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(54) **BETTING LAYOUT FOR CASINO GAMES AND METHOD OF USE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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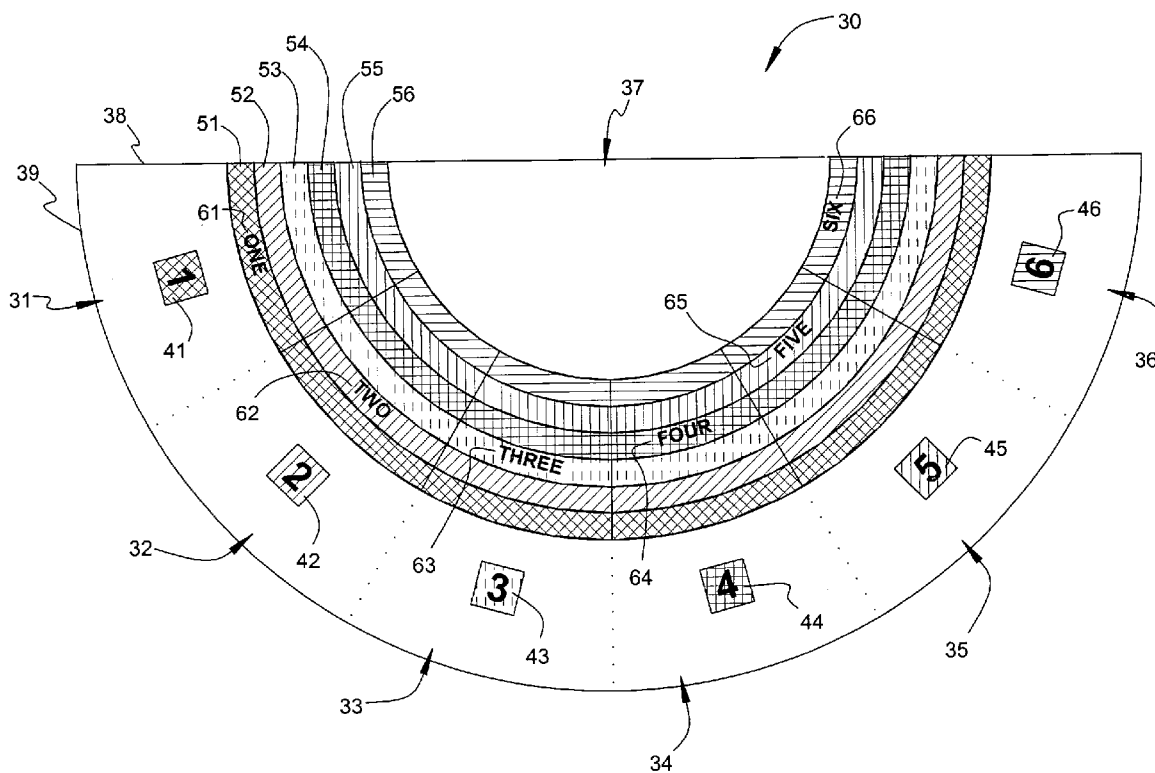
A betting layout (30, 30a, 130) for playing a casino game for increasing the betting capacity of the game. The betting layout (30, 30a, 130) includes a dealer position (37, 37a), a plurality of player betting positions (41-46), indicia uniquely identifying each the player betting position (41-46), and a plurality of gallery betting positions (51-56) extending about the dealer position (37, 37a) and past each of the plurality of player betting positions (41-46). Respective ones of the gallery betting positions (51-56) include indicia corresponding to that of a respective one of the player betting positions (41-46). A method of using the betting layout (30, 30a, 130) is also disclosed.

