.

[0116] The table owner or game room owner can additionally provide enhancements to the game room or table by creating skins or other visual enhancements to make the game room or table more visually appealing to potential players. The game room can be visualized either in an overhead view, as in Figure 1 of this application, or in a perspective or other view. The players can be represented by icons or avatars at the tables. Alternatively, the other players can remain anonymous.

[0117] There is no requirement that actual money be used for the games. For example, if desired, points can be used, or virtual money can be used. If virtual money or points are used, these awards can be redeemed in various ways. For example, if a game-room owner is developing a virtual casino, the points can be used to provide visual items to decorate the exterior and/or interior of the virtual casino, as well as items to decorate a table of the casino.

[0118] Figure 24 illustrates a gaming platform flow in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention. The gaming platform flow in Figure 24 divides customers into “agent customers” and “retail customers.” As shown in Figure 24, for an agent customer, the flow can proceed based by determining whether an agent has a zero credit balance. If not, the agent’s credits are reset. Then, when the agent’s credit balance is zero, the agent can start playing. After play is complete, the agent can settle with other agents.

[0119] For retail customers, the flow can begin by the customer accessing a URL (uniform resource locator). The system can determine whether player is playing from a valid IP address. If not, the customer can be

directed to play with points. If the customer is playing from a valid IP address, the customer can be directed to play with real money. In either case, the customer is presented to an appropriate interface (real money interface or points interface as appropriate). In the case of real money play, the system may check to determine whether a balance is zero. If a balance is zero, then the customer may be prompted to deposit or transfer funds. Once the balance is above zero, the customer can begin playing. The play can be interrelated with other products, such as sports betting products. When the play is complete, the system can re-check to verify that there continues to be a positive balance in the account. If so, then the customer can withdraw funds.

[0120] As shown in Figure 24, in the case of a player who is playing with points, if the point balance is zero, then the system can check whether a real money balance is zero. If not, points can be purchased using real money. If there is no real money, the customer can be prompted to purchase and deposit points using additional funds. Once there are a positive balance of points, the player can begin playing. Play can be interrelated with points consumption products, including – for example – role playing games. After each game, the system can reevaluate whether the points balance is positive. If it is, play can continue. Otherwise, the player can be prompted to purchase additional points.

[0121] Figure 25 illustrates a method according to certain embodiments of the present invention. A method can include, at 2510, creating a table. The table can be in a game room. The table can be one of several tables. Alternatively, the table can be the only table in the game room.

[0122] The method can also include, at 2520, appointing a first user as an owner for the table. The owner can be a dealer of a card game. The appointing of the first user as the owner of the table can be performed prior to creating the table. Thus, the order of the steps as shown should not be taken as a limitation on the method.

[0123] The method can further include, at 2522, configuring the table

based on instructions from the owner. The configuring the table can include setting rules for the competition. The method can also include, at 2524, setting a maximum exposure for the dealer. The method can additionally include, at 2526, monitoring and updating an additional volume for the dealer in connection with the maximum exposure.

[0124] The method can further include, at 2530, appointing a second user as a player for the table. More than one user can be appointed as a player for the game. The users can request to be appointed as players in the room.

[0125] The method can also include, at 2532, creating an invitation list of players for the table. The method can also further include, at 2534, sending a notification regarding the table to a friend of the first user. The method can additionally further include, at 2536, sending a broadcast notification regarding the table to multiple users. The method can also include, at 2538, displaying characteristics of the table to potential players, wherein the characteristics include a commission rebate. Other parameters can also be displayed to potential players. It should be noted that although these processes are shown below 2530, they may be performed before 2530. Therefore, the order of the steps as shown should not be taken to be limiting.

[0126] The method can additionally include, at 2540, conducting a competition at the table. The competition can be a game. For example, the competition can be a game of chance, a game of skill, or a game that combines skill and chance. The method can also include, at 2542, receiving a bid from the second user in a first currency. The method can further include, at 2544, converting the bid into a second currency. The method can additionally include, at 2546, providing the bid to the first user in the second currency. The method can also involve maintaining the bid as two bids, such that each bid separately settled with the two players after the competition.

[0127] The method can also include, at 2550, distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition. The award can be cash, credits, tokens, or any combination thereof. The method can further include, at 2560,

reviewing balances in the room and conducting a further competition if the balances meet a predetermined condition.

[0128] Figure 26 illustrates a system according to certain embodiments of the present invention. As shown in Figure 26, a system can include a server 2610 in communication with a first user terminal 2620 and a second user terminal 2630. The communication link can be, for example, the Internet. There may be more than two user terminals in the system. The first user terminal 2620 does not have to be similar in construction to the second user terminal 2630. For example, the first user terminal 2620 can be a personal computer, such as a laptop computer, whereas the second user terminal 2630 can be a mobile telephone, personal digital assistant, or the like. Other user terminal constructions are also permitted.

[0129] The server 2610 is shown as a single device but can also be implemented as multiple devices working in coordination. The server 2610 can be a standalone computer or a rack-mounted computer. Other implementations for server 2610 are also permitted. The server 2610, and each of the first user terminal 2620 and the second terminal 2630 can include at least one processor 2640 and at least one memory 2650. The processor 2640 and the memory 2650 can be variously embodied. For example, the processor 2640 can be embodied as a central processing unit (CPU), application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), or any other processing device. The processor 2640 can be implemented as multiple cores or multiple controllers working in conjunction with one another. The memory 2650 can be any suitable storage device, such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium. The memory 2650 may be, for example, a hard disk drive or random access memory (RAM). The memory 2650 can be embodied on a same chip with the processor 2640 or the memory 2650 can be embodied separately. The memory 2650 can be encoded with instructions that, when executed, cause the device in which they are incorporated to perform a method, such as the method shown in Figure 25, or any of the other methods described herein.

[0130] One having ordinary skill in the art will readily understand that the invention as discussed above may be practiced with steps in a different order, and/or with hardware elements in configurations which are different than those which are disclosed. Therefore, although the invention has been described based upon these preferred embodiments, it would be apparent to those of skill in the art that certain modifications, variations, and alternative constructions would be apparent, while remaining within the spirit and scope of the invention. In order to determine the metes and bounds of the invention, therefore, reference should be made to the appended claims.

WE CLAIM:

1. A method, comprising:
creating a table;
appointing a first user as an owner for the table;
appointing a second user as a player for the table;
conducting a competition at the table; and
distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein creating the table comprises creating the table in a game room.
3. The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the appointing the first user as the owner comprises appointing the first user as a dealer of a card game.
4. The method of any of claims 1-3, wherein the conducting the competition comprises conducting a game.
5. The method of any of claims 1-4, wherein conducting the competition comprises conducting a game of chance, a game of skill, or a game that combines skill and chance.
6. The method of any of claims 1-5, wherein the distributing the award comprises distributing cash.
7. The method of any of claims 1-6, wherein the distributing the award comprises distributing credits or tokens.
8. The method of any of claims 1-7, further comprising:
creating an invitation list of players for the table.
9. The method of any of claims 1-8, further comprising:
reviewing balances in the room and conducting a further competition if the balances meet a predetermined condition.
10. The method of any of claims 1-9, further comprising:
configuring the table based on instructions from the owner.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the configuring the table comprises setting rules for the competition.

12. The method of any of claims 1-11, further comprising:
displaying characteristics of the table to potential players, wherein the characteristics include a commission rebate.

13. The method of any of claims 1-12, further comprising:
sending a notification regarding the table to a friend of the first user.

14. The method of any of claims 1-13, further comprising:
sending a broadcast notification regarding the table to multiple users.

15. The method of any of claims 1-14, further comprising:
setting a maximum exposure for the dealer.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
monitoring and updating an additional volume for the dealer in connection with the maximum exposure.

17. The method of any of claims 1-16, further comprising:
receiving a bid from the second user in a first currency;
converting the bid into a second currency; and
providing the bid to the first user in the second currency.

18. A non-transitory computer-readable medium encoded with instructions that, when executed in hardware, perform a process, the process comprising the method according to any of claims 1-17.

19. An apparatus, comprising:
creating means for creating a table;
first appointing means for appointing a first user as an owner for the table;
second appointing means for appointing a second user as a player for the table;
conducting means for conducting a competition at the table; and
distributing means for distributing an award based on an outcome of the competition.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the creating means is configured to create the table in a game room.

21. The apparatus of claim 19 or claim 20, wherein the first appointing means is configured to appoint the first user as a dealer of a card game.

22. The apparatus of any of claims 19-21, wherein the conducting means is configured to conduct a game.

23. The apparatus of any of claims 19-22, wherein conducting means is configured to conduct a game of chance, a game of skill, or a game that combines skill and chance.

24. The apparatus of any of claims 19-23, wherein the distributing means is configured to distribute cash.

25. The apparatus of any of claims 19-24, wherein the distributing means is configured to distribute credits or tokens.

26. The apparatus of any of claims 19-25, further comprising:

list means for creating an invitation list of players for the table.

27. The apparatus of any of claims 19-26, further comprising:

reviewing means for reviewing balances in the room and conducting a further competition if the balances meet a predetermined condition.

28. The apparatus of any of claims 19-27, further comprising:

configuring means for configuring the table based on instructions from the owner.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the configuring means is configured to set rules for the competition.

30. The apparatus of any of claims 19-29, further comprising:

displaying means for displaying characteristics of the table to potential players, wherein the characteristics include a commission rebate.

31. The apparatus of any of claims 19-30, further comprising:

notification means for sending a notification regarding the table to a friend of the first user.

32. The apparatus of any of claims 19-31, further comprising:

broadcast means for sending a broadcast notification regarding the table to multiple users.

33. The apparatus of any of claims 19-32, further comprising:

limit means for setting a maximum exposure for the dealer.

34. The apparatus of claim 33, further comprising:

volume means for monitoring and updating an additional volume for the dealer in connection with the maximum exposure.

35. The apparatus of any of claims 19-34, further comprising:

receiving means for receiving a bid from the second user in a first currency;

converting means for converting the bid into a second currency; and

providing means for providing the bid to the first user in the second currency.

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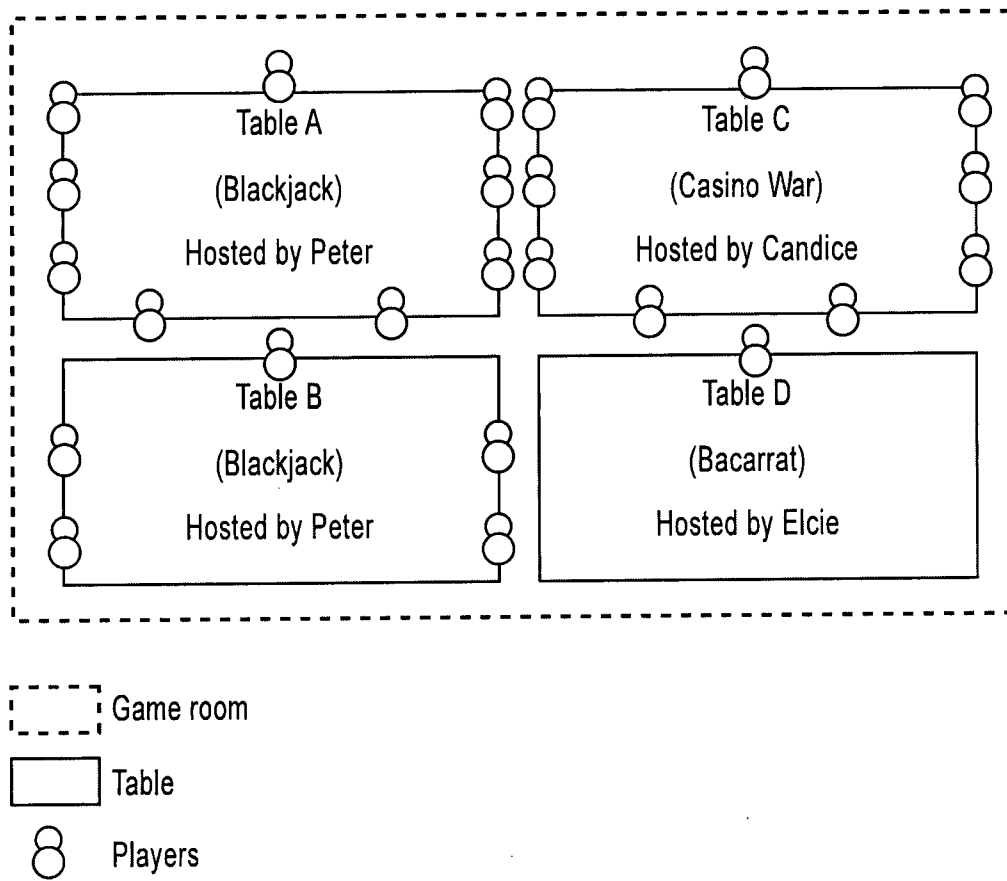


FIG.1

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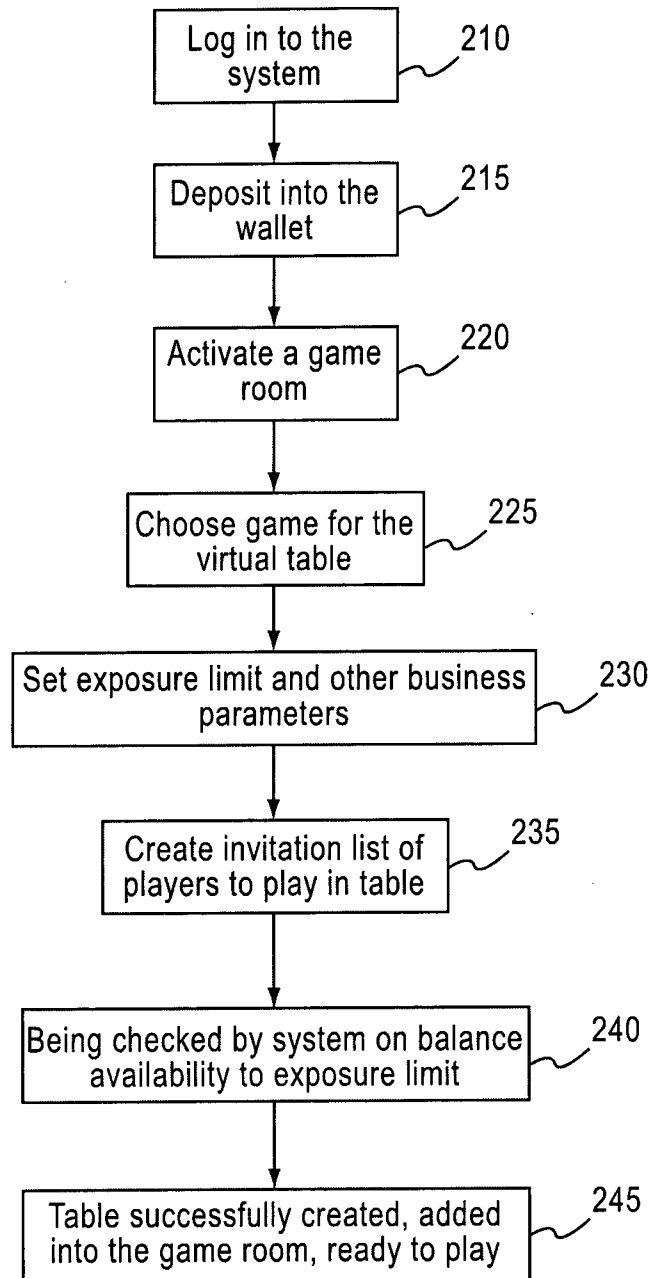


