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(54) **BLACKJACK VARIANTS WITH PLAYER HAND DISQUALIFICATION**

Publication Classification

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CPC **A63F 1/00** (2013.01); **A63F 2001/003** (2013.01)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

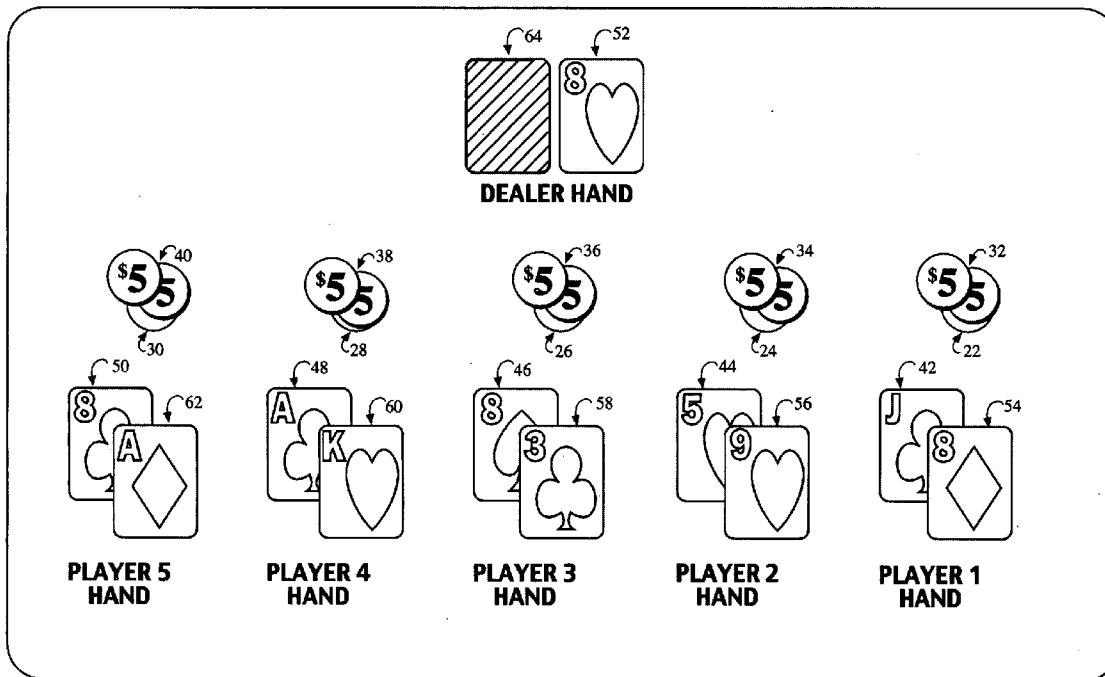
(21) Appl. No.: **14/544,813**

A method of playing a blackjack wagering game on a felt table or on a gaming device comprising at least a processor, input device and video monitor screen is disclosed. The method comprises providing player-advantage rules in blackjack games without requiring an extra wager in addition to a base wager. A predetermined set of dealt initial player hands is automatically disqualified, effectively ending the game for the player and forfeiting the player's wager. All dealt initial player hands that are not disqualified are qualified hands. All qualified hands remain in play. The player will receive at least one player-advantage rule on every hand that remains in play.

(22) Filed: **Feb. 20, 2015**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/966,345, filed on Feb. 21, 2014.