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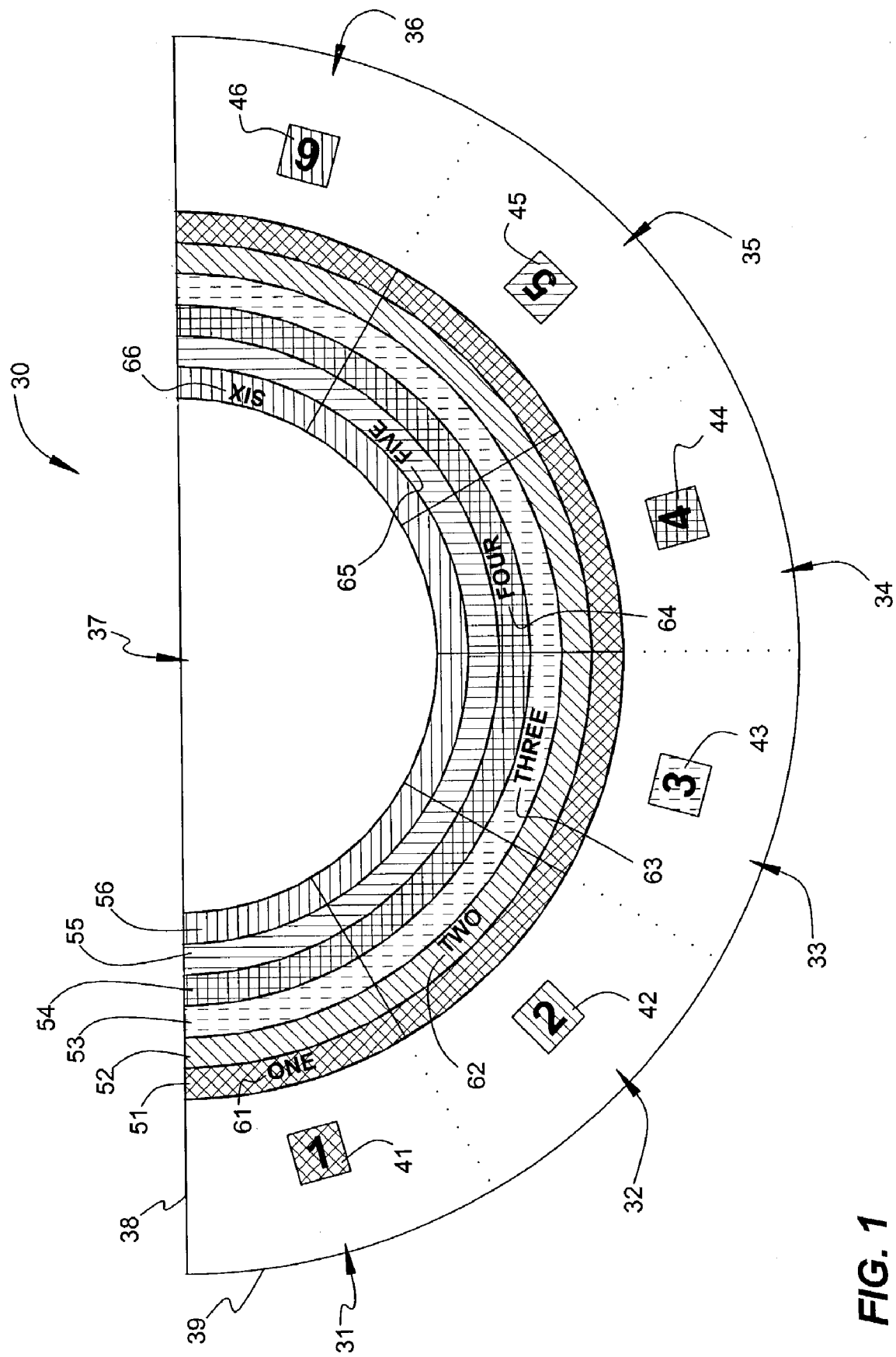