FIG.2

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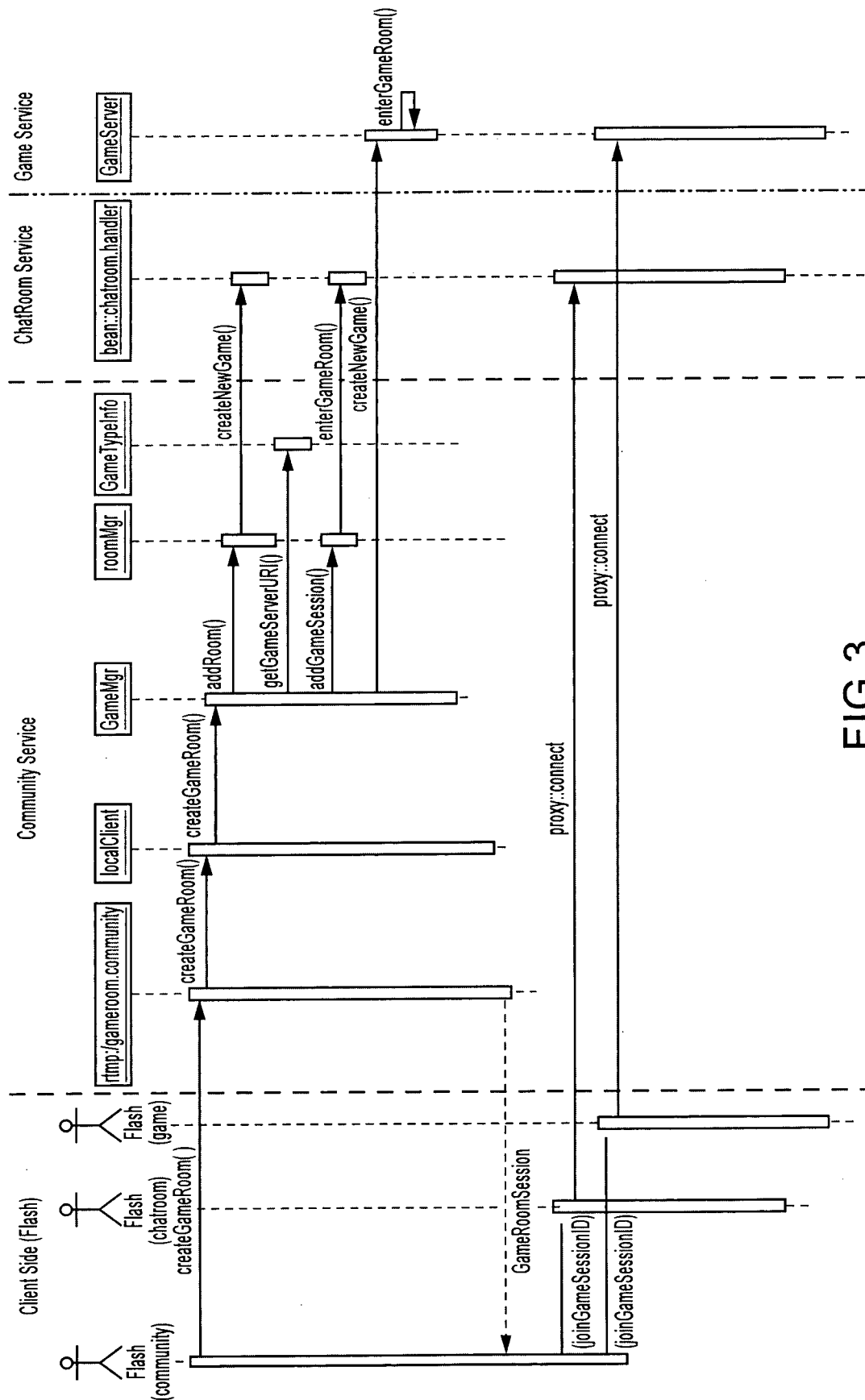


FIG. 3

blackjack game setting

select template

hoola rookie

commission-winning bet (for player)/(0-5%)

2.00

max exposure (per round)

20.00

allow split

yes

no

allow insurance

yes

no

game rules

soft 17

hard 17

no. of skipped turns to kick off player (0-15)

5

commission-losing bet (for player) / %(0-5%)

3.00

max no. of players (1-6)

6

allow double

yes

no

allow surrender

yes

no

round time / (30-90) seconds

45

ok

fyi: it is wise to read up on the details about the commission given to the hoola company under the rules section for the game. gaining hoola knowledge is key to becoming a real casino tycoon!

FIG.4

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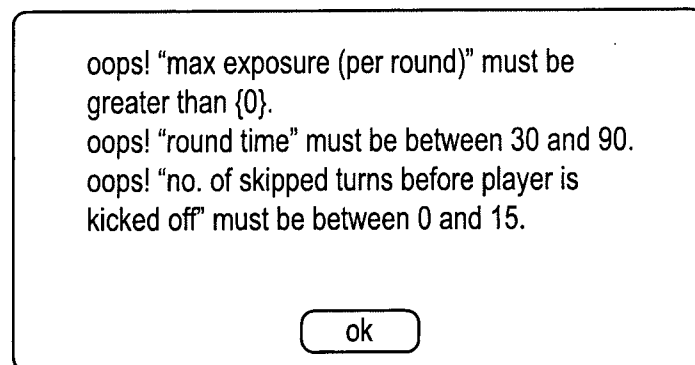


FIG.5

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Game --> View Configuration			
Select Game:	Blackjack	Template Name:	hoola performs
		Select	Return
Game Specific Settings (Payout)			
Normal Bet:	1.00	Max Rate Amount (CAD):	0.00
SidebetSuitKQ:	20.00	Max Rate Amount (HKD):	0.00
SidebetSuitBlackJack:	3.00	Max Rate Amount (USD):	0.00
SidebetSuitFirstTwoCards:	1.50	Max Rate Amount (Pesetas):	0.00
SidebetPair:	11.00	Max Rate Amount (CNY):	0.00
Blackjack:	1.50	Max Rate Amount (Peseta):	0.00
Insurance:	1.00	Max Rate Amount (AUD):	0.00
		Max Rate Amount (Perras):	0.00
Host Settings			
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (CAD):	Default: 330.00	Min:	33.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (HKD):	Default: 2,500.00	Min:	250.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (USD):	Default: 320.00	Min:	32.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (Pesetas):	Default: 2,500.00	Min:	250.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (CNY):	Default: 2,200.00	Min:	220.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (Peseta):	Default: 2,500.00	Min:	250.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (AUD):	Default: 350.00	Min:	40.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (Perras):	Default: 2,500.00	Min:	250.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (JPY):	Default: 29,000.00	Min:	2,900.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (SEK):	Default: 2,200.00	Min:	220.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (DKK):	Default: 1,700.00	Min:	170.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (SGD):	Default: 450.00	Min:	45.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (NOK):	Default: 1,800.00	Min:	180.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (EUR):	Default: 300.00	Min:	30.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (GBP):	Default: 200.00	Min:	20.00
Max Exposure/Ante Amount (PT):	Default: 2,500.00	Min:	250.00
Company's Settings			
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (CAD):	33,000.00	Max Rate Amount (JPY):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (HKD):	2,900,000.00	Max Rate Amount (SEK):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (USD):	220,000.00	Max Rate Amount (DKK):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (Pesetas):	170,000.00	Max Rate Amount (SGD):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (CNY):	45,000.00	Max Rate Amount (NOK):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (Peseta):	180,000.00	Max Rate Amount (EUR):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (AUD):	30,000.00	Max Rate Amount (GBP):	0.00
Banker to Company Commission Max Offer (Perras):	250,000.00	Max Rate Amount (PT):	0.00

FIG.6

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notifications(1) >cstest008

cstest008 has invited you to join
the groups: test

Accept

Decline

cstest008 has post a message on
wall.

cstest008 want to add you as a
friend.

You Accepted~

FIG.7

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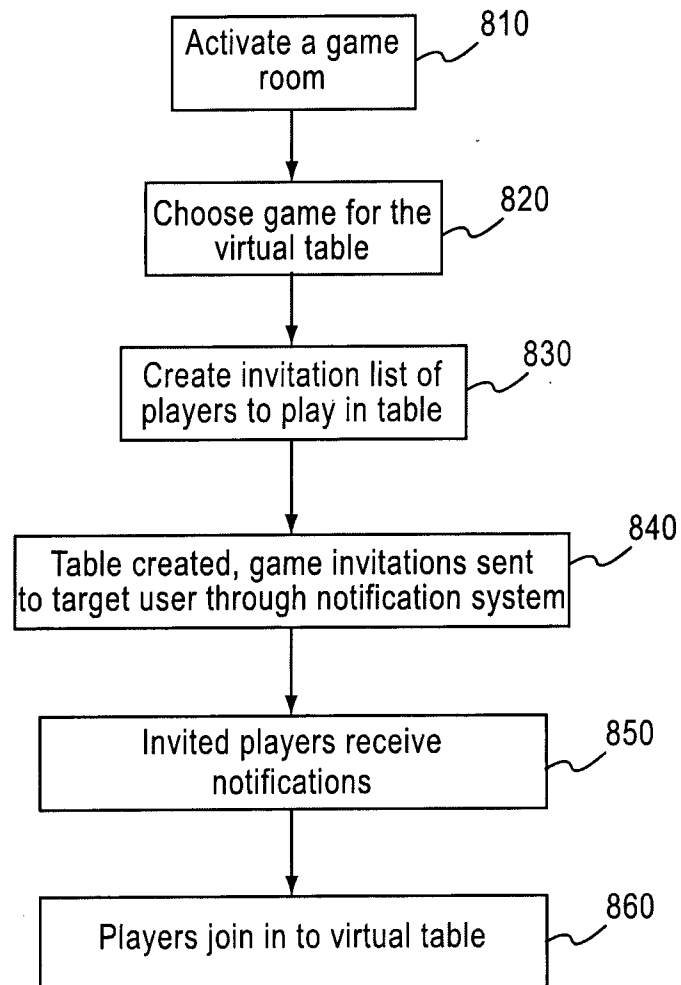


FIG.8

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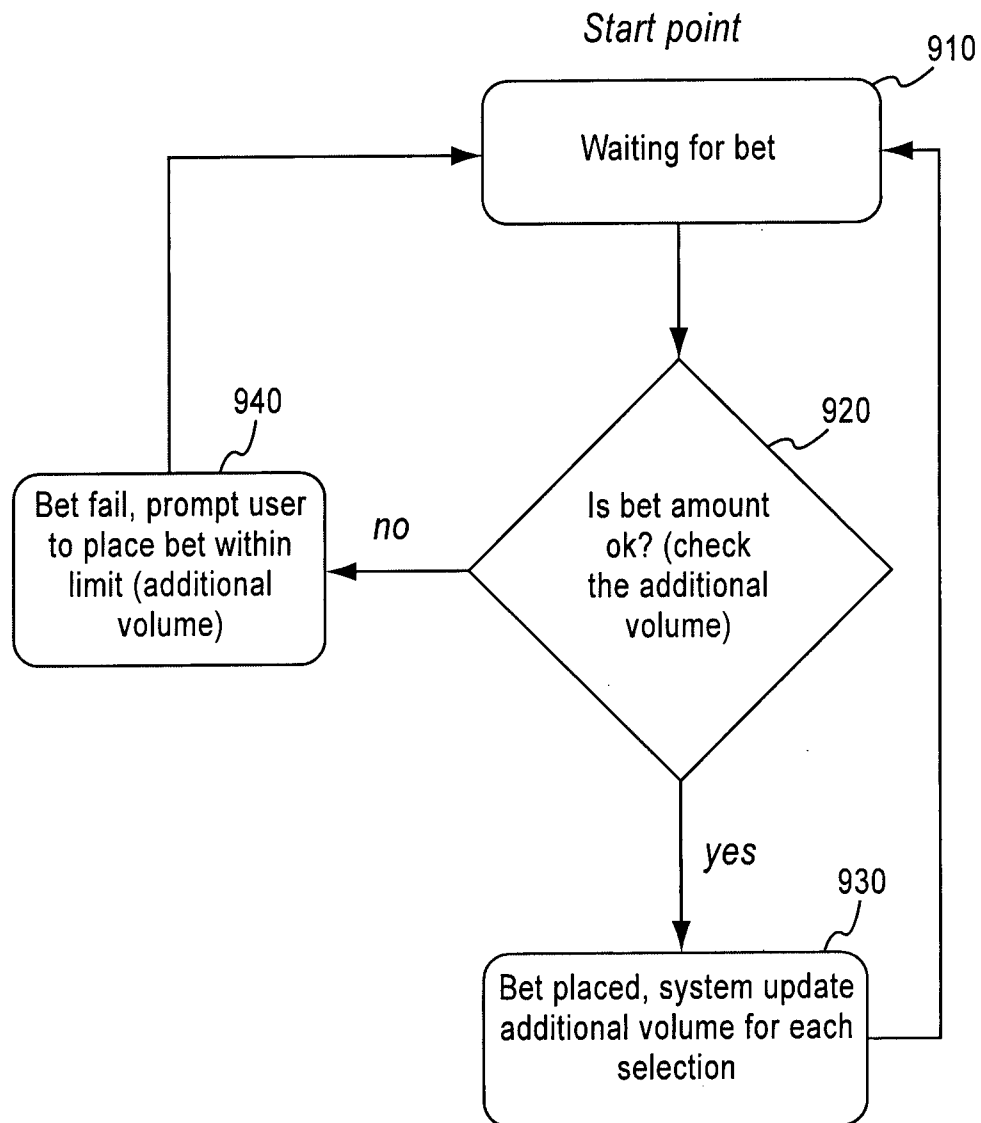