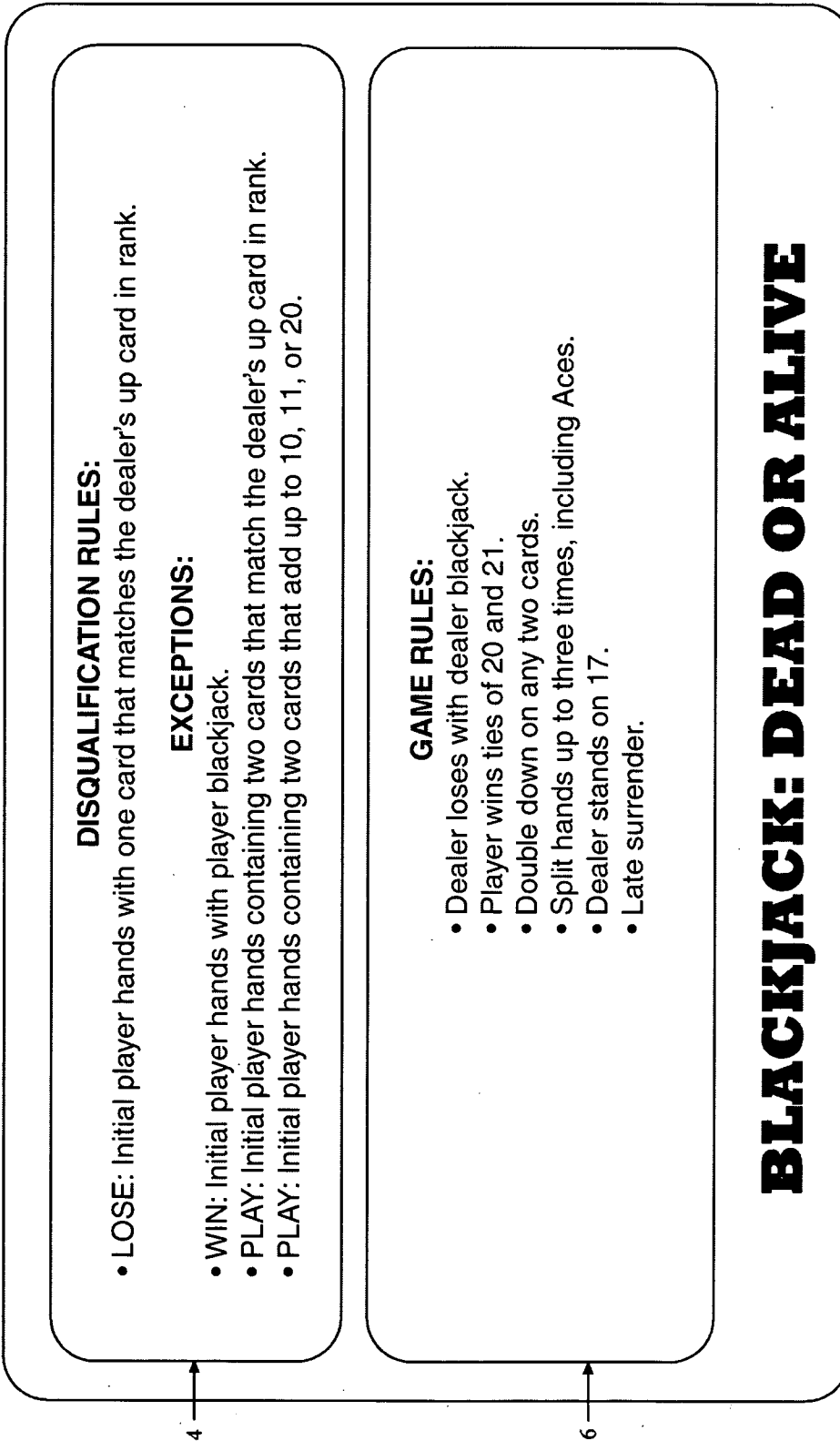


Fig.1

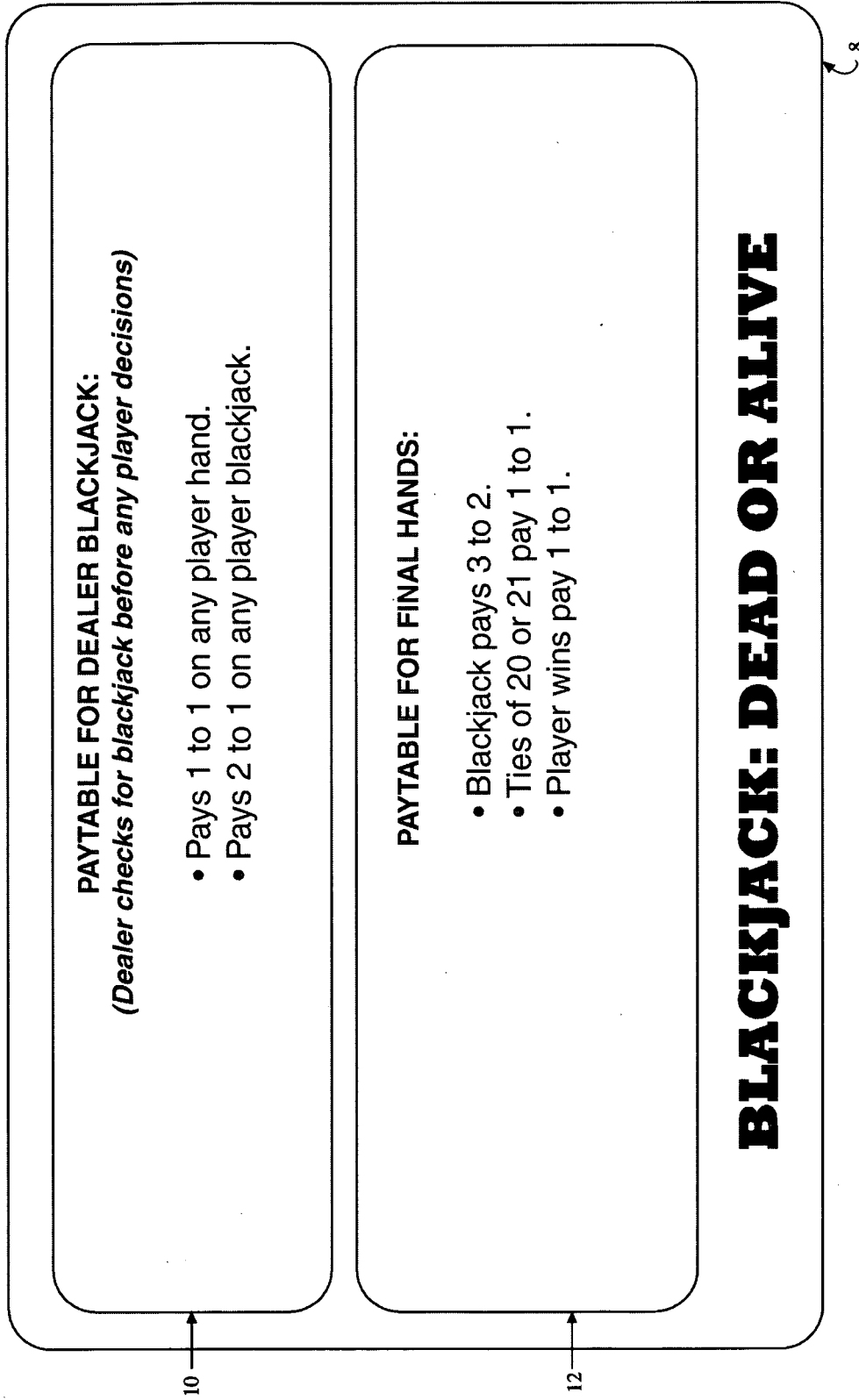


Fig.2

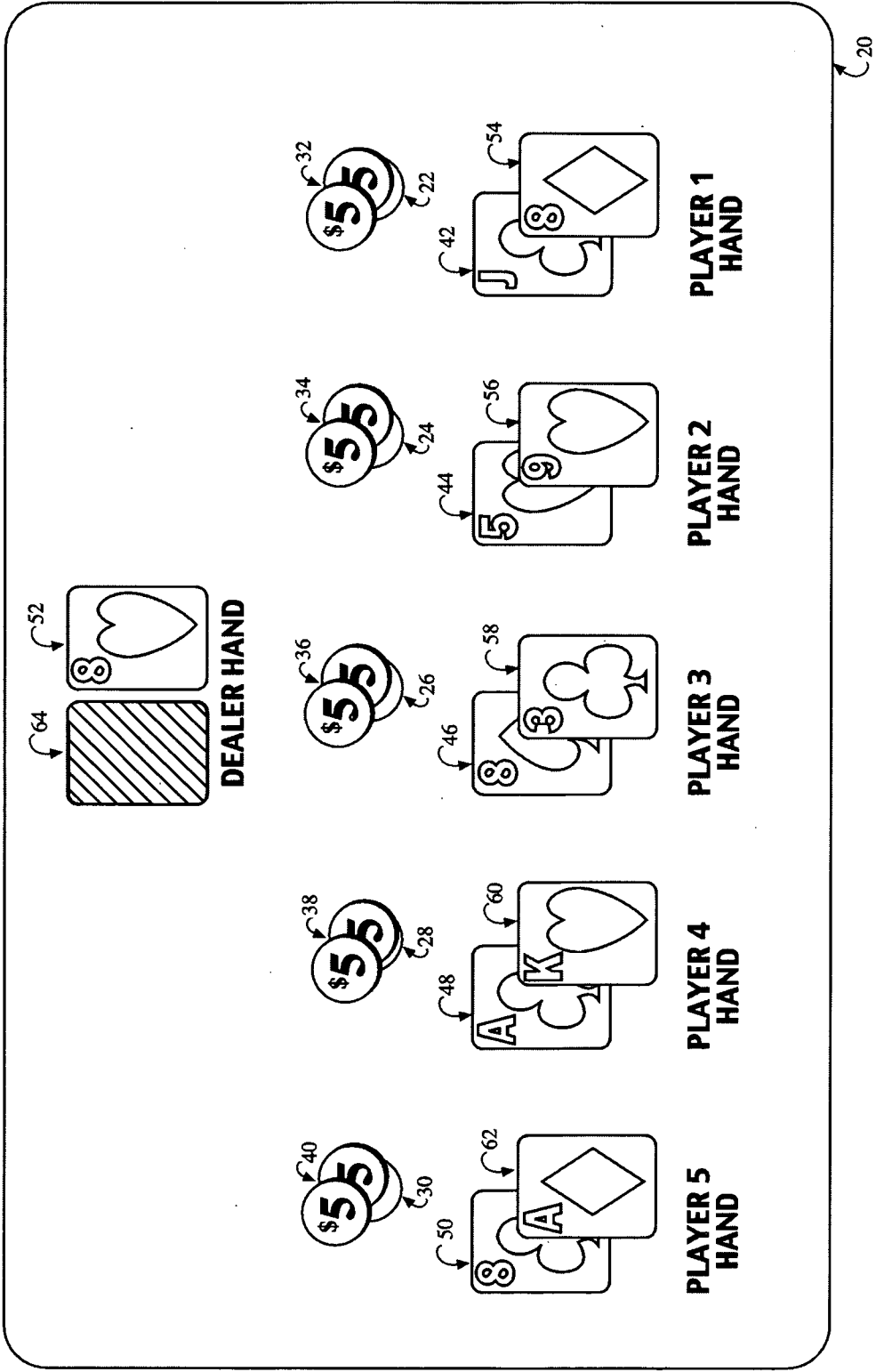


Fig. 3

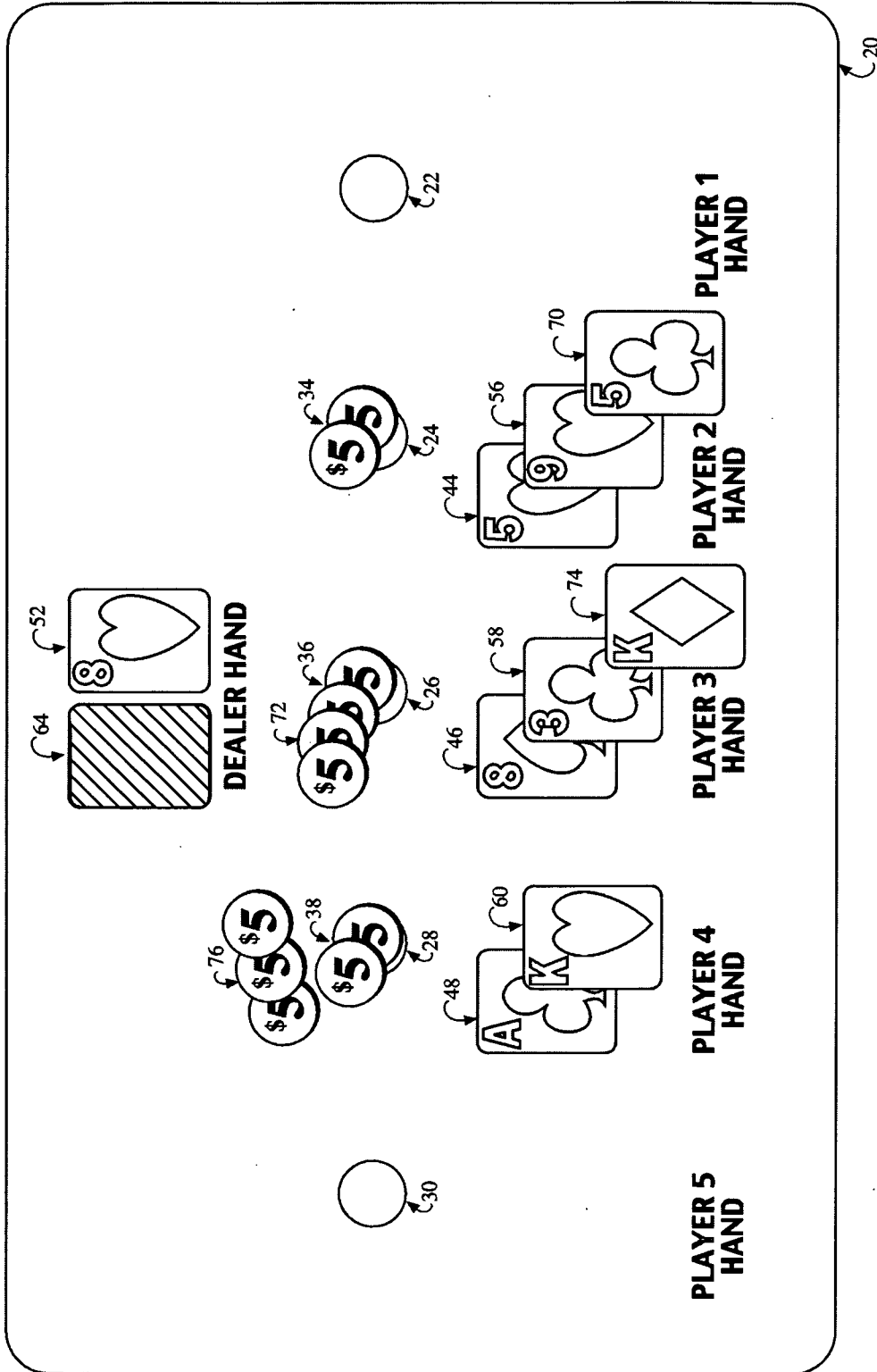


Fig. 4

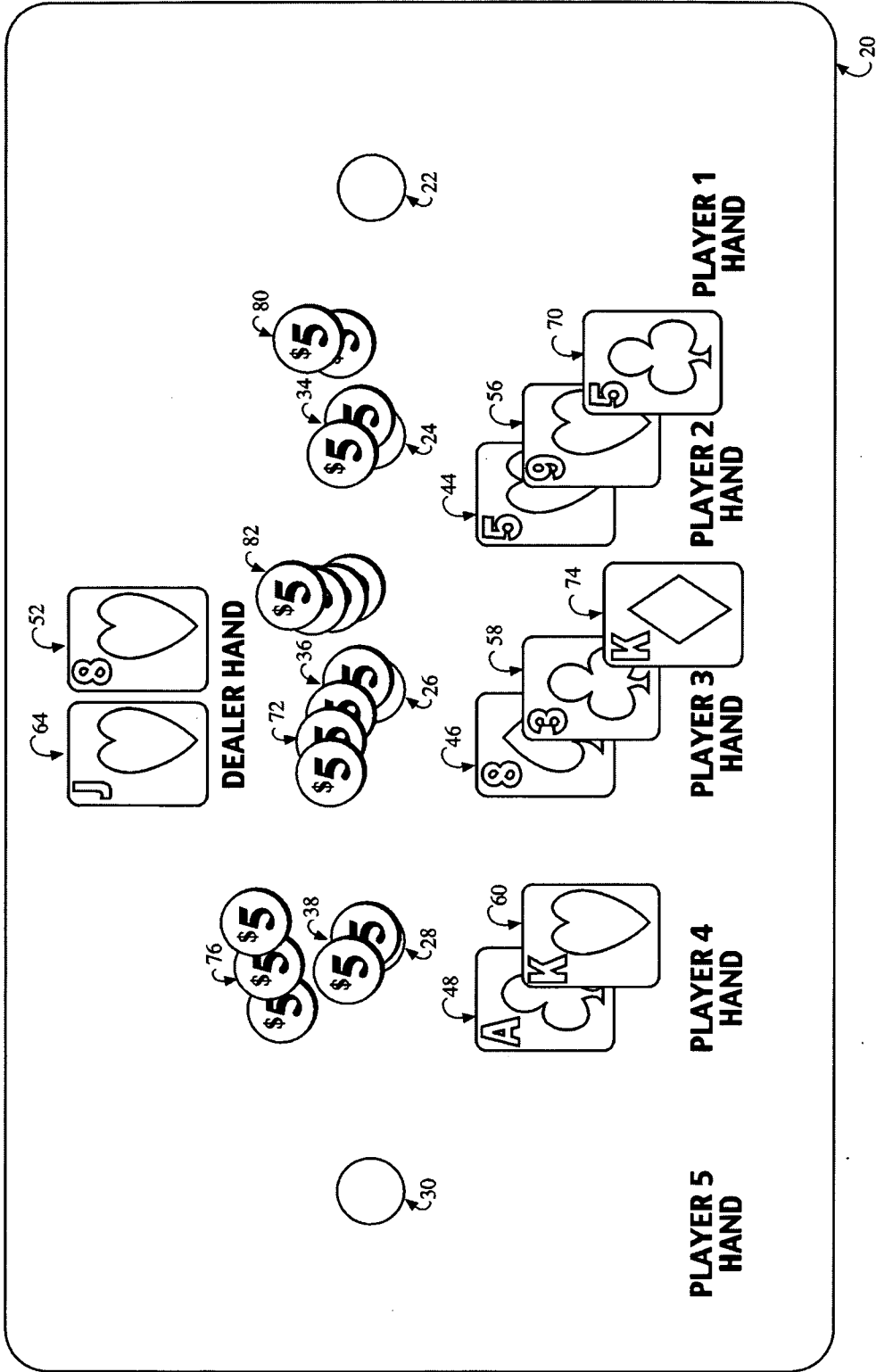


Fig. 5

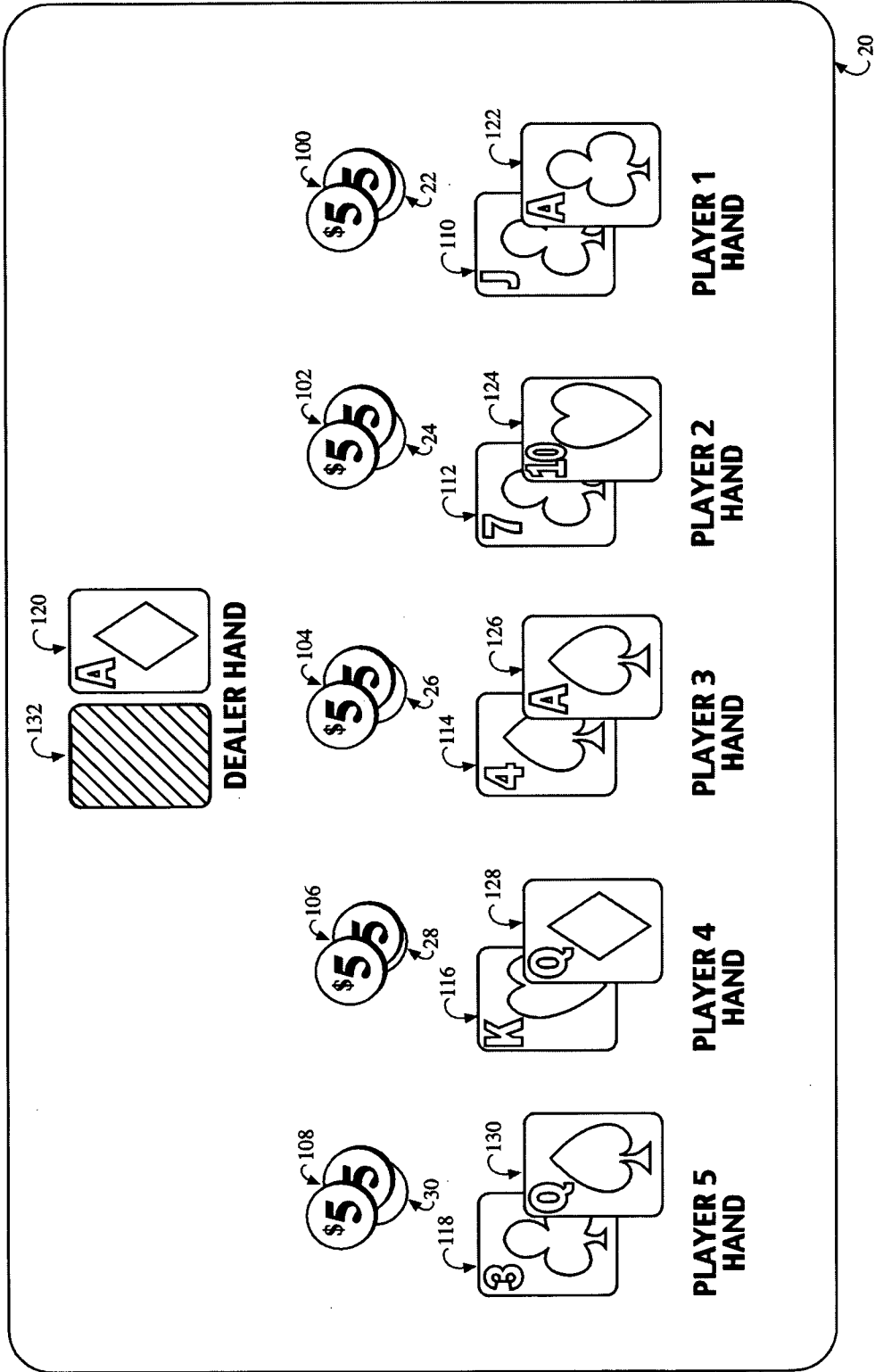


Fig. 6

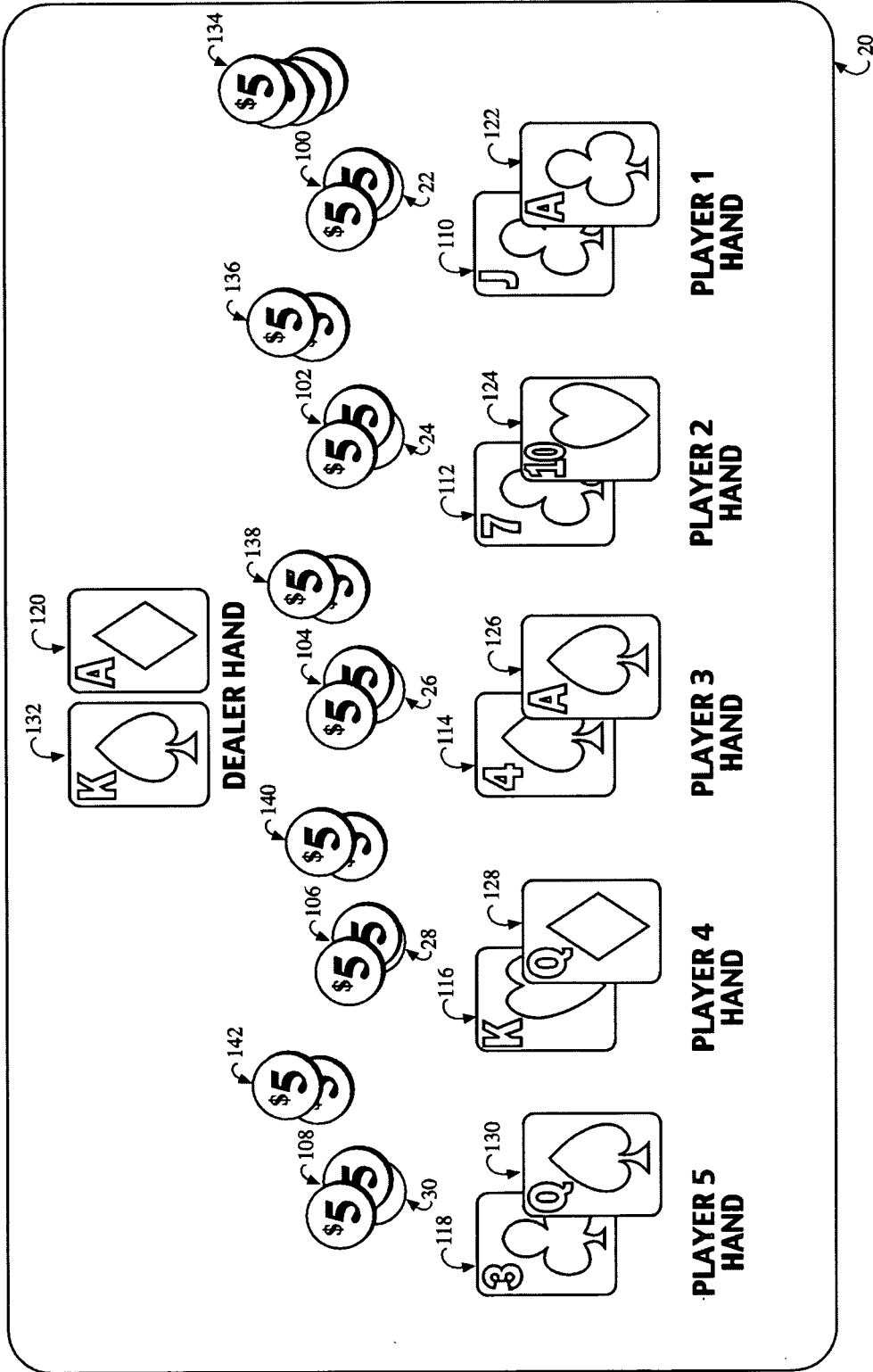


Fig. 7

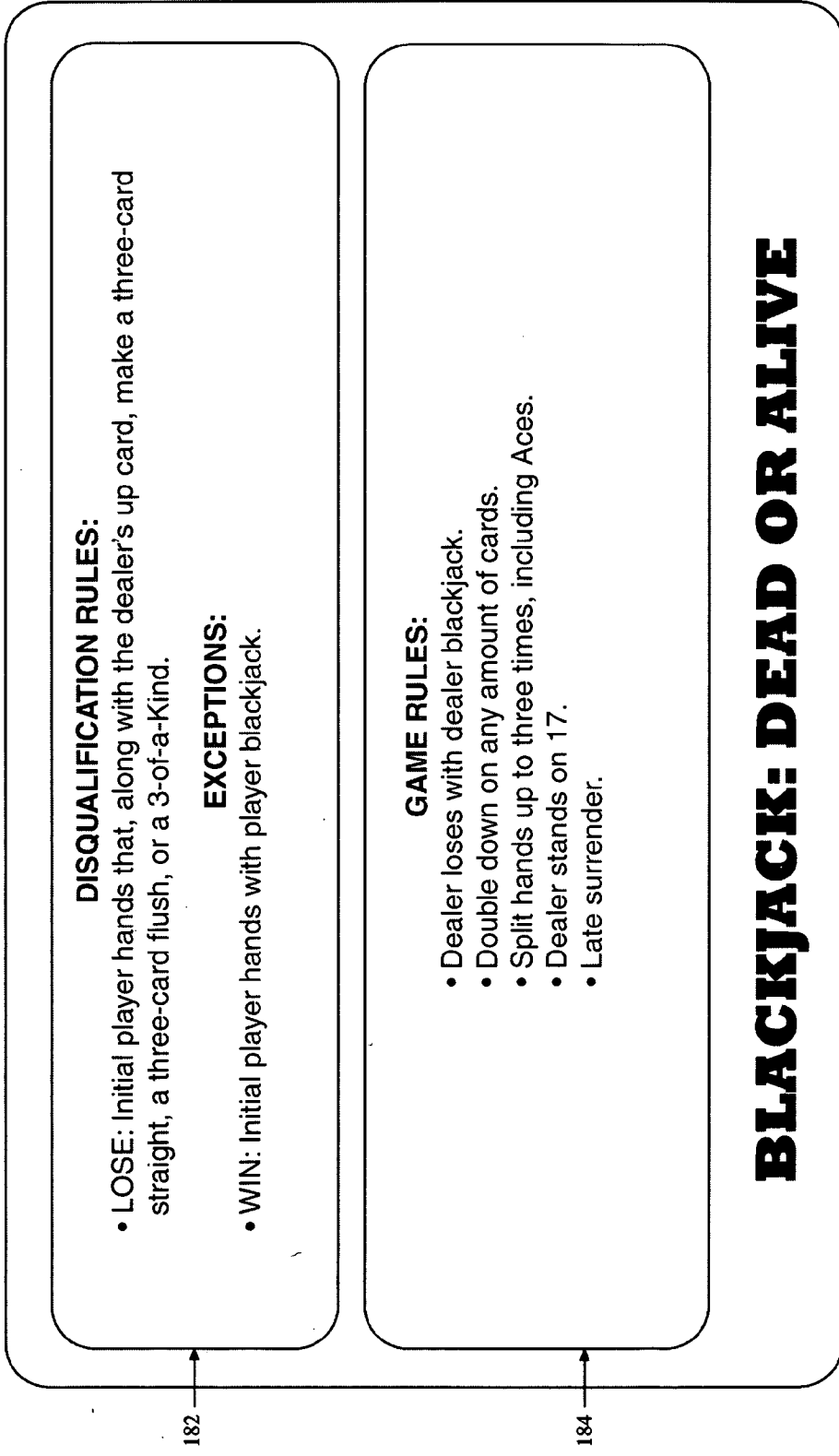


Fig.8

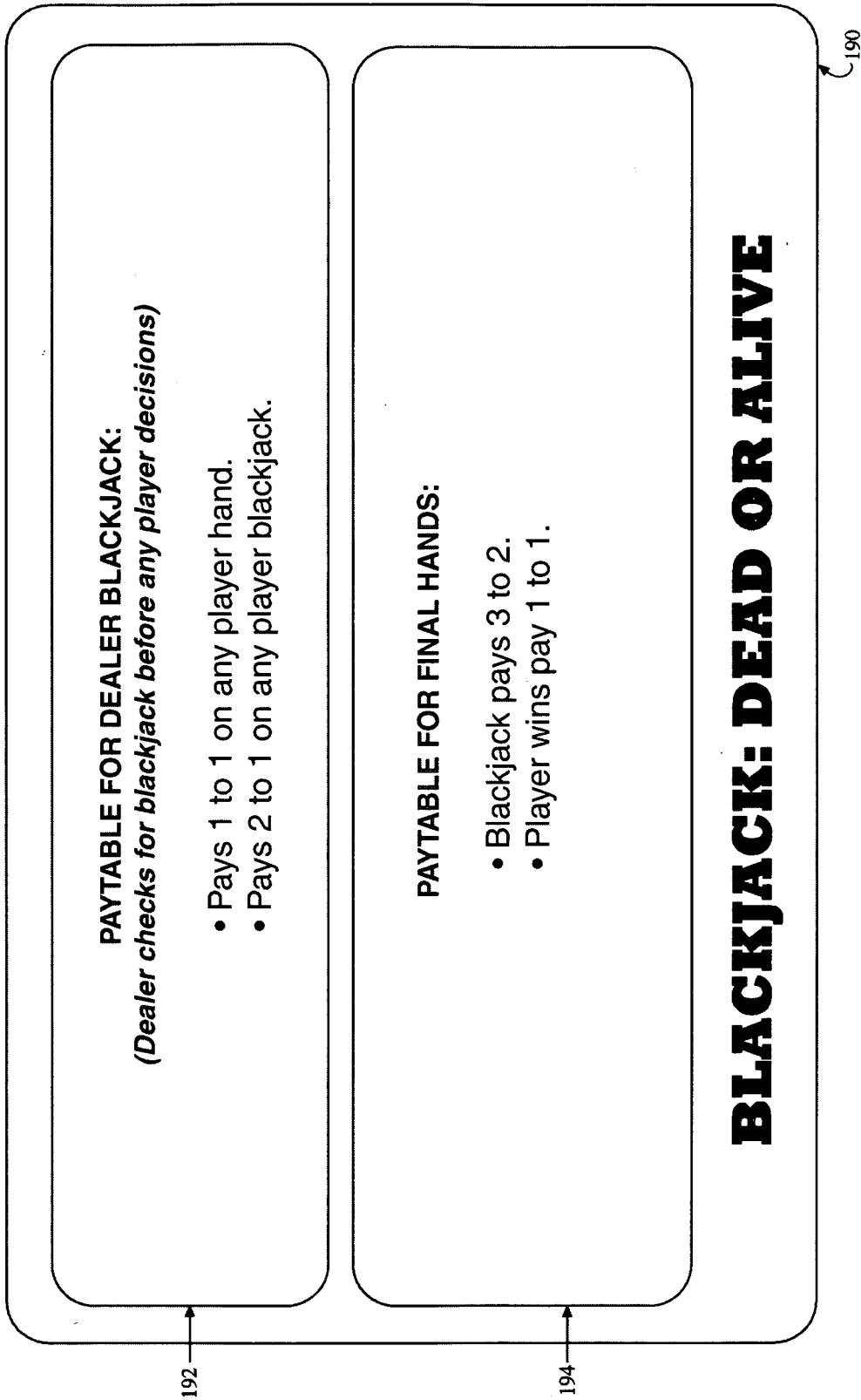


Fig. 9

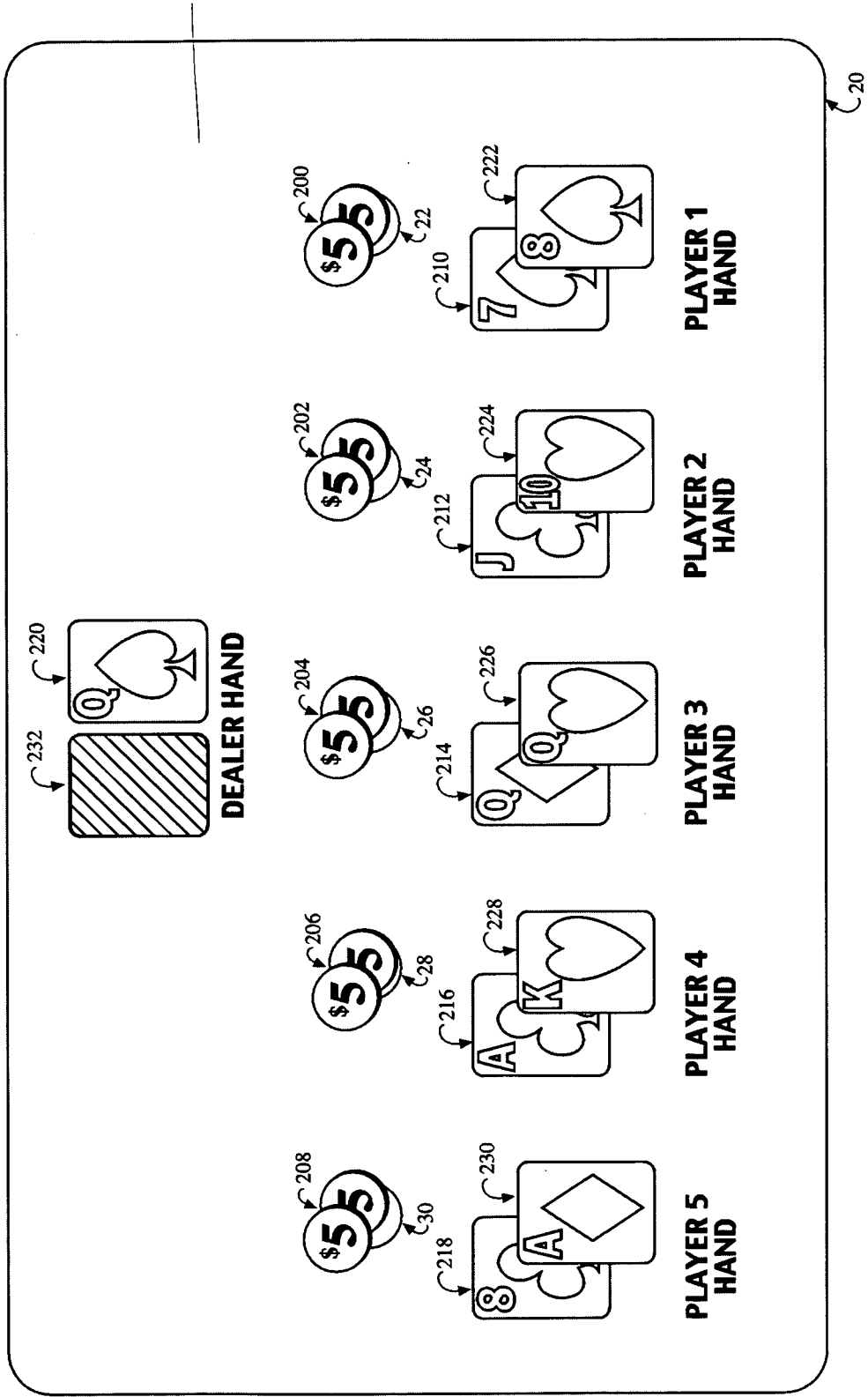


Fig.10

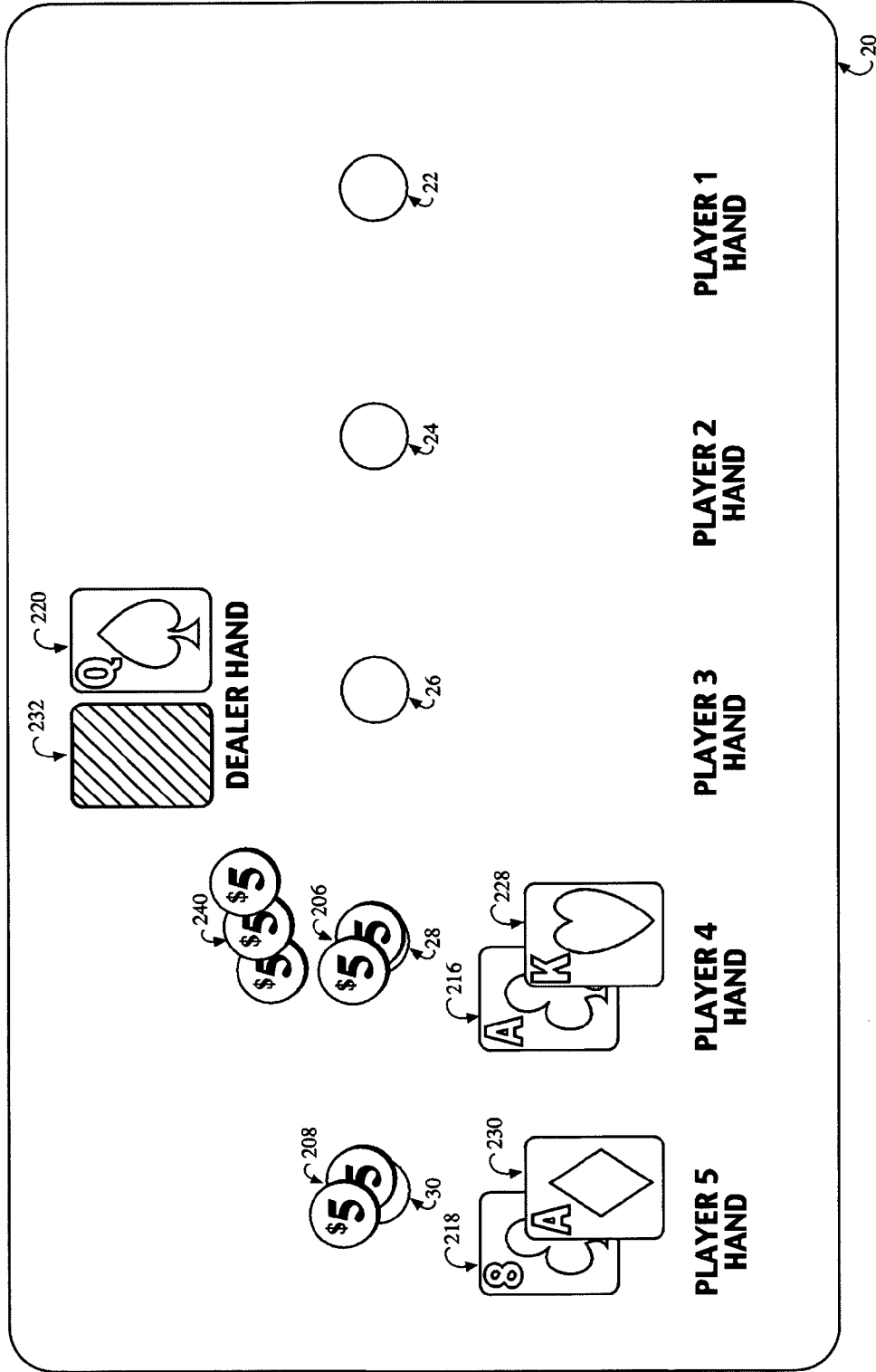


Fig. 11

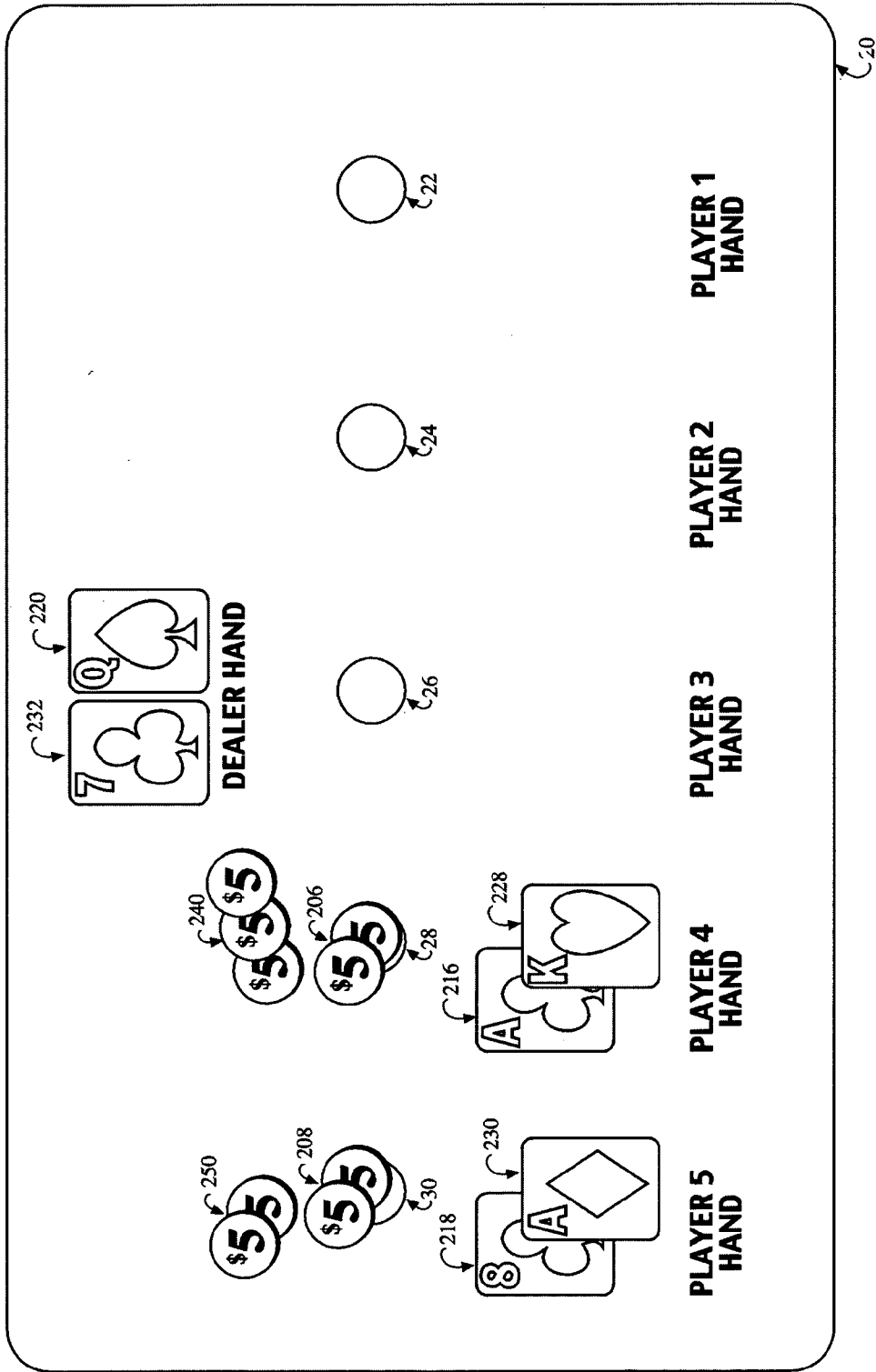


Fig.12

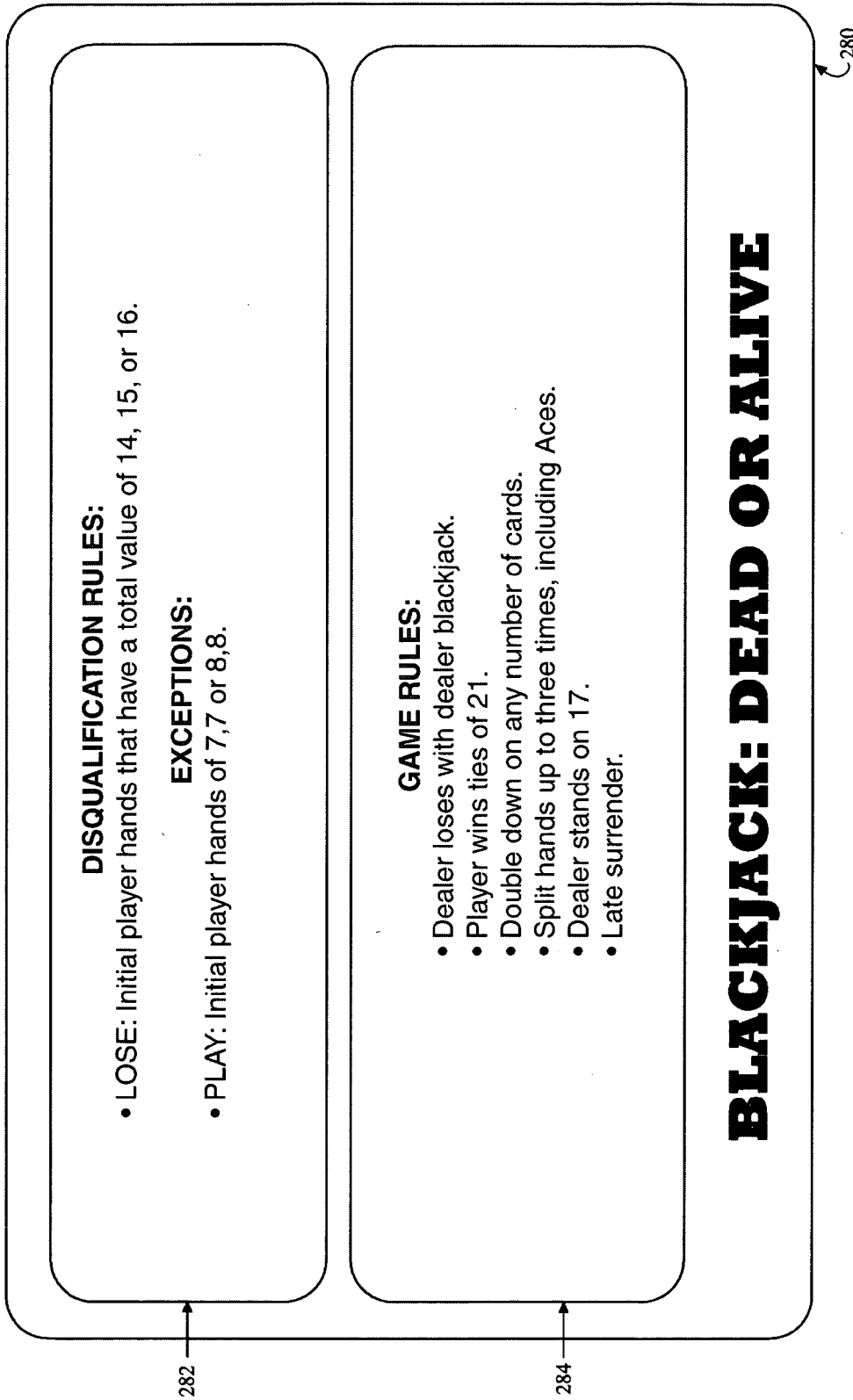


Fig.13

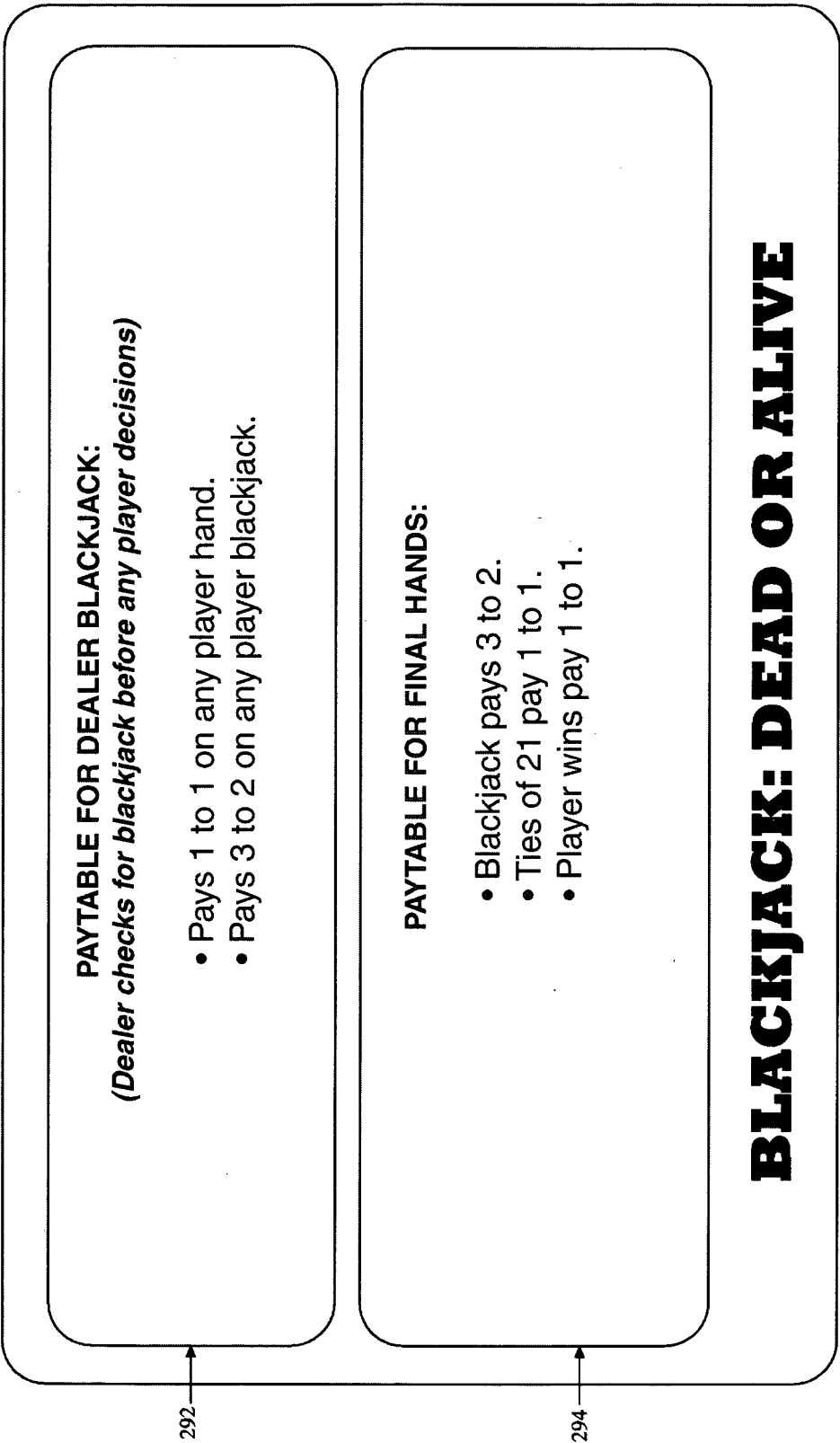


Fig.14

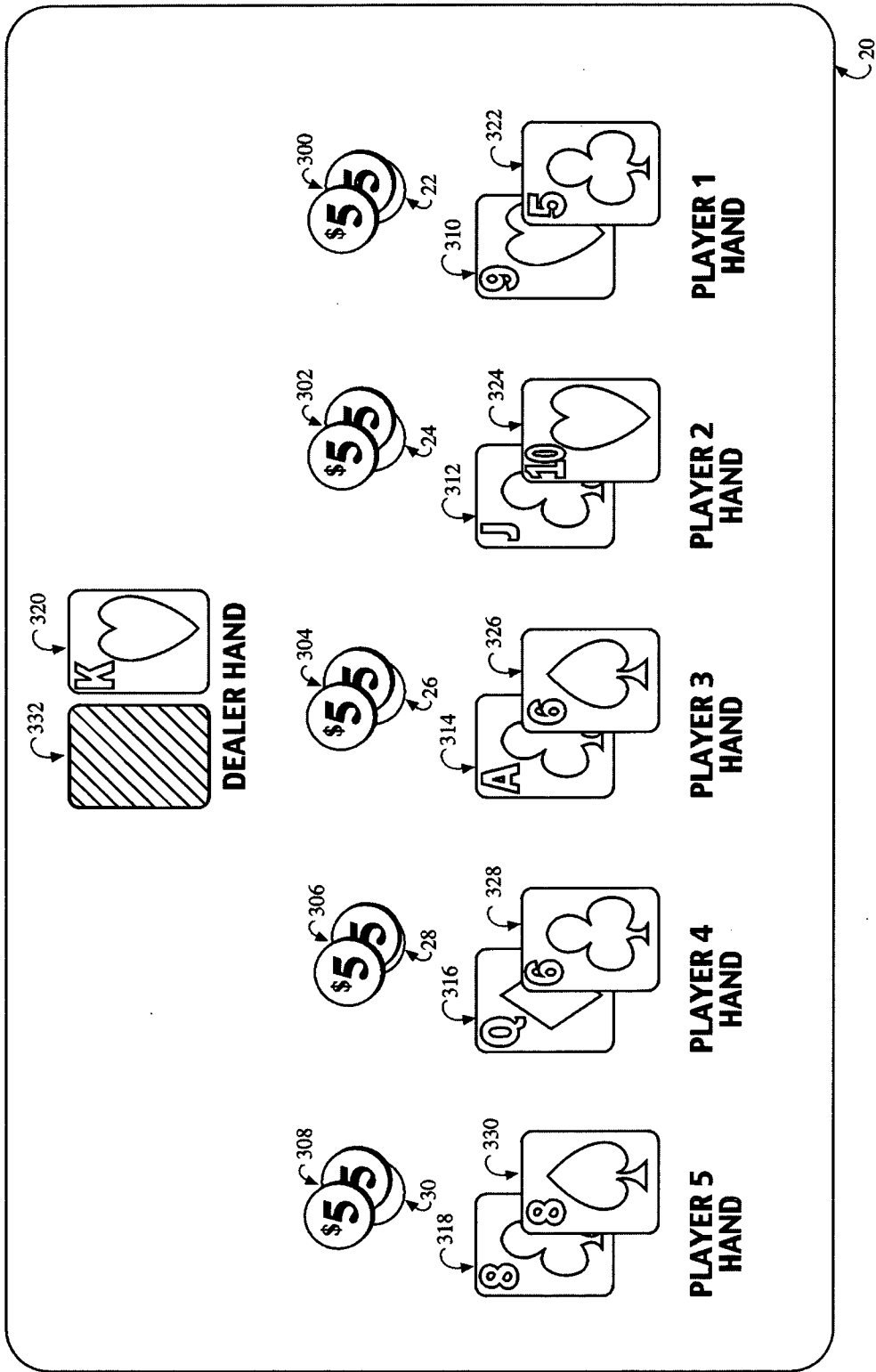


Fig. 15

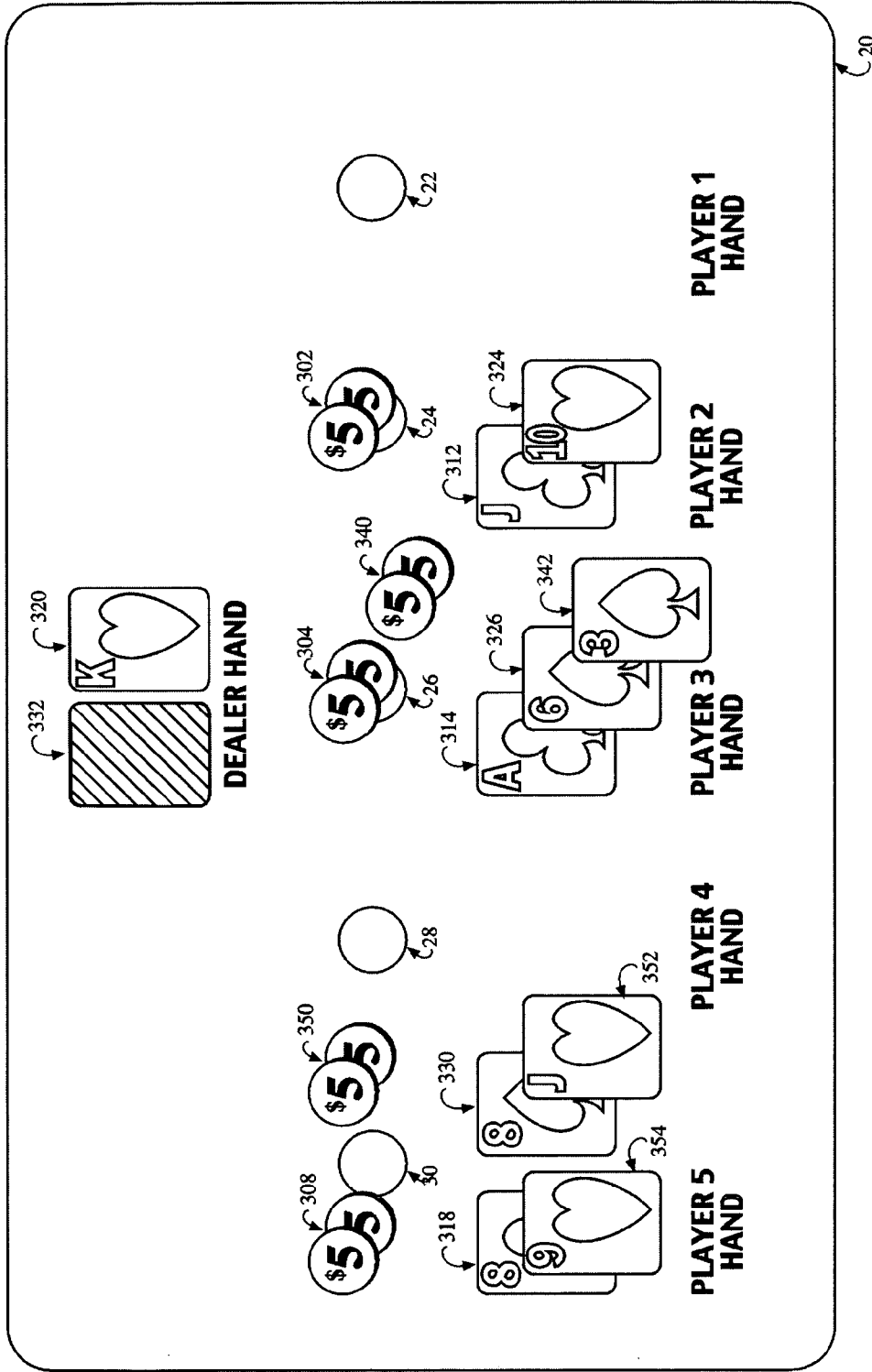


Fig.16

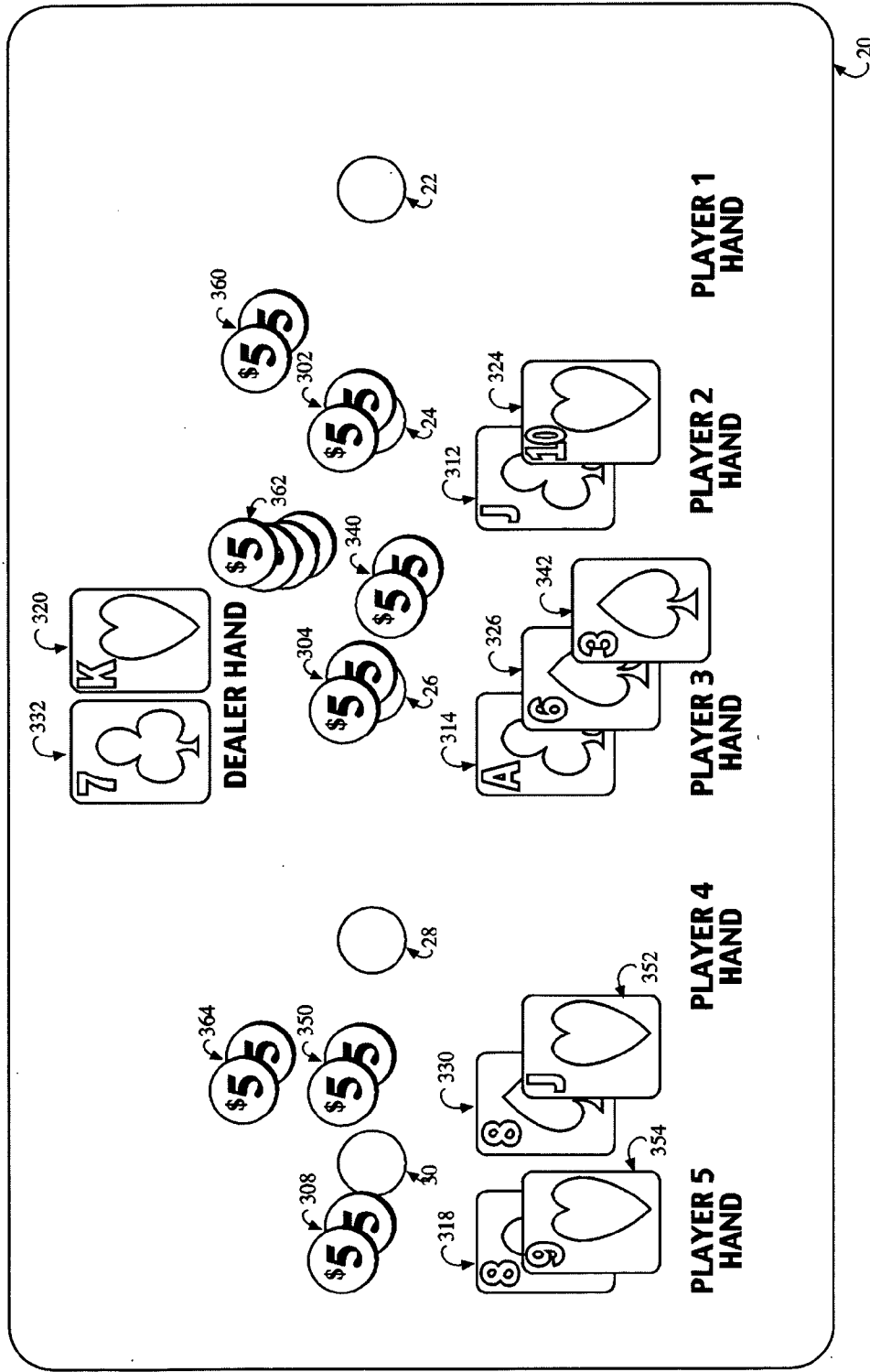


Fig. 17

BLACKJACK VARIANTS WITH PLAYER HAND DISQUALIFICATION

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] This Application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/966,345, filed Feb. 21, 2014, and having the Title BLACKJACK VARIANTS WITH PLAYER HAND DISQUALIFICATION.