FIG. 1

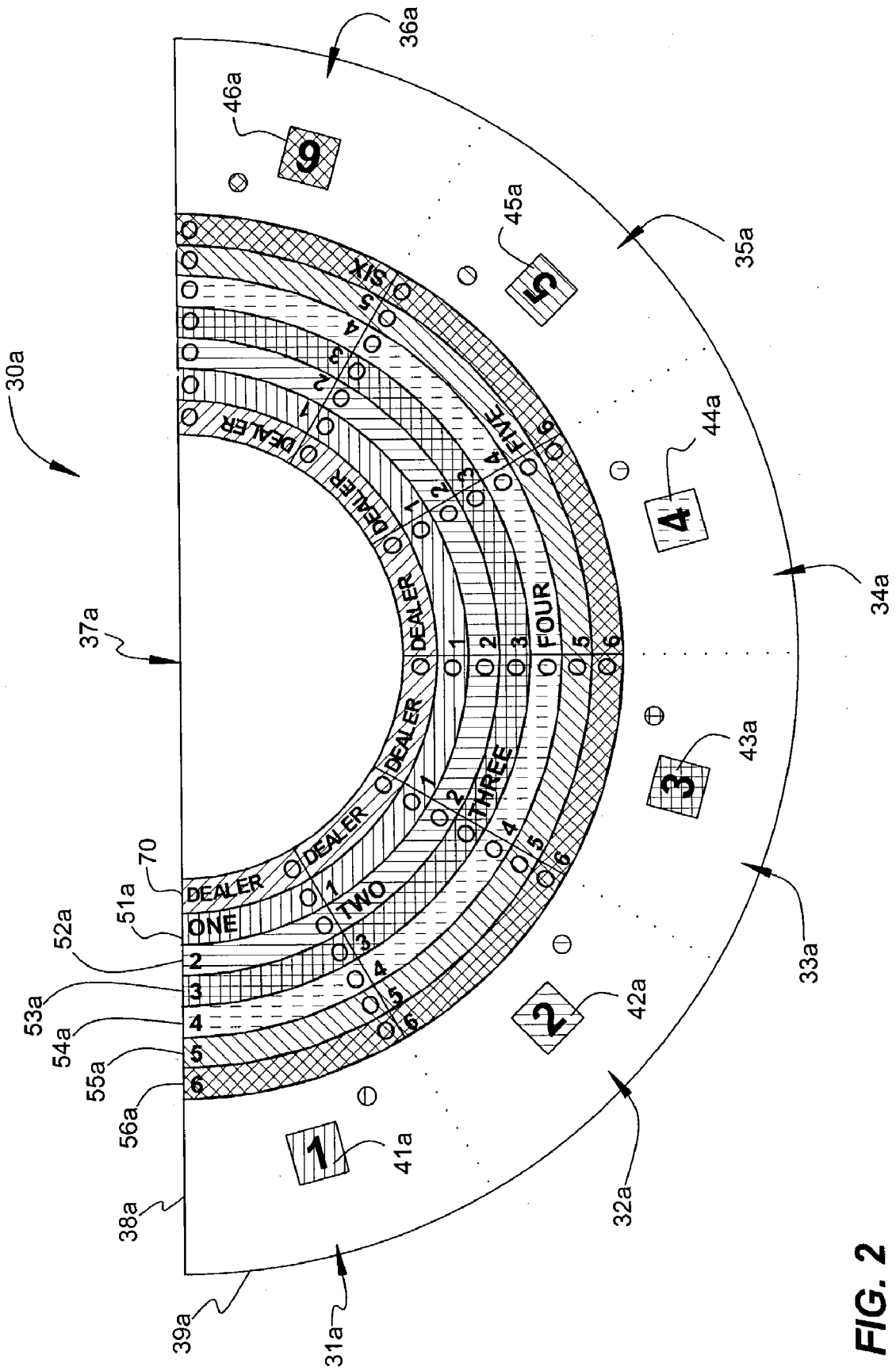


FIG. 2

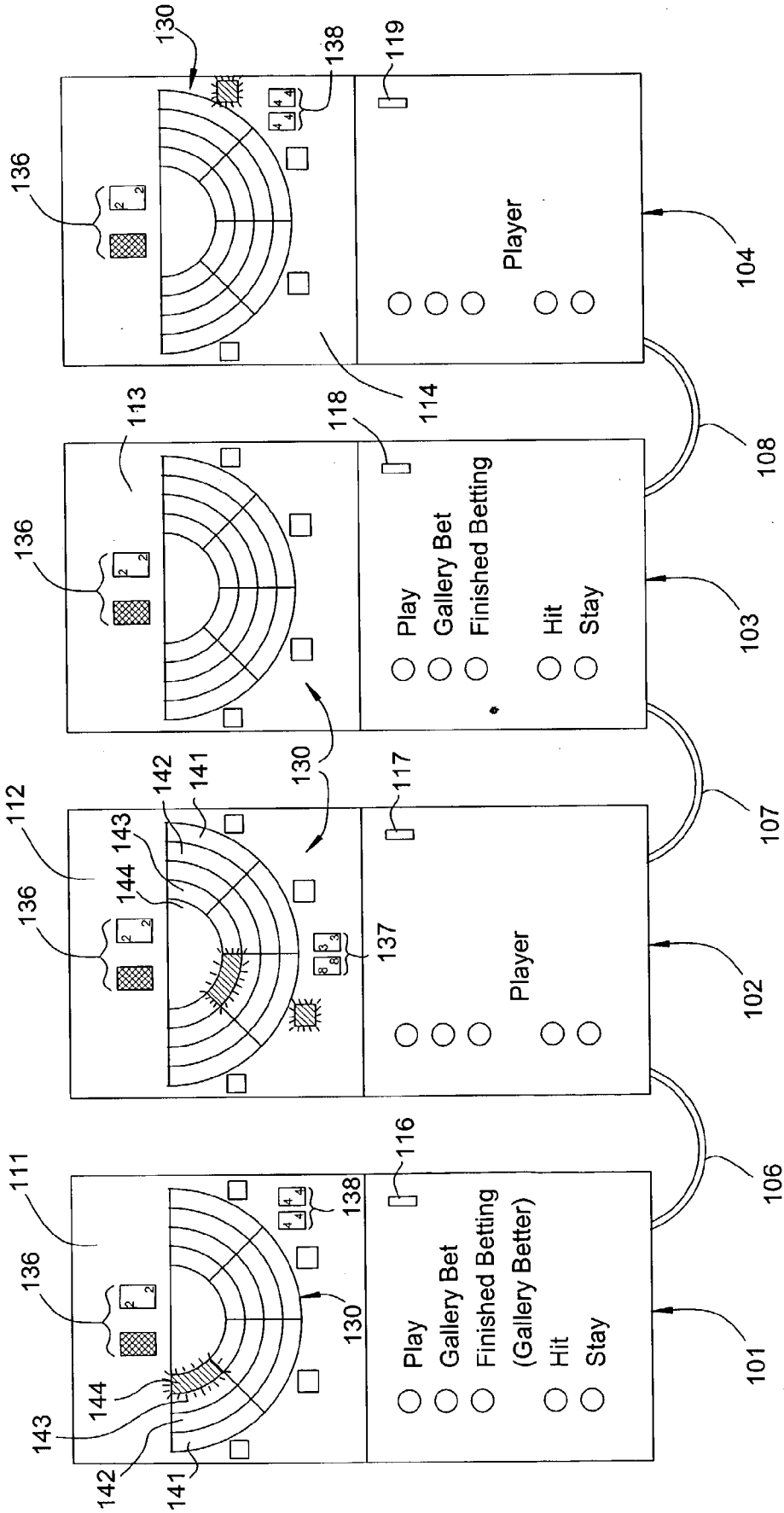


FIG. 3

BETTING LAYOUT FOR CASINO GAMES AND METHOD OF USE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] This invention relates, in general, to layouts for casino games and gaming machines, and more particularly to betting layouts for card games of the type played at casinos and methods for their use.

[0003] 2. Description of Related Art

[0004] Casino games based on various card games are well known, for example, card games such as poker, blackjack and pai-gow poker. Such casino card games generally allow one or more players to play against a house dealer or a player/banker and allow the players to place wagers on their own hand. In fact, casino games also have been devised which allow players to place wagers on the hands of other players. Such prior casino games typically include a playing surface, for example, a felt or cloth table betting layout, which allows for the seating of four to seven players on one side of the table and a standing house dealer on the other side of the table.

[0005] An exemplar of the prior art is U.S. Pat. No. 5,494,296 to Grassa which shows a multiple position layout for play of a twenty-one game in which each player can bet on the hands of other players, as well as their own hand. U.S. Pat. No. 5,839,731 to Feola also shows a method and a betting layout for playing a casino game. U.S. Pat. No. 6,270,078 to Leone et al. shows a method of playing an improved version of the game of pai-gow poker, with its associated betting layout.

[0006] Most prior casino card games, however, are limited in that usually casino card games only allow a player seated at the table to place a wager, either on their own hand or also on another player's hand. Accordingly, such prior casino games only allow for four to seven players to place bets on the hands being dealt. Thus, the betting capacity of such prior casino card games is limited to the number of bets placed by the handholding players.

[0007] However, in some casinos and card rooms, non-players have been allowed to place gallery bets on top of, or on the side of, player's wagers. Such a prior non-player betting, sometimes called "betting from the balcony" or "gallery betting," however, creates a chaotic environment in which control of the game by the house may be compromised. The confusion can be compounded when one of the players acts as the banker, in which case the house or dealer may or may not have a hand.

[0008] What is needed is a new and improved betting layout for card games which facilitates the management of gallery wagering and overcomes the above noted problems and other disadvantages of known casino card game layouts.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] In summary, one aspect of the present invention is directed to a betting layout for betting on a casino game, and particularly a casino card game. The betting layout includes a plurality of spaced player betting positions, and most usually a dealer position, indicia uniquely identifying each of the player betting positions, and a plurality of non-player

betting locations for wagering by non-players on any one of the player's hands. Respective ones of the non-player betting positions include indicia corresponding to that of a respective player betting positions.

