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(54) Title: ADMINISTRATOR TOOL OF AN ELECTRONIC GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD OF PROCESSING GAMING PROFILES CONTROLLED BY THE SYSTEM

(57) Abstract: An electronic gaming system has a plurality of tables each having a plurality of electronic player interaction areas (EPIA 's) spaced preferably about a table periphery so that a gaming player locates oneself in front of a respective EPIA to play a game. A computer-based controller of the system assigns any one of preferably a variety of games to any one table. The player is then free to choose what game he/she desires to play by picking a particular table. The gaming system has a host console that communicates with each EPIA via the controller for managerial control of the plurality of tables. A software-based administrator tool operates preferably through a user interface for the control of at least one gaming profile type by the deletion, editing and creation of various gaming rules.



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**ADMINISTRATOR TOOL OF AN ELECTRONIC  
GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD OF PROCESSING  
GAMING PROFILES CONTROLLED BY THE SYSTEM**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to an electronic gaming system and method of operation and more particularly to an administrator tool of the system and method of creating and editing gaming profiles controlled by the electronic gaming system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Gaming is an increasingly popular form of entertainment. Games, particularly, games of chance and skill where one or more players play and place wagers on a desired and/or predicted outcome can be played in a variety of ways and in a variety of places, including at a casino or other venue or on the Internet. Of the various forms of games that are available for play, many utilize playing cards. Of these, poker is arguably the most popular.

[0003] Traditionally, poker is played at a table with several players wagering paper or coin money on a series of playing cards dealt from a deck of fifty-two cards. This deck is comprised of four suits at thirteen cards per suit. This form of poker requires a human dealer to coordinate the game, including dealing, wagering, folding, and the like. In “social” card games, especially poker, the players take turns acting as the dealer, but in licensed commercial gaming establishments, such as casinos, the dealer is typically a non-playing employee. Unfortunately, traditional poker is potentially prone to human dealer error. Moreover, human dealers in casino type establishments must be trained and paid a salary sufficient to retain them.

[0004] One alternative form of gaming, with particular reference to poker, has flourished on the internet. Internet gaming has become quite successful in that it provides many choices for the players. In particular, internet gaming is fast and convenient, with registration, betting and payouts available from almost any computer

with internet access and with payments typically arranged via a credit card. Yet further, poker or other card games may also be provided by stand-alone machines similar to slot machines.

[0005] One major drawback of internet and stand-alone type games is the lack of the human element. Many people prefer to play poker against other players face-to-face, because of the drama associated with “live” gaming. Undoubtedly, an elevated level of competition exists when people compete directly against one another and face-to-face. In gaming establishments, experienced players are trying to hone strategy and read other players’ intentions through their movements and style of play to be more competitive.

[0006] In U.S. Patent Application Publication number US 2005/0090304 A1, filed September 13, 2004, and disclosed herein by reference in its entirety, an electronic gaming system and method of displaying and obscuring electronic playing cards is disclosed and assigned to the same assignee of the present invention. Generally, this electronic gaming system replaces the human dealer with a computer capable of simulating the deal and simulating the playing cards via video displays. The system has a plurality of tables with each table having a plurality of electronic player interaction areas or stations (EPIA’s). An individual interested in playing a particular game can locate oneself in front of a particular station of a table (or can be assigned) and upon logging-in, can play the game.

[0007] Unfortunately, known gaming rules can not easily be altered, updated or created by qualified casino employees. For instance, rules related to timing parameters, jackpots and distribution, and other gaming parameters can not be easily changed to meet the changing demands and wants of a player, or to satisfy the interests of the casino.

[0008] The present invention is aimed at one or more of the problems set forth above.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] An electronic gaming system has a plurality of tables each having a plurality of electronic player interaction areas (EPIA’s) spaced preferably about a table periphery so that a gaming player locates oneself in front of a respective EPIA to play a particular game. A computer-based controller of the system assigns any one of preferably a variety of games to any one table. The player is then free to choose what

game he/she desires to play by picking a particular table. The gaming system has a host console that communicates with each EPIA via the controller for managerial control of the plurality of tables. A software-based administrator tool operates preferably through a user interface for the control of at least one gaming profile type by the deletion, editing and creation of various gaming rules.

**[0010]** The software based administrator tool is displayed on the user interface and includes at least one gaming profile type. Preferably, the gaming profile type has a timing profile heading, a jackpot profile heading and a game profile heading. Each heading is capable of providing a user with the ability to create, edit and delete specific profile attributes of any one of a plurality of games. Generally, the timing profile heading is associated with events in a game that are timed, and thus determines how fast or how slow the game proceeds within the gaming system. The jackpot profiles heading enables adjustment of various amounts of money or awards regarding jackpots, and the game profiles heading allows the creation and saving of games each with unique parameters or gaming rules.

**[0011]** A method of operating the administrator tool for controlling the plurality of games includes selecting one of the plurality of gaming profile headings displayed in an options field of the administrator tool. Once the appropriate heading is selected, a unique profile of any one of the profile headings can be chosen from a plurality of lists selectively displayed in an information field of the administrator tool for editing, deletion, and generally creation.

**[0012]** Benefits and advantages of the present invention include an automated electronic gaming system that does not require a human dealer of cards that could be prone to mistakes and other human frailties such as sickness. Yet another advantage is the ability to efficiently meet the changing needs and daily demands often found on the gaming floor of a casino by handling and processing a wide array of games and related gaming profiles by selected users or casino employees having pre-arranged security clearances.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0014] Figure 1 is a diagrammatic illustration of a gaming system embodying the present invention and in a casino environment;

[0015] Figure 2 is a perspective view of an electronic poker table of the gaming system;

[0016] Figure 3 is a top view of the electronic poker table of Figure 2;

[0017] Figure 4 is a front and back view of an electronic playing card;

[0018] Figure 5 is a plan view of a player interface of an electronic player interaction area of the system with hole cards of the electronic playing cards hidden;

[0019] Figure 6 is a plan view of the player interface of Figure 5 with the hole cards revealed;

[0020] Figure 7 is a partial block diagram of the gaming system associated with one poker table;

[0021] Figure 8 is a partial block diagram of the gaming system associated with a plurality of poker tables;

[0022] Figure 9 is a perspective view of the electronic player interaction area in a module form with headphones;

[0023] Figure 10 is a perspective view of a modified electronic player interaction area embodied in a hand-held module with headphones;

[0024] Figure 11 is a block diagram of software components of the gaming system;

[0025] Figure 12 is a simplified block diagram of the gaming system;

[0026] Figure 13 is a block diagram of the gaming system with a host console;

[0027] Figure 14 is a flow diagram of a method of operating the gaming system;

[0028] Figure 15 is a first table tab image displayed on a video screen of the host console;

[0029] Figure 16 is a second table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;

[0030] Figure 17 is a third table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;

- [0031] Figure 18 is a fourth table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0032] Figure 19 is a hand dialog displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0033] Figure 20 is a minutes dialog displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0034] Figure 21 is a fifth table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0035] Figure 22 is a sixth table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0036] Figure 23 is a seventh table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0037] Figure 24 is an eighth table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0038] Figure 25 is a first wait list tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0039] Figure 26 is a ninth table tab image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0040] Figure 27 is an account number dialog displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0041] Figure 28 is a time limit dialog displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0042] Figure 29 is a tournament chop page image displayed on the video screen of the host console;
- [0043] Figure 30 is a first image display on a video system of an administrator tool and displaying a timing profile;
- [0044] Figure 31 is a second image display of the timing profile;
- [0045] Figure 32 is a third image display of the timing profile;
- [0046] Figure 33 is a fourth image display of the timing profile;
- [0047] Figure 34 is a fifth image display of the timing profile;
- [0048] Figure 35 is a sixth image display of the timing profile;
- [0049] Figure 36 is a seventh image display of the timing profile;

- [0050] Figure 37 is a eighth image display of the timing profile;
- [0051] Figure 38 is a ninth image display of the timing profile;
- [0052] Figure 39 is a tenth image display of the timing profile;
- [0053] Figure 40 is an eleventh image display of the timing profile;
- [0054] Figure 41 is a first image display of a jackpot profile of the administrator tool;
- [0055] Figure 42 is an image display of a create jackpot profile prompt of the jackpot profile; Figure 43 is a second image display of the jackpot profile;
- [0056] Figure 44 is a third image display of the jackpot profile having an update jackpot profile prompt;
- [0057] Figure 45 is a fourth image display of the jackpot profile;
- [0058] Figure 46 is a fifth image display of the jackpot profile having a delete confirmation prompt;
- [0059] Figure 47 is a create game profile prompt of an image display of a game profile of the administrator tool;
- [0060] Figure 48 is a first image display of a game profile of the administrator tool;
- [0061] Figure 49 is a first image display of an update game profile prompt of the game profile;
- [0062] Figure 50 is a second image display of the game profile;
- [0063] Figure 51 is a third image display of the game profile;
- [0064] Figure 52 is a second image display of the update game profile prompt;
- [0065] Figure 53 is a fourth image display of the game profile;
- [0066] Figure 54 is a fifth image display of the game profile;
- [0067] Figure 55 is a sixth image display of the game profile;
- [0068] Figure 56 is a seventh image display of the game profile;
- [0069] Figure 57 is a first image display of a tournament game profile of the game profile;
- [0070] Figure 58 is a first image display of a create blind structure prompt of the tournament game profile;
- [0071] Figure 59 is a second image display of the create blind prompt;
- [0072] Figure 60 is a second image display of the tournament game profile;

[0073] Figure 61 is a first image display of a create payout structure prompt of the tournament game profile;

[0074] Figure 62 is a second image display of the create payout structure prompt;

[0075] Figure 63 is an image display of a ring game profile;

[0076] Figure 64 is a first image display of a create rake structure prompt of the ring game profile; and

[0077] Figure 65 is a second image display of the create rake structure prompt of the ring game profile.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

[0078] In the illustrated embodiment and as best shown in Figures 1-4, an electronic gaming system 10 and method of operation embodies the present invention. The system 10 utilizes electronic cards 76 or electronic chips and electronic playing cards 76 to provide an automated card game for play by one or more players. It should be noted that the description that follows is directed towards a gaming system 10 which utilizes electronic cards and chips (for wagering). However, the system 10 may also provide a non-wagering (without electronic chips) automated card game. Preferably, a human dealer is not required, thus the system 10 handles all dealer functions. For the purposes of illustration, the system will be described as applied to an electronic poker game known as Texas Hold'em. However, the present invention is not limited to any particular card game.

#### I. The Game

[0079] Referring to Figures 3-6, in Texas Hold'em, each player at an electronic gaming or poker table 18 is electronically dealt a number of cards, e.g., two cards, face down. These are known as a player's "hole" cards 28 and are generally placed directly in front of the respective players. A number of cards, e.g., three or five, are dealt face-up and displayed in a common display area 26. These are known as community or common cards 30. A player's hand, thus, consists of the player's hole cards 28 and the common cards 30. At the end of play of a particular hand, whichever player holds the highest poker hand is the winner of that round or hand of poker.

[0080] The electronic playing cards 76 may be used in any sort of electronic card game, and even in such games where the player chooses when to reveal their hole cards 28 to themselves or to the other players. The electronic poker tables 18 are preferably capable of playing any variety of card games. Each card game, whether poker or otherwise, will generally have its own set of rules, including the number of cards, how the cards are dealt, the number of betting rounds, the structure of permissible wagers, and the like. Thus, while the present invention may be described below in the context of an electronic poker game (and more specifically, with respect to a player's hole cards 28 in a Hold'em style poker game), the present invention is not limited to such a card game.

[0081] Furthermore, the poker or card game can be a timed game wherein the players have a predetermined time period to complete each turn. For example, the players have a set period of one minute to complete each turn. Furthermore, this period of time may vary; for instance, the first turn may have a period of completion of one minute, while the second turn may have a shorter or longer period of completion. During a given betting round, the players have a predetermined period of time to either fold, check, or make a wager. If no action is taken during the predetermined time period, a default action is taken where the player preferably must fold or check. Generally, the time period for response during a betting round will decrease as the hand of the electronic poker game progresses. Parameters, such as the predetermined time period for each betting round may be automatically modified by the system 10.

[0082] More specific to the electronic playing cards 76, as best shown in Figure 4, each card has visual image or graphical representation of a front side 76A and a back side 76B. The back side 76B of each card 76 has an identical pattern or image such that the cards cannot be individually identified with respect to any other card when viewing the back side 76B. The electronic playing card 76 is typically one of a set or deck of standard playing cards. The deck may be a standard deck of fifty-two cards, with each card having an individual designation. The designations have a first component being assigned values of two through ACE, and the second component being four groupings or suits (hearts, diamonds, clubs, spades). The value and suit of each card is indicated on the front side 76A of each playing card 76.

[0083] In a traditional card game with physical cards, the player's hole cards are dealt "face-down" so that they are not revealed to any other player. The dealt player must then discretely view their own hole cards without revealing them to other players. To do this, the player typically lifts the hole cards close to their bodies, fanning them out, and shielding them with their hands, so only the dealt player can see the front side of their cards. Alternatively, the dealt player may leave the cards face down on the table and lift one side or corner revealing at least a portion of the front side, while shielding the cards with their hands. Similarly, and with electronic hole cards 28 of cards 76 (as best shown in Figures 5 and 6), lifting of the corners of the cards 28 can be computer simulated upon a triggering event initiated by the respective player.

[0084] The image displayed on the back side 76B of the playing cards may be a logo, a random image (chosen from a set of predetermined images), or may be advertising directed at the player. The image may include a video or a cycling through of a set of predetermined images. Alternatively, the image may be selectable by either a player or an employee of a casino 12.

## II. The Casino

[0085] Referring to Figure 1, the gaming system 10 is preferably situated in a gaming environment, such as a casino 12. Typically, the casino 12 is divided into specialized or designated areas such as a poker room or poker area 14 each containing a plurality of tables 18, or five tables as illustrated. The poker area 14 is often cordoned off by, for example, a railing 16. While the casino 12 is one example of an environment for the gaming system 10, the present invention is not limited to any such location or environment and may also include a generally virtual casino environment and the like.

## III. The Table

[0086] Referring to Figures 2-3, each table 18 has a table top 20 supported by at least one base 42 at floor level, and a plurality of substantially vertical legs 44 projecting between the base 42 and the table top 20. The table top 20 includes a playing surface 22 and a plurality of electronic player interaction areas (EPIA) 24 for in-part the display of the respective hole cards 28. Each table 18 seats a plurality of players, and for example and as illustrated, is preferably capable of seating a maximum of ten players, hence, each table includes ten EPIA's 24A-24J and ten chairs 40 (see Figure 1). For the game of Texas Hold'em, the table top 20 also preferably includes one central or common display area (CDA) 26 for the display of the common cards 30.

[0087] Although the EPIA's 24 and CDA 26 are generally computer generated visual displays, thus authentic playing cards are not utilized, the electronic poker tables of the gaming system 10 are aesthetically designed to convey and retain the overall sense and ambience of a standard poker room with non-electrical poker tables. The playing surface area not taken up by the EPIA's 24 and the CDA 26 is preferably covered in a traditional material such as felt having any variety of colors. Moreover, logos, game information, or other information may be printed on the material. Alternatively, the

EPIA's 24 and the CDA 26 is a single display that covers a substantial portion or all of the table top 20. The EPIA's 24 and the CDA 26 can be set apart from the rest of the table top 20 by virtual or computer generated borders. The areas of the display around the EPIA's 24 and the CDA 26 are preferably used to simulate the playing surface 22 of a standard poker table by, for example, providing an electronic image of a felt material. Furthermore, logos, game information, other information, advertisements, announcements, pictures, videos, or other information may be displayed and rotated, cycled, or shown for a limited period of time on the table top 20.