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to variants of blackjack games suitable for use in casinos, gaming establishments, internet sites or mobile devices as a felt table game, an electronic table game, an electronic machine game, or an electronic device game.

[0004] 2. Background of the Art

[0005] Blackjack, also known as twenty-one, is generally considered the most popular wagering game in the world. The popularity of blackjack games in the gaming industry is partially based on the game's simplicity (i.e., there is widespread public knowledge of the game rules) and the fact that players feel more directly involved in exercising judgment in the play of the game.

[0006] The commonly known traditional blackjack game (i.e., basic blackjack) is played between at least one player and a dealer (or a virtual dealer hand in the case of electronic gaming). The purpose of the game is to beat the dealer, which is accomplished in three key ways: a) the player is dealt an Ace and a 10-value card, thereby achieving a Blackjack and automatic win (without a dealer Blackjack); b) the player achieves a final score higher than the dealer without exceeding 21 (with or without drawing additional cards); or c) the dealer draws additional cards until his hand exceeds 21. Aces are valued at 1 or 11 points, 10s and Face Cards are valued at 10 points, and all other cards are valued at their face value (i.e., a 2 is worth 2 points, a 3 is worth 3 points, etc.).

[0007] The game begins with each player making a wager to play one hand and receiving two cards, either both face up or face down. The dealer receives one card face up and the other face down. Any player receiving a natural twenty-one or Blackjack (an Ace and a 10-point card in the initial dealt hand) immediately wins, and play is terminated as to that player. Each remaining player examines his hand and forms a final player hand by taking a hit (i.e., receiving another card), or standing (i.e., refusing to receive any additional cards and making final the current hand). A player may hit as many times as the player wishes as long as the player does not bust (i.e., have a cumulative total greater than 21). When a player busts, the player loses his wager and play is terminated as to that player. If the dealer is dealt a Blackjack, all players lose their wagers. Otherwise, the dealer draws additional cards until his hand reaches a predetermined point limit (i.e., 17), or until his point total exceeds 21.

[0008] Additional options may be available depending on the initial dealt hand. If the player receives a pair (i.e., two cards having the same rank), the player may split the pair and use each card as a basis for a separate hand. For example, if a player were to be dealt a pair of eights, the player may choose to split the pair and continue play with two hands each having an eight and an additional dealt card. Each of those individual hands is then played independently according to the same rules as above. A player may also have the option to double

down, which allows the player to double his wager and receive exactly only one additional card. Surrender is another option that allows the player to forfeit (typically) one-half of his wager and terminate play before making any decisions if he feels that his chances of winning are slim. These options, if used correctly according to basic strategy, are valuable advantageous tools for the player, and help the player to enhance his chances to win against the dealer.