FIG.9

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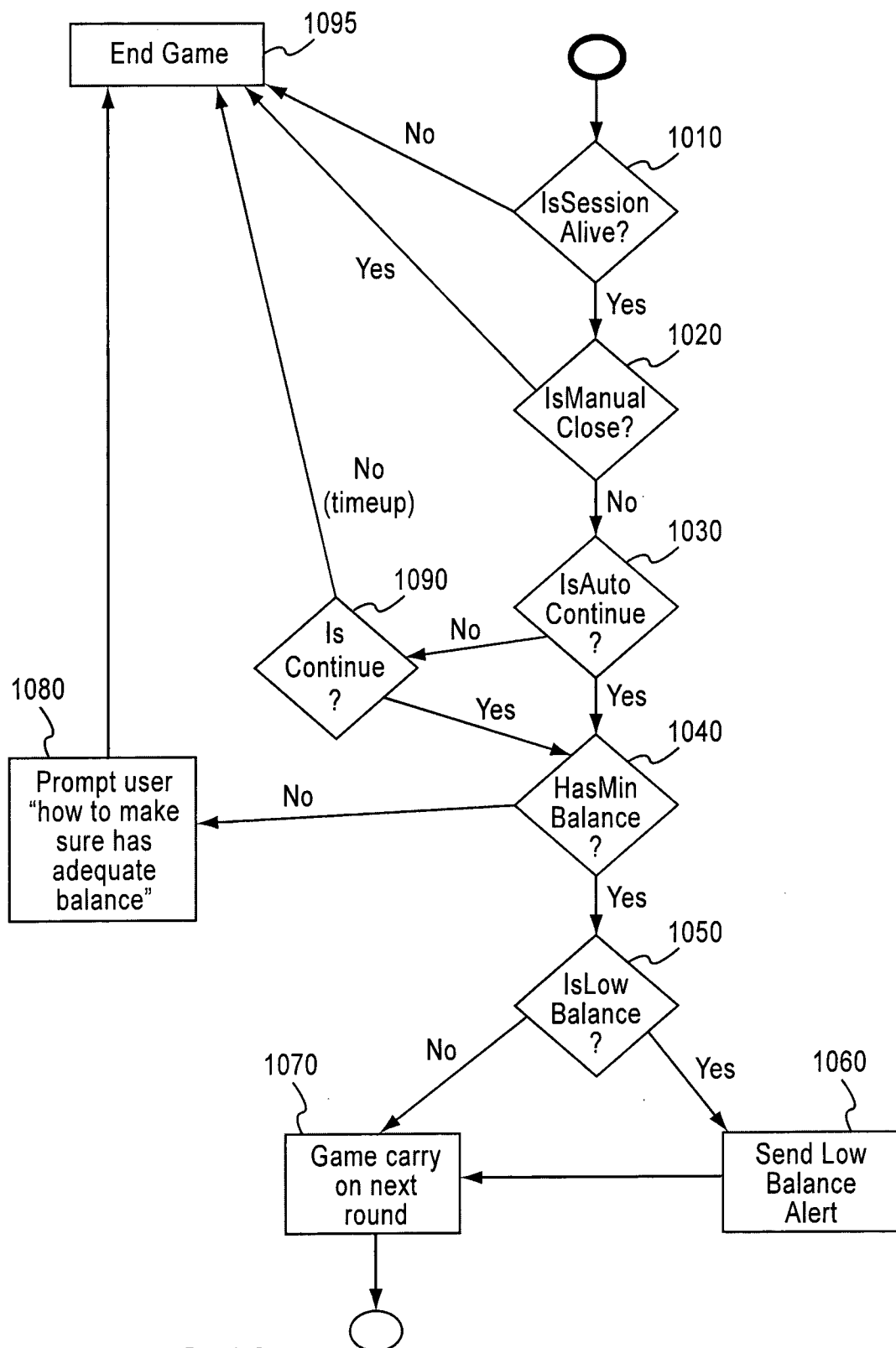


FIG.10

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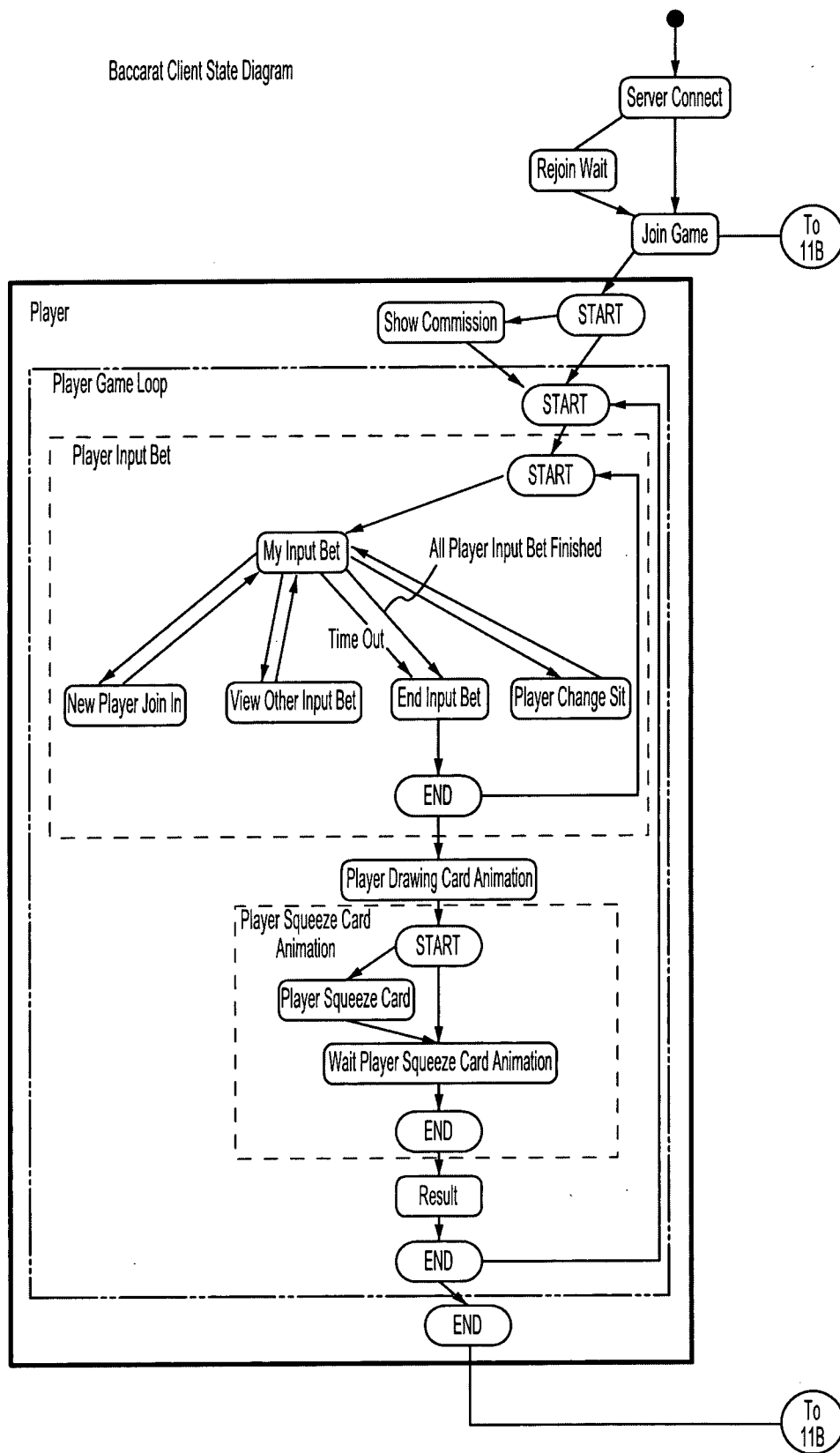


FIG.11A

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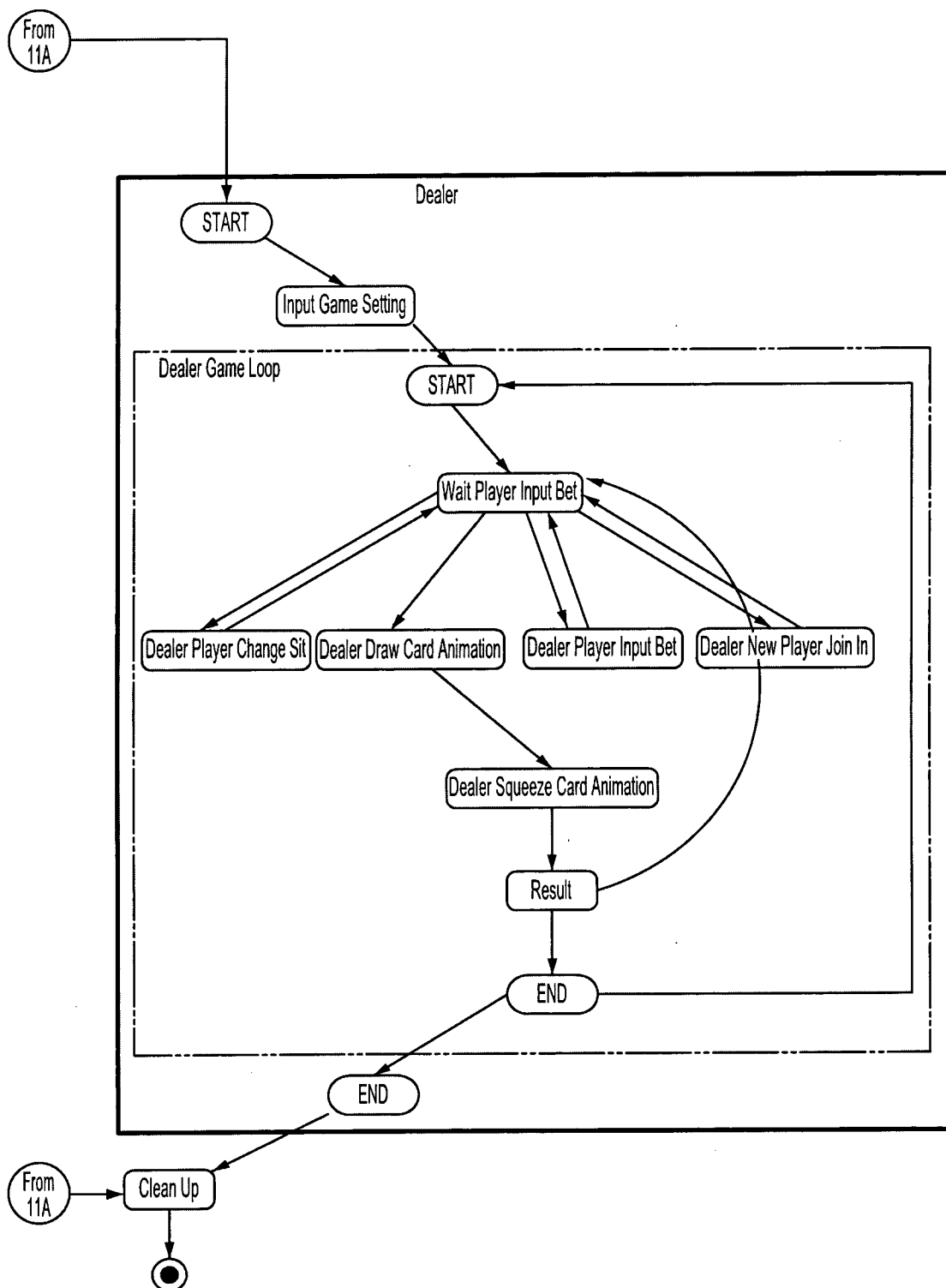


FIG. 11B

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Baccarat Server State Diagram

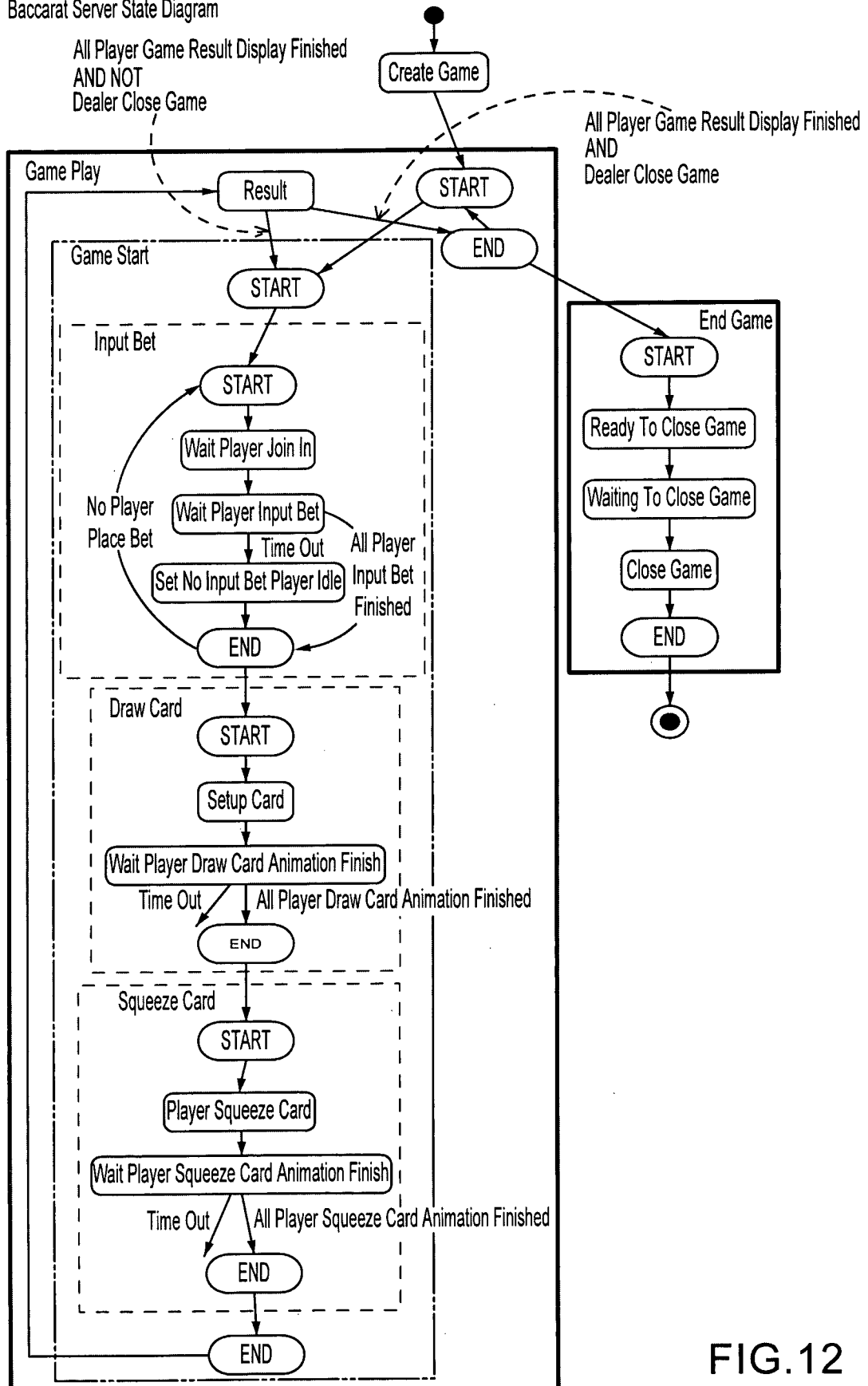


FIG.12

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Black Jack Client State Diagram