#### IV. Electronic Player interaction Areas

[0088] Referring to Figures 3 and 5-6, each EPIA 24 has a player interface 54 used to convey game information directly to a player assigned to the respective EPIA 24, and to effectuate interaction or input from the player to the system 10. Each EPIA 24 can be part of one large display monitor, such as a LCD or plasma monitor, that includes the CDA 26, or the EPIA's preferably have separate and distinct monitors and computers networked together as required to play the game. The player interfaces 54 can be implemented on the table top 20 or in a module 34 (see Figure 9). Alternatively, the player interface 54 may be implemented on a hand-held device 58, such as a personal data assistant (see Figure 10).

[0089] With reference to Figures 2 and 5-6, the player interface 54 of the EPIA 24 is preferably a touch-screen display. Each display 54 is preferably housed in respective modules 34. In one embodiment, each module 34 incorporates a fully-functional computer (not shown) and is thus easily removable and replaced from the poker table 18. The computer includes a processor capable of running an operating system, such as Windows XP or Windows CE, both available from Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington. Alternatively, the EPIA's 24 may be driven by one or more computers (not shown) located in the proximity of the table 18 with a server or server computer 50 or within the table 18.

##### a) Card Reader and Player Account:

[0090] Referring to Figure 9, the module 34 preferably has a card reader 36 for reading a player tracking card (not shown). A player may log into the gaming system 10 through the EPIA 24 preferably by swiping the card through the card reader 36.

Additionally, the card reader 36 may be integrated into the bezel (not shown) located around the module 34. The EPIA 24 may also require entry of a personal identification number into an attached keypad or virtual keypad displayed on the player interface 54. Alternatively or in addition, the player may log-in using a biometric parameter, such as a fingerprint, sensed by a sensor and a RFID card or chip. Once a player's identity is established, the player can access a preferably required player account and purchase chips using an account balance communicated over a network. The player account may have an associated balance that contains a dollar amount based on an amount of money deposited by the player and/or any winnings that they have collected, either through poker or some other game. Additionally, information regarding the player's play at the table 18 may be tracked and recorded to the player's account.

**[0091]** In one aspect of the present invention, the gaming system 10 may utilize a cashless system, such as Ticket-In Ticket-Out (TITO), that is constructed and arranged into each EPIA 24. Alternatively, a preferably bar-coded ticket, magnetic card, RFID card, or some other media (jointly referred to as a TICKET) may be inserted in the EPIA 24. The TICKET may have an associated value that is either printed and/or encoded thereon or that is associated with the TICKET in the gaming system 10. Additionally, once the player decides to leave the table 18, any remaining chips they have, may be instantly converted back into dollars and stored in their player account and/or a new Ticket preferably generated at the table 18.

b) Controller

**[0092]** A controller that is either the module 34, the personal computer (not shown), the hand-held device 58, the server 50 or a combination thereof, controls the player interface 54 (i.e. controls the information components of the player interface 54), detects touches if the player interface 54 is a touch-screen display device, and interprets the touches as trigger or touch events. The controller preferably controls the display device 54 including obscuring or hiding the player's hole cards 28 such that the player may controllably display and view the cards, while maintaining them secret from the other players.

c) Visual Player Interface

[0093] Referring to Figures 5-6, preferably the player interface 54 includes a graphical representation 56 of a poker table. Each player in the poker game is represented by a user graphic or icon 62 that lists their names as well as their chip totals. The pot of the current hand may be represented in the center of the poker table representation 56 by stack(s) of chips 64 and/or a number 66 representing the value of the current pot. Each player's contribution to the pot may be represented by stack(s) of chips 68 and/or a number 70 adjacent their user graphic 62.

[0094] In one embodiment, not only is the EPIA 24 capable of controllably displaying and/or obscuring a player's hole cards, the EPIA 24 is also capable of providing an indication of the player's current highest hand based on the player's current hand and the common cards 30. The highest hand may be shown textually, e.g., two-pairs, and/or graphically, pictures of the five cards which make of the highest hand. The highest hand may be triggered and shown using the same trigger event associated with the hole cards 28. Alternatively, a separate trigger event, such as a touch-event on another location on the EPIA 24 may be used to show the highest hand.

[0095] The player interface 54 preferably includes a series of player buttons 72 and a series of game buttons 74. The player buttons 72 include, for example, a sit-in button 72A, a leave table button 72B, and an options button 72C. Generally, only one of the sit in button 72A and the leave table button 72B would be active at any time. The options button 72C allows the player to access an option menu or screen (not shown) that allows the player to modify certain parameters of the player interface 54, such as for example, to choose between different formats of the player interface 54 (i.e. graphical display or text display). The player buttons 72 are preferably implemented on the touch screen display 54, or alternatively, can be embodied in electro-mechanical switches or buttons (not shown).

[0096] Regarding the leave table button 72B, a player may decide to activate this feature when the player decides to change seats or move to another table altogether. For example, if another player or players have left the table 18 leaving fewer players at the table and the player does not like to play at a table with that few of players, the player may request through the EPIA 24 another seat assignment.

[0097] The series of game buttons 74 allow the player to signal their game play decisions to the gaming system 10 during the play of the game, and thus preferably

include a fold button 74A, a call button 74B and a raise button 74C. The game buttons 74 are active when it is a player's turn in the poker game and preferably inactive when it is not. Moreover, the EPIA 24 only activates those buttons 74 that are appropriate, given the rules of the game being played, during the current turn. For example, if the maximum number of raises for a particular game has already been made, then the wager or raise button would be inactive. The raise button 74C may be replaced with one or more buttons (not shown) which allow the player to make a wager of a predetermined or allowed amount, e.g. \$10. In addition or alternatively, a keypad (not shown) may be provided which allows the player to key in a wager amount.

[0098] Preferably, the EPIA 24 provides a player with virtual buttons that summon or direct specific employees of the casino 12. For example the player may request a host/hostess to order a drink. Additionally, the player may anonymously request that an employee review something that occurred or is occurring at the table 18 (e.g. possible collusion).

[0099] Preferably, the player interface 54 also displays the common cards 30. Other information that can be displayed on the player interface include, but is not limited to, an indication (visual icon and/or audio) of the player whose turn it is to act, a total of chips for each player, any cards of the other players that are face-up, and/or messages to the player, such as advertising.

[00100] Moreover, in the casino 12 environment, preferably a portion of each pot goes to the house for running the poker game. This portion of the pot is known as the rake and is preferably displayed on each EPIA 24. The rake may be shown as an amount in dollars and may include a graphical representation of virtual chips. Similarly, the EPIA 24 preferably displays a graphical representation of the chips and/or a dollar amount indicative of the amount of chips each player at the table has remaining and the amount of the current pot.

[00101] In addition, or alternatively, to the common cards 30 displayed by the CDA 26, each EPIA preferably includes a graphical representation of the common cards in the middle of the graphical representation 56 of the poker table 18. Graphical representations of the other player's card may also be shown (face-down during the current hand and face-up at the end of the hand). The common card 30 displayed in the graphical representation 56 are preferably smaller than the display of the hole cards 28

for the player of the specific EPIA 24. The display of the common cards 30 in the CDA 26 are preferably larger than the display of the common cards 30 in the EPIA representation 56.

**[00102]** Other attributes of the EPIA's 24 may include:

- utilization of Surface Acoustic Wave touch screen technology
- utilization of Multi Touch touch screen technology
- a secure process for returning a player to a game after missing a number of blinds by pressing the button that temporarily removes the player from the game
- method to obscure player pre-selection of one or several bet options (Poker is a sequential game. Situations exist where a player will know what action they want to take prior to it being their turn. Allowing the player to make that decision in advance of their turn in a way that allows players seating close to observe this action would provide an unfair advantage to some players and not others. This feature allows a player to make a pre-selection while observing his hole cards in such a way that other players will not be able to observe that pre-selection.),
- ability to display live and pre-recorded video, and
- ability to replay a previous hand (may be limited to showing the end result of the last hand and may only be available for a short period of time).

d) Audio Player Interface:

**[00103]** Preferably, the EPIA 24 includes a player sound generation device that generates sounds audible to the player assigned to the EPIA 24. The player sound generation device may be implemented as an earpiece (60) or headphones (see Figures 9 and 10) or one or more speakers. Player sounds are generally meant to be heard by a specific player alone and may include a reminder or indication of a player's turn or if the game is timed, an indication of the time remaining or that time is running out, an audible signal indicating the player's hole cards 28 or the highest hand of the player or a winning

percentage associated with the player's hand. The audio signals or sounds can be any series of beeps, chimes, a simulated voice, and the like.

e) Physical Structure of the EPIA:

[00104] As best illustrated in Figures 2 and 3, the modules 34 are removably mounted to the table top 20, and preferably such that the touch-screen display 54 is substantially parallel and flush with the playing surface 22 of the table top 20. Moreover, the playing surface 22 of the table top 20 can be an overlay with selected cut-outs or openings for exposing the player interface or touch-screen display 54. The overlay preferably covers the outer edge of the display for aesthetic appearances. Moreover, the touch-screen display 54 can be mounted at an angle with respect to the table top 20 and below the playing surface 22 thus partially shielding the player's hole cards 28 from adjacent players. Similarly, the display 54 can be mounted at an angle with respect to and above the table top 20 wherein the angle can be adjustable for player viewing convenience.

V. Central Display Area and Audio

[00105] As best illustrated in Figures 3 and 5-6, the CDA 26 is used to display information such as common cards 30 for all players to see and is thus located further from the players than their respective EPIA's 24. Consequently, the display of the common cards 30 is preferably larger than the display of the hole cards 28. That is, the hole cards 28 are displayed at a first predetermined ratio from the standard size playing card, and the common cards 30 are displayed at a second predetermined ratio from the standard size playing card. Preferably, the first and second ratios may be defined such that the common cards 30 are displayed larger than the hole cards 28. Alternatively, the first and second ratios can be the same.

[00106] As previously described, the CDA 26 is preferably separate from the plurality of EPIA's 24, and is implemented preferably utilizing a LCD or plasma monitor or similar device. The CDA 26 preferably indicates which player's turn it is and which player is the designated "dealer" for the current hand. These indications are provided by respective visual signals such as an icon, arrow or the like, and/or an audio signal such as a beep, musical tone, and/or voice message. This indication of a player's turn and dealer

designation CDA 26 can also be in addition to the indication provided on the respective EPIA 24. With audio indication, the CDA 26 can utilize integrated “transducer sound emitting technology” thus eliminating the need for separate speakers.

[00107] In other card games other than Texas Hold'em, common cards 30 may not exist, hence, during play of these games, the CDA 26 can be used to display advertising messages instead. The advertising messages may be from the casino or third parties and may consist of graphics, pictures, animations, video and/or audio. The advertising may be presented at predetermined locations on the central display 38 for varied durations as the CDA cycles through a plurality of advertising messages.

[00108] In general, the CDA 26 is preferably capable of displaying and/or animating:

- blinds,
- common cards 30,
- bets placed and player chip stacks,
- an indication of players who have folded and not folded,
- winning hands,
- winning hand percentage estimates in situations where all remaining player hold cards are exposed, and
- rake in dollars or virtual chips.

[00109] Preferably, the gaming table 18 includes a table or system sound generation device (as oppose to the player sound generation device previously described) that is used to generate sounds audible to all the players. The table sound generation device may be implemented by one or more speakers mounted to the table 18. Alternatively, the table sound generation device may include one or more speakers adjacent to or integral with each EPIA 24 as previously described. For example, system sounds may include sounds imitating the shuffling of cards, the dealing of cards, chips thrown into the pot, sounds related to the winning of the jackpot. Player sounds may include a reminder or indication of a player's turn or if the game is timed, an indication of the time remaining or that time is running out. Generally, player exclusive sounds will not be played through the system sound generation device.

## VI. Server Computer

**[00110]** As best illustrated in Figures 7 and 8, each EPIA 24, in the illustrated embodiment, preferably includes a dedicated computer (not shown), and the CDA 26 has a dedicated CDA computer 52. Both the EPIA computer and the CDA computer 52 for any given table 18 communicate with the server computer 50 that preferably plays/controls the card game, and preferably over an Ethernet network 48. The same server 50 communicates or is networked in a like manner to preferably all of the tables 18. One skilled in the art would now know that more than one EPIA 24 could operate off of one computer or that the computer 52 for the CDA 26 could also control the EPIA's 24 and/or replace the server 50 altogether. However, having a multitude of dedicated computers simplifies software and maintenance issues and due to the relatively inexpensive costs of computers, reduces manufacturing costs of the gaming system 10.

**[00111]** The server 50 is preferably used to implement and facilitate player tracking, ticket in ticket out (cashless) wagering, assigning player's to the seat 40 at a particular table 18, tournament play, table set-up (including turning the tables on and off and modifying table parameters), and progressive jackpots. In general, the server 50 runs the game wherein the server 50 electronically "shuffles" the playing cards, deals the cards, controls the players' turns, receives the player's inputs and acts accordingly; tracks, manages, and awards the pot, and tracks the rake. Game data is stored in a database preferably of the server 50 with each input, wager, play, and the like stored in the database. Other functions implemented by the server 50 are:

- electronically shuffling the playing cards 76
- dealing cards,
- controlling players' turns,
- receives the player's data input,
- player tracking,
- cashless wagering,
- defining and modifying table parameters, including, turning the tables 18 on and off, setting the poker game being played at the table 18, setting wager parameters, and the like,
- defining and managing jackpots, including the house percentage or rake,

- defining and managing progressive jackpots,
- establishing and managing a queue for players and assigning players to seats 40 and/or specific tables 18 from the queue, and
- establishing and managing tournament play, including assigning player seats, collapsing tables, and the like.

[00112] In addition, other devices may be connected to the server 50 for providing additional features and/or functions. For example, a queuing system can be provided utilizing its own dedicated computer. However, in some systems these additional features or function could be provided, at least in part, by the server(s) 50.

## VII. Host Console

[00113] With particular reference to Figures 7-8 and 13, the system 10 preferably has a host console 102 in electrical communication with the server computer 50 for configuring the EPIA's 24 and/or the CDA 26 and for establishing parameters of the electronic poker game. Preferably, the host console 102 is embodied in a separate computer, such as a personal computer, connected or networked (wired or wirelessly) to the server computer 50. The host console 102 may be integrated into a console, such as a kiosk. The host console 102 may also be embodied in any type of suitable device, such as a handheld computer, a personal digital assistant (PDA), notebook or laptop computer, or tablet computer. Preferably, the host console 102 provides interaction with a host or floor manager of the casino 12 via a host interface 120 of the host console 102 that is preferably a touch-screen similar to the player interface 54.

[00114] In general, the host console 102 is an administration device that can be used to create and edit game profiles including setting the game type, limits, play timing, and/or number of required players. The host console 102 allows the host or casino employee to start, pause, and stop games and to monitor table play. Additional electronic tables 18 can be activated or opened, and ring or tournament games (see below) can be easily started. Preferably, the host console 102 provides the ability to turn any one or all of the poker tables 18 on and off by communicating with the EPIA computers and CDA computer 52 via the server 50.