[0009] After all the players have played their hands, the dealer reveals the face-down card in the dealer's hand. The dealer plays the dealer's hand according to established house rules. That is, the house uses established "house rules" to eliminate the dealer's discretion, so that the dealer hits or stands as the house rules dictate. The dealer then resolves the wagers. In resolving the wagers, players with a final hand total closer to 21 than the dealer's final hand total are rewarded at even money. However, if the dealer's final hand is closer to 21, the player loses his wager. If the dealer busts, all players who did not bust or receive a Blackjack win. Most usually, if the player and dealer push (i.e., tie), the player's wager is returned.

[0010] Despite the popularity of blackjack, there are still problems with its gameplay, especially for the player. Two of the most disappointing features of blackjack for the player are losing to a dealer's Blackjack (especially if the player's dealt cards are potentially lucrative), and achieving a 20-point or 21-point total, only to have the dealer tie, thus resulting in push. Another disappointment for the player is to receive certain non-promising hands such as a 15-point or 16-point initial hand (especially against a dealer 10-value card) that has little chance to win. In addition, the play can become monotonous, and the payouts of 1:1 make it difficult to win big unless you bet big.

[0011] It is for these reasons that inventors and gaming manufacturers have strived to create new variations of blackjack games that are more thrilling for the player and more lucrative for the house. Unique gameplay with additional wager opportunities and higher risk/reward options (and most often higher house edges) can attract new types of players who are looking for more stimulating games with larger payouts. And this may keep them playing longer, thereby increasing revenue for the casino.

[0012] Prior art has taught numerous attempts to make blackjack more exciting, stimulating and lucrative.

[0013] U.S. Pat. No. 8,371,917 (Hall) provides a variation of a blackjack game. If the dealer's up card is of a predetermined card, then the dealer will automatically reveal the dealer's hole card, thereby providing the player with additional information. If the player's initial hand comprises a predetermined hand or hands, then the player can earn a bonus that can be multiplied based on a multiplier associated with the dealer's up card.

[0014] U.S. Pat. No. 7,568,704 (Davis, et al.) provides an optional bonus bet wherein a player bets that he or she will be dealt a natural Blackjack hand. Unless the dealer is also dealt a natural Blackjack hand, the player continues playing blackjack with his or her natural Blackjack hand reevaluated as a hard hand eleven. If the player beats the dealer, the player is paid 3:2 for his or her base bet and a significantly higher payout for his or her bonus bet. If the dealer is also dealt a natural Blackjack, a player with a natural Blackjack is paid at a significantly higher payout for his or her bonus bet while the base bet is a push.

[0015] U.S. Pat. No. 7,329,178 (Moore, et al.) discloses a version of the game of blackjack, in which players may discard one of the two cards that they are initially dealt, if they pay a discard fee before any cards are dealt. The player who discards then draws another card to replace the card that has been discarded. If the dealer has a Blackjack, a player who has an ace or card with a value of ten in his initial hand, and has paid the discard fee, may discard the other card and draw a replacement card. If the player then has a Blackjack, he wins the hand.

[0016] U.S. Pat. No. 7,255,351 (Yoseloff, et. al.) discloses a casino blackjack game comprised of placing an optional wager on an auxiliary card game; dealing a first number of cards to a player; dealing a second number of cards to the dealer; displaying at least one of the player's cards; displaying at least one of the dealer's cards; and wherein if at least one of the displayed player's cards or at least one of the displayed dealer's cards is a card of a specific predetermined rank, paying a player who has placed the optional wager for the occurrence of the at least one card of a specific predetermined rank being displayed in either the exposed card(s) of the dealer's hand and/or the player's hand.

[0017] U.S. Pat. No. 7,156,734 (Walker, et al.) describes systems and methods for resolving a hand of blackjack. If it is determined that the hand of blackjack has resulted in a push, then it is determined if the player has won the hand of blackjack based on a random outcome.

[0018] U.S. Pat. No. 7,066,466 (Stavinsky, et al.) describes a method for playing a modified blackjack game using decks containing an extra 11 and/or 12 value card(s). Prior to play each player makes a blackjack game wager and a suit wager. After one or more cards are dealt to each player a suit designating card is dealt and revealed and if one or both of the player's first two cards are of the same suit as the suit designating card, the player wins the suit wager. Thereafter, each player hand and the dealer hand are completed according to the rules of blackjack (slightly modified due to the inclusion of the additional 11 and/or 12 value cards) and the blackjack wagers are resolved.

[0019] U.S. Pat. No. 6,773,013 (Caldwell) discloses a method for enhancing a conventional game of Twenty-one that includes the steps of: providing a player an opportunity to place a Twenty-one wager to participate in the conventional game of Twenty-one; providing the player an opportunity to place a match wager that an index value of at least one of an initial two cards dealt to the player will match an index value of a face-up card dealt to a dealer; dealing the initial two cards to the player and dealing the face-up card to the dealer; verifying that the player placed the match wager and paying the player a match winning amount on the match wager if the index value of at least one of the initial two cards dealt to the player matches the index value of the face-up card; and continuing with play of the conventional game of Twenty-one.

[0020] U.S. Pat. No. 6,293,551 (Webb) teaches a casino blackjack game, wherein the concept of the insurance wager against a dealer Blackjack (two-card total of 21) is expanded to provide a player wagering option when a dealer first card is either an Ace or a ten-value card. An additional wagering option is provided when a player first card is either an Ace or a ten-value card that the player two-card total will be 21. Payouts for the respective wagers are varied according to whether the dealer or player first card is the Ace or the ten-value card and whether the two-card twenty-one is comprised

of cards of a predefined relation such as same suit or color or cards including a 10-value card of a particular rank.

[0021] U.S. Pat. No. 5,979,897 (Grossman) teaches a method for playing a modified form of blackjack using one or more standard 52-card decks, and having rule variations to increase the excitement of the game while retaining the same "take" for the house. By paying 1:1 on any Blackjack, rather than the traditional 3:2, the player is afforded special rules including: Blackjack in a specified suit pays 2:1, five or more cards totaling exactly 21 pays 2:1, and six cards totaling 20 or less pays 1:1.

[0022] The traditional casino table game of poker is played by pitting player against player. Most popular poker table games in brick-and-mortar and virtual casinos worldwide (Texas Hold 'Em, for instance) provide players with the option to, among other choices, fold after each deal. To fold is to discard one's hand, effectively losing the hand and any wagers made up to that point.

[0023] Some newer table games are played by pitting each player against a dealer (i.e., the "house"). In particular, the following prior art refers to certain hands being automatically disqualified, as opposed to being voluntarily folded.

[0024] U.S. Pat. No. 4,836,553 (Suttle, et al.) and U.S. Pat. No. 5,685,774 (Webb) each disclose a poker game that requires the disqualification of the dealer if the dealer's hand does not equal or exceed a predetermined minimum ranking.

[0025] U.S. Pat. No. 7,661,678 (Snow) teaches a poker game that requires the disqualification of the dealer if the dealer's hand equals or exceeds a predetermined maximum ranking.

[0026] The patents referred to above provide dealer disqualification that is an integral part of the basic gameplay and the mathematical analysis supporting each game. The disqualifications are necessary to insure that the game will have a solid house advantage; however, players feel frustration if they were dealt a lucrative or promising hand that they then cannot play out for potential large awards.

[0027] U.S. Pat. No. 5,782,473 (Chou, et al.) provides a card game in which each player is dealt five cards. After determining points perceived on his hand, each player must show three cards from his hand which add up to either ten, twenty, or thirty to continue playing the game. If a player cannot successfully do that, he is disqualified and must leave the game and wait for the next round. There is no upside to the player disqualification; that is, the player is not rewarded with additional player-friendly features (i.e., features that are advantageous for the player) that may offset the negativity of disqualification.

[0028] Each of the references discussed in this text art are incorporated herein in their entirety for all purposes including enablement of multiplayer platforms and structures for execution of games according to the present invention.

[0029] It is still desirable to create a new and exciting blackjack game that does not require an additional wager, yet provides appealing player rules.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0030] A method of playing a physical table or an electronic wagering card game for a single player or multiple players uses at least a single deck of 52 standard playing cards having a standard rank. In the case of a table game format, it is preferred that multiple decks be utilized, the decks being shuffled by either an electronic shuffling machine or an electronic continuous shuffler, in order to provide a random deal

of the cards. An electronic format requires the use of a Random Number Generator, or RNG, in order to provide a random deal result. The present invention requires a wager (cash, credits, non-monetary points, etc.) from each player to play the blackjack game. No additional wager is required. The game is played with two dealt cards to each player and the dealer; preferably each player is randomly dealt two cards face up in a player card area, and the dealer receives a first face up card and a second face down card in a dealer hand area.

[0031] Certain predetermined rules require that the player's initial hand be automatically disqualified, thereby ending play of that player's hand and with that player losing his wager. In a first preferred embodiment of the present invention, if the rank of any one of the player's initial cards matches the rank of the dealer's up card, the player hand is disqualified. In a second preferred embodiment, if both of the player's initial cards together with the dealer's up card forms a three-card straight, a three-card flush or 3-of-a-Kind, the player hand is disqualified. A third preferred embodiment, an initial player hand may be disqualified if its total point value equals one of a predetermined set of point values (i.e., hard 14s through 16s). There may be specific predetermined exceptions to any of these said rules. Any players remaining in the game continue play of the traditional blackjack game as described above in the background of the art of the invention, with certain player-friendly advantages applied as described below.

[0032] Since the aforementioned disqualification rules favor the house, the player may receive certain beneficial rules that adjust the game's advantage to the player. In particular, if the dealer achieves a Blackjack (an Ace and a 10-point card) with his first two initially dealt cards, all players will receive at least a push, but preferably a 1:1 payout. If a player has a Blackjack against the dealer's Blackjack, he will receive at least a 1:1 payment, but preferably a 3:2 or 2:1 payment. In addition, if the player ties a dealer 21 (by drawing card[s]), the player wins.

[0033] Certain other beneficial rules may apply. For instance, the player may be permitted to: win other predetermined ties instead of pushing; double down on any two initially-dealt cards, or double down on any amount of cards; split any hand at least three times, including aces; double down on any split hand; receive extra compensation for certain hands; and/or surrender, whether early or late.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0034] FIG. 1 shows a graphic illustration of the rules of the game utilizing the game technology of the first embodiment described herein.

[0035] FIG. 2 shows a graphic illustration of the paytables of the game utilizing the game technology of the first embodiment described herein.

[0036] FIG. 3 shows a first game of the first embodiment at a beginning stage.

[0037] FIG. 4 shows the first game of the first embodiment at a later stage.

[0038] FIG. 5 shows the first game of the first embodiment at a final stage.

[0039] FIG. 6 shows a second game of the first embodiment at a beginning stage.

[0040] FIG. 7 shows the second game of the first embodiment at a final stage.

[0041] FIG. 8 shows a graphic illustration of the rules of the game utilizing the game technology of the second embodiment described herein.

[0042] FIG. 9 shows a graphic illustration of the paytables of the game utilizing the game technology of the second embodiment described herein.

[0043] FIG. 10 shows a first game of the second embodiment at a beginning stage.

[0044] FIG. 11 shows the first game of the second embodiment at a later stage.

[0045] FIG. 12 shows the first game of the second embodiment at a final stage.

[0046] FIG. 13 shows a graphic illustration of the rules of the game utilizing the game technology of the third embodiment described herein.

[0047] FIG. 14 shows a graphic illustration of the paytables of the game utilizing the game technology of the third embodiment described herein.

[0048] FIG. 15 shows a first game of the third embodiment at a beginning stage.

[0049] FIG. 16 shows the first game of the third embodiment at a later stage.

[0050] FIG. 17 shows the first game of the third embodiment at a final stage.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0051] A method of playing a blackjack wagering game uses at least one deck of 52 standard playing cards having 13 ranks (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, J, Q, K, A) and 4 suits (Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, Clubs). The game is played on a felt table utilizing physical playing cards, or it may be an electronic game utilizing at least a computer processor, input device and a video monitor screen. The game may be played on at least a casino gaming table, a casino gaming machine, a personal computer or pad, an internet gaming site, or as a mobile application.

[0052] The present invention is a basic blackjack game as described in the background of the art, modified to include at least one player-disqualification rule and at least one player-advantage rule that provide an extra excitement and anticipation not seen in traditional blackjack. An extra wager in addition to the base wager is preferably not required in order to play the game.

[0053] The rules of the game require that an initial predetermined set of player initial hands must be disqualified; that is, the initial hands are forfeited along with the wager, thereby providing an automatic loss and ending the play of the hand. Predetermined exceptions to the initial predetermined set of initial hands may be provided. The initial predetermined set of player initial hands minus the predetermined exceptions (if any) provides a final predetermined set of disqualified initial hands. In addition to the value of the wager, the particular composition of the final predetermined set of disqualified initial hands determines an expected value that provides an additional house advantage (over and above the house advantage inherent in basic blackjack) that may determine the configuration of predetermined player-friendly rules (i.e., rules that increase the player advantage, therefore lowering the house advantage). In other words, a high additional house advantage may provide a greater amount and/or more lucrative player-friendly rules; a low additional house advantage may provide a lesser amount and/or less lucrative player-friendly rules.

[0054] In the present invention, the player is not privy to the exact cost of every individual initial hand against the dealer up card, as only the expected value and not the actual value of the disqualified hand is known. The expected value of a particular hand is the amount of money that the player will win on average on the wager. The expected value may be referred to as “positive”, meaning that the expected value is higher than the amount of the wager, or “negative”, meaning that the expected value is lower than the amount of the wager. Every disqualified initial hand loses not only the base wager, but its expected value. The amount of the wager and the expected value of each disqualified initial hand and the frequency of its occurrence are used to figure the additional house advantage that may determine the configuration of the player-advantage rule(s). If the player is dealt a fewer than average amount of disqualified initial hands, he will be playing at a lower additional house advantage. If the player is dealt a more than average amount of disqualified initial hands, he will be playing at a higher additional house advantage. This makes the game less predictable, and therefore more exciting.