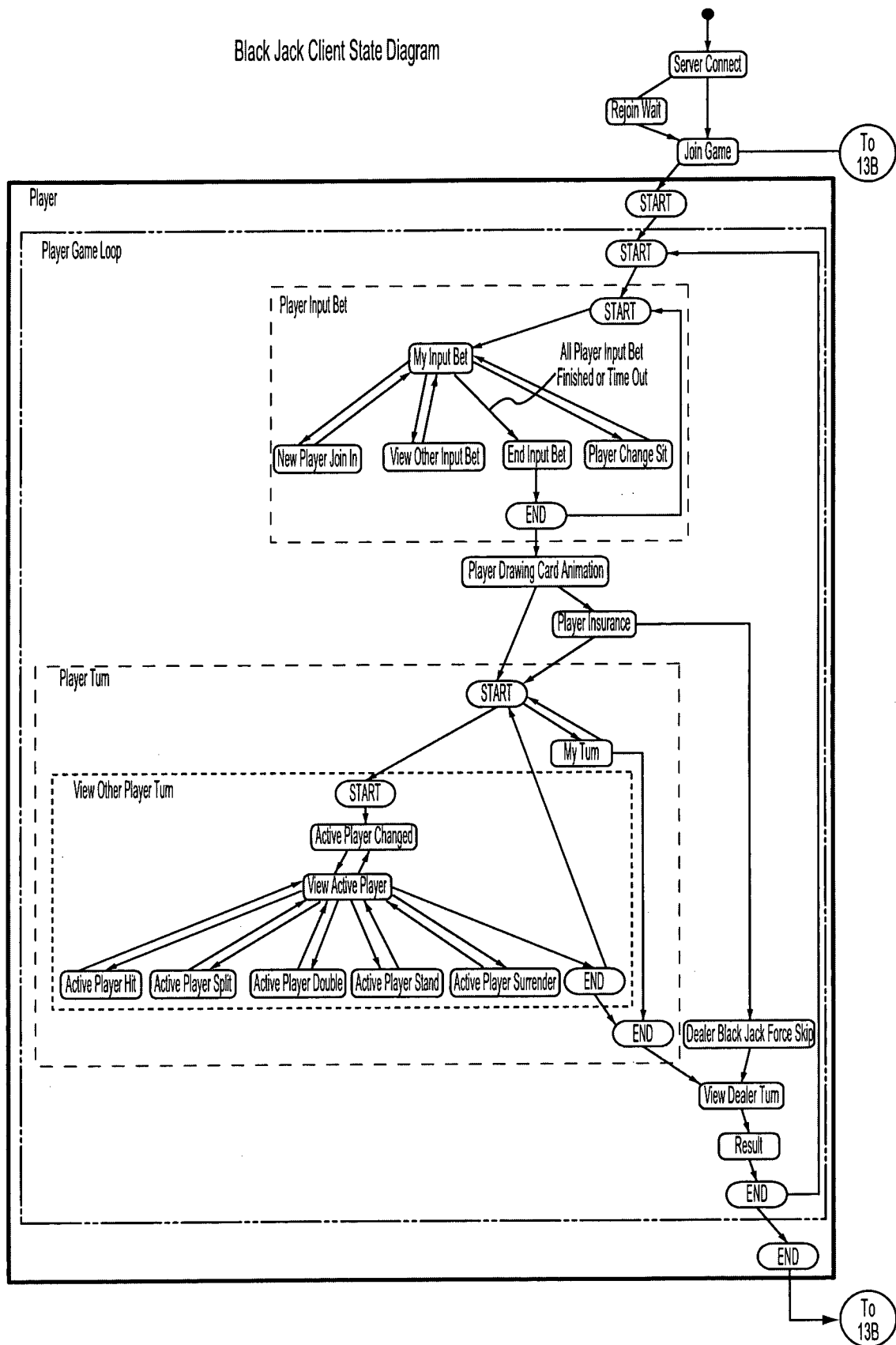


FIG.13A

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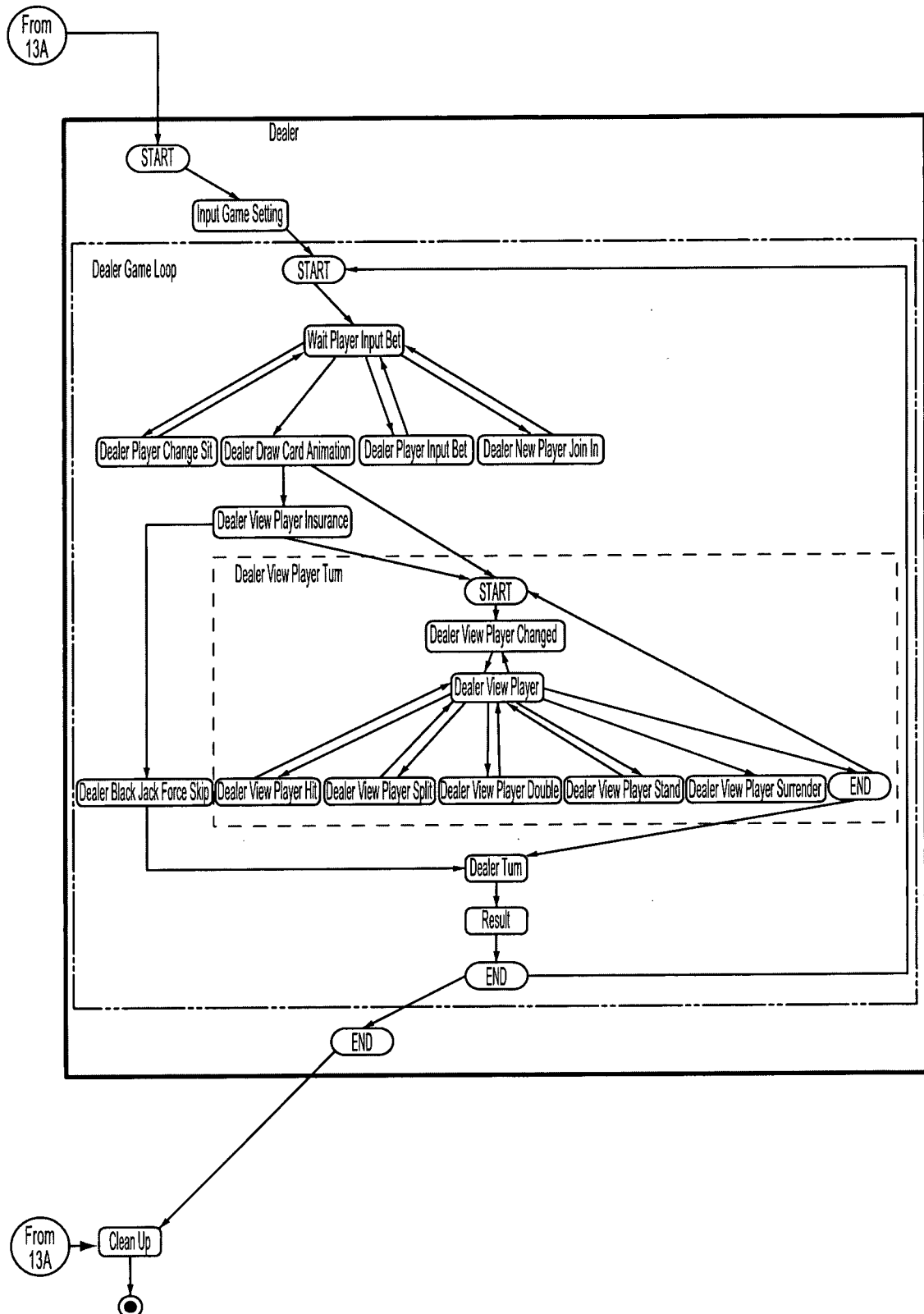


FIG.13B

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Black Jack Server State Diagram

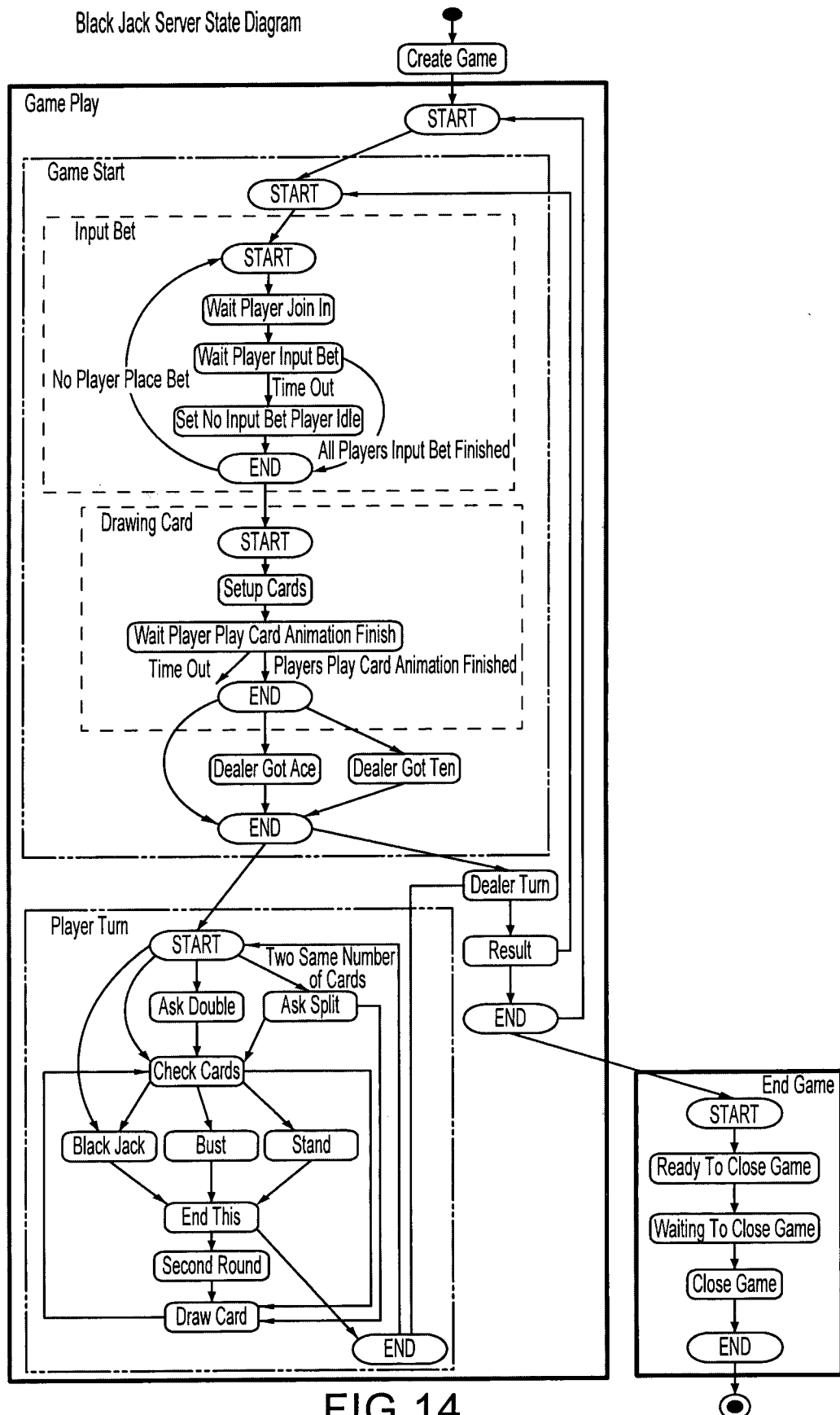


FIG.14

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Casino War Client State Diagram