[00115] The host console 102 may enable a casino employee or host to:

- select or change one of the plurality of poker games to be played on one or more of the electronic poker tables 18,
- select the betting or wager structure to be used (For example, the poker games may have one of a limit, no-limit, or pot-limit wagering structure. The host console 102 enables the employee set the wagering structure for a given electronic poker table 18.),
- select or change other parameters of the electronic poker games, including, but not limited to time parameters, wager limits, amounts associated with a big blind and a little blind,
- select whether the electronic poker game is a timed game or a non-timed game,
- modify the predetermined time period for each betting round in a timed game,
- monitor the number of drinks ordered by a player through the EPIA 24,
- add notes with information related to a specific player,
- initiate a replay of a previous hand graphically, textually or numerically,
- lock out and remove one of the players from the electronic poker table 18,
- adjust the stack of electronic chips for one or more of the players (Possibly for correcting any deficiencies and/or settle any disputes with regard to operation of the electronic poker table 18 or play of one of the other players)

**[00116]** Other functions may be provided by the host console 102. For example, as discussed above, players may be assigned to one of the EPIAs 24. The system 10 may require that the assigned player log-in to the assigned EPIA 24. The system 10, possibly through the host console 102 or the server computer 50 allows the host to define a trigger event based on a particular player. The host console 102 may monitor the players who log on, and produce a signal if a designated player logs on. Thus, an employee, in

response to the signal is aware that the designated player is currently located and playing at the respective EPIA 24.

[00117] The host console 102 is preferably used to monitor play at any one of the electronic poker tables 18 and establishes a value associated with the rate of play of hands at the associated table 18. This may be done by establishing when a hand of the electronic poker game is dealt and the time a winner is determined and the pot awarded to the winner. If the rate of play of hands is below a predetermined value, then the employee via the host console 102 can be signaled via a message or alert (audio and/or visual) on the host console 102. In response, the host may wish to observe play at the electronic poker table 18.

[00118] Additionally, the host console 102 allows the casino host to pause play at one of the electronic poker tables 18, for example, to allow the host to discuss any issues any of the players have with regard to the electronic poker game and/or one of the other players. The employee may re-start the electronic poker game when finished. In another aspect of the present invention, the host console 102 may allow the host to restart the electronic poker table 18 after a fault or fault condition. For example, the host console 102 may allow the host to restart the EPIA's 24 and/or the CDA 26. Additionally if the EPIA's 24 include a separate computer or a separate computer is provided to drive the central display area 26, the host console 102 may be adapted to restart or reboot these computers.

[00119] Preferably, a player may create an alert to the host console 102 through their EPIA 24. The alert may be anonymous, and is a request for the host to come and observe a table 18. The alert appears on the host console 102. If the alert is anonymous, there will be no indication of which player created the alert on the host console 102. Preferably, the host console 102 enables the host to "hibernate" a game. This may be used for example, to pause a game until the next day. A hibernated game may be re-started at the same or any other table.

[00120] Referring to Figure 15, the host console 102 is programmed with two main sections referred to on the touch screen 120 of the host console 102 as a table tab 122 and a wait list tab 124. When activating or booting-up the host console 102, or when the host selects the table tab 122 if the console is already activated, a default or home screen of the system 10 generally depicts graphically the tables 18 as table

representations 180 (see Figure 18). This depiction generally marks the beginning of all the table pages 126 generally programmed under the table tab 122 option. Selection of the wait list tab 124 displays a wait list page 128 (see Figure 25). Each one of the pages 126, 128 on the touch-screen 120 provides a multitude of options for the host to select. When selected, the home pages 126, 128 will generally change the display configuration providing additional information for the host and often additional options to choose from.

For the sake of explanation, and although each page 126, 128 may have a multitude of screen displays, all the screen displays with respect to the table tab 122 will be referred to as one common table page 126. Similarly, each screen with respect to the wait list tab 124 will be referred to as one common wait list page 128.

**[00121]** With particular reference to Figure 15, each table 18 may be selected and diagnostic information and options are shown on the table page 126 that includes a table component list 130, a component parameter list 132, a reset connection button 134, a restart software button 136, a reboot button 138, a calibrate screen button 140, a back button 142, and a refresh button 144. Because the table page 126 is preferably one of many screen displays linked to that illustrated in Figure 15, the back and refresh buttons 142, 144 provide the host with the ability to generally scroll through various screen displays of the table page 126 such as that also illustrated in Figures 16 and 17.

**[00122]** The table component list 130 includes a list of all components of the selected table 18, each personal computer 50 (i.e., the "Table Client") and each module 34 (i.e., the individual seats). Table Client 2 is a backup to Table Client 1 and is optional. Selection of one of the components of the table 18 in the table component list 130 displays information regarding the selected component in the component parameter list 132.

**[00123]** The table component list parameter list 132 preferably includes a:

1. Description Field (e.g., "Table 13, Seat 4");
2. Client Type Field (e.g., Player or Table);
3. Client Status: (Active or Inactive);
4. Connection Status: (Connected or Disconnected);
5. Seat Number (where appropriate);
6. Seat Status (e.g., Open, Reserved, Active);
7. Player Name (when available); and,

8. Player Status (e.g., Active or In-Active).

[00124] The reset connection button 134 is active when the connection between the server computer 50 and the component selected in the component list 130 is disconnected. Selection of the reset connection button 134 may be used to “ping” the selected component and attempt to restart the connection therebetween. The restart software button 136 may be used to restart the software on the selected component if the component is inactive. For example, either the client software or the operating software may be restarted, i.e., a soft reboot. The reboot hardware button 138 may be used to restart the selected component, i.e., turn off the selected component and turn the selected component back on.

[00125] Because the player interface 54 of the EPIA 24 is preferably a touch-screen display, it requires running of a calibration routine for first time use and periodic calibration routine re-runs thereafter. The selection of the calibrate screen button 140 will run the calibration routine for the selected EPIA 24. Selection of the back button 142 will return the screen 120 to a previous state or view. Selection of the refresh button 144 will refresh all of the information contained on the current screen.

[00126] The table page 126 also includes a stop/pause parameter selection area 146, a move game button 148, a pause game button 150, a stop game button 152, an auto deal check button 154, a closed seating check button 156, a use wait list check button 158, an information/status area, a pair of navigation buttons, and a clear alert button 164. The stop/pause parameter selection area 146, located toward the lower left hand corner of the screen, is used with either of the pause game button 150 or the stop game button 152 if the host wants to pause a game or electronic table 18 to make a change or perform some other function. The stop/pause parameter selection area 146 includes the three options of “No Delay,” “Minutes,” and “Hands.” The game or table will be resumed when the host is finished. A stopped game ends the play at the table typically at the end of the day.

[00127] In the lower right hand corner of the screen illustrated in Figure 15, the auto deal check button 154, the closed seating check button 156, and the use wait list check button 158 are used to turn on/off the corresponding function. The information/status area 160 provides additional information about the selected component or a just completed action. The navigation buttons 162 may be used to cross

between messages in the information/status area 160. The clear alert button 164 is used to clear alerts generated by players at their respective EPIA's 24A-24J.

**[00128]** Referring to Figure 16, the table page 126 displays the game history of a selected table of the plurality of tables 18A-18J preferably displayed in a list 166. The list 166 includes a line item for each action that has occurred on the selected table with a time stamp.

**[00129]** Referring to Figure 17, the table page 126 also displays information regarding the game being played at the selected table of the plurality of tables 18A-18J. Preferably, the tables 18A-18J are used to provide a variety of electronic card games, such as poker, and the host console 102 provides a list of the predefined or selected card games. When providing game information, the table page 126 preferably has a general section 168, a game play section 170, a rake section 172, and a live action setting section 174. The general section 168 includes the current game and a description of the current game being played on the selected table of the plurality of tables 18A-18J and any other needed information associated with the current game. In Figure 17, the selected game is "Limit Hold'em \$1/\$2". The general section 168 includes: type, variation, stakes, and jackpots. The game play section 170 describes parameters that affect game play. In the illustrated embodiment, the game play section 170 includes: maximum raises per hand, action time limit, minimum number of players, and maximum number of players. The rake section 172 includes information regarding the current rake. The live action section 174 includes information regarding wagering. For example, the defined game is "Limit Hold'em \$1/\$2" and the live action section 174 includes information related to the blinds, permissible wagers, and the minimum and maximum stakes allowed.

**[00130]** Referring to Figure 18, the seven table representations 180A-180G of the table page 126 is illustrated and preferably includes:

1. The name of the table shown;
2. The game being played at the table (e.g., Limit Hold'em \$1/\$2 or no game);
3. The number of hands being played per hour.

**[00131]** Each graphical table representation 180A-180G may also include the status of each EPIA 24, for example inactive (indicated by a red "X" or marked as "No Game"), active, reserved or out. A reserved EPIA 24 or seat, means that it has been

assigned to a player and can only be used by that player. The player must log in to the reserved or assigned EPIA 24 to begin playing. Typically, the player has a predetermined amount of time to log-in to the assigned EPIA 24 or the seat 40 becomes available again.

**[00132]** Referring to Figure 23 and more particularly to pausing and/or stopping a game via the host console 102, the stop/pause parameter selection area 146 is used to select how the game will be stopped or paused. To do so, there are three options: “no delay,” “by minutes,” and “by hands.” If “no delay” is first selected, then if the pause button 150 or the stop game button 152 is selected, the game is immediately paused or stopped, respectively. Once a game has been paused, the pause button 150 will be replaced with a resume button 150'. Alternatively, if “by minutes” is selected, then a minute dialog 184 is displayed (see Figure 20). The minute dialog 184 allows the host to enter when the game will be paused or stopped (in minutes) after the appropriate buttons are selected. Yet again, if “by hands” is selected, then a hands dialog 186 is displayed (see Figure 19). The hands dialog 186 allows the host to enter when the game will be paused or stopped (in number of hands of play) after the appropriate buttons are selected.

**[00133]** As best illustrated in Figures 21 and 22, each table representation 180A-180G of the tables 18 can generally be zoomed in upon to display additional or more particular information. The screen 120 has a zoom button 188 and a second set of navigation buttons 190. With particular reference to Figure 21, with the graphical table representations 180 being displayed, a selected table is highlighted by a colored or yellow banding 182. The navigation buttons 190 may be used to cycle or move through the table representations 180. To zoom in on a table representation 180 of a table 18, the host preferably double-clicks on the desired table representation 180 or selects the zoom button 188 to zoom in on the selected table representation 180.

**[00134]** Referring to Figure 22, once a table representation is zoomed in on, the table page 126 displays a larger and more detailed graphical table representation or table enlargement 192. The table enlargement 192 has a central information area 192A and a plurality of player information areas 192B. The central information area 192A generally includes information about the actual table 18, which may include: table identifier, status, game type, pending status, average pot, hands per hour, average wait time to get a seat at the table, and a start time of the current game. The player information areas 192B

generally include the seat number, the status (reserved, occupied, etc), player name (where appropriate), the player's stake, the player's wins/losses for the current game, and the time player entered the current game.

**[00135]** Referring to Figure 26, the table page 126 preferably includes a reserve (or reserve for player) button 194, a game info button 198, a history button 200 and a diagnostics button 202. Selection of the game info button 198, the history button 200, and the diagnostics button 202, will result in game information, history information, and diagnostics information being displayed. As shown in Figures 26-28, the table page 126 may also include a reserve empty button 204, an unseat button 206, and a penalize button 208. The reserve empty button 204 may be used to reserve a seat without designative a specific person. The unseat button 206 may be used to remove a player. The penalize button 208 may be used to adjust a player's stack or otherwise penalize a player. An adjust pot button 230 may be used to adjust the pot of the current hand.

**[00136]** The reserve button 194 allows the host via utilization of the host console 102 to reserve a seat 40 for a specific player. In order to use this button, the use wait list check box has to be off and the restricted seating check box has to checked. This allows the host to place the specific player ahead of those players on the wait list, while not opening the seat 40 to anyone who may attempt to log-in or use the unoccupied seat. When the reserve button 194 is selected, an account number dialog 210 is displayed (see Figure 27). The account number dialog 210 allows the host to enter the account number of the person for whom they are reserving the seat 40. After the account number has been entered, a time limit dialog 212 is shown. The time limit dialog 212 (see Figure 28) allows the host to designate how long the reservation will last before the player logs into the EPIA 24 to secure the seat 40. Once a seat has been reserved, the reservation and the player's name will be reflected at the corresponding graphical representation (see Figure 26 that shows seat 7 reserved for "Greg").

**[00137]** Typically, a player who has left the table to take or break or for any reason may return as long as they pay any missed blinds. However, the other players may want another player to sit in. The unseat button 206 allows the host to remove a player from the table after the player has left their seat for an amount of time or a number of hands (without logging out).

**[00138]** With particular reference to Figure 24, the screen 120 includes a drop down list 214. The drop down list 214 includes a list of all games which may be played on the tables 18. Selecting "all" on the drop down list will display graphical representations of all of the tables 18. Selecting one of the games in the drop down list 214 will display graphical representations of only those tables which are playing that selected game.

**[00139]** With particular reference to Figure 25, the wait list page 128 includes an information section 216 for each type of game that may be played on the tables 18. Each information section 216 includes information related to the game and the wait list for that game. In the illustrated embodiment, the information section includes:

1. the number of tables playing the game;
2. the number of players sat in a given interval; and,
3. the number of players in the queue (i.e., the wait list).

**[00140]** The information section 216 may also include a queue active check box and an allow entry check box, which allow the employee to turn the wait list on/off for given game and to allow/disallow additional players to be added to the wait list for a given game, respectively.

**[00141]** With particular reference to Figure 29, a tournament chop page 218 is illustrated which is used only during tournaments and allows the host to stop tournament play prematurely, i.e., before only one player is left, and split the remaining pot or table stakes. The tournament chop page 218 includes a series of check boxes 220 that allow the host to designate how the pot or jackpot will be split. In the illustrated embodiment, there are three options: split manually, split even, or split by table stakes. If split manually is chosen, the corresponding amounts are entered in a virtual key pad 222. The tournament chop page 218 may also include a refund rake check box 224. A cancel button 225 allows the employee to cancel the current operation and return to a previous screen. A stop & chop now button 226 stops the current tournament and splits the pot as designated.

**[00142]** Additional features of the host console 102 are described in the following concurrently filed U.S. Patent Applications all of which are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety:

US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-063);

US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-064);  
US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-065);  
US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-066);  
US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-067); and  
US Patent Application Serial No. N/A (Atty. Docket No. 60,667-068).

#### VIII. Administrator Tool

**[00143]** Referring to Figures 30-65, the gaming system 10 preferably has a administrator tool 300 that is software based or a computer readable media and communicates with the host console 102 and server 50 for configuring the settings of the electronic poker tables 18 and games. The administrator tool 300 enables, for instance, a floor manager of the casino 12 to conveniently and quickly adapt to the constant changes that occur within the poker room or area 14, because new games can be created, configured and stored for easy access. Preferably, the administrator tool 300 is accessed by selecting an administrator tool icon (not shown) from a dedicated computer with a dedicated interface, monitor, electronic tablet or screen 301 and preferably a mouse or touch screen. Alternatively, the administrator tool 300 could be run from the game computer 94 (see Figure 12), the host console 102, or the sever computer 50 (see Figure 13). Access to the administrator tool icon is preferably limited to a pre-approved floor manager or employee of the casino 12 who may or may not be a host employee. This depends upon internal security and operational procedures of the casino.

**[00144]** Referring generally to Figures 30 and 31, when the icon (not shown) is initially selected, the administrator tool 300 displays three options or settings designated as gaming profile types 302, table setup 304 and host administration 306 in an option field 308 preferably at the left of the screen 301. The option field 308 is adjacent to an information field 310 on the right and a tool bar 312 preferably toward the top of the screen 301. By selecting a "+" symbol adjacent to gaming profile types 302, the list is expanded and a plurality of profile types or headings are displayed; they preferably are: timing profiles heading 314, jackpot profile heading 316 and game profile heading 318. The timing profiles heading 314 is associated with events in a game that are timed, and thus determines how fast or how slow the game proceeds within the system 10. The jackpot profile heading 316 enables adjustment of various amounts of money or awards

regarding jackpots, and the game profiles heading 318 allows the creation and saving of games each with unique parameters.

a) Timing Profile:

[00145] The timing profiles heading 314 functions to perform the following:

- create new timing profiles,
- edit an existing timing profile, and
- delete a timing profile.