[0010] In one embodiment, the player and non-player betting positions extend continuously past each of the plurality of player betting positions. The betting layout may advantageously take the form of a plurality of concentric, substantially semicircular bands with the dealer position being centrally located and the non-player and player betting positions being circumferentially spaced about the dealer position. Other geometries are suitable for use as the betting array, but they should allow for gallery betting from the player's side of the table without physical interference by the gallery betters with the player's betting.

[0011] In one embodiment, the player betting indicia includes a color uniquely identifying each of the player betting positions. The non-player betting positions may be located between adjacent player betting positions around the concentric semicircular layout, and respective ones of the semicircular bands of the layout have a color corresponding to that of a respective one of the player betting positions.

[0012] In one embodiment, the betting layout includes four to seven player betting positions with non-player betting positions at the ends of the layout and between the player betting positions. The non-player betting (gallery betting) positions should be located so that gallery betters will not physically interfere with the players, which is particularly well-implemented by the use of a layout with continuous bands. The present layout can be implemented electronically in a gaming machine, as well as by a table top layout.

[0013] Another aspect of the present invention is directed to a method of playing a casino game which includes the steps of providing a betting layout including a plurality of player betting positions and a plurality of non-player betting positions located to enable non-players to wager on player's hands without interfering with player's play of the game, permitting a player to place a wager on the hand of the player, permitting a non-player to place a gallery wager on a player's hand and paying out on the wagers in accordance with the rules of the game for both the player and non-player.

[0014] In one embodiment, the method further includes the step of permitting a plurality of players, each seated at a respective one of the player positions, to place a wager on their respective hands, permitting each of the plurality of players to place a wager on the hand of another one of the plurality of handholding players, and permitting non-player to place a gallery wager on the hand of any one of the handholding players.

[0015] In one embodiment, the step of providing a betting layout may be accomplished by providing a plurality of concentric, substantially semicircular, wagering bands extending past each of a plurality of player positions, respective ones of the wagering bands being identified with a corresponding one of the player betting positions. The method further may include the step of permitting the plurality of non-players to reach between respective players and place gallery wagers on the concentric substantially semicircular bands whereby the plurality of non-players can bet on one or more players' hands without physically interfering with the players.

[0016] An object of the present invention is to provide a new and improved betting layout for casino games, and particularly card games, so as to implement more orderly gallery betting.

[0017] The betting layout for card games of the present invention has other features and advantages which will be apparent from, or are set forth in more detail in, the accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of this specification, and the following Best Mode of Carrying Out the Invention, which together serve to explain the principles of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] FIG. 1 illustrates a betting layout for a casino game constructed in accordance with the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 2 illustrates a modified betting layout for a card game in accordance with the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic representation of a gaming machine assembly constructed in accordance with the present invention.

BEST MODE OF CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

[0021] Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. While the invention will be described in conjunction with the preferred embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to those embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention, as defined by the appended claims.

[0022] Turning now to the drawings, wherein like components are designated by like reference numerals throughout the various figures, attention is directed to FIG. 1 which illustrates a betting layout for a casino game in accordance with present invention, the betting layout being generally designated by numeral 30. Betting layout 30 may be used in a casino, a card room, other gaming facilities, or at home. The betting layout allows players to bet on their own hands, as well as the hands of other players. Unlike prior casino game layouts, however, the betting layout of the present invention also allows non-players to bet on the hands of players from "the gallery" or "the balcony." Accordingly, betting layout 30 allows for additional people to bet from many positions around the layout and thereby increases the betting capacity of the card game for a given layout floor space.

[0023] Betting layout 30 includes a plurality of player card-receiving zones into which cards are dealt, generally designated by the numerals 31-36, and in front of which players may be seated and wager on the game being played. In the illustrated embodiment, the betting layout includes six card-receiving zones, however, one will appreciate that the betting layout may include a wide number of player positions in accordance with the present invention. Typically, casinos will allow four to seven card-receiving or seating zones for games such as blackjack. Player seating zones 31-36 are spaced about a centrally located dealer card-receiving zone, generally designated by numeral 37. When

the betting layout is utilized for a casino card game, a house dealer usually will stand during play of the game adjacent dealer zone 37 and deal cards to the player.

[0024] It is the practice in some casinos, however, to allow players to take turns acting as the banker. In such games, the house takes a "commission" of \$1.00 per player per hand or 5% of the winnings, depending upon the house rules. The house dealer also may or may not be dealt a hand, again depending upon the house rules. It will be understood that betting layout 30 of the present invention also can be readily employed for player/banker games and/or games in which the house is not dealt a hand.