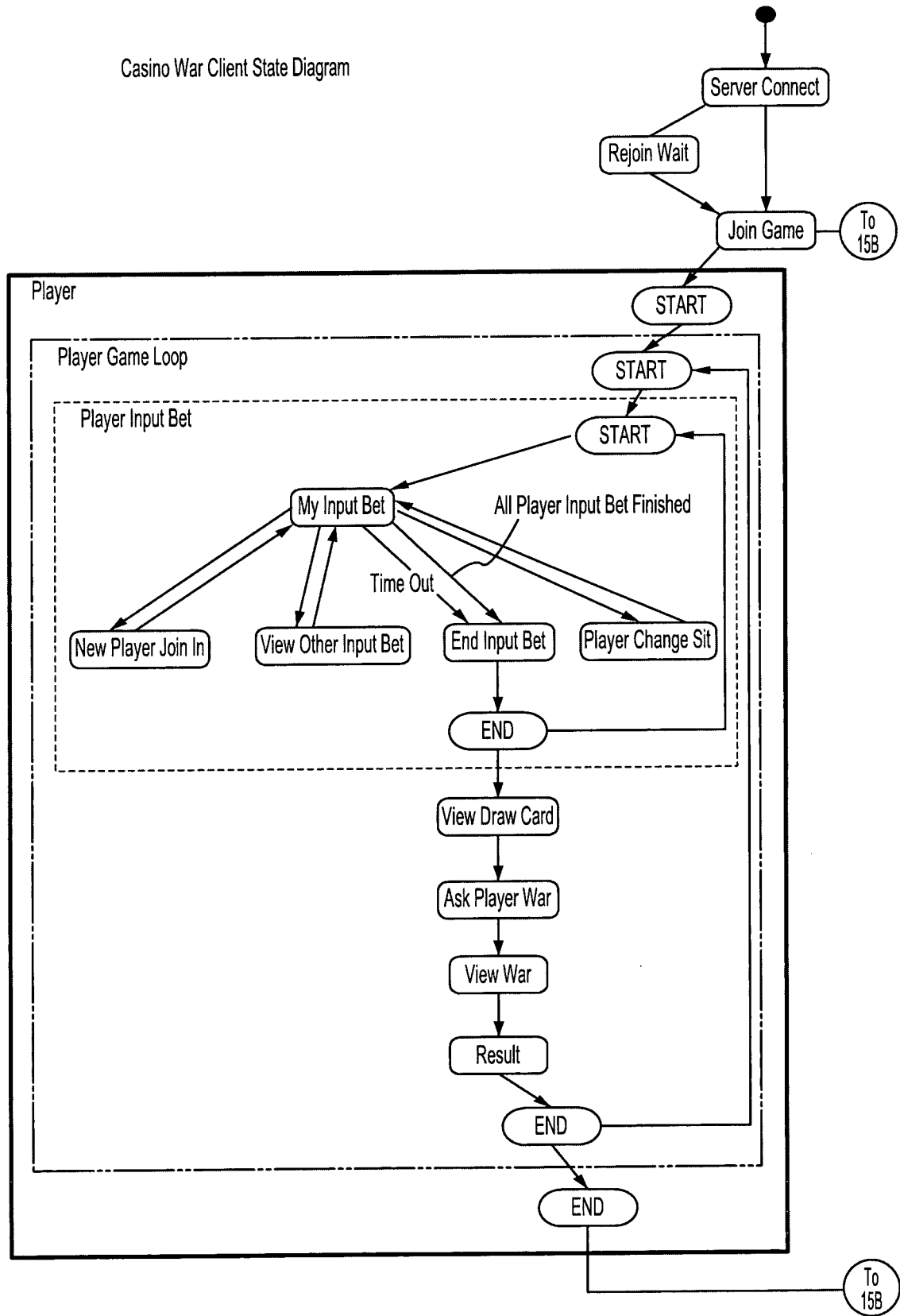


FIG.15A

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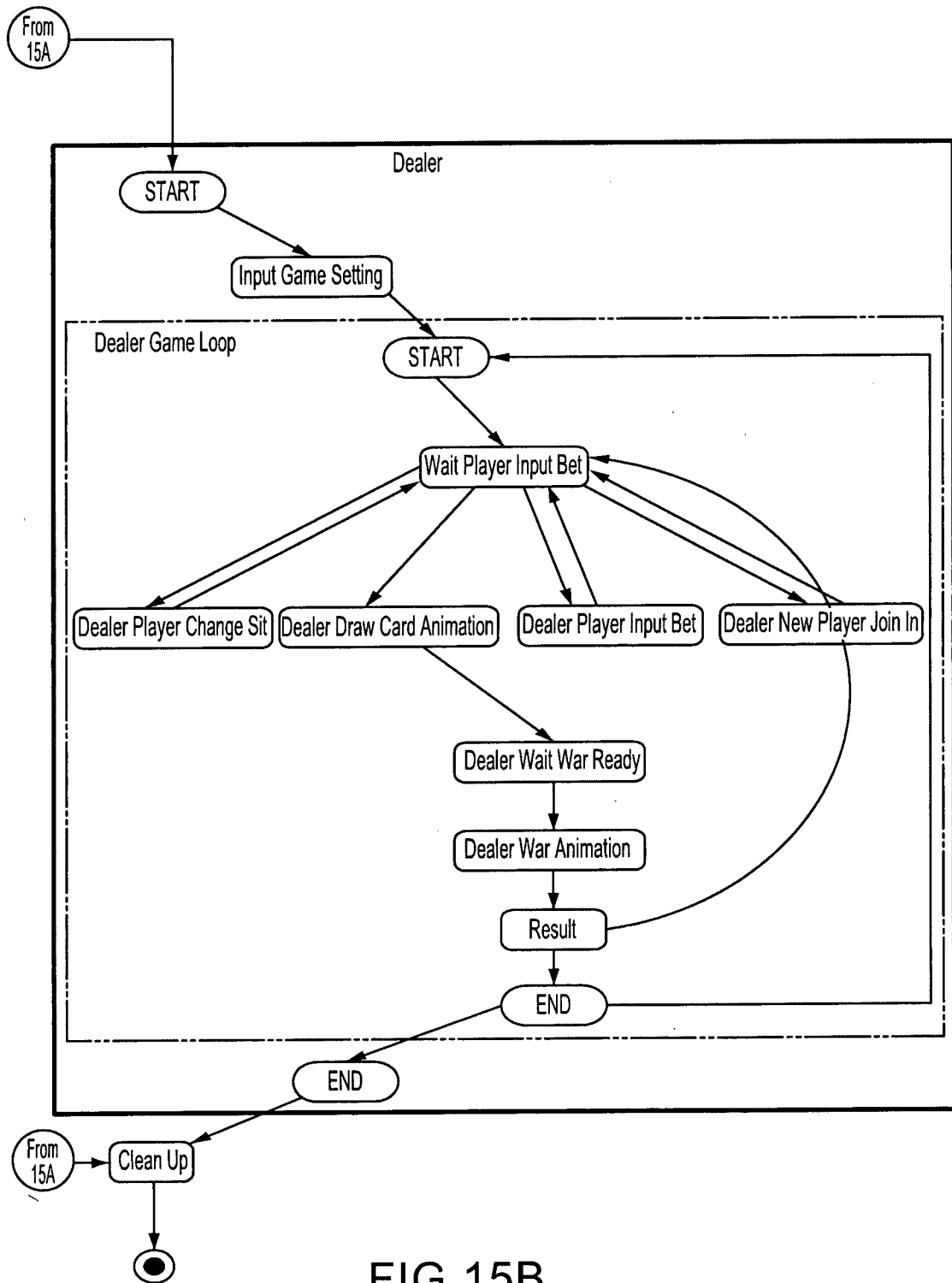


FIG.15B

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Casino War Server State Diagram

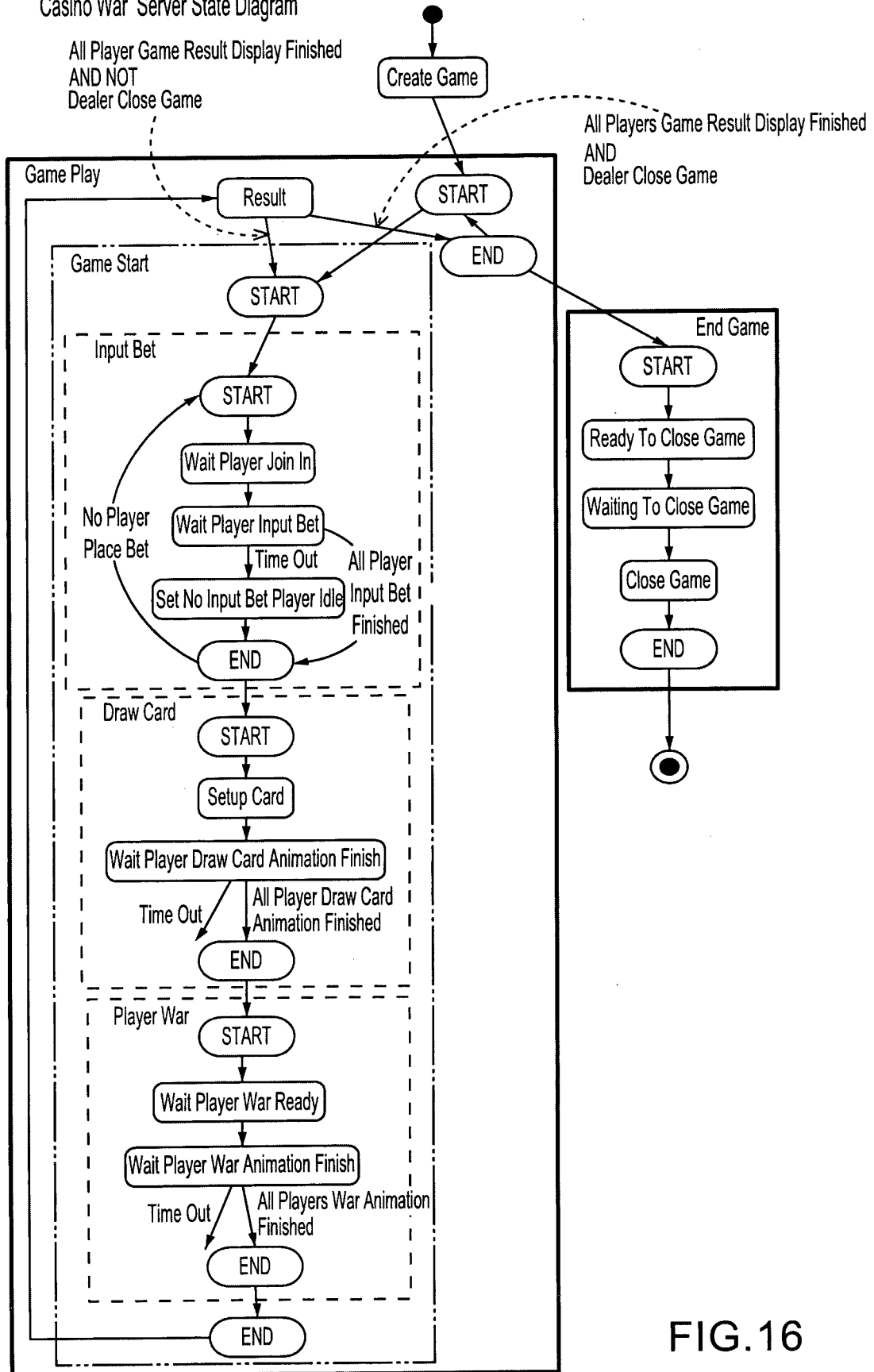


FIG.16

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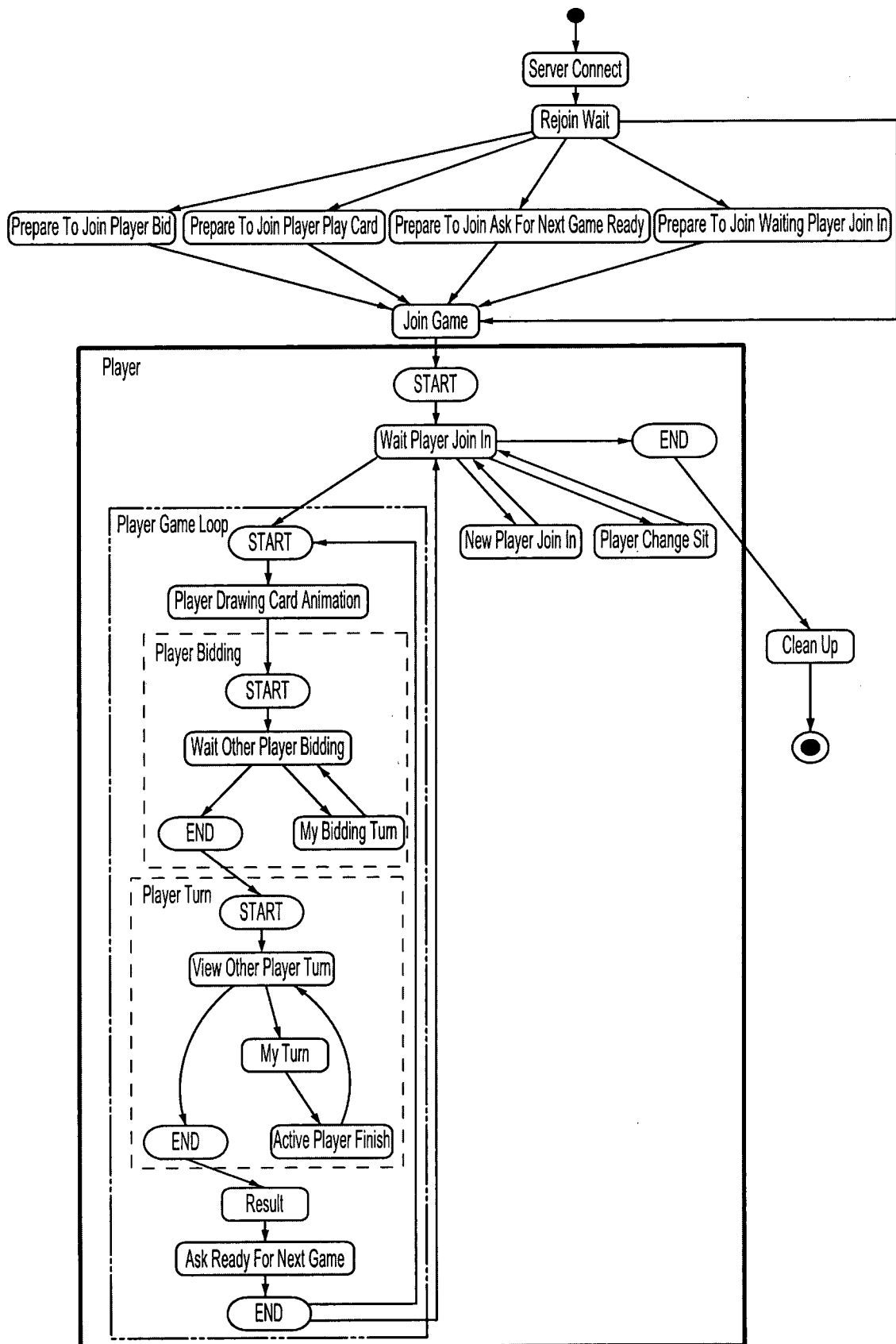


FIG.17

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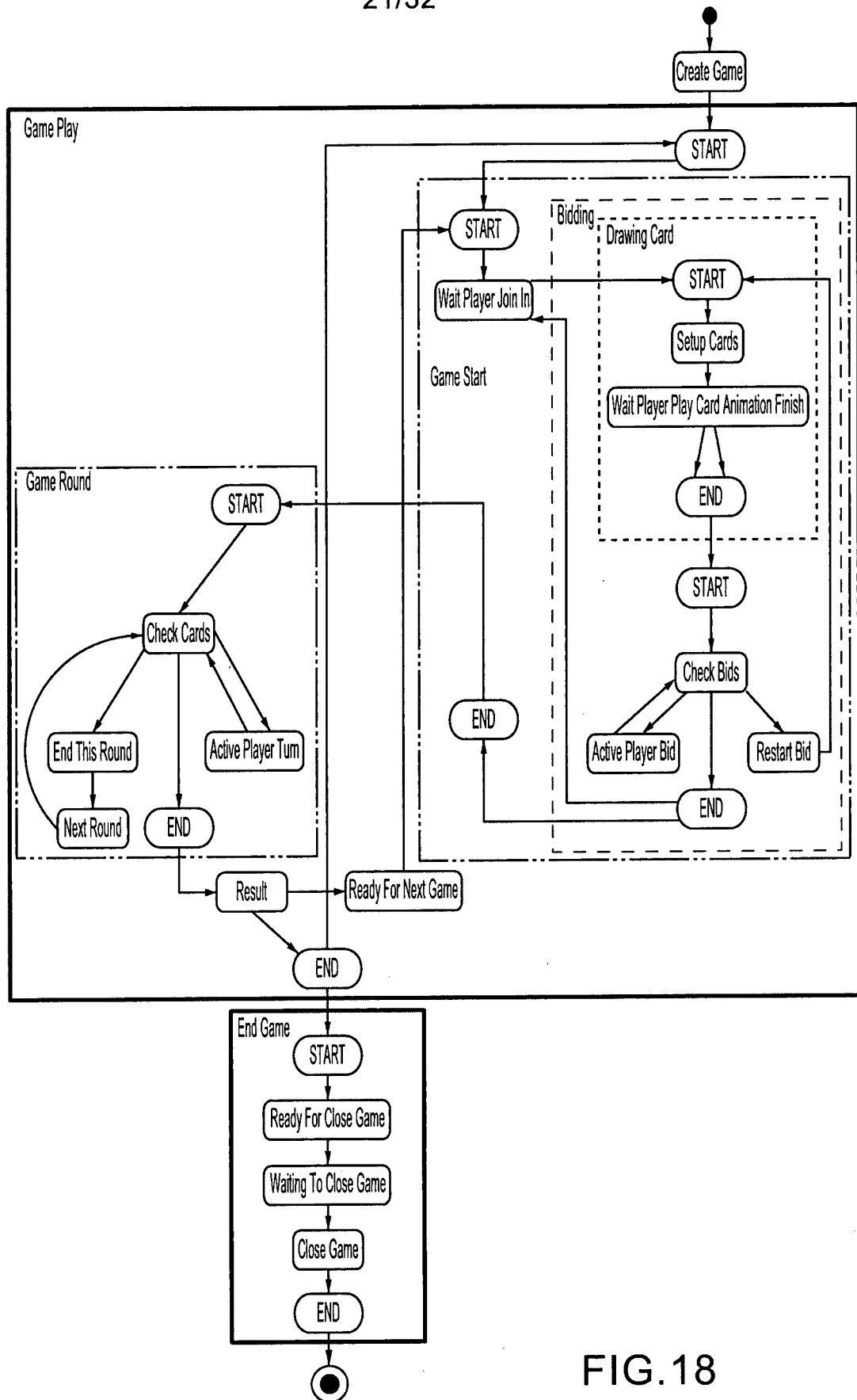