[00146] Referring to Figures 30-31, when the administrator tool 300 is used to create a new timing profile, the timing profiles heading 314 in the expanded list under profile types 302 is first highlighted by the floor manager preferably without selecting the “+” symbol adjacent to the timing profiles heading 314. Highlighting of the timing profiles heading 314 causes the display of basic timing information 320 in the information field 310. The floor manager then selects a new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a new timing key 324 to appear in the information field 310. Referring to Figure 32, the “+” symbol adjacent to the highlighted timing profiles heading 314 is then selected by the floor manager that preferably reveals basic timing 326 and new timing key 328 as sub-options under the timing profiles heading 314 in the options field 308. Similarly, the new timing key 328 is then highlighted and a “+” symbol adjacent to the highlighted new timing key 328 is selected by the floor manager. The administrator tool 300 then automatically reveals a sub-option identified as events 330. When the floor manager selects events 330, an update value icon 333 appears in the tool bar 312, and an event list 332 is displayed in the information field 310 (see Figure 33) wherein a predetermined timing value is shown for each uniquely identified event in the list 332.

[00147] To create new timing, the floor manager then selects an event from the event list 332 for editing. Referring to Figure 34, this selection causes an overlay window or time prompt 334 to appear for entry of the new time value preferably in seconds. After the new time is entered, the floor manager selects the “ok” box 336 and commits the change by selecting a refresh icon 338 in the tool bar 312. Referring to Figure 35, by selecting the refresh icon 338 the floor manager is prompted by the administrator tool 300 to rename the event selected via an overlay window or name

(  
prompt 340 that automatically appears with space provided to enter a new name. Once entered, the floor manager selects an “ok” box 342 of the name prompt 340 that completes the creation of a new timing profile process.

**[00148]** Referring to Figures 36 – 38, when the administrator tool 300 is used to edit a timing profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings, which preferably are the timing profiles heading 314, the jackpot profile heading 316 and the game profile heading 318. The timing profiles heading 314 is then highlighted by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 and the adjacent “+” symbol is selected to reveal profile types or sub-options in the options field 308. These sub-options are preferably basic timing 326, ring game timing 344, and tournament timing 346. Selection of the “+” symbol adjacent to the timing profiles heading 314 also causes the administrator tool 300 to automatically reveal the respective display of basic timing information 320, ring game timing 348, and tournament timing 350 in the information field 310. As an illustrative example, the floor manager then selects a “+” symbol adjacent to the tournament timing 346 in the options field 308 that reveals a subcategory events 352. When the floor manager highlights or selects events 352, the events list 332 appears in the information field 310.

**[00149]** From the events list 352, the floor manager then selects the desired event for editing. Referring to Figure 38 and as illustrated by example, the event identified “between split award” 354 is selected causing the administrator tool 300 to reveal an overlay window or time prompt 356. The floor manager then enters the desired time in the available data field 358 of the prompt 356 and when finished selects an “o.k.” box 360 of the prompt 356. To commit the new changes, the floor manager then selects the refresh icon 338 in the tool bar 312, thus completing the editing process.

**[00150]** Referring to Figures 39-40, when the administrator tool 300 is used to delete a timing profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings, which preferably are the timing profiles heading 314, the jackpot profile heading 316 and the game profile heading 318. The timing profiles heading 314 is then highlighted by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 and the adjacent “+” symbol is selected to reveal the profile types or sub-options in the options field 308.

These sub-options are preferably the basic timing 326, the ring game timing 344, and the tournament timing 346.

**[00151]** From the options field 308 or from the information field 310, the floor manager, by way of illustrative example, then selects or highlights the ring game timing 344 or 348. Once selected, the floor manager selects the delete icon 362 in the tool bar 312 causing the administrator tool 300 to automatically reveal an overlay window or delete confirmation prompt 364 that requests confirmation of the selected deletion. Once the floor manager confirms the deletion by selecting a “yes” box 366 in the prompt 364 the deletion process is completed.

b) Jackpot Profile:

**[00152]** The jackpot profile heading 316 can be added to any game profile and further functions to perform the following:

- create a new jackpot profile,
- edit an existing jackpot profile, and
- delete a jackpot profile.

**[00153]** Referring to Figures 41-42, when the administrator tool 300 is used to create a new jackpot profile, the “+” symbol adjacent the profile types 302 is selected and the jackpot profile heading 316 is selected or highlighted from the subsequent drop-down list. Once highlighted, the administrator automatically reveals a jackpot list 368 in the information field 310. The floor manager then selects the new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a jackpot profile overlay window or jackpot prompt 370 to appear (see Figure 42).

**[00154]** Preferably, the jackpot prompt 370 has the following fields for the floor manager to enter data:

- description field 372
- minimum pot field 374
- fee percent field 376
- fee increment field 378
- maximum fee field 380
- fixed fee amount field 382

- jackpot account field 384
- payout amount field 386
- jackpot rule field 388
- minimum players field 390

**[00155]** The description field 372 assigns a name to the jackpot profile such as for example “Royal Flush” or “Bad Beat.” The minimum pot field 374 determines the minimum amount required in the pot before it is awarded, and assigns that amount in the space provided. If a casino fee is desired, the fee percent field 376 takes a percent of each pot. If a fee percent is desired, the fee increment field 378 is used to enter an incremental fee amount preferably in dollars. Preferably, the fee increment would match a chip value such as fifty cents or one dollar. The maximum fee field 380 sets a cap on the dollar amount taken out of each pot, if so desired. The fixed fee amount field 382 sets a specific cents or dollar amount fee for each pot. Use of field 382 alleviates use of fields 376, 378 and 380. The jackpot account field 384 is the name of the account where the funds established by field 376 or field 380 is deposited. This field preferably has a default name of jackpot. The minimum players field 390 sets the minimum number of players that must be playing for a jackpot to be awarded.

**[00156]** With the jackpot profile heading 316 chosen, each of the fields 372-390 are listed as column headings 392 of the jackpot list 368 in the information field 310. When all applicable fields 372-390 of the prompt 370 are filled in by the floor manager, an “o.k.” box 394 of the prompt 370 is selected and the jackpot profile is then available for selection when updating or creating a game profile.

**[00157]** Referring to Figures 43-44, when the administrator tool 300 is used to edit a jackpot profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings, which preferably are the timing profiles heading 314, the jackpot profile heading 316 and the game profile heading 318. The jackpot profile heading 316 is then highlighted or selected by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 in the options field 308. This selection causes the administrator tool 300 to display the jackpot list 368 in the information field 310. From the jackpot list 368, the floor manager chooses the appropriate jackpot profile for editing.

[00158] Referring to Figure 44 and by way of illustrative example, a ring bad beat jackpot profile 396 of the jackpot list 368 is selected by the floor manager. This selection causes the administrator tool 300 to display an update jackpot profile prompt 398 that preferably has the same fields 372 – 390 as the create jackpot prompt 370 (see Figure 42). When all desired fields for editing are changed by the floor manager, the floor manager selects an “o.k.” box 400 of the prompt 398 thus completing the editing process of a jackpot profile.

[00159] Referring to Figures 45 – 46, when the administrator tool 300 is used to delete a jackpot profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator tool 300 to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings 314, 316 and 318. The jackpot profile heading 316 is then highlighted or selected by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 in the options field 308. This selection causes the administrator tool 300 to display the jackpot list 368 in the information field 310. From the jackpot list 368, the floor manager chooses the appropriate jackpot profile for deletion.

[00160] From the information field 310, the floor manager, by way of illustrative example, then selects or highlights the jackpot profile identified as “ring bad beat” 396. Once selected, the floor manager selects the delete icon 362 in the tool bar 312 causing the administrator tool 300 to automatically reveal an overlay window or delete confirmation prompt 402 that requests confirmation of the selected deletion (see Figure 46). Once the floor manager confirms the deletion by selecting a “yes” box 404 in the prompt 402 the deletion process is completed.

c) Game Profiles:

[00161] Referring to Figures 47- 48, the game profiles provides the floor manager with the ability to create and save games with each game having a unique set of parameter. These parameters may include such setting as:

- game type (ring or tournament)
- stakes (limit or no limit)
- betting requirements (small and big blind values)

For example, the floor manager can create two different game profiles for Texas Hold'em with different small and big blind values. A game profile is preferably assigned to an electronic table 18 before starting the game with the specific game profile at that table.

[00162] The game profiles heading 316 further functions to perform the following:

- create a new game profile,
- edit an existing game profile,
- clone an existing game profile, and
- delete a game profile.

[00163] When the administrator tool 300 is used to create a new game profile, the game profiles heading 318 in the expanded list under profile types 302 is first highlighted by the floor manager preferably without selecting the "+" symbol adjacent to the timing profiles heading 314. The floor manager then selects the new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a create game profile prompt 406 to appear (see Figure 47). Preferably, the game prompt 406 has the following fields for the floor manager to enter data and make selections:

- description field 408
- game field 410
- wait lists field 412
- time out field 414
- ring field 416
- single table tournament field 418
- multi-table tournament field 420
- hi field 422
- hi/low field 424
- ante field 426
- bring in field 428
- small blind field 430
- big blind field 432
- small wager field 434
- big wager field 436

- limit field 438
- pot limit field 440
- no limit field 442
- minimum stakes field 444
- suggested field 446
- maximum stakes field 448
- maximum raises field 450
- minimum rebuy field 452
- minimum rejoin field 454
- rejoin timeout field 456
- minimum players field 458
- maximum players field 460
- time limit field 462
- auto deal field 464
- game timing field 466
- zero balance timeout field 468
- number of tables field 470
- buy-in field 472
- initial stakes field 474
- increment field 476
- unit field 478
- rake account field 480
- available jackpot profiles field 482
- assigned jackpot profiles field 484

[00164] The description field 408 of prompt 406 enables the floor manager to enter the distinct name of any new game. Game field 410 allows entry of a specific game such as for example Texas Hold'em. Selecting the check box of the wait lists field 412 activates the wait list feature of the system 10 for a particular game. Not selecting the wait lists field 412 will cause the particular game not to appear on the waiting list of the system 10. Provided the waiting list field 412 is selected, the time out field 414 enables entry of a time-out value preferably in minutes, which provides a prospective player that

amount of time to log into the game before the waiting list chooses the next available player. Selection of the ring field 416 as a type of game profile allows a game to be continuous in the sense that it enables a revolving set of players. Selection of the single table tournament field 418 as a type of game profile restricts the game to a single table that has a finite set of players. Each player may continue to play until the initial buy-in is depleted and only one player remains in the game (i.e. the tournament winner). Selection of the multi-table tournament field 420 is similar to field 418 but entails multiple tables. The hi field 422 allows the floor manager to choose the option where the highest hand in the game wins the pot. Selection of the hi/low field 424 is an alternative to the hi field 422 wherein the player with the lowest hand preferably has a stake in the pot.

[00165] With regards to betting requirements, the ante field 426 of the game prompt 406 prescribes the amount posted by all players at the start of a hand. Preferably, this amount is entered in dollars. The bring-in field 428 sets the minimum amount of money that a player must bring into the game. The small blind field 430 is the minimum amount of money that the player immediately to the left of the dealer button must post at the beginning of a hand. The big blind field 432 as an alternative to the small blind field 430, is the amount of money that the player immediately to the left of the dealer button must post at the beginning of a hand (i.e. no more and no less). The small and big wager fields 434, 436 are the respective minimum and maximum amounts of money for an acceptable raise in betting.

[00166] With regards to stakes requirements, the limit field 438 sets a maximum limit to betting in each round of game play. The pot limit field 440 is chosen to allow a betting structure that permits players to bet up to the amount of the pot. The no limit field 442 is preferably an alternative to fields 438, 440 and permits a player to wager any or all of their chips in one bet. The minimum and maximum stakes fields 444, 448 allow entry of respective minimum and maximum amounts of money that a player must bring to the game. Fields 444, 448 are disabled if the tournament field 418 or 420 is selected. The suggested field 446 is optional and suggests the amount of money that a player should bring to a game. Field 446 is disabled if tournament field 418 or 420 is selected. The maximum raises field 450 set the maximum number of raises permitted per round of play. The minimum rebuy field 452 sets the minimum amount of money that a player must bring back into a game after achieving a zero balance in the game and while still

being seated and logged into the game. The minimum rejoin field 454 set the minimum amount of money that a player must bring into a game to resume play after the player has previously logged out. Preferably, the rejoin amount is the same as the minimum stakes amount. The rejoin timeout field 456 sets the minimum amount of time that a player must wait in order to rejoin a game for less than what they left the game with. Preferably, field 456 has a default time of about sixty minutes.

**[00167]** With regards to game options, the minimum and maximum players fields 458, 460 set the respective minimum and maximum number of players that must be present before a game can begin. Preferably, the maximum number of players per table 18 for system 10 is about ten but can be decreased by the floor manager. The time limit field 462 sets a time limit, preferably in seconds, within which a player must act before the system 10 completes an action automatically. When selected, the auto deal field 464 causes the system 10 to automatically deal each hand after the prior hand is complete. If not selected, the system will wait for an employee or floor manager to manually select auto deal from the screen 120. Preferably, the auto deal field 464 is selected when creating a game profile because auto deal can be temporarily disabled utilizing the screen 120. When selecting the game timing field 466, a drop down list is provided by the administrator that lists all of the available timing profiles. From this list, the floor manager chooses a timing profile for the game profile. The zero balance timeout field 468 provides a player with a specified amount of time after achieving a zero balance to rebuy into the game. If the player does not rebuy into the game within the time specified, the system 10 will automatically remove the player from the game. This time is preferably entered in seconds and the field 468 generally acts to free up chairs that can otherwise be used by active players.

**[00168]** With regards to tournament play, the number of tables field 470 sets the number of tables for a game profile during tournament play. Preferably, field 470 has a default setting of one table. The buy-in field 472 allows entry of a dollar amount that a player must pay to enter the tournament. The initial stakes field 474 enables entry of an amount of virtual chips that a player receives for a tournament. The stakes are not necessary equal to the buy-in amount. In tournaments, all players will preferably begin with the same amount of stakes or chips. The increment field 476 is dependent upon the unit field 478 and enables setting of the amount of hands or elapsed minutes before the

blinds are increased by the system 10. The unit field 478 is associated with the ~~micromin~~ field 476 and when selected provides of drop-down list of units (i.e. number of hands, and minutes) for the floor manager to choose from.

**[00169]** With regards to rakes and jackpots, the rake account field 480 allows entry of an account in which the rake is deposited. As illustrated in Figure 47, the current rake account is “houserake.” The available jackpot profiles field 482 is preferably a scrolling list of available jackpot profiles. One or more of these profiles can be selected by the floor manager and upon selection of arrow key 486 of the prompt 406, the selected jackpot profile(s) are eligible whenever the game profile is being played. The assigned jackpot profiles field 486 is a scrolling list of jackpot profiles assigned to the game profile. Selection of any one of the assigned jackpot profiles and selection of arrow key 488 will remove the selected, assigned, jackpot profile from the assigned jackpot profiles field 486.

**[00170]** When all applicable fields 408 - 484 of the create game profile prompt 406 are filled in by the floor manager, a “save” box 490 of the prompt 406 is selected and the game profile is saved for future use.