[0055] In a first embodiment of the present invention, each player places a wager and is dealt two face-up cards. The dealer receives one face-up card, and one face-down card. The predetermined set of initial player hands that require disqualification comprises hands that have a card whose rank matches the rank of the dealer’s up card. Exceptions to the predetermined set of initial player hands preferably comprise initial player hands that have a 10-point total, an 11-point total, a 20-point total, a 21-point total representing a player Blackjack or initial hands that have two same-ranked cards that match the rank of the dealer’s up card. These exception hands are called “safe” hands. After the initial deal, each player’s initial hand is analyzed; disqualified initial hands are removed along with the wager, ending further play of those hands. Any hand that is not disqualified is a qualified hand. Any initial hands (whether an outright qualified hand or a safe hand) remaining in the game are played out according to basic blackjack gameplay, with the exception of predetermined additional or replacement rules that provide player-friendly advantages. In this first embodiment of the present invention, a dealer Blackjack will not automatically win as in basic blackjack. Instead, the dealer will automatically lose if the dealer achieves a Blackjack (an Ace and a 10-point card) with his first two initially dealt cards. All players will receive at least a push, but preferably a 1:1 payout. If a player has a Blackjack against the dealer’s Blackjack, he will receive at least a 1:1 payment, but preferably a 3:2 or 2:1 payment. It should be noted that the dealer preferably may check for a dealer Blackjack before any player hands are disqualified, although the dealer may check after the disqualification process has been completed. Additionally, certain predetermined dealer-player ties may be player wins instead of pushes.

[0056] The gameplay of the first embodiment of the present invention provides an added anticipation and excitement not seen in basic blackjack. Utilizing a traditional blackjack deal (each player receives a face up card, the dealer receives his up card, each player receives a second up card, and the dealer receives his down card), when a player is dealt his first card, he will immediately not only hope for a poor dealer up card and a second player card that will provide a strong initial hand, but he will also be looking at the dealer’s up card, hoping his card does not match the dealer’s. If it doesn’t, he still has to hope that his second card will not match the dealer’s. If his first card does match the dealer’s, he then will

hope that his second card will “save” him. For example, if a player receives an “8” as his first card, and the dealer’s up card is an “8”, he will now hope for a “2” or “3” so as to end up with a point total of 10 or 11, or another “8” so as his hand will have two cards that match the dealer. Even if the player does have an initial hand that should be disqualified, he still has one more chance to stay in the game: if the dealer has a dealer Blackjack, all players will receive at least a push, and preferably a win. Winning ties also provide an anticipation not usually seen in basic blackjack.

[0057] In a second embodiment of the present invention, the predetermined set of initial player hands that require disqualification comprises initial player hands that, combined with the dealer’s up card, provide a three-card straight, a three-card flush or a 3-of-a-Kind. In this said embodiment, there are no safe hands except for a player Blackjack. After the initial deal, each player’s initial hand is analyzed; disqualified initial hands are removed along with the wager, ending further play of those hands. Any hand that is not disqualified is a qualified hand. Any initial hands remaining in the game are played out according to basic blackjack rules, with the exception of predetermined additional and/or replacement rules that provide player-friendly advantages. In this second embodiment of the present invention, a dealer Blackjack will not automatically win as in basic blackjack. Instead, the dealer will automatically lose if the dealer achieves a Blackjack (an Ace and a 10-point card) with his first two initially dealt cards. All players will receive at least a push, but preferably a 1:1 payout. If a player has a Blackjack against the dealer’s Blackjack, he will receive at least a 1:1 payment, but preferably a 3:2 or 2:1 payment. It should be noted that the dealer preferably may check for a dealer Blackjack before any player hands are disqualified, although the dealer may check after the disqualification process has been completed. Additionally, the player may double down on any amount of cards.

[0058] The gameplay of the second embodiment of the present invention provides an added anticipation and excitement not seen in basic blackjack. Utilizing a traditional blackjack deal (each player receives a face up card, the dealer receives his up card, each player receives a second up card, and the dealer receives his down card), when a player is dealt his first card, he will immediately not only hope for a poor dealer up card and a second player card that will provide a strong initial hand, but he will also be looking at the dealer’s up card, hoping that the combination of the player’s initial two cards plus the dealer’s up card will not result in a straight, a flush, or a 3-of-a-Kind. If the dealer has a dealer Blackjack, all players will receive at least a push, and preferably a win. Doubling down on any amount of cards also provides an anticipation not usually seen in basic blackjack.

[0059] In a third embodiment of the present invention, the predetermined set of initial player hands that require disqualification comprises hands that have two cards that have a 14-value total, a 15-value total or a 16-value total (all hard values: no aces). In this said embodiment, a player Blackjack is a win, and a 7-7 or an 8-8 player initial hand is safe hand. After the initial deal, each player’s initial hand is analyzed; disqualified initial hands are removed along with the wager, ending further play of those hands. Any hand that is not disqualified is a qualified hand. Any initial hands remaining in the game are played out according to basic blackjack rules, with the exception of predetermined replacement rules that provide player-friendly advantages. In this third embodiment

of the present invention, a dealer Blackjack will not automatically win as in basic blackjack. Instead, the dealer will automatically lose if the dealer achieves a Blackjack (an Ace and a 10-point card) with his first two initially dealt cards. All players will receive at least a push, but preferably a 1:1 payout. If a player has a Blackjack against the dealer's Blackjack, he will receive at least a 1:1 payment, but preferably a 3:2 or 2:1 payment. It should be noted that the dealer preferably may check for a dealer Blackjack before any players are disqualified, although he may check after the disqualification process has been completed. Additionally, the player may win ties of predetermined point totals.

[0060] The gameplay of the third embodiment of the present invention provides an added anticipation and excitement not seen in basic blackjack. Utilizing a traditional blackjack deal (each player receives a face up card, the dealer receives his up card, each player receives a second up card, and the dealer receives his down card), when a player is dealt his first card, he will immediately not only hope for a poor dealer up card and a second player card that will provide a strong initial hand, but he will also be looking to avoid hard 14-point, 15-point, or 16-point initial hands. Even if the player does have an initial hand that should be disqualified, he still has one more chance to stay in the game: if the dealer has a dealer Blackjack, all players will receive at least a push, and preferably a win. Winning ties of certain predetermined point totals also provides an anticipation not usually seen in basic blackjack.

[0061] It should be appreciated that the particular design and mathematical analysis of the game will dictate both the final composition of the predetermined set of initial hands (i.e., the predetermined set minus any exclusions) that must be disqualified and the configuration of the player-friendly advantage rules. Various disqualification rules can include, but are not limited to, either one, some, or all of the following:

[0062] Initial player hands that comprise one card whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0063] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0064] Initial player hands that comprise one card whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card.

[0065] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card.

[0066] Initial player hands that comprise a predetermined total value.

[0067] Initial player hands plus the dealer's up card that together provide a straight, a flush, or a 3-of-a-Kind.

[0068] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value matches the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0069] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is lower than the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0070] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is higher than the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0071] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose color matches the color of the dealer's up card.

[0072] Depending at least upon the configuration of the set of initial player hands requiring disqualification, various disqualification exemption rules can include, but are not limited to, either one or some of the following:

[0073] Initial player hands that comprise a Blackjack.

[0074] Initial player hands that comprise a predetermined total value.

[0075] Initial hands that comprise two cards of the same rank.

[0076] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0077] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card.

[0078] Initial player hands plus the dealer's up card that together provide a straight, a flush, or a 3-of-a-Kind.

[0079] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value matches the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0080] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is lower than the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0081] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is higher than the rank of the dealer's up card.

[0082] Initial player hands that comprise two cards whose color matches the color of the dealer's up card.

[0083] Depending at least upon the configuration of the final set of initial player hands requiring disqualification, various player-advantage rules can include, but are not limited to, either one, some, or all of the following:

[0084] Dealer loses a dealer blackjack.

[0085] Player wins predetermined ties.

[0086] Player receives an additional award for predetermined initial hands.

[0087] Player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands.

[0088] Player receives an additional award for predetermined initial hands in view of dealer initial up card.

[0089] Player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer initial up card.

[0090] Player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer initial down card.

[0091] Player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer final hand.

[0092] Player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands if the dealer busts.

[0093] Player may be permitted to double down on any two initially-dealt player cards.

[0094] Player may be permitted to double down on any amount of cards.

[0095] Player may split any hand at least three times, including aces.

[0096] Player may double down on any split hand.

[0097] Player may surrender early.

[0098] Player may surrender late.

[0099] The above embodiments provide the basis of the gameplay for both physical table games and electronic versions of the present invention. The various components of the electronic table or gaming machine are controlled by a central processing unit (CPU), also referred to herein as a controller or processor (such as a microcontroller or microprocessor). To provide gaming functions, the controller executes one or more game programs stored in a computer readable storage medium, in the form of memory. The controller performs the random selection using a random number generator (RNG) of an outcome from the plurality of possible outcomes of the wagering game. Alternatively, the random event may be determined at a remote controller. The remote controller may either use an RNG or a pooling scheme for its central determination of a game outcome. It should be noted that the controller may include one or more microprocessors, includ-

ing, but not limited to, a master processor, a slave processor, and a secondary or parallel processor.

[0100] The controller is also coupled to the system memory and a money/credit detector. The system memory may comprise a volatile memory (e.g., a random-access memory [RAM]) and a non-volatile memory (e.g., an EPROM). The system memory may include multiple RAM and multiple program memories. The money/credit detector signals the processor that money and/or credits were input via the value input device. Preferably, these components are located within the housing of the gaming machine. However, as explained above, these components may be located outboard of the housing and connected to the remainder of the components of the gaming machine via a variety of different wired or wireless connection methods.

[0101] The controller is also connected to, and controls, the primary display, the player input device, and a payoff mechanism. The payoff mechanism is operable, in response to instructions from the controller, and awards a payoff to the player in response to certain winning outcomes that might occur in the basic game or the bonus game(s). The payoff may be provided in the form of points, bills, tickets, coupons, cards, etc. For example, the payoff mechanism may include both a ticket printer and a coin outlet. However, any of a variety of payoff mechanisms well known in the art may be implemented, including cards, coins, tickets, smartcards, cash, etc. One or more pay tables stored in the system memory determine the payoff amounts distributed by the payoff mechanism.

[0102] Communications between the controller and both the peripheral components of the gaming machine and external systems occur through input/output (I/O) circuits. More specifically, the controller directs and receives inputs from the peripheral components of the gaming machine through the input/output circuits. Further, the controller communicates with the external systems via the I/O circuits and a communication path (e.g., serial, parallel, IR, RC, 10bT, etc.). The external systems may include a gaming network, other gaming machines, a gaming server, communications hardware, or a variety of other interfaced systems or components. Even though the I/O circuits may be shown as a single block, it should be noted that each of the I/O circuits may include different types of I/O circuits.

[0103] Controller, as used herein, comprises any combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware that may be disposed or reside inside and/or outside the gaming machine that may communicate with and/or control the transfer of data between the gaming machine and a bus, another computer, processor, or device and/or a service and/or a network. The controller may comprise one or more controllers or processors. The controller may, alternatively, comprise a CPU in combination with other components, such as the I/O circuits and the system memory.

[0104] Reference to the Figures will assist in further understanding of the practice of the present invention.

[0105] FIG. 1 shows a sample rules table 2 according to the first embodiment of the present invention describing the rules for a blackjack game herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first rules table 4 describes the rules that comprise the initial player hands that must be disqualified, essentially losing the bet and ending any further play of the hand. A second rules table 6 comprises the general game rules that include at least one player-advantage rule.

[0106] FIG. 2 shows a sample payout table 8 according to the first embodiment of the present invention describing the payouts for a blackjack game in relation to the rules as shown in FIG. 1 herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first payout table 10 describes the payouts for a dealer Blackjack. A second payout table 12 comprises the payouts for a final player hand in view of the dealer final hand.

[0107] FIG. 3 shows a felt table layout (or alternately a player monitor screen) 20 with a first blackjack game according to the first embodiment of the present invention, and according to FIG. 1 and FIG. 2, with five player areas (Player 1 Hand, Player 2 Hand, Player 3 Hand, Player 4 Hand, Player 5 Hand), each comprising, in ascending order, a Player 1 Betting Circle Area 22, a Player 2 Betting Circle Area 24, a Player 3 Betting Circle Area 26, a Player 4 Betting Circle Area 28, and a Player 5 Betting Circle Area 30. All five players, from Player 1 through Player 5, in ascending order have placed a \$10 wager (32, 34, 36, 38 40). The traditional deal of blackjack is executed by Player 1 receiving his first card 42 (a Jack of Clubs), Player 2 receiving his first card 44 (a 5 of Hearts), Player 3 receiving his first card 46 (an 8 of Spades), Player 4 receiving his first card 48 (an Ace of Clubs), and Player 5 receiving his first card 50 (an 8 of Clubs). The dealer then receives his up card 52 (an 8 of Hearts). The deal is further continued by Player 1 receiving his second card 54 (an 8 of Diamonds), Player 2 receiving his second card 56 (a 9 of Hearts), Player 3 receiving his second card 58 (an 3 of Clubs), Player 4 receiving his second card 60 (a King of Hearts), and Player 5 receiving his second card 62 (an Ace of Diamonds). The dealer then receives his second card face down 64.

[0108] FIG. 4 refers to the elements in FIG. 3 with: Player 1's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table 4 since Player 1's hand contains a card of a rank 54 (an 8 of Diamonds) that matches the rank of the dealer's up card 52; Player 2's hand being in play according to the first rules table 4 with Player 2 electing to draw a card 70 (a 5 of Clubs) and then electing to Stand; Player 3's hand being saved from disqualification because the total value of his initial hand is an 11-value hand, and with Player 3 doubling his bet 72 in order to obtain an only one additional card 74 (a King of Diamonds); Player 4's hand comprising a player Blackjack and being resolved according to the second payout table 12 in FIG. 2 in that the player receives a payout of 3:2 (\$15) 76; and Player 5's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table 4 since Player 5's hand contains a card of a rank 50 (an 8 of Clubs) that matches the rank of the dealer's up card 52.

[0109] FIG. 5 refers to the elements in FIG. 4 with the dealer's second card 64 now being displayed as an up card (the Jack of Hearts), with the dealer's final hand having a value of 18 (a 10-value card plus an 8-value card) and with: Player 2's hand being valued at 19, therefore providing a win of \$10 80; and Player 3's hand being valued at 21, therefore providing a win of \$20 82.