FIG.18

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Roulette Server State Diagram

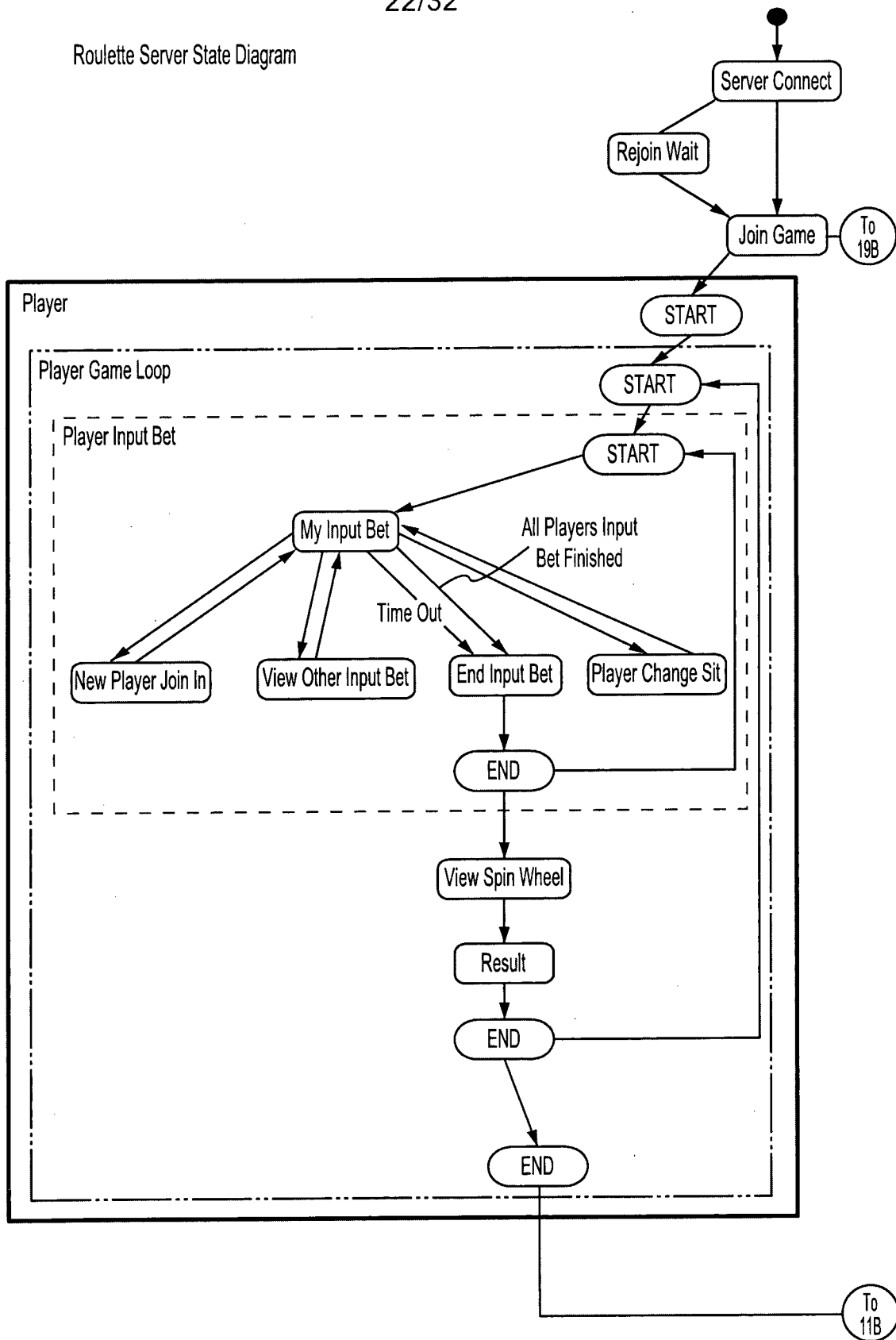


FIG.19A

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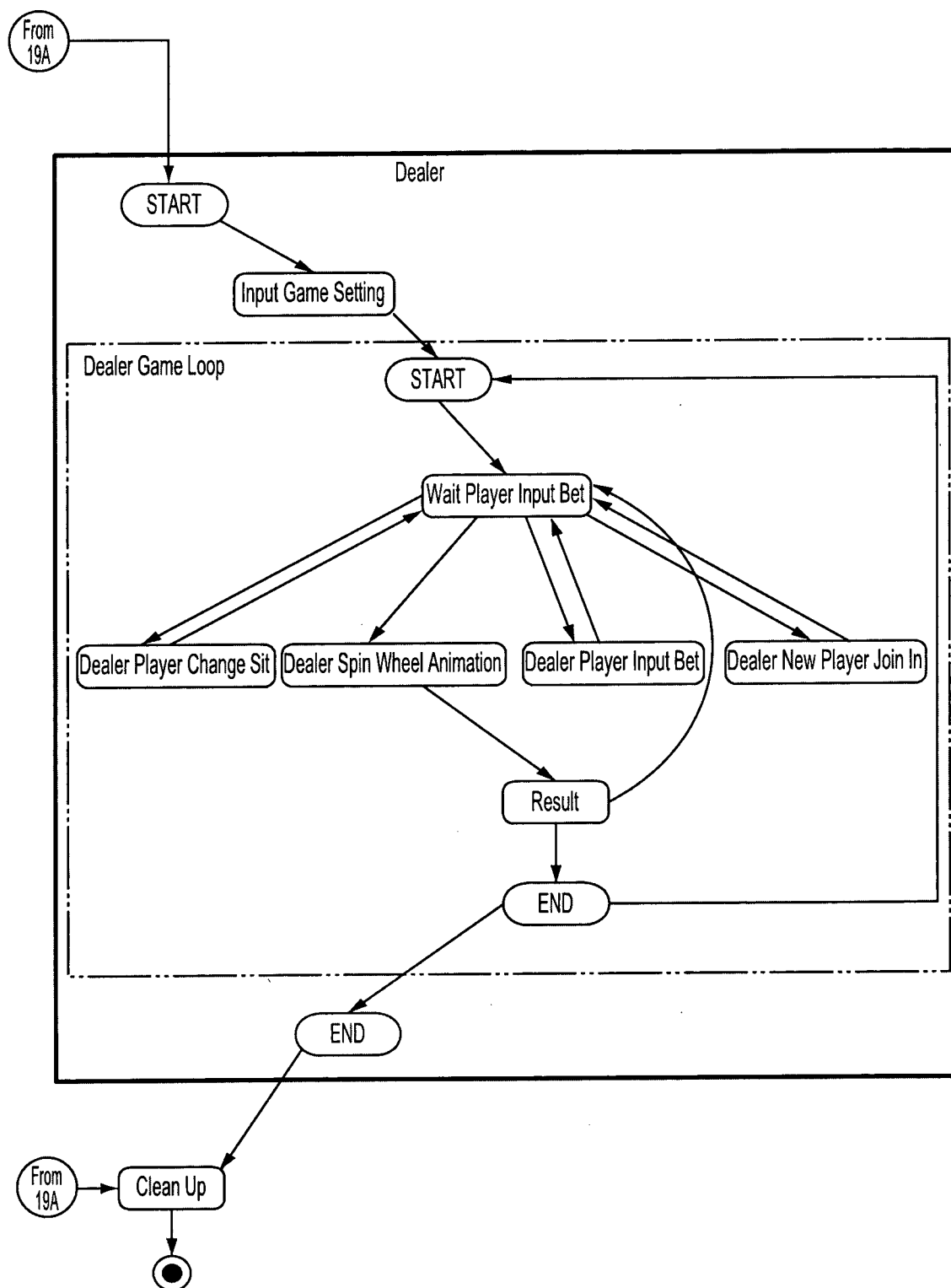


FIG.19B

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Roulette Server State Diagram