**[00171]** Referring to Figures 48 – 49, the administrator tool 300 can edit a game profile at any time. However, any game profile changes preferably will not affect a game being played at the time of the change. When the administrator tool 300 is used to edit a game profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings, which preferably are the timing profiles heading 314, the jackpot profile heading 316 and the game profile heading 318. The gaming profiles heading 318 is then highlighted by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 and the adjacent “+” symbol is selected to reveal a listing of available game profiles 492 in the options field 308. The game profile 492 that requires editing is then highlighted or selected causing each of the fields 408 - 484 as previously described for prompt 406 to be listed as column headings 494 in the information field 310 and the parameters/data 496 of the selected game profile 492 to appear in the information field 310 below the associated column headings 494.

**[00172]** When the floor manager selects an update icon 498 in the tool bar 312, an update game profile prompt 500 appears (see Figure 49). Prompt 500 is substantially the

same as the previously described create game prompt 406 (see Figure 47), hence, like fields shall have the same identifying numerals. Once displayed, the floor manager makes the desired changes to any one of the fields 408 – 484. When finished, the floor manager selects a “save” box 502 of the prompt 500 and the updated game profile can then be assigned to an electronic table 18.

**[00173]** Referring to Figures 50 – 53, cloning of a game profile is an efficient and relatively simple means of creating a new game profile that closely resembles a game profile that has previously been created. When the administrator tool 300 is used to clone a game profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings, which preferably are the timing profiles heading 314, the jackpot profile heading 316 and the game profile heading 318. The gaming profiles heading 318 is then highlighted or selected by the floor manager revealing the listing of available game profiles 492 in the options field 308. The game profile 492 that requires cloning is then highlighted or selected causing each of the fields 408 – 484, previously described, to be listed as column headings 494 in the information field 310 and the parameters/data 496 of the selected game profile 492 to appear in the information field 310 below the associated column headings 494.

**[00174]** When the floor manager selects a clone icon 504 in the tool bar 312, the word “CLONE” is appended to the game profile name preferably in both the option field 308 and the information field 310 as part of the data 496 (see Figure 51). As illustrated, the clone of the originally selected game profile 492 appears preferably at the bottom of the drop-down listing of game profiles and is highlighted. The selected game profile to be cloned remains in the listing, however, it is no longer highlighted by the administrator tool 300.

**[00175]** To make changes to the game profile clone, the floor manager then selects the update icon 498 in the tool bar 312 and the update game profile prompt 500 appears (see Figure 52). Once displayed, the floor manager makes the desired changes to any one of the fields 408 – 484 (see Figure 47). When finished, the floor manager selects the “save” box 502 of the prompt 500 and the game profile clone appears in highlighted form in the game profile listing with the new name preferably entered by the floor manager into prompt 500 (see Figure 53). For instance and as illustrated, the game profile name

“Hold’Em \$2/\$2 (CLONE)” in description field 408 of the prompt 500 has been changed by the floor manager to “jackpot Hold’em \$2/\$2” as appearing in Figure 53.

[00176] Referring to Figures 54 – 55, when the administrator tool 300 is used to delete a game profile, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 is first selected by the floor manager. This causes the administrator tool 300 to reveal the plurality of profile types or headings 314, 316 and 318. The game profile heading 318 is then highlighted or selected by the floor manager from the plurality of profile types 302 in the options field 308. This selection causes the administrator tool 300 to display the drop-down listing of game profiles 492 in the options field 308. From the drop-down list, the floor manager then chooses the appropriate game profile 492 for deletion. Once selected, the floor manager selects the delete icon 362 in the tool bar 312 causing the administrator tool 300 to automatically reveal a delete confirmation prompt 506 that requests confirmation of the selected deletion (see Figure 55). Once the floor manager confirms the deletion by selecting a “yes” box 508 in the confirmation prompt 506 the deletion process is completed.

d) Tournament Game Profiles

[00177] Tournament game profiles are created generally as any other game profile is created and as previously described. As best shown in Figure 47, selection of the single table tournament field 418 of create game profile prompt 406 designates a game profile as a tournament game. Generally from the option and information fields 308, 310 the floor manager may modify a tournament game profile in terms of creating:

- a blind structure 510 (see Figures 57 and 58),
- a payout structure 512 (see Figure 62), and
- a rake structure 514 (see Figure 65, also applicable for ring game profiles).

[00178] Blind structures 510 is a way of increasing blinds associated with the hand or minute increments previously entered in field 476 and field 478 of the create game profile prompt 406 (see Figure 47). Payout structures 512 generally designate an amount or percent of money paid out to players at the end of a tournament and dependent upon their final placement with regards to the other tournament players. For instance, a player who wins first place will likely receive a greater award than a player who wins second

place. The rake structure 514 preferably applies to both tournament and ring game profiles and generally varies the percent of a pot or percent of a buy-in dependent upon the pot size or total buy-in amount collected for a particular tournament.

**[00179]** Referring to Figures 56 and 57, when the administrator tool 300 is used to create a blind structure 510 for a tournament game profile 492, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 in the option field 308 is first selected by the floor manager, then the “+” symbol adjacent to the game profiles heading 318 is selected. Selection of heading 318 causes the drop-down listing of game profiles 492 to appear. The floor manager then selects the tournament game profile to be modified. When the “+” symbol adjacent to the tournament game profile is elected, the administrator tool 300 reveals a drop-down listing that preferably lists optional selections 516 for the blind structure 510, the payout structure 512 (see Figure 61) and the rake structure 514 (see Figure 64).

**[00180]** Selection of the blind structure 510 of the selections 516 for a particular tournament game profile 492 causes blind structure information to be listed in the information field 310. The floor manager then selects the new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a create blind structure prompt 518 to appear (see Figure 58). Preferably, the blind structure prompt 518 has the following fields for the floor manager to enter data:

- level field 520,
- ante field 522,
- bring-in field 524,
- small blind field 526,
- big blind field 528,
- small wager field 530, and
- big wager field 532.

**[00181]** Fields 520 – 532 of the blind structure prompt 518 correspond to column headings 534 in the information field 310 when the blind structure in the options field 308 is highlighted. In prompt 518, the floor manager enters an integer number representing the level being created in the level field 520. Then a money amounts are entered in the small and big blind fields 526, 528. The amount for the smallest acceptable bet is entered into the small wager field 530 and the largest acceptable bet is entered into the big wager field 532 for that particular level in the level field 520. As

illustrated in Figure 59, an acceptable level is 1, an acceptable small blind is 50.00 (representing dollars), an acceptable big blind is 100.00, and acceptable small wager is 100.00 and an acceptable big wager is 100.00. After selecting the “save” box 533 in the prompt 518, this process is repeated for each blind structure 510 that the floor manager wants to create.

**[00182]** Referring to Figures 56 and 60, when the administrator tool 300 is used to create a payout structure 512 for a tournament game profile 492, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 in the option field 308 is first selected by the floor manager, then the “+” symbol adjacent to the game profiles heading 318 is selected. Selection of heading 318 causes the drop-down listing of game profiles 492 to appear. The floor manager then selects the tournament game profile to be modified. When the “+” symbol adjacent to the tournament game profile is elected, the administrator tool 300 reveals another drop-down listing that preferably lists the optional selections 516 for the blind structure 510, the payout structure 512 and the rake structure 514.

**[00183]** Selection of the payout structure 512 of the selections 516 for a particular tournament game profile 492 would cause payout structure information to be listed in the information field 310 if any exists at the time (see Figures 56 and 60). The floor manager then selects the new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a create payout structure prompt 536 to appear (see Figure 61). Preferably, the payout structure prompt 536 has the following fields for the floor manager to enter data:

- place field 538,
- percent field 540, and
- amount field 542.

**[00184]** Fields 538-542 of the payout structure prompt 536 may correspond to column headings (not shown) in the information field 310 if previous payout records existed when the payout structure in the options field 308 is highlighted. In prompt 536, the floor manager enters an integer number representing the winning placement of the player in the place field 520. For example, if there are only first and second place winners that are awarded money, then the floor manager would not enter a three which would designate a third place winner. As best illustrated in Figure 62, the floor manager enters a one designating the first place winner then selects the percent field 540 to enter the percent of a pot received by the first place winner. The floor manager then selects a

“save” box 544 of the prompt 536 to same the first place setting. The process beginning with selecting the new icon 322 is repeated for each placement of winners (i.e. second place and so on).

**[00185]** Alternatively to a percentage of the pot, each placement of winners could win a pre-designated sum of money. This is done by selecting the amount field 542 of the payout structure prompt 536 instead of the percent field 540. Preferably, once either the percent or amount fields 540, 542 are selected for one placement, that field must apply to all winning placements.

**[00186]** Referring to Figures 63 - 65, when the administrator tool 300 is used to create a rake structure 512 for a tournament or ring game profile 492, the “+” symbol adjacent to profile types 302 in the option field 308 is first selected by the floor manager, then the “+” symbol adjacent to the game profiles heading 318 is selected. Selection of heading 318 causes the drop-down listing of game profiles 492 to appear. The floor manager then selects the tournament game profile to be modified. When the “+” symbol adjacent to a tournament game profile is selected, the administrator tool 300 reveals another drop-down listing that preferably lists the optional selections 516 for the blind structure 510, the payout structure 512, and the rake structure 514. When the “+” symbol adjacent to a ring game profile is selected, the administrator tool 300 reveals another drop-down listing that preferably lists only the rake structure 514.

**[00187]** Selection of the rake structure 514 of the selections 516 for a particular tournament or ring game profile 492 causes the listing of rake structure information 546 in the information field 310 if any exists at the time (see Figure 64). The floor manager then selects the new icon 322 in the tool bar 312 that causes a create rake structure prompt 548 to appear (see Figure 64). Preferably, the rake structure prompt 548 has a pot size field 550 and a rake amount field 552 for entry of data by the floor manager.

**[00188]** The pot size field 550 and the rake amount field 552 of the rake structure prompt 548 preferably corresponds to column headings 554 in the information field 31. For a tournament game profile, the floor manager enter the total buy-in amount for all the players into the pot size field 550. For a ring game profile and as illustrated in Figures 65, the floor manager creates the rake structure for each increment of the rake. For example, if the pot size is ten dollars, the rake may be one dollar, if the pot size is twenty

dollars, the rake may be two dollars, and so on. The rake structure 514 depends then on the maximum, possible pot size and/or the maximum amount raked.

[00189] For each rake increment of the ring game profile 492, the floor manager enters the pot size in the pot size field 550 of the rake structure prompt 548, then the amount to be raked is entered into the rake amount field 552. As illustrated in Figure 65 for example, the floor manager is creating a ninth record or increment for a pot size of \$55.50 and a rake amount of \$6.00. The floor manager then selects a “save” box 554 of the rake structure prompt 548 to save the settings. The process is generally completed after this first iteration for tournament game profiles, and is repeated beginning with the selection of the new icon 322 for each increment of a ring game profile.

#### VIII. General Process and Software

[00190] With particular reference to Figure 14, in another aspect of the present invention, a method 110 provides an electronic poker game to a plurality of players on at the electronic poker table 18 using the host console 102 and the server computer 50. In a first step 112, the host console 102 preferably configures the EPIA's 24 and the central display area 26 and establishes parameters of the electronic poker game. In a second step 114, the electronic poker game is administered by the server computer 50 using electronic cards and chips.

[00191] In operation, the gaming system 10 will implement a player-account based cash in/cash out system. The system 10 will create a user account for each player. Once an account is established for the player, the player is issued a Player Card having an associated personal identification number or PIN. Once the player has been issued a Player Card, their account may be funded. The Player Card is used to identify the player at the tables 18. The player may fund their account by bringing cash to a cage, where the cash is accepted and credited to the player's account. Printed receipts are given to the player and maintained by the casino 12. To bring electronic chips to the table 18, the player sits down at a seat 40, swipes their Player Card and enters their PIN. The system 10 informs the player of their account balance and allows them to convert all or a portion of the account balance to electronic chips to bring to the game.

[00192] From a software perspective, the gaming system 10 may be implemented using six program groups: a table server, a game engine, a table client, a player client, a

table manager, and a cage manager. The table server implements the network communication, control and authentication as well as inter-table functions (seat reservations, multi-table tournaments). The game engine is responsible for all game functions, e.g., electronic playing card deck generation, dealing, betting, determining winners and awarding pots. The table client is the graphical control for the CDA 26. The player client implements the user interface for the EPIA 24 and the logic for capturing player input and communication the player input to the table client server. The table manager contains the host interface for setting user, network, and game parameters, for starting, pausing, and stopping games, and for monitoring game activity and responding to system or user generated alerts. The cage manager provides the ability to create and fund player accounts and to create the Player Cards.

**[00193]** If there are no seats 40 available, the player is placed in a queue, until a seat opens up. In one embodiment, players are taken off of the queue and assigned a seat on a first come, first served basis. However, the system 10 may allow the casino 12 to implement special rules for players to bypass the queue or list. For example, the casino may present vouchers to players under certain conditions, such as a win in a tournament, to be placed at the head of a queue.

**[00194]** In one aspect of the present invention and as stated above, the system 10 tracks each transaction, wager, card dealt in a database. The system 10 also tracks the players which are playing at each table 18. This information is stored in the database, summarized, and may be presented in any numerous forms of reporting formats. Any information regarding the player's, the games, and how each hand is played may be tracked. This available data may also be analyzed for purposes of determining the frequency of poker hands (per hour) for a table or all games in which a particular player or players played or detecting, e.g., collusion between players.

**[00195]** The system 10 allows jackpots, i.e., progressive jackpots, to be generated by and won across multiple hands and/or multiple tables. A progressive jackpot may increase based on the amounts wagered and/or won at the included tables. The progressive jackpot may continue to increase until won under a set of predetermined conditions. Alternatively, it may be active until only for a predetermined time period. The conditions for winning the jackpot that it is won by one or more players at the end of the time period.

[00196] The system 10 allows a progressive jackpot to be funded in multiple ways. The way in which a progressive jackpot is funded may be funded through a computer program application on the server 50 or other device. For example, the progressive jackpot may be funded by taking a set percentage from every jackpot, every other jackpot, or every n<sup>th</sup> jackpot. The amount of the progressive jackpot may be displayed on the CDA 26 and/or a remote display.

[00197] The progressive jackpot may be initiated randomly, under certain definable conditions, and/or for a specific event, i.e., a marketing event. The progressive jackpot may be a single hand, a predetermined number of hands at one table or across multiple hands, for a predetermined time period, and the like.

[00198] Preferably, after a jackpot is won by a player, one or more government reporting forms may be presented to the player on their EPIA 24. The form may accept the player's electronic signature (if permissible) or may notify the player of the requirements and direct them to a location where they can fill out the form. The device may be a personal, notebook, or tablet computer, handheld computer, PDA, or other suitable device.

#### IX. Tournament Play

[00199] The system 10 facilitates tournament play. In a tournament, a predetermined number of tables 18 having a predetermined number of players are involved. A buy-in, e.g., \$100 is required. Typically, after a player loses all of their money, they are eliminated from the tournament.