[0025] In the illustrated embodiment, betting layout 30 has a semicircular configuration in which player card-receiving zones 31-36 are circumferentially spaced about dealer's zone 37. Betting layout 30 may be positioned on top of, or form the top of, a semicircular table. Advantageously layout 30 can be a felt cover for the table which facilitates picking up the cards. The dealer stands adjacent the center of the table, that is, the midpoint of straight side 38. At will, one or more players are seated, adjacent a respective one of player card-receiving zones 31-36, circumferentially along curved side 39 of betting layout 30. One should appreciate that the betting layout of the present invention need not be positioned on or formed as a tabletop, but instead may be used in other gaming contexts. For example, betting layout 30 may be displayed on the viewing screen of a gaming machine, as will be described further below in connection with FIG. 3. Similarly, layout 30 can be embodied in a board game or other similar forms of entertainment.

[0026] Each player seating zone can include a corresponding player betting position or box 41-46 having indicia uniquely identifying each player betting position 41-46. In the illustrated embodiment, each player betting position 41-46 includes a number designating the player seated at any one of the respective player card-receiving zones 31-36. Additionally, each player betting position 41-46 can include a color or other indicia, uniquely identifying each respective player betting position 41-46.

[0027] Betting layout 30 of the present invention further includes a plurality of gallery betting positions, which may advantageously take the form of wagering bands or strips 51-56. Gallery betting bands 51-56 extended about dealer zone 37 and past each of player seating zone 31-36. Each gallery betting band also includes indicia corresponding to the indicia for the player betting positions 41-46. For example, gallery betting position or band 51 may include a designation 61, for example, the number "one" corresponding to first player betting position 41. In addition to, or instead of, designation 61, betting band 51 may include a color (shown schematically) corresponding to that of player betting box 41. Similarly, gallery betting bands 52-56 include a corresponding numeral designation 62-66 (e.g., "two", "three", "four", "five" and "six", respectively) and/or colors corresponding to that of player betting positions or boxes 42-46, respectively.

[0028] In the illustrated embodiment, gallery betting positions 51-56 have a semicircular configuration that extend circumferentially about centrally located dealer position 37 in a concentric manner. In this manner, a portion of each betting band 51-56 extends in front of each player position in a radially aligned manner with respect to dealer zone 37.

Thus, each player can place, within arms reach, additional bets on one or more hands of the other players' hands. It is contemplated, therefore, that each player also may use the gallery betting bands to place bets on the hands of other players. Thus, as far as another player is concerned, each player is also part of the gallery.

[0029] Preferably, the indicia of the betting boxes and the gallery betting bands are based upon color so that the betting layout or array is colorful, which increases the aesthetic value of the betting layout. Such a colorful layout may beneficially add aesthetics to the casino environment and may attract onlookers to the particular casino card game played on the betting layout.

[0030] Although the gallery betting bands preferably extend continuously past each of the player zones 31-36, one should appreciate that band 51-56 need not be continuous. The betting bands should be formed so as to provide sufficient space around the layout upon which a non-player may place a bet while standing behind or adjacent to a player, without interfering with the player seated in front or along side of the non-player. A non-player may bet while standing behind or adjacent to a player since bands 51-56 are within arm's reach all around the betting layout. Betting bands 51-56, therefore, are within arm's length of a non-player standing at either end of betting layout 30, as well as being within arm's-length of a non-player standing between adjacent ones of player zones 31-36. The configuration of betting layout 30, namely the configuration of arcuate gallery betting bands 51-56, allows a non-player to place one or more bets on the players' hands without physically interfering with any of the players betting or play of the game.

[0031] Betting layout 30 also allows the dealer to better manage the game and keep track of the collection of, and pay out on, the bets by players and non-players. Moreover, the ability of non-players to bet from the gallery or balcony on a selected player or players' hands, adds excitement to the game and stimulates interest in the casino.

[0032] The method of using betting layout 30 in accordance with the present invention can now be described. In operation and use, betting layout 30 allows players of casino games, such as blackjack, pai-gow poker, and other card games, to place bets on their respective hands. Players may also exercise the option of making one or more additional bets on other players' hands by placing a bet on the colored semicircular betting bands.