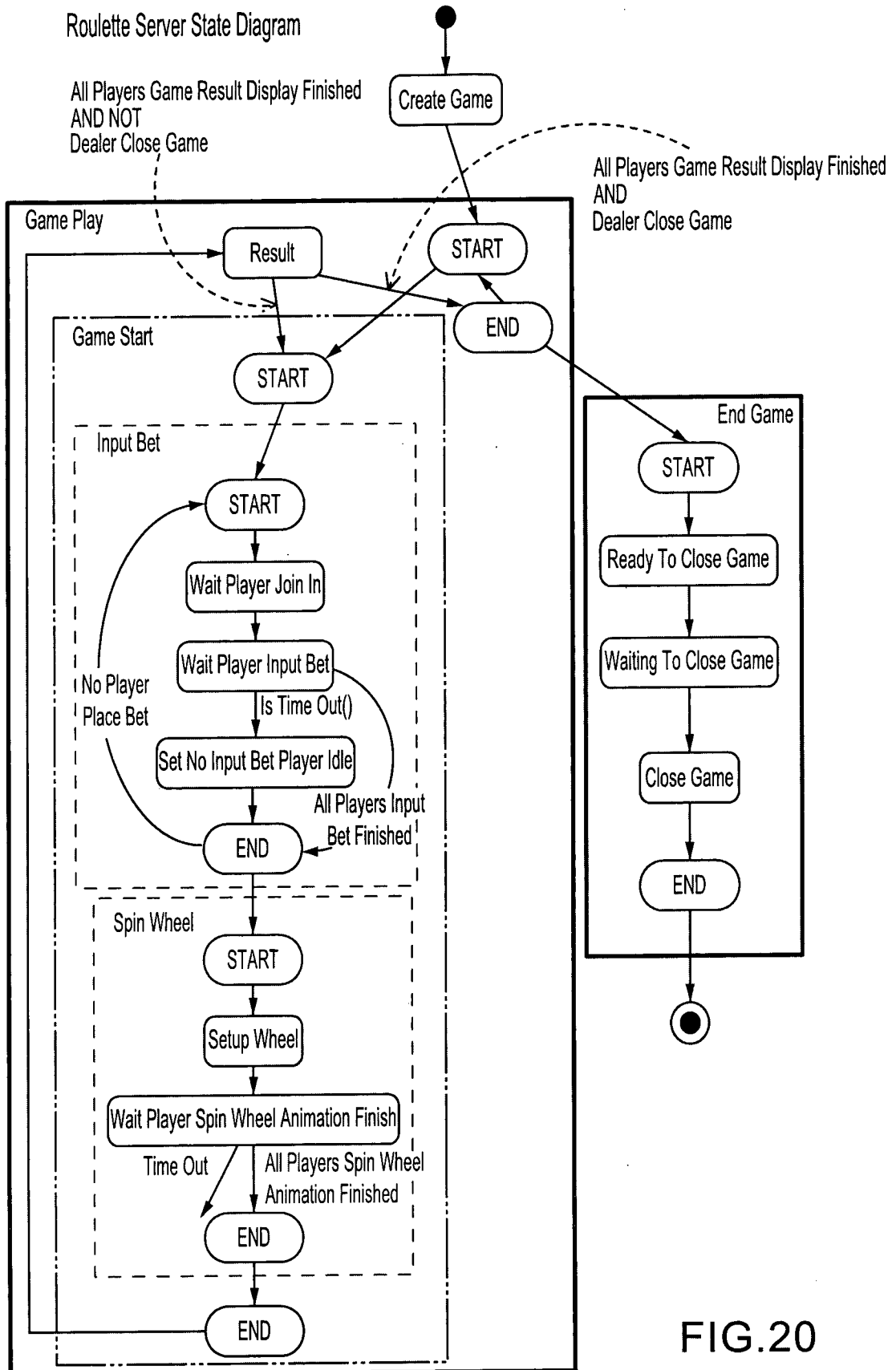


FIG.20

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SicBo Client State Diagram

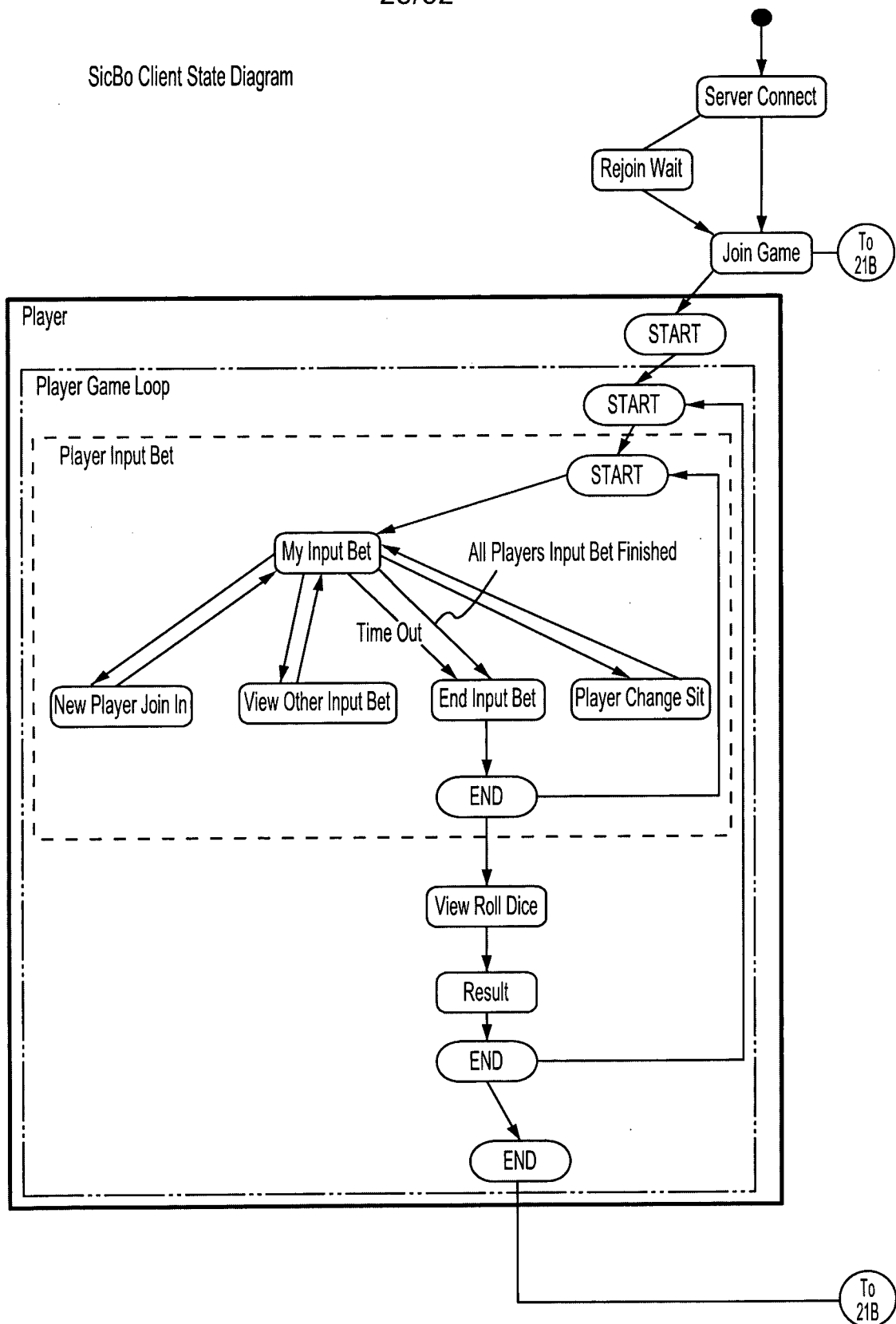


FIG.21A

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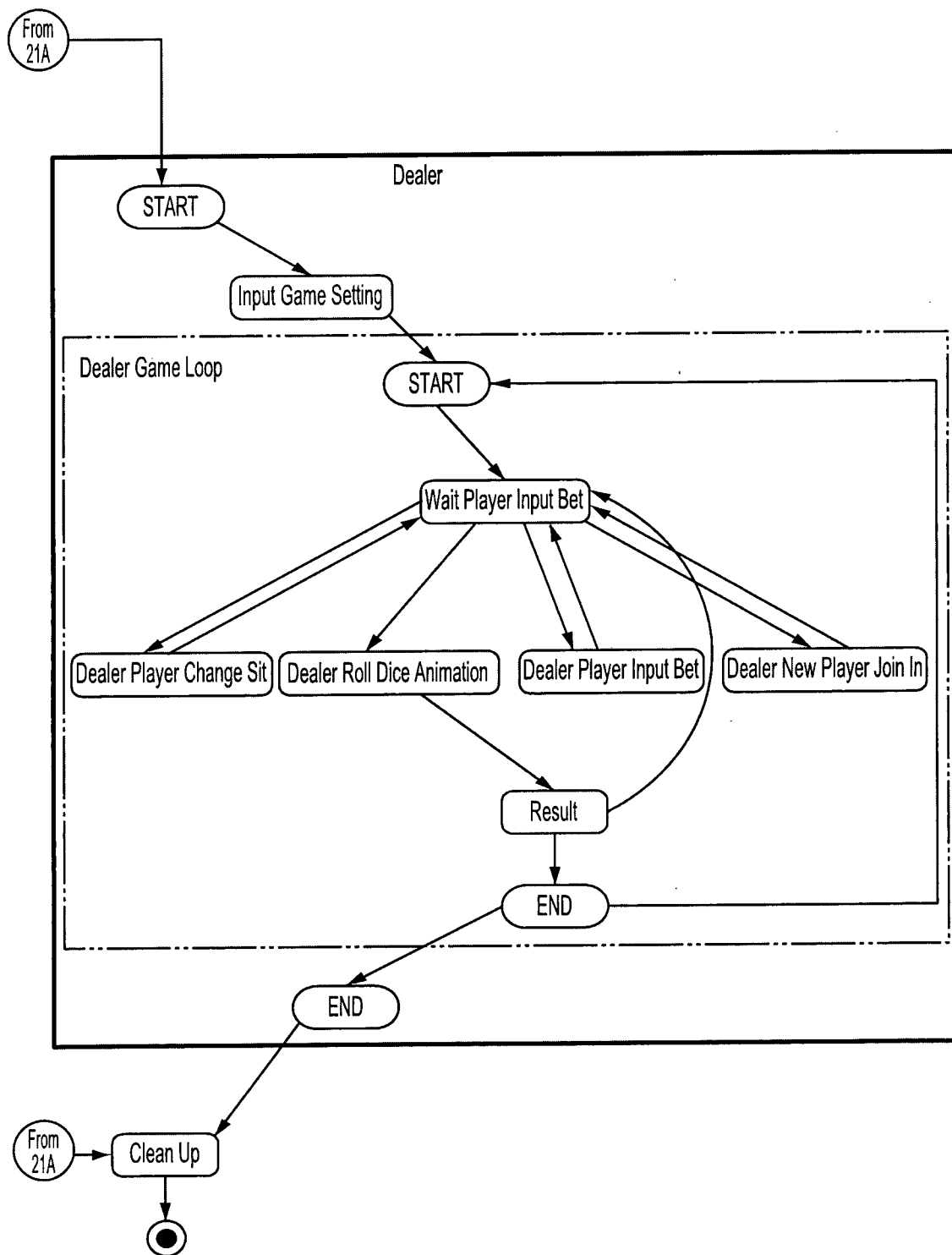


FIG.21B

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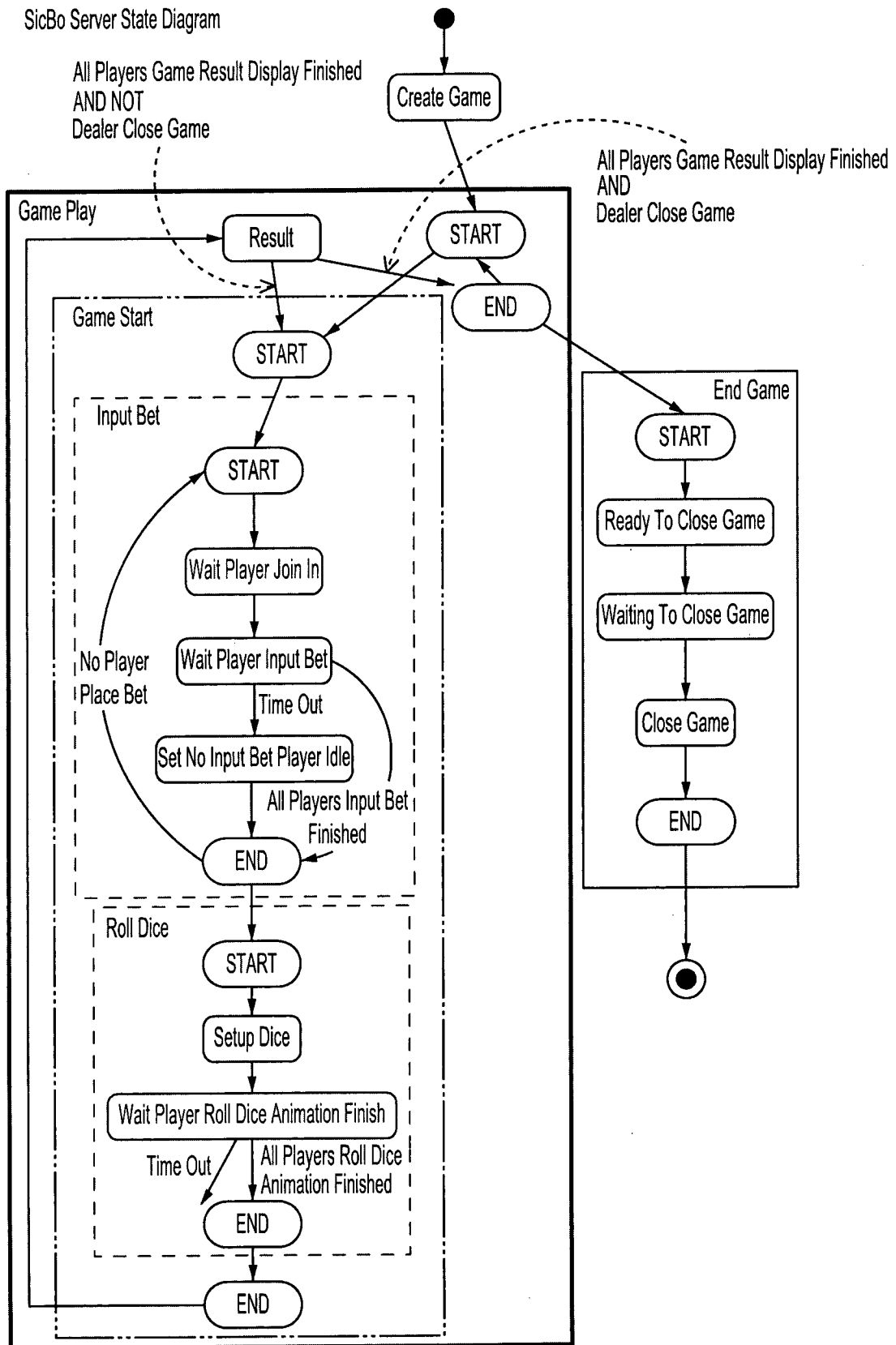


FIG.22

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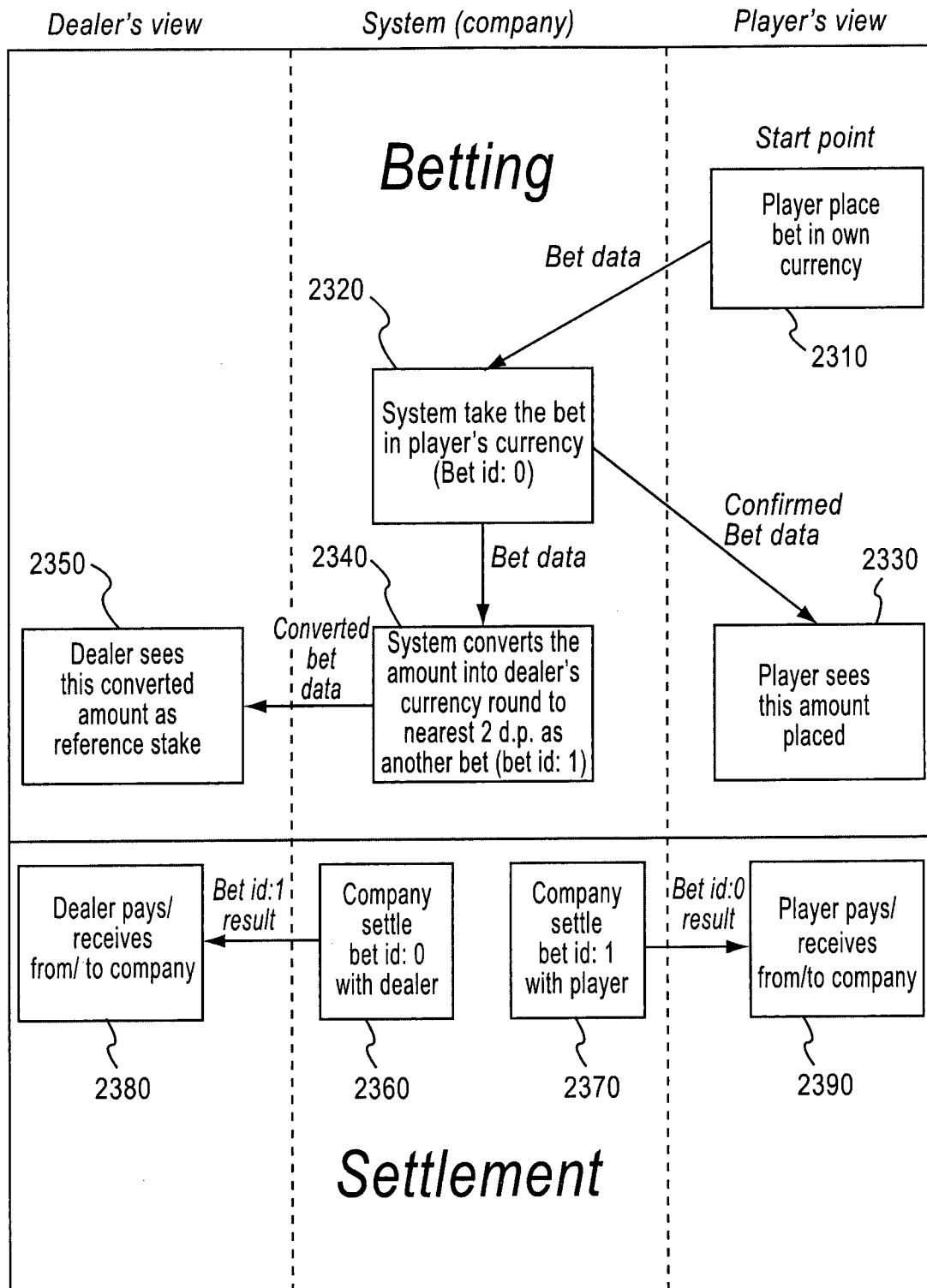


FIG.23

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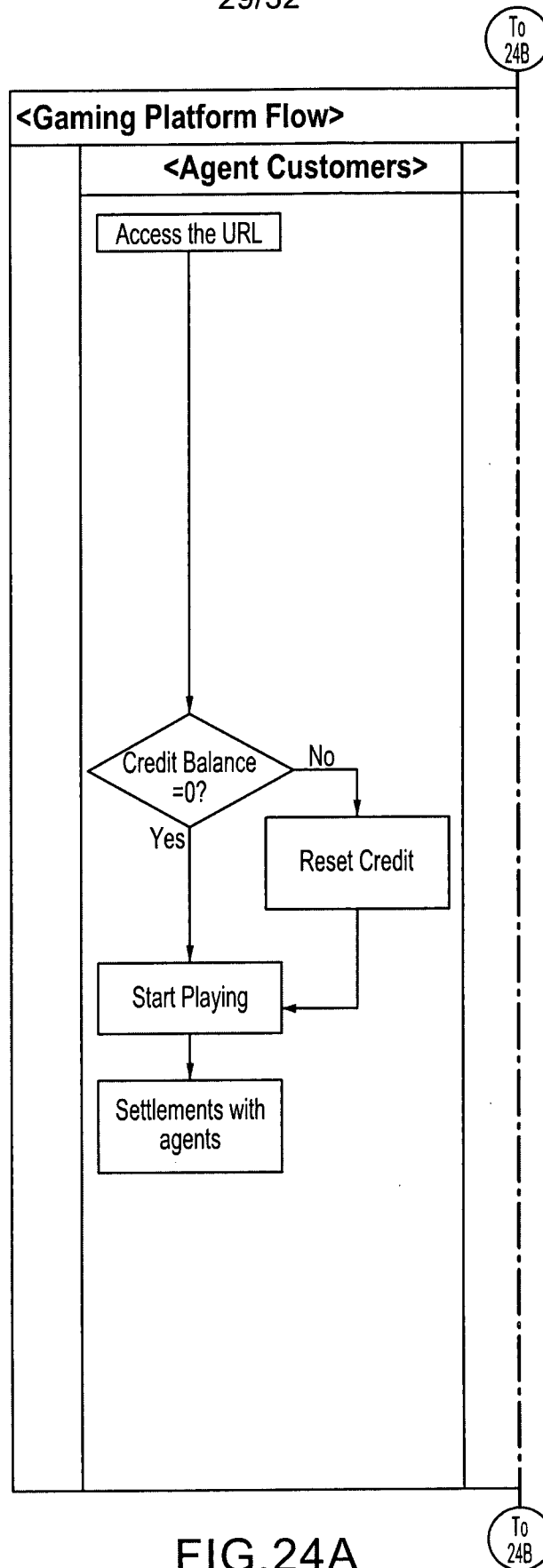


FIG.24A

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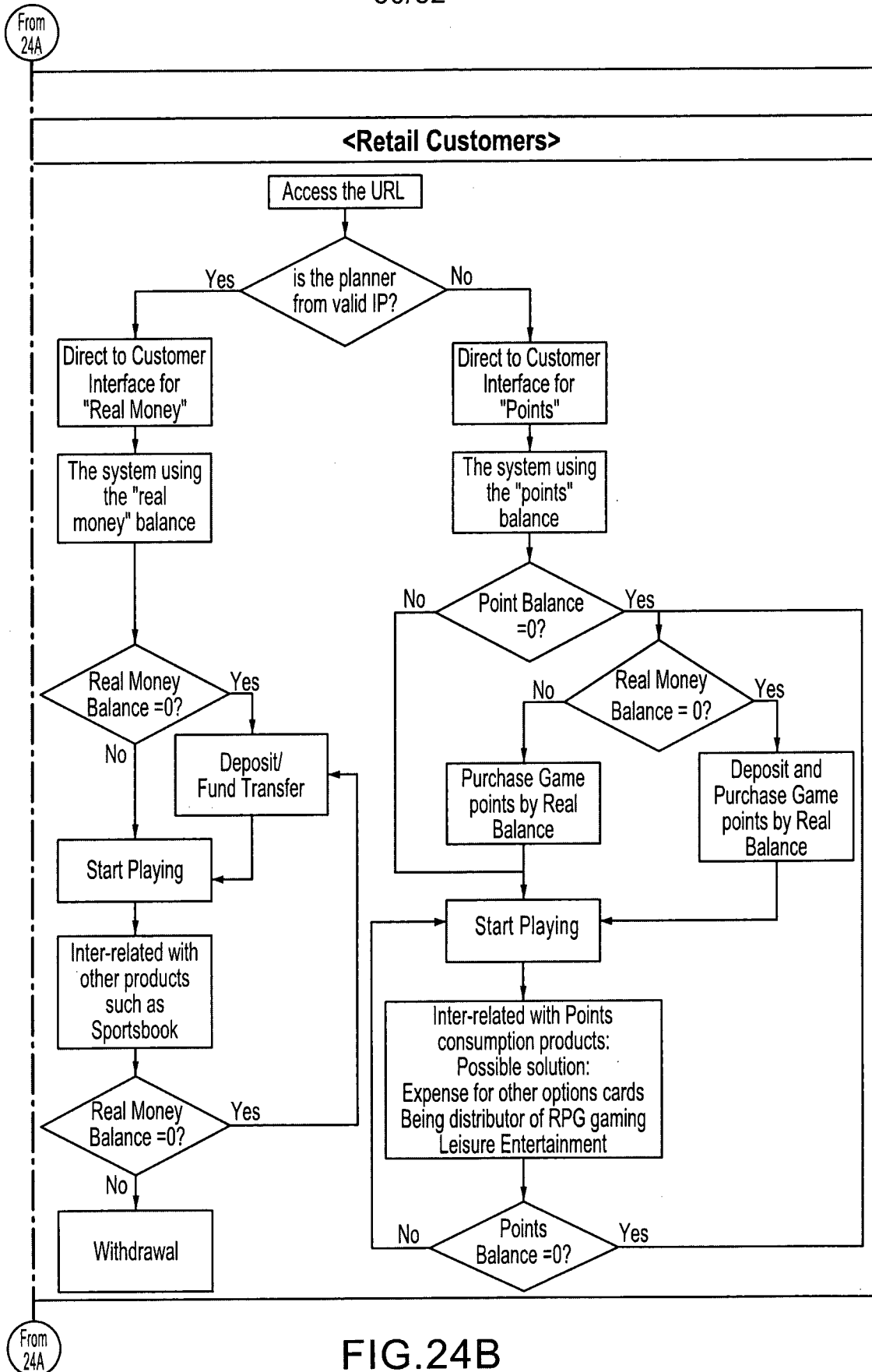


FIG.24B

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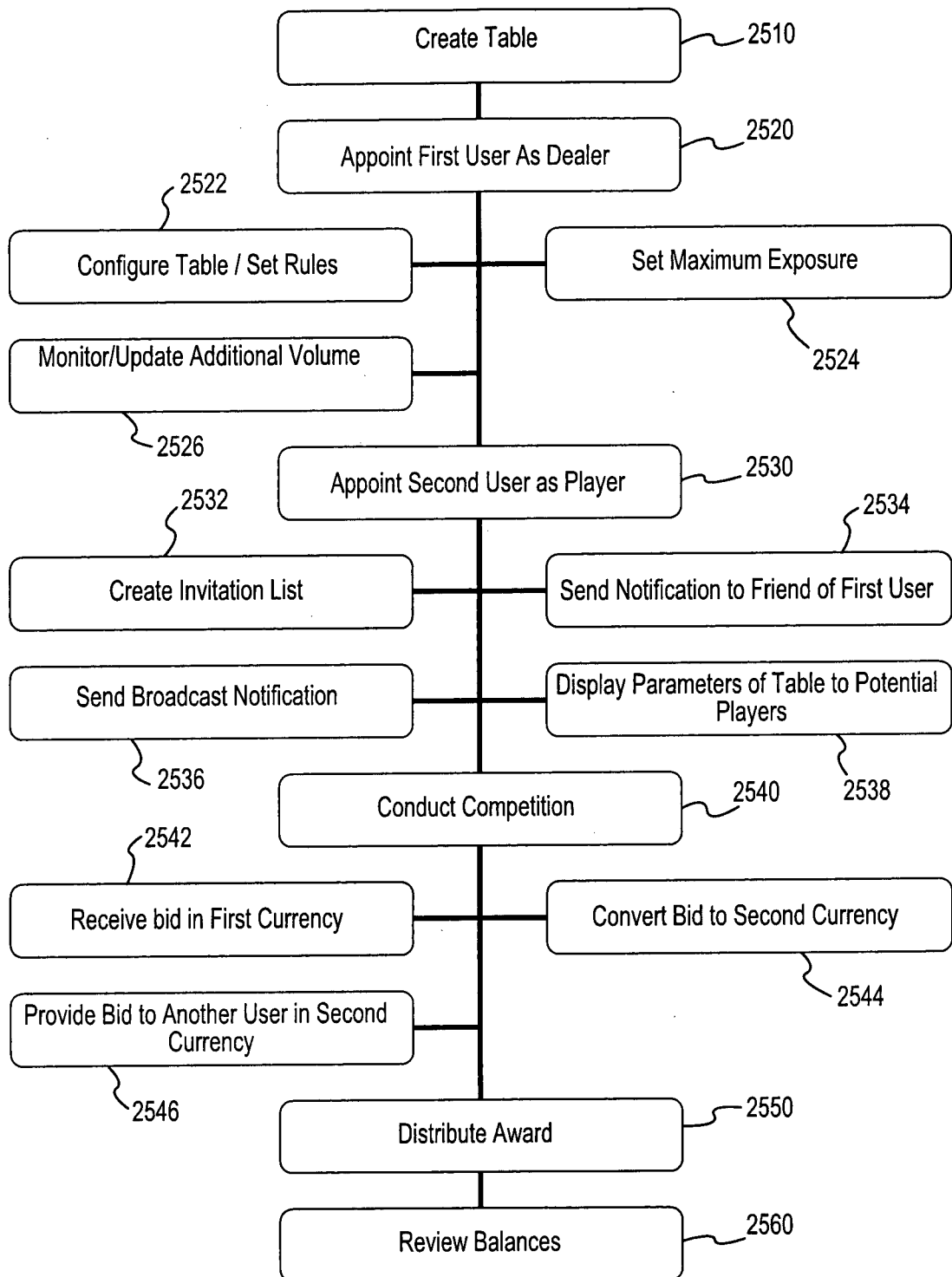


FIG.25

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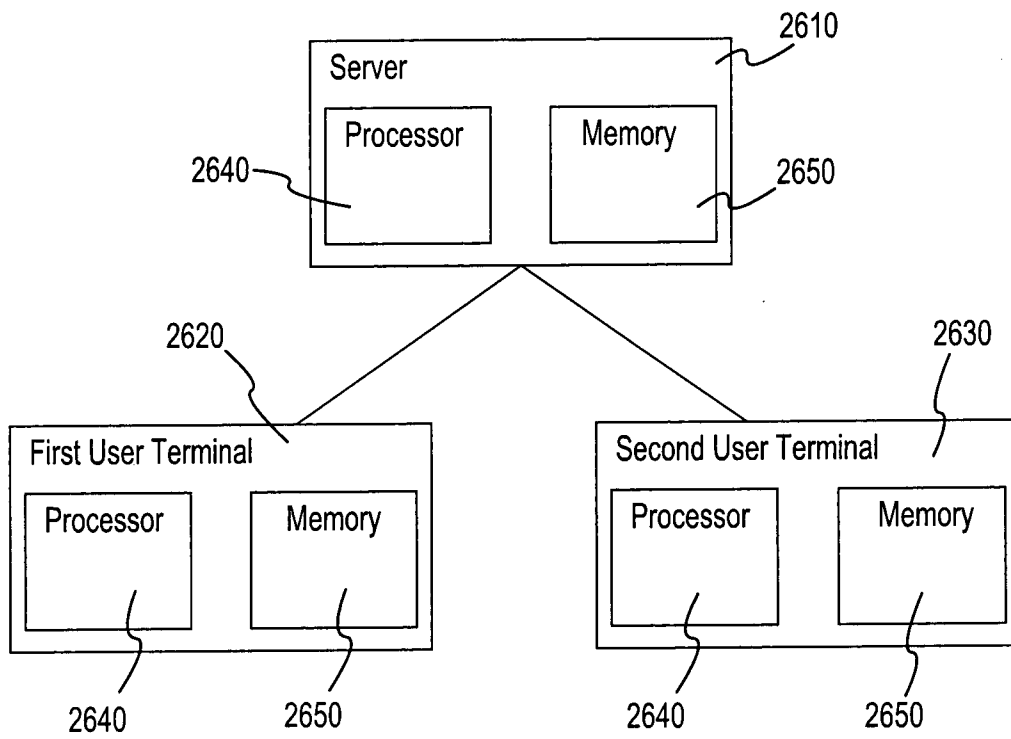


FIG.26

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/IB2011/001203

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. A63F13/12
ADD.

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
A63F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2008/060812 A2 (CYBERVIEW TECHNOLOGY INC [US]; LINARD SYLVIE [GB]; BRUNET DE COURSSOU) 22 May 2008 (2008-05-22) paragraphs [0001] - [0014]; claim 1; figures 1-8 paragraphs [0027], [0031], [0032], [0040] - [0043] -----	18-35
X	US 2003/190960 A1 (JOKIPII ERON [US] ET AL) 9 October 2003 (2003-10-09) paragraphs [0002] - [0009], [0021] - [0029], [0034] - [0037], [0040] - [0042], [0046] - [0047]; figures 1-3,5,7 -----	18-35
X	EP 1 125 617 A2 (ICOMMSOFT CO LTD [KR]) 22 August 2001 (2001-08-22) paragraphs [0001], [0006], [0012], [0015], [0017], [0021] - [0024], [0027], [0031] -----	18-35



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

1 September 2011

Date of mailing of the international search report

09/09/2011

Name and mailing address of the ISA/

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Ruf, Andreas

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/IB2011/001203

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 2008060812 A2	22-05-2008	AU 2007319603 A1 EP 2084681 A2 US 2008113811 A1	22-05-2008 05-08-2009 15-05-2008
US 2003190960 A1	09-10-2003	NONE	
EP 1125617 A2	22-08-2001	KR 20010081906 A US 2001016519 A1	29-08-2001 23-08-2001

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/IB2011/001203

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☒ Claims Nos.: 1-17(completely); 18-35(partially)
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
see FURTHER INFORMATION sheet PCT/ISA/210
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

Continuation of Box II.2

Claims Nos.: 1-17(completely); 18-35(partially)

The subject-matter of method claims 1-17 represents essentially a scheme, rules and method for doing business and for playing games, Rule 39.1(iii) PCT, wherein the method steps lack a definition or limitation of any kind to a technical means, or any kind of technical effects, besides a usual procedure when organising a game and setting up a corresponding "game table". This equally applies to step related to wagers, payouts, invitations, currency conversion, etc. Since no technical contributions are made, a search is hence deemed not meaningful.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that claims relating to inventions in respect of which no international search report has been established need not be the subject of an international preliminary examination (Rule 66.1(e) PCT). The applicant is advised that the EPO policy when acting as an International Preliminary Examining Authority is normally not to carry out a preliminary examination on matter which has not been searched. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the claims are amended following receipt of the search report or during any Chapter II procedure. If the application proceeds into the regional phase before the EPO, the applicant is reminded that a search may be carried out during examination before the EPO (see EPO Guideline C-VI, 8.2), should the problems which led to the Article 17(2) declaration be overcome.