[00200] Under predetermined rules, players may register for a tournament and be assigned to seats at a table. During play, under predetermined rules, tables may be broken down and the players distributed to other tables. The system 10 facilitates the tournament by providing one or more of the following features:

- a) registration
- b) tracking tournament information
- c) display of tournament information on central display and/or remote display
- d) tournament set-up, e.g., buy-in
- e) re buy-in
- f) tournament jackpot, cash or entry voucher for entry another tournament (specific tournament or expiration date)
- g) Process for breaking tables:
  - (1) message that table is breaking
  - (2) convey new seat assignment
  - (3) determination of breaking order
  - (4) display of breaking order
- h) display information on status of other tables and players at other tables
- i) System to monitor and adjust hands per hour of an individual table during a tournament: During a poker tournament it is important that each table play roughly the same number of hands per hour as all other tables. This can be accomplished by pausing a game and/or slowing a game down with out pausing.
- j) multi-site tournaments
- k) system for automatically paying players tournament winnings based on tournament pay tables and their final position in the tournament
- l) automatic posting of blinds and method to turn on and off of automatic posting of blinds/missed blinds
- m) method for automatically calculating allowed bet amounts in pot-limit and no-limit betting structures
- n) automatic varying of rake based upon number of players, time of day, type of game and/or other criteria
- o) ability to offer rake discounts to individual players
- p) transferring a player from one seat to another at the same table, or

to another: Situations exist where are forced to (“must move”) or desire to move seats. This feature provides automatic notification and movement of player information from one seat to another.

- q) database and network architecture allowing single and multi-site networking and management of a plurality of automated poker
- r) tracking and reporting of player statistics: Data and method of display over the internet and/or other methods for player to analyze their previous play statistics. In another embodiment date and method of display is utilized to determine player rankings for a given game and/or over a given time period
- s) ability to view available tables and register for live tables and/or tournaments via a remote connection such as the internet or an automated voice response unit
- t) options adjust speed of play(speed of card shuffling, dealing, discarding, betting, etc.)
- u) electronically transfer money from an account to the table
- v) electronically transfer money to another
- w) use of “cash card” to bring money to the table
- x) ability for operator to view details of any and all tables
- y) ability for operator to view details of any and all players

#### X. Virtual Gaming

**[00201]** In one aspect of the present invention, remote or virtual games may be provided by the system 10. The remote or virtual games may be provided on wireless devices and may be played at predetermined locations.

**[00202]** Virtual games may also be provided through the EPIAs 24. For example, the virtual or remote games may be played by the poker players when it is not their turn. The virtual or remote games may be another poker hand, played against other players, at the table or at other tables, or played against virtual players. Alternatively, the remote or virtual games may be other types of games, including, but not limited to blackjack, keno, slot machines, and the like.

[00203] In addition to running other casino games on EPIA 24 or other ter system can be run on other gaming devices throughout the casino. For example, a virtual poker game can be run on an existing electronic bingo terminal or an electronic race book terminal.

XI. Alternative Embodiments

[00204] While the forms of the invention herein disclosed constitute presently preferred embodiments, many others are possible. It is not intended to mention all the possible equivalent forms or ramifications of the invention. It is understood that the terms used herein are merely descriptive rather than limiting, and that various changes can be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention.

In the Claims:

1. An electronic gaming system for control of a plurality of games being selectively played by a plurality of players, the system comprising:

at least one game table having a plurality of electronic player interaction areas for player communication and player input, wherein each one of the plurality of players is located adjacent to a respective one of the plurality of electronic player interaction areas; and

a first computer being in communication with the plurality of electronic player interaction areas, the first computer having a user interface for managerial control of the at least one game table; and

a software based administrator tool operated through the user interface for the control of at least one gaming profile type associated with at least gaming rules.

2. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 wherein the user interface is a touch-screen display.

3. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 2 wherein each one of the plurality of electronic player interaction areas has a second computer being in communication with the first computer.

4. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising the at least one gaming profile type having a timing profile heading having a new timing key

displayed on the user interface and for entering a time for at least one event of a new game of the plurality of games.

5. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 4 wherein the new timing key has an events sub-option that when selected lists a plurality of timing events specific to the new game.

6. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 5 further comprising a time prompt of the administrator tool displayed by the user interface when any one of the plurality of timing events is selected.

7. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 6 further comprising a name prompt of the administrator tool displayed by the user interface after entry of a time in the time prompt for naming the new game.

8. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 wherein the timing profile heading has a plurality of sub-options each having a unique list of timing events for editing.

9. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 8 wherein the plurality of sub-options has a basic timing key sub-option, a ring game timing sub-option, and a tournament timing sub-option.

10. The electronic gaming system set forth in 8 further comprising a delete icon of the administrator tool displayed on the user interface for deleting a selected one of the plurality of sub-options of the timing profile heading.

11. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising the gaming profile type having a jackpot profile heading having a jackpot profile prompt displayed on the user interface and having a plurality of fields for entry of jackpot parameters.

12. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 11 wherein the plurality of fields has a description field and a minimum pot field.

13. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 11 wherein the jackpot profile heading is available for editing or creating a game profile.

14. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising the gaming profile type having a jackpot profile heading having a jackpot list displayed selectively on the user interface when the jackpot profile heading is selected.

15. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 14 further comprising an update jackpot profile prompt of the jackpot profile heading displayed on the user interface when any one of at least one unique jackpot profile of the jackpot list is selected, the jackpot profile prompt having a plurality of fields for entry of data related to monetary parameters of the gaming rules.

16. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 14 further comprising a delete icon of the administrator tool that when selected deletes a unique jackpot profile of the at least one unique jackpot profile pre-selected from the jackpot list.

17. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 wherein the at least one gaming profile type has a game profile heading having settable parameters of the gaming rules including game type, stakes and betting requirements.

18. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising the at least one gaming profile type having a game profile heading displayed on the user interface for at least creating a unique new game profile, editing a unique existing game profile, and deleting a unique existing game profile of the at least one game.

19. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising:  
the at least one gaming type having a game profile heading displayed on the user interface; and  
a create game profile prompt of the game profile heading displayed selectively on the user interface and having a plurality of fields for entering new game data of the gaming rules.

20. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 19 wherein the plurality of fields of the create game profile prompt has a description field and a game field.

21. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 19 further comprising an update game profile prompt of the game profile heading displayed selectively on the user interface and having a plurality of fields for entry of data to edit the gaming rules.

22. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 21 further comprising a clone icon of the administrator tool displayed on the user interface and for selectively cloning a unique game profile of at least one game profile of the game profile heading.

23. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 21 further comprising a delete icon of the administrator tool displayed on the user interface and for selectively deleting a unique game profile of at least one game profile of the game profile heading.

24. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 19 further comprising:  
the game profile heading having a tournament profile sub-option displayed selectively on the user interface; and  
a table tournament field of the plurality of fields of the create game profile prompt for designating tournament play.

25. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 24 further comprising a blind structure prompt of the tournament profile sub-option displayed selectively for tournament play and having a plurality of fields for entering tournament play data of the gaming rules.

26. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 24 further comprising a payout structure prompt of the tournament profile sub-option displayed selectively for tournament play and having a plurality of fields for entering tournament play data of the gaming rules.

27. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 24 further comprising a rake structure prompt of the tournament profile sub-option displayed selectively for tournament play and having a plurality of fields for entering tournament play data of the gaming rules.

28. The electronic gaming system set forth in claim 1 further comprising:

- a timing profile of the at least one gaming type associated with events in each respective one of the plurality of games that are timed;
- a jackpot profile of the at least one gaming type associated with monetary parameters regarding a jackpot of each respective one of the plurality of games; and
- a game profile of the at least one gaming type associated with the creation and storing of a new game of the plurality of games.

29. A method of operating an administrator tool for controlling a plurality of games comprising the steps of:

- activating a computer of a gaming system;
- displaying the administrator tool on a user interface of the computer;
- selecting one of a plurality of gaming profile headings displayed in an options field of the administrator tool;

selecting a unique profile of one of the plurality of profile headings from a plurality of lists selectively displayed in an information field of the administrator tool for editing or deleting.

30. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further step of selecting a delete icon displayed in a tool bar field of the administrator tool for deleting the selected unique profile.

31. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further steps of:

creating a new timing profile of the plurality of profile headings by selecting a refresh icon displayed in a tool bar field of the administrator tool before selecting the unique profile, wherein the unique profile selected is an event from an events list of the plurality of lists;

filling in data fields including a new file name in a time prompt automatically displayed as a result of selecting the unique event; and

selecting a refresh icon displayed in a tool bar field of the administrator tool.

32. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further steps of:

creating a new unique profile by selecting one of a jackpot profile heading and a game profile heading of the plurality of profile headings without selecting any one of the unique profiles in the plurality of lists;

displaying a respective prompt of the selected one of the jackpot profile heading and the game profile heading by the administrator tool; and

filling in data fields of the respective prompt.

33. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further steps of:

editing the selected unique profile by selecting a refresh icon displayed in a tool bar field of the administrator tool before selecting the unique profile, wherein the unique profile selected is a timing event from a timing events list of the plurality of lists;

filling in data fields, without including a new file name, in a time prompt automatically displayed as a result of selecting the unique event; and

selecting a refresh icon displayed in a tool bar field of the administrator tool.

34. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further steps of:

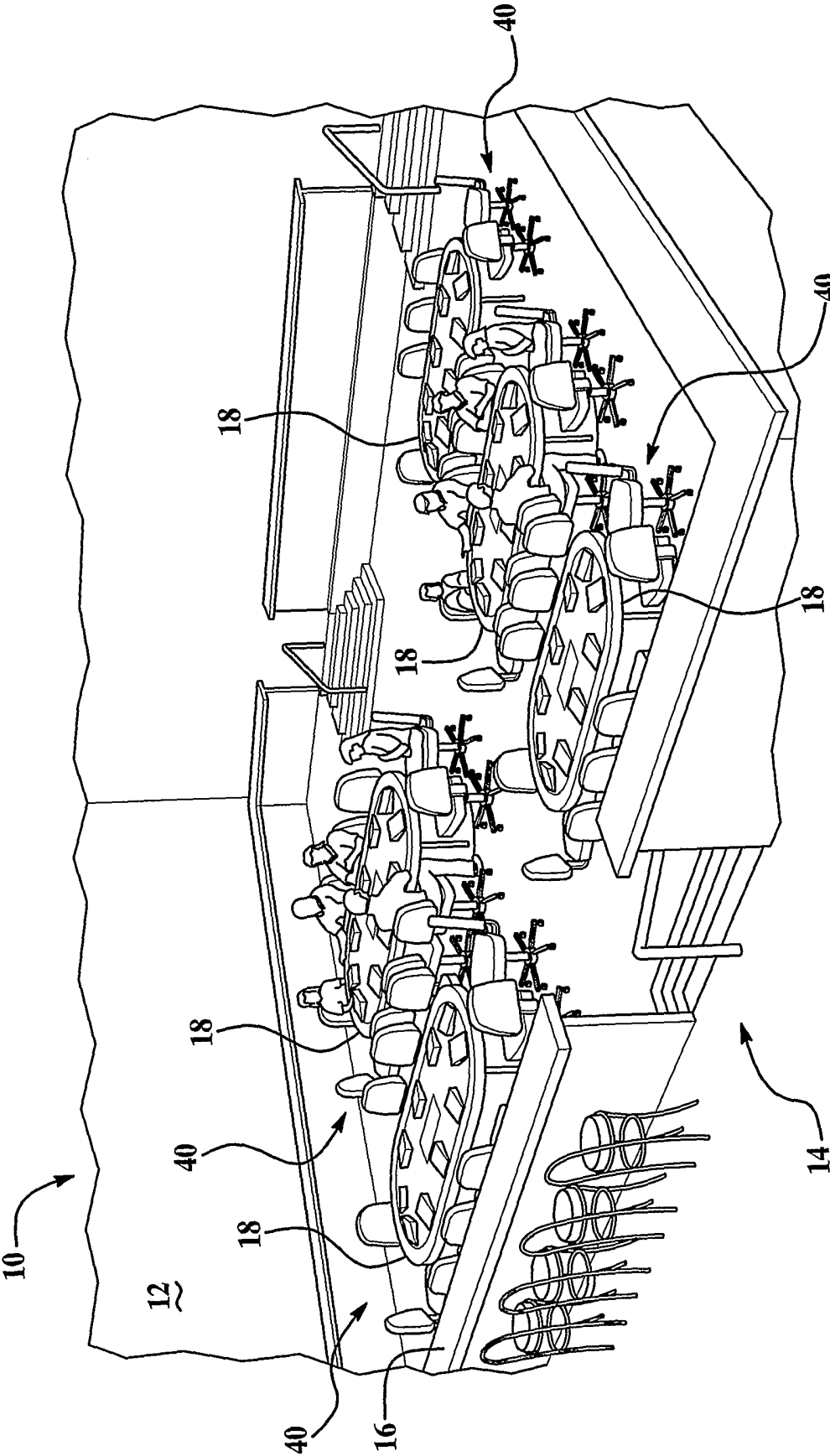
editing the selected unique profile wherein the selected unique profile is a jackpot profile selected from a jackpot list of the plurality of lists; and

filling in data fields of a jackpot prompt displayed by the administrator tool as a result of selecting the unique profile.

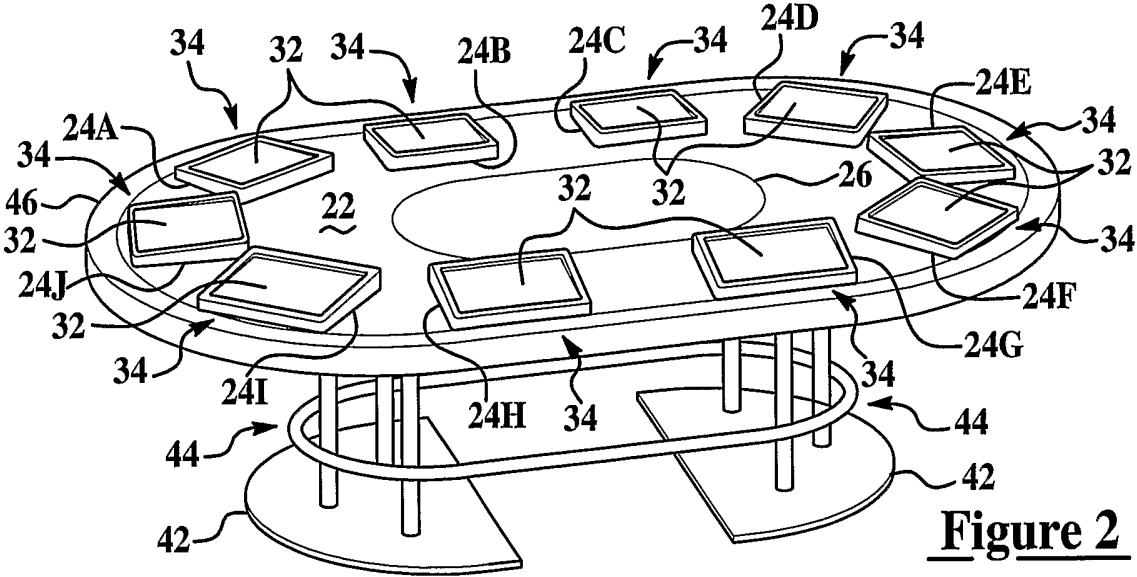
35. The method of operating the administrator tool set forth in claim 29 comprising the further steps of:

editing the selected unique profile wherein the selected unique profile is a game profile selected from a jackpot list of the plurality of lists;

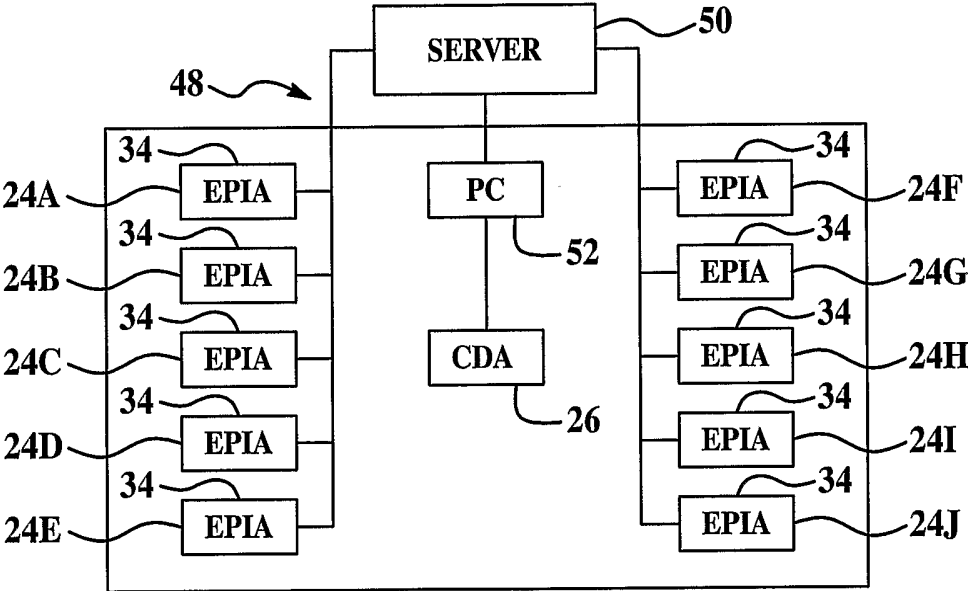
displaying game parameters of the game profile in the information field;  
selecting an update icon in an options field of the user interface; and  
filling in data fields of a game prompt displayed by the administrator tool as a  
result of selecting the update icon.