[0033] Additionally, betting layout 30 allows non-players to place wagers from positions adjacent to the table on the hands of the players. For example, a non-player can walk up and momentarily stand between first and second player card-receiving zones 31 and 32. Should the non-player wish to place a wager on the hand of one of the players seated at card-receiving position 35, the non-player may quickly identify which betting band corresponds to the fifth player by the number and/or color of the player position betting boxes. In particular, the non-player may observe the color and/or number of player betting box 45 located at the fifth player card-receiving zone 35, and easily find the corresponding betting band 55.

[0034] The non-player may then wager on the hand of the selected player seated at the fifth player zone 35 by simply reaching between the first and second players and placing a

bet on a portion of semicircular band 55 which extends in front of and between the first and second player zones 31 and 32.

[0035] Next, the dealer deals a card hand to each hand-holding player in accordance with the rules of the particular card game being played including, but not limited to poker, blackjack and pai-gow poker. During the play-sequence of each round, the dealer will pay, take or push all bets on each player betting position 41-46 and each non-player betting band 51-56 after a win/loss/tie loss comparison is made between each player's hand and the dealer's hand. In the present example in which hands are dealt to players zones 31 and 35, the dealer may first look to gallery betting position 51 and pay or take the bets placed on band 51 around the semicircle in a counterclockwise fashion, as well as player betting box 41. Next, the dealer will complete the deal to player card-receiving zone 35 and look to the next gallery betting band 55 upon which bets have been placed. The bets will be paid or taken in a counterclockwise fashion. Thus, the configuration of betting layout 30 facilitates a dealer in handling the additional workload associated with the additional bets by players, as well as the gallery bets by non-players, namely, by allowing the dealer to sweep along each one of gallery betting bands 51-56, as necessary, until all hands and bets are accounted for. Accordingly, casinos using the betting layout of the present invention may gain an increased number of bets per round, gain security, and provide added comfort to their players, and income per square foot of casino area.

[0036] In another embodiment of the present invention, betting layout 30a is similar to betting layout 30 described above but includes an additional option betting line 70 as shown in FIG. 2. Like reference numerals have been used to describe like components of betting layouts 30 and 30a. Betting layout 30a is particularly suited for card games in which bets may be placed on the dealer's hand or that of a handholding player, such as pai-gow poker.

[0037] In operation and use, betting layout 30a is used in substantially the same manner as betting layout 30 discussed above but allows bets to be placed on the dealer's hand or that of a handholding player who wishes to serve as the "bank".

[0038] An electronically implemented embodiment of the present casino game layout is shown in FIG. 3. A plurality of gaming machines 101-104 are electronically coupled together at 106-108. Each gaming machine 101-104 includes a display screen 111-114, most typically a video display screen. The gaming machines also will include betting input slots, or the like, 116-119 formed for receipt of coins or credit cards, or both, in a manner well known in the industry, and at least once CPU having gaming software therein.

[0039] Displayed on screens 111-114 can be a casino game layout 130, which is common to all screens. If there are two band holding players at machines 102 and 104, for example, all machines will display a dealer's hand 136, a hand 137 at the machine 102's position and a hand 138 at machine 104's position and the gallery machine's position 101. A non-player may bet at machine 101, for example, by selecting one of the players, e.g., player at machine 104. This could light up betting band 144 in the sector for machine 101. If the player at machine 102 bets on his own hand, his betting

space 152 will light up, and if he also bets on the player's hand at machine 104, band 144 in sector for machine 102 will light up, as schematically shown.

[0040] Thus, the system will allow betting from the gallery by non-players, as well as betting by players on their own hands and on other player's hands. Each machine will have the usual input buttons to "hit" or "stand" in order to allow a player to play the game, and a "gallery bet" button, or the like, to allow non-players to bet on player's hands. The "gallery bet" button will also prevent the non-player from playing.

[0041] Obviously, all player's and non-player's bets must be made before the play of hands begins, which can be electronically controlled by a "finished betting" button.

[0042] In the gaming machine embodiment "interfering with the player's play of the game" is controlled electronically and continuous betting bands 141-144 are not essential. Non-players do not physically reach between players to bet, but layouts on screens 111-114 which are similar in configuration to layouts 30, 30a have visual advantages and help understanding, particularly when the same layout is being used at gaming tables.

[0043] In many respects the modifications of the various figures resemble those of preceding modifications and the same reference numerals followed by subscript "a" designate corresponding parts.