[0110] FIG. 6 shows a felt table layout (or alternately a player monitor screen) 20 with a second blackjack game according to the first embodiment of the present invention, and according to FIG. 1 and FIG. 2, with five player areas (Player 1 Hand, Player 2 Hand, Player 3 Hand, Player 4 Hand, Player 5 Hand), each comprising, in ascending order, a Player 1 Betting Circle Area 22, a Player 2 Betting Circle Area 24, a Player 3 Betting Circle Area 26, a Player 4 Betting Circle Area 28, and a Player 5 Betting Circle Area 30. All five players, from Player 1 through Player 5, in ascending order have placed a \$10 wager (100, 102, 104, 106, 108). The traditional

deal of blackjack is executed by Player 1 receiving his first card **110** (a Jack of Clubs), Player 2 receiving his first card **112** (a 7 of Clubs), Player 3 receiving his first card **114** (a 4 of Spades), Player 4 receiving his first card **116** (a King of Hearts), and Player 5 receiving his first card **118** (a 3 of Clubs). The dealer then receives his up card **120** (an Ace of Diamonds). The deal is further continued by Player 1 receiving his second card **122** (an Ace of Clubs), Player 2 receiving his second card **124** (a 10 of Hearts), Player 3 receiving his second card **126** (an Ace of Spades), Player 4 receiving his second card **128** (a Queen of Diamonds), and Player 5 receiving his second card **130** (a Queen of Clubs). The dealer then receives his second card face down **132**.

[0111] FIG. 7 refers to the elements in FIG. 6 with the dealer checking for Blackjack by turning over his down card **132** to reveal a King of Spades. Since the dealer has achieved a Blackjack, each player's hand is afforded a win according to the first paytable **10** in FIG. 2: Player 1's hand is a Blackjack, winning 2:1 or \$20 **134**; Player 2's hand wins 1:1 or \$10 **136**; Player 3's hand wins 1:1 or \$10 **138**; Player 4's hand wins 1:1 or \$10 **140**; and Player 5's hand wins 1:1 or \$10 **142**.

[0112] FIG. 8 shows a sample rules table **180** according to the second embodiment of the present invention describing the rules for a blackjack game herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first rules table **182** describes the rules that comprise the initial player hands that must be disqualified, essentially losing the bet and ending any further play of the hand. A second rules table **184** comprises the general game rules that include at least one player-advantage rule.

[0113] FIG. 9 shows a sample payout table **190** according to the second embodiment of the present invention describing the payouts for a blackjack game in relation to the rules as shown in FIG. 8 herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first payout table **192** describes the payouts for a dealer Blackjack. A second payout table **194** comprises the payouts for a final player hand in view of the dealer final hand.

[0114] FIG. 10 shows a felt table layout (or alternately a player monitor screen) **20** with a first blackjack game according to the second embodiment of the present invention, and according to FIG. 8 and FIG. 9, with five player areas (Player 1 Hand, Player 2 Hand, Player 3 Hand, Player 4 Hand, Player 5 Hand), each comprising, in ascending order, a Player 1 Betting Circle Area **22**, a Player 2 Betting Circle Area **24**, a Player 3 Betting Circle Area **26**, a Player 4 Betting Circle Area **28**, and a Player 5 Betting Circle Area **30**. All five players, from Player 1 through Player 5, in ascending order have placed a \$10 wager (**200, 202, 204, 206, 208**). The traditional deal of blackjack is executed by Player 1 receiving his first card **210** (a 7 of Spades), Player 2 receiving his first card **212** (a Jack of Clubs), Player 3 receiving his first card **214** (a Queen of Diamonds), Player 4 receiving his first card **216** (an Ace of Clubs), and Player 5 receiving his first card **218** (an 8 of Clubs). The dealer then receives his up card **220** (a Queen of Spades). The deal is further continued by Player 1 receiving his second card **222** (an 8 of Spades), Player 2 receiving his second card **224** (a 10 of Hearts), Player 3 receiving his second card **226** (a Queen of Hearts), Player 4 receiving his second card **228** (a King of Hearts), and Player 5 receiving his second card **230** (an Ace of Diamonds). The dealer then receives his second card face down **232**.

[0115] FIG. 11 refers to the elements in FIG. 10 with: Player 1's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table **182** in FIG. 8 since Player 1's hand plus the dealer's up card comprise a three card flush; Player 2's hand being dis-

qualified according to the first rules table **182** since Player 2's hand plus the dealer's up card comprise a three card straight; Player 3's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table **182** since Player 3's hand plus the dealer's up card comprise a 3-of-a-Kind; Player 4's hand comprising a player Blackjack (the exception to the disqualification rules in the first rules table **182** wherein even though the player's cards and the dealer's up card form a straight, the player's initial hand is not disqualified) and being resolved according to the second payout table **194** in FIG. 9 in that the player receives a payout of 3:2 (\$15) **240**; and Player 5's hand being in play according to the first rules table **182**.

[0116] FIG. 12 refers to the elements in FIG. 11 with the dealer's second card **232** now being displayed as an up card (a 7 of Clubs), with the dealer's final hand having a value of 17 (a 10-value card plus a 7-value card) and with: Player 5's hand being valued at 19, therefore providing a win of \$10 **250**.

[0117] FIG. 13 shows a sample rules table **280** according to the third embodiment of the present invention describing the rules for a blackjack game herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first rules table **282** describes the rules that comprise the initial player hands that must be disqualified, essentially losing the bet and ending any further play of the hand. A second rules table **284** comprises the general game rules that include at least one player-advantage rule.

[0118] FIG. 14 shows a sample payout table **290** according to the third embodiment of the present invention describing the payouts for a blackjack game in relation to the rules as shown in FIG. 13 herein called BLACKJACK: DEAD OR ALIVE. A first payout table **292** describes the payouts for a dealer Blackjack. A second payout table **294** comprises the payouts for a final player hand in view of the dealer final hand.

[0119] FIG. 15 shows a felt table layout (or alternately a player monitor screen) **20** with a first blackjack game according to the third embodiment of the present invention, and according to FIG. 13 and FIG. 14, with five player areas (Player 1 Hand, Player 2 Hand, Player 3 Hand, Player 4 Hand, Player 5 Hand), each comprising, in ascending order, a Player 1 Betting Circle Area **22**, a Player 2 Betting Circle Area **24**, a Player 3 Betting Circle Area **26**, a Player 4 Betting Circle Area **28**, and a Player 5 Betting Circle Area **30**. All five players, from Player 1 through Player 5, in ascending order have placed a \$10 wager (**300, 302, 304, 306, 308**). The traditional deal of blackjack is executed by Player 1 receiving his first card **310** (a 9 of Hearts), Player 2 receiving his first card **312** (a Jack of Clubs), Player 3 receiving his first card **314** (an Ace of Clubs), Player 4 receiving his first card **316** (a Queen of Diamonds), and Player 5 receiving his first card **318** (an 8 of Clubs). The dealer then receives his up card **320** (a King of Hearts). The deal is further continued by Player 1 receiving his second card **322** (a 5 of Clubs), Player 2 receiving his second card **324** (a 10 of Hearts), Player 3 receiving his second card **326** (a 6 of Spades), Player 4 receiving his second card **328** (a 6 of Clubs), and Player 5 receiving his second card **330** (an 8 of Spades). The dealer then receives his second card face down **332**.

[0120] FIG. 16 refers to the elements in FIG. 15 with: Player 1's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table **282** since Player 1's hand has a value of 14; Player 2's hand being in play with the player deciding to Stand; Player 3's hand being in play with Player 3 doubling his bet **340** in order to obtain an only one additional card **342** (a 3 of Spades); Player 4's hand being disqualified according to the first rules table **282** since Player 4's hand has a value of 16;

and Player 5's hand being in play according to the first rules table 282, with the player deciding to Split the two 8s by providing an additional wager 350 and receiving a Jack of Hearts 352 on the first split hand, and a 9 of Hearts 354 on the second split hand.

[0121] FIG. 17 refers to the elements in FIG. 16 with the dealer's second card 332 now being displayed as an up card (a 7 of Clubs), with the dealer's final hand having a value of 17 (a 10-value card plus a 7-value card) and with: Player 2's hand being valued at 20, therefore providing a win of \$10 360; Player 3's hand being valued at 20, therefore providing a win of \$20 362; and Player 5's first split hand being valued at 18, therefore providing a win of \$10 364, and Player 5's second split hand being valued at 17, therefore providing a push.

[0122] Although specific examples and specific rules have been provided in this discussion, these specifics are intended to be only support for the generic concepts of the invention and are not intended to be absolute limits in the scope of the technology discussed.

What is claimed:

1. A method of playing a wagering playing card game comprising steps to:

- a) establish a first predetermined rules table associated at least with a player's initial two card blackjack hand that determines whether or not the player's initial two card blackjack hand is qualified for continued play;
- b) establish a second predetermined rules table that includes at least one rule that provides an advantage to the player;
- c) establish a first predetermined payout table associated with a dealer's initial two card blackjack hand based on whether or not the dealer's initial two card blackjack hand is an Ace and 10-point card representing a Black-jack;
- d) establish a second predetermined payout table associated with a player's final blackjack hand ranking and a dealer's final blackjack hand ranking;
- e) establish an initial deck of playing cards to be used in the play of the blackjack game;
- f) enable the player to make one wager on a blackjack hand;
- g) display to the player two cards face up representing the player's initial blackjack hand;
- h) display to the dealer one card face up and one card face down representing the dealer's initial blackjack hand;
- i) prevent the player from continuing play of the player's initial blackjack hand if the player's initial blackjack hand is disqualified according to the first rules table;
- j) discard the disqualified player's initial blackjack hand and lose the wager;
- k) qualify the player's initial blackjack hand that is not disqualified;
- l) allow the player to continue play of the player's initial blackjack hand if the player's initial blackjack hand is qualified;
- m) allow the player to make gameplay decisions based on the second rules table until the player's hand is finalized;
- n) allow the dealer to make gameplay decisions based on the second rules table until the dealer's hand is finalized;
- o) compare the final player's hand to the final dealer's hand; and
- p) award the player any wins according to the second paytable.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the first predetermined rules table provides a predetermined set of disqualifying player initial hands.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined set of disqualifying hands comprises initial player hands that comprise one card whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise one card whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise a predetermined total value, initial player hands plus the dealer's up card that together provide a straight, a flush, or a 3-of-a-Kind, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is lower than the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is higher than the rank of the dealer's up card, or initial player hands that comprise two cards whose color matches the color of the dealer's up card.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein predetermined exceptions can be offered to the predetermined set of disqualifying hands.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein at least the composition of the predetermined set of disqualifying player initial hands determines an additional house advantage not available in traditional blackjack.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein at least the additional house advantage determines the configuration of the second predetermined rules table.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the second predetermined rules table at least includes either one or some of the following: dealer loses a dealer blackjack, player wins predetermined ties, player receives an additional award for predetermined initial hands, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands, player receives an additional award for predetermined initial hands in view of dealer initial up card, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer initial up card, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer initial down card, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer final hand, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands if the dealer busts, player may be permitted to double down on any two initially-dealt player cards, player may be permitted to double down on any amount of cards, player may split any hand at least three times including aces, player may double down on any split hand, player may surrender early, or player may surrender late.

8. A gaming system comprising: at least one processor; a gaming apparatus having at least one input device and at least one display device; at least one memory device which stores a plurality of instructions which, when executed by the at least one processor, cause the at least one processor to operate with the at least one display device and the at least one input device to:

- a) establish a first predetermined rules table associated at least with a player's initial two card blackjack hand that determines whether or not the player's initial two card blackjack hand is qualified for continued play;
- b) establish a second predetermined rules table that includes at least one rule that provides an advantage to the player;

- c) establish a first predetermined payout table associated with a dealer's initial two card blackjack hand based on whether or not the dealer's initial two card blackjack hand is an Ace and 10-point card representing a Black-jack;
- d) establish a second predetermined payout table associ-ated with a player's final blackjack hand ranking and a dealer's final blackjack hand ranking;
- e) establish an initial deck of playing cards to be used in the play of the blackjack game;
- f) enable the player to make one wager on a blackjack hand;
- g) display to the player two cards face up representing the player's initial blackjack hand;
- h) display to the dealer one card face up and one card face down representing the dealer's initial blackjack hand;
- i) prevent the player from continuing play of the player's initial blackjack hand if the player's initial blackjack hand is disqualified according to the first rules table;
- j) discard the disqualified player's initial blackjack hand and lose the wager;
- k) qualify the player's initial blackjack hand that is not disqualified;
- l) allow the player to continue play of the player's initial blackjack hand if the player's initial blackjack hand is qualified;
- m) allow the player to make gameplay decisions based on the second rules table until the player's hand is finalized;
- n) allow the dealer to make gameplay decisions based on the second rules table until the dealer's hand is finalized;
- o) compare the final player's hand to the final dealer's hand; and
- p) award the player any wins according to the second payable.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the first predetermined rules table provides a predetermined set of disqualifying player initial hands.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the predetermined set of disqualifying hands comprises initial player hands that com-prise one card whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose rank matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise one card whose suit matches the suit of the

dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose suit matches the suit of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise a predetermined total value, initial player hands plus the dealer's up card that together provide a straight, a flush, or a 3-of-a-Kind, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value matches the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is lower than the rank of the dealer's up card, initial player hands that comprise two cards whose total value is higher than the rank of the dealer's up card, or initial player hands that comprise two cards whose color matches the color of the dealer's up card.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein predetermined excep-tions can be offered to the predetermined set of disqualifying hands.

12. The method of claim 10 wherein at least the composi-tion of the predetermined set of disqualifying player initial hands determines an additional house advantage not available in traditional blackjack.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein at least the additional house advantage determines the configuration of the second predetermined rules table.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the second predeter-mined rules table at least includes either one or some of the following: dealer loses a dealer blackjack, player wins pre-determined ties, player receives an additional award for pre-determined initial hands, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands, player receives an additional award for predetermined initial hands in view of dealer initial up card, player receives an additional award for predeter-mined final hands in view of the dealer initial up card, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer initial down card, player receives an addi-tional award for predetermined final hands in view of the dealer final hand, player receives an additional award for predetermined final hands if the dealer busts, player may be permitted to double down on any two initially-dealt player cards, player may be permitted to double down on any amount of cards, player may split any hand at least three times includ-ing aces, player may double down on any split hand, player may surrender early, or player may surrender late.

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