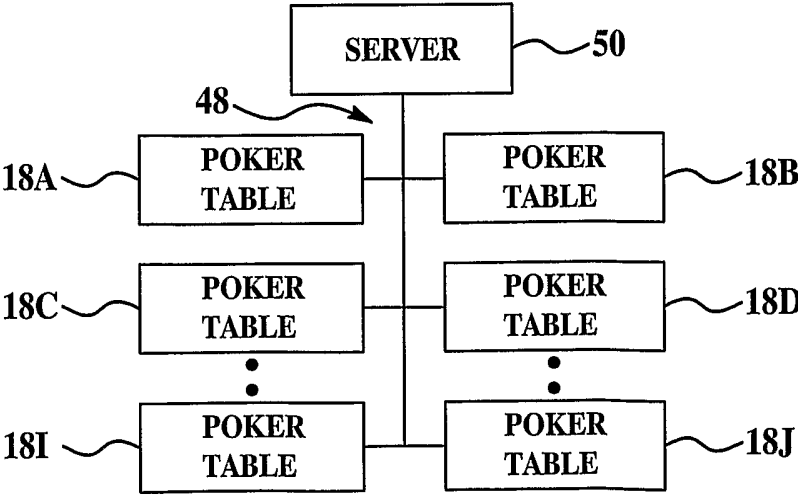
**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**

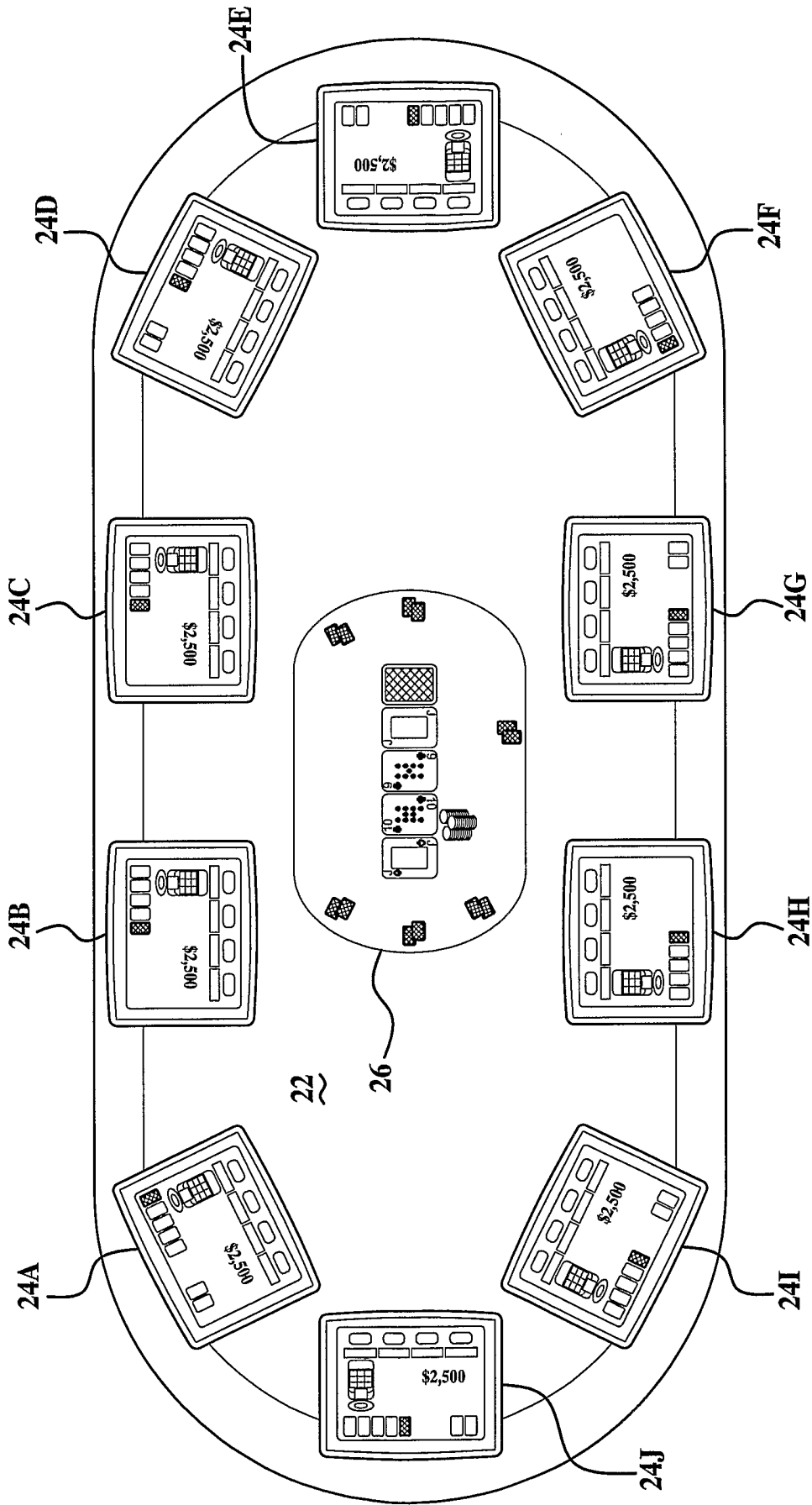
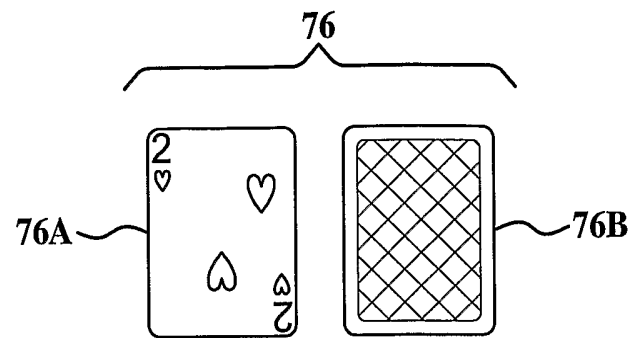
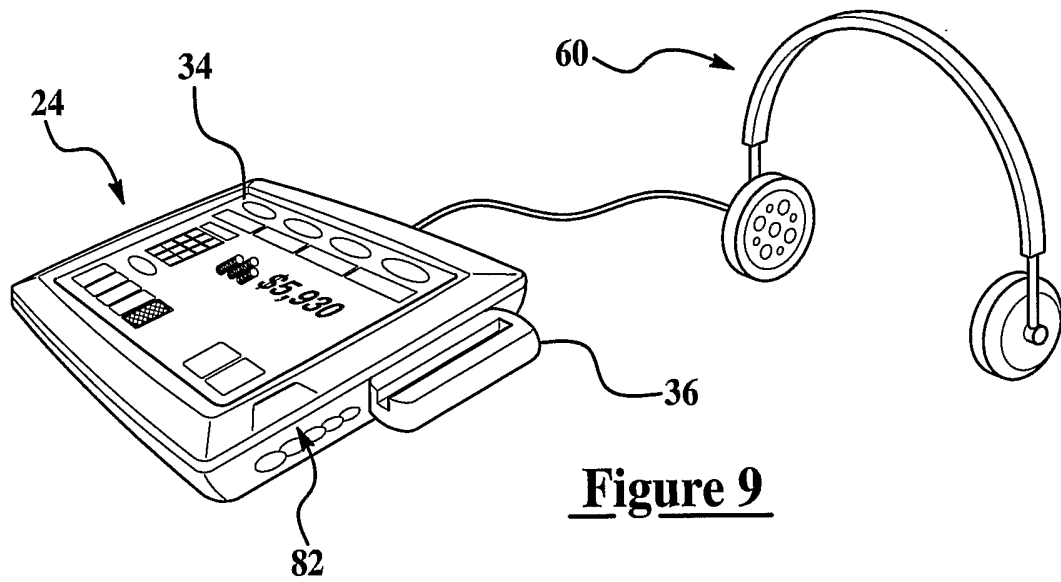
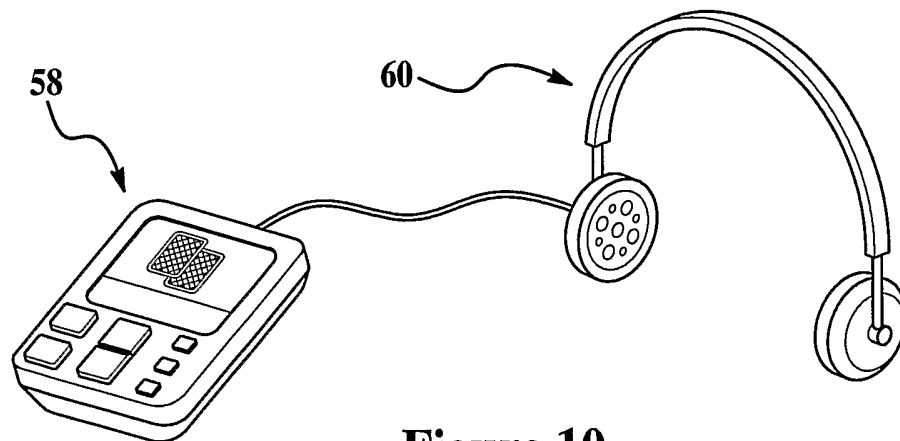


Figure 3

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**Figure 4****Figure 9****Figure 10**

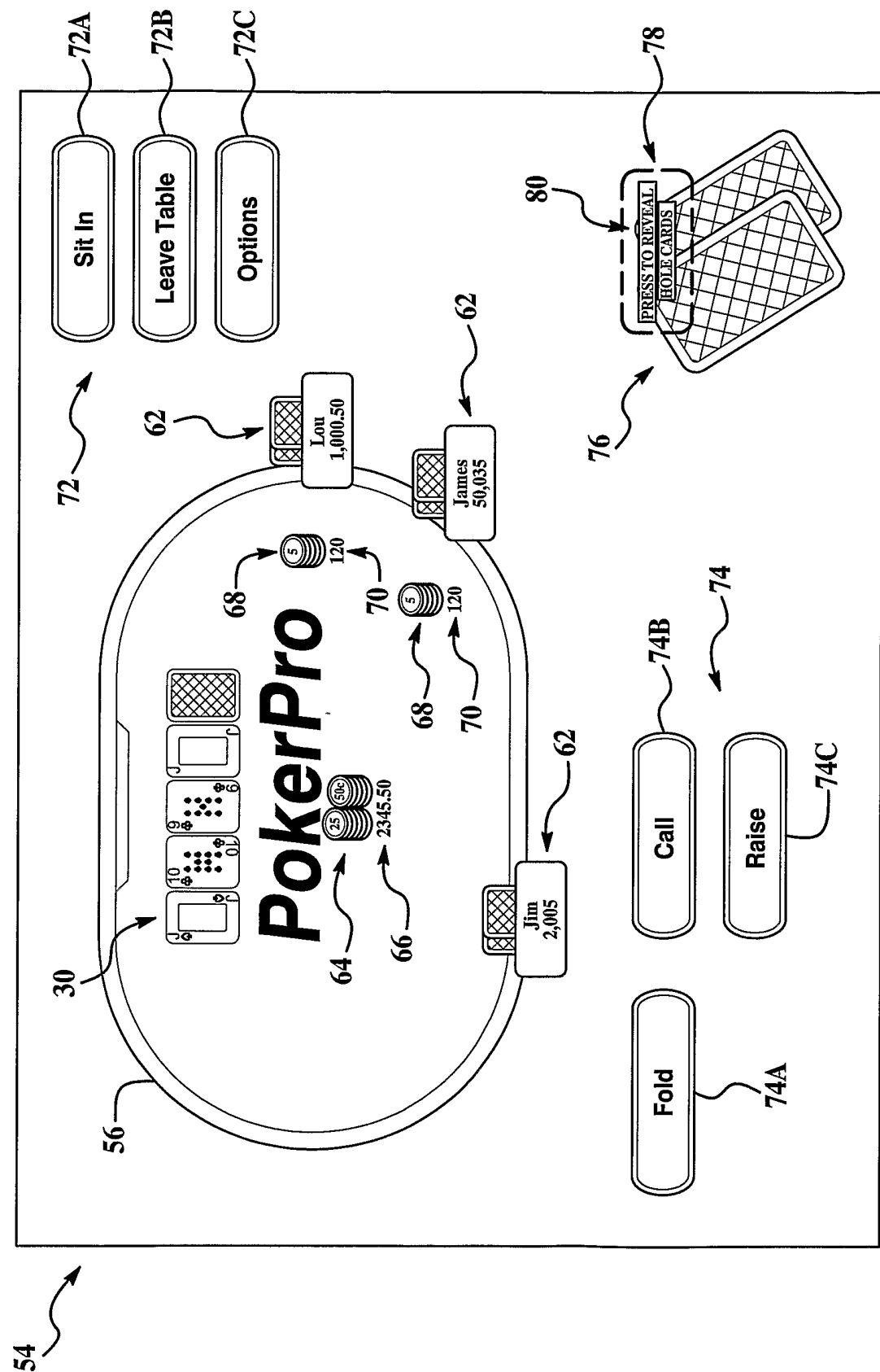


Figure 5

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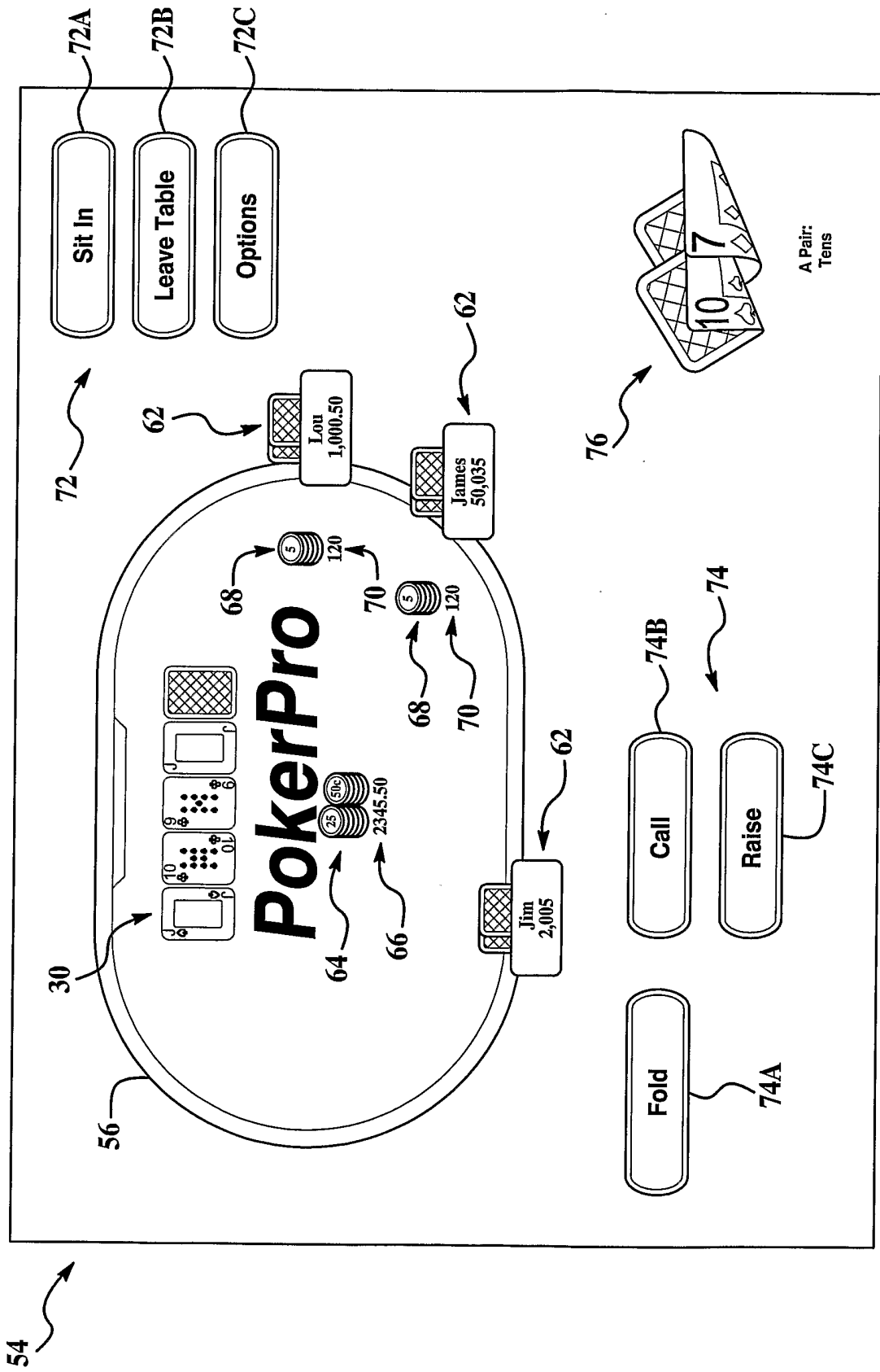
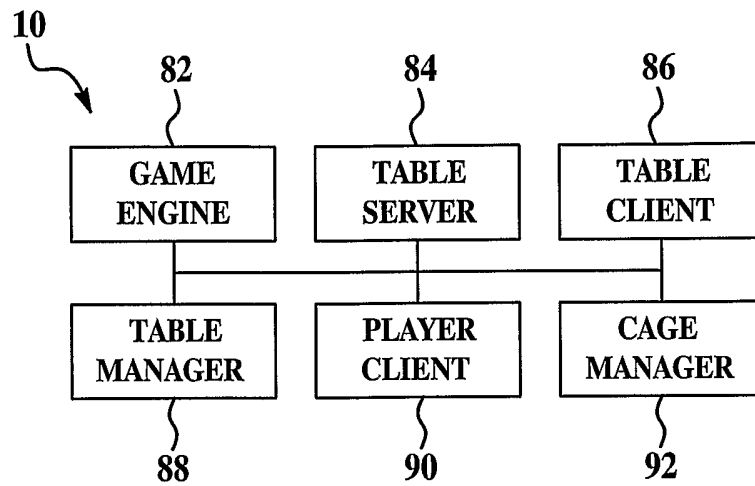
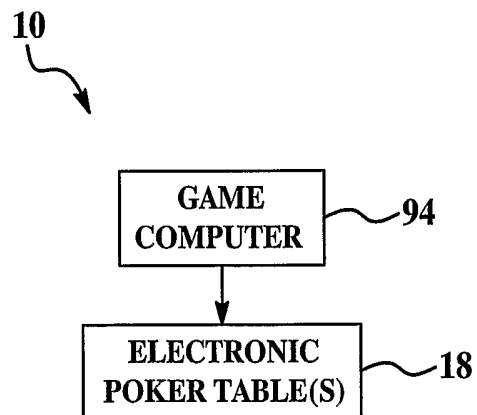
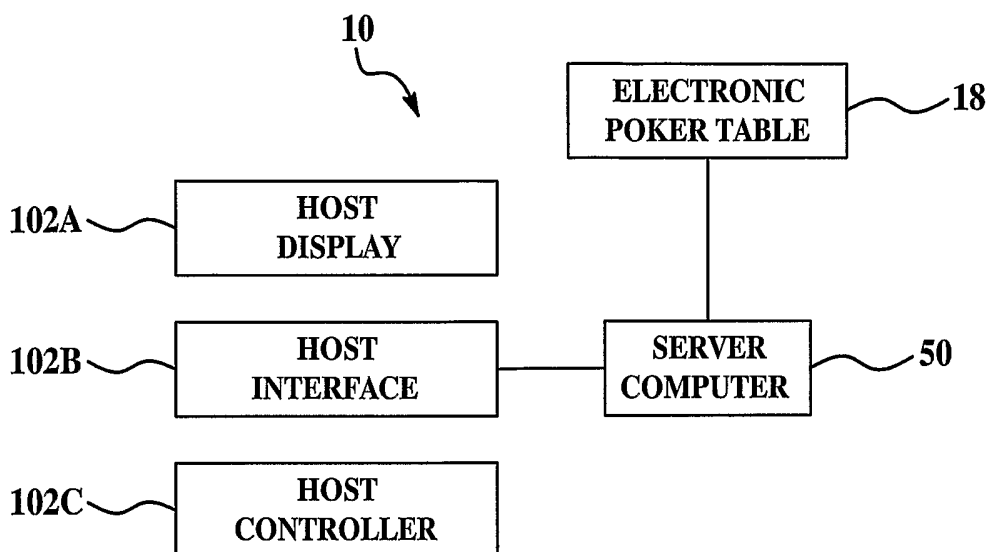
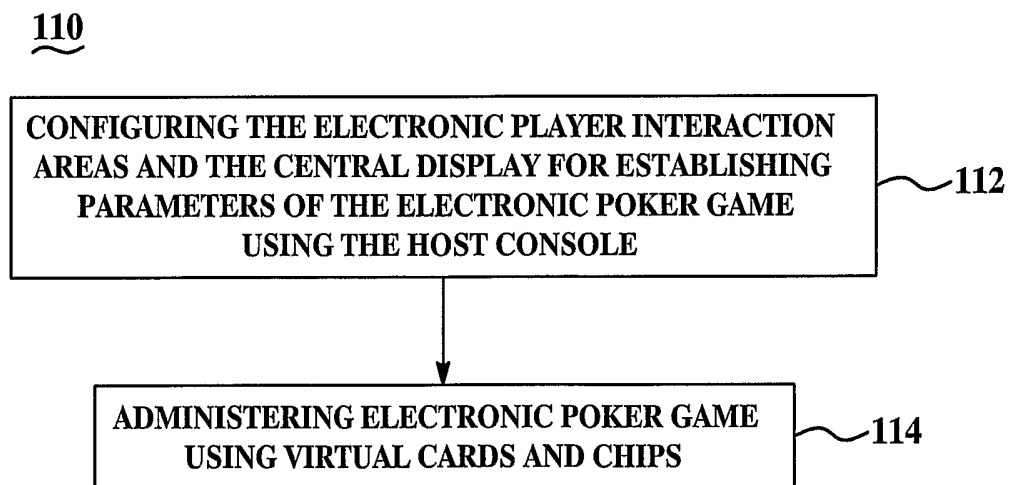


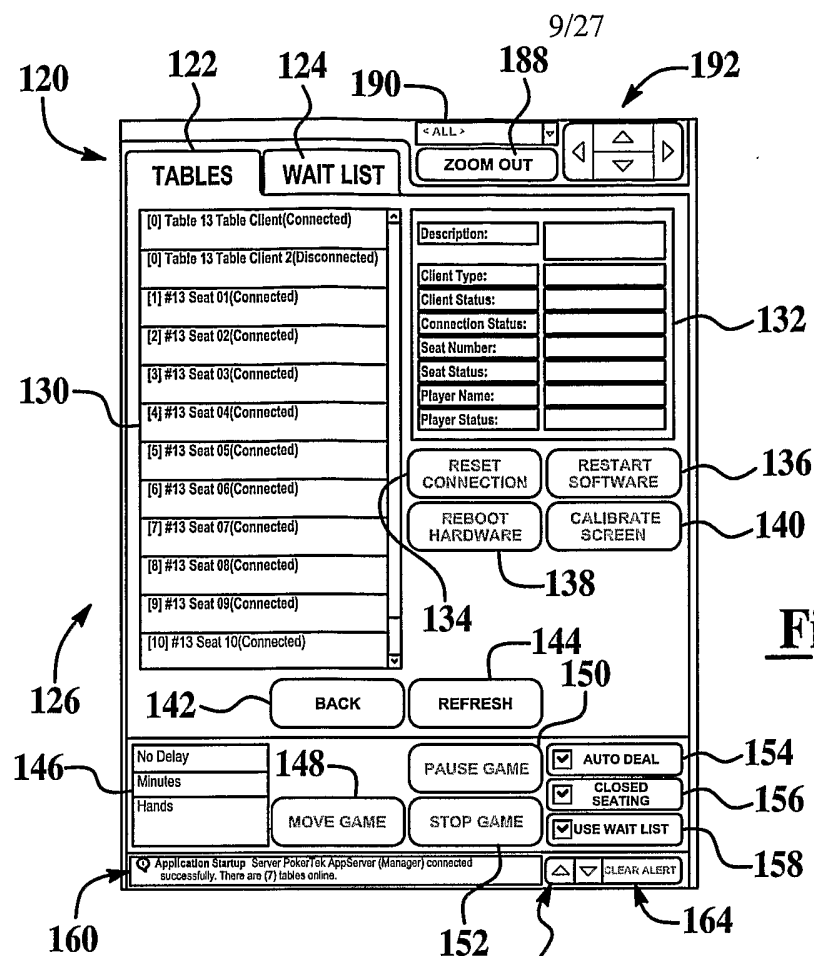
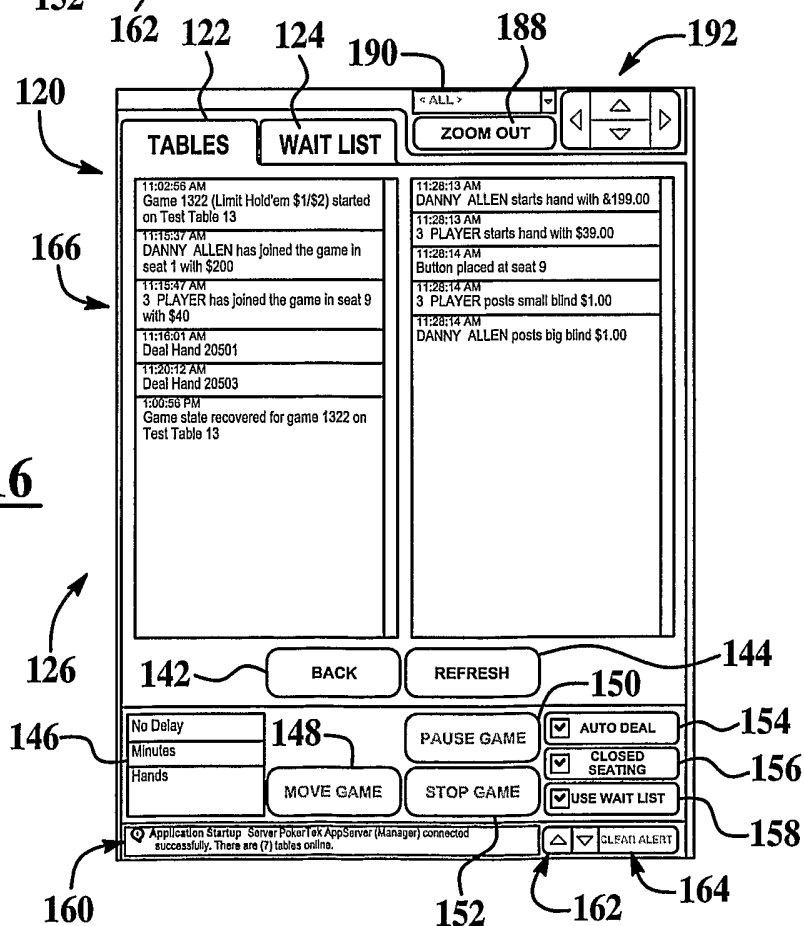
Figure 6

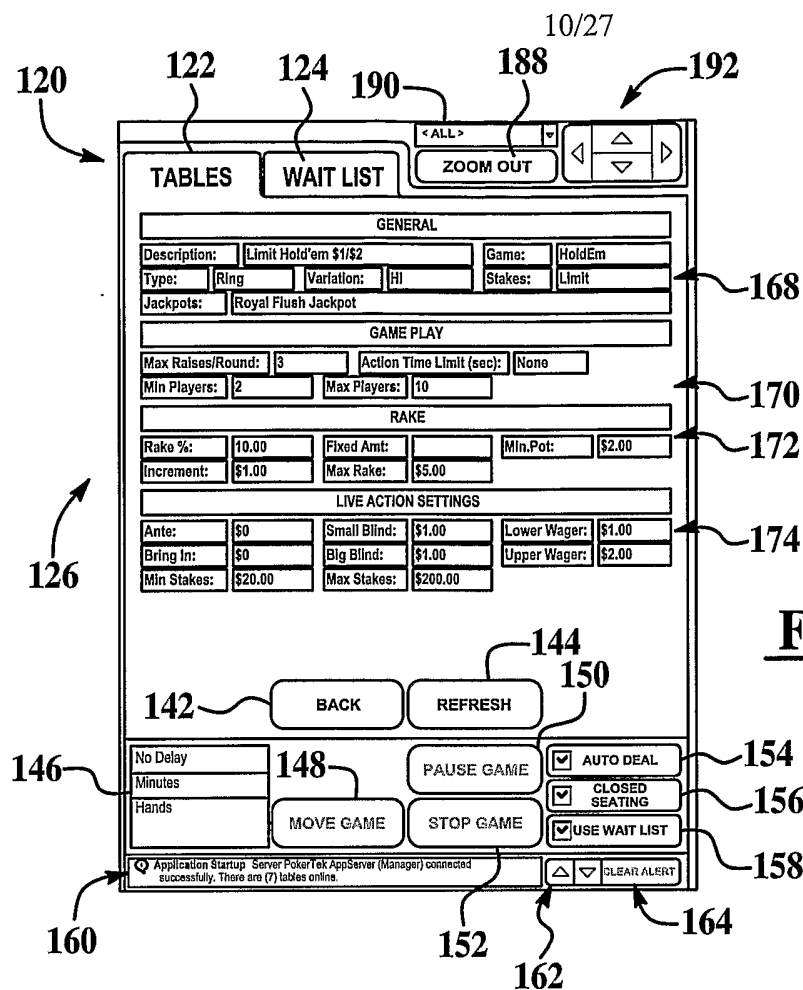