[0044] The foregoing descriptions of specific embodiments of the present invention have been presented for purposes of illustration and description. They are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed, and obviously many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the claims appended hereto and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A betting layout for a casino game comprising:
 - a plurality of player betting positions provided on the layout;
 - indicia identifying each said player betting position and distinguishing it from the other player betting positions;
 - at least one gallery betting position provided on the layout in a location for betting by a non-player on a selected one of the players' results; and
 - said gallery betting position including indicia corresponding to that of at least one of said players' betting positions.
2. The betting layout according to claim 1 wherein,
 - the gallery betting position is located at a location enabling betting by players and non-players without interfering with betting by the other.

3. The betting layout according to claim 1 wherein,
 - said betting layout is provided for use on a top of a table for wagering on a card game played at the table.
4. The betting layout according to claim 1 wherein,
 - the betting layout is provided on a display screen of a electronic gaming machine to enable betting on a simulated card game.
5. The betting layout according to claim 1 wherein,
 - the layout includes a plurality of gallery betting positions each including indicia corresponding to each of the indicia identifying each of the player betting positions.
6. A betting layout according to claim 1 wherein,
 - said gallery betting positions are proximate each of said plurality of player betting positions.
7. A betting layout according to claim 5 wherein,
 - the player betting positions and the gallery betting positions extend in a continuous array in front of the players and the non-players.
8. A betting layout according to claim 7 wherein,
 - the continuous array is a substantially semicircular configuration.
9. The betting layout according to claim 8 wherein,
 - the layout includes a dealer position centrally located on the layout, and said player betting positions and said gallery betting positions are circumferentially spaced about semi-circular configuration.
10. A betting layout according to claim 2 wherein,
 - said player betting positions and said gallery betting positions are provided by circumferentially extending betting bands with respect to said dealer position.
11. A betting layout according to claim 10 wherein,
 - said player betting positions and said gallery betting positions are provided by a plurality of concentric semicircles, respective ones of said semicircles including indicia identifying each of said player betting positions.
12. A betting layout according to claim 11 wherein,
 - said indicia identifying each player betting position comprises a color uniquely identifying each said player betting position.
13. A betting layout according to claim 12 wherein,
 - said layout includes between four and seven player betting positions and a gallery betting position between each player betting position.
14. A betting layout according to claim 5 wherein,
 - said indicia uniquely identifies each said player betting position and an indicia identifying a dealer betting position, said betting layout includes six player betting positions and seven gallery betting positions, each player betting position and each gallery betting position including indicia corresponding to that of each of said player betting positions and said dealer betting position.
15. A betting layout according to claim 14 wherein,
 - said gallery betting positions extend between adjacent player betting positions allowing a non-player to bet on one or more players' hands or the dealer's hand without physically interfering with the betting of players.

16. A method of playing a casino game having rules, said method comprising:

providing a betting layout including a plurality of player betting positions and a plurality of gallery betting positions located to enable non-players to wager on player's hands without interfering with the player's play of the game;

permitting a player at one of said player betting positions to place a wager on a result of the game as played by the player;

permitting a non-player to place a bet on a gallery betting position as to the result of the game as played by said player; and

paying out on said wagers in accordance with the rules of the casino game to both said player and said non-players.

17. The method according to claim 16 wherein,

the step of providing a betting layout is accomplished by providing a betting layout on a top of table suitable for the play of a card game on top of the layout.

18. The method according to claim 16 wherein,

the step of providing a betting layout is accomplished by providing the betting layout on the screen of a gaming machine.

19. A method according to claim 16, and the step of:

permitting a plurality of players, each betting at a respective one of said player

betting positions, to place a wager on their respective hands;

permitting each said plurality of players to place a wager on the hand of another one of said plurality of players; and

permitting said non-players to place at least one bet on the hand of at least one of the players.

20. A method according to claim 19, and the step of:

permitting a plurality of non-players to place a bet on the hand of any one of the players.

21. A method according to claim 20, and the step of:

permitting a plurality of non-players to place a plurality of bets on the hands of a plurality of the players.

22. A method according to claim 21 wherein,

said providing step is accomplished by providing betting layout having a plurality of concentric semicircular gallery betting bands extending past each of a plurality of player positions, respective ones of said concentric semicircular gallery betting bands corresponding to a respective one of said player betting positions.

23. A method according to claim 21 wherein,

said gallery betting bands extend between adjacent player betting positions, said method includes the step of:

permitting said plurality of non-players to place bets on concentric semicircular gallery betting bands at locations between said player betting positions whereby the plurality of non-players can bet on one or more players' hands without physically interfering with the betting of the players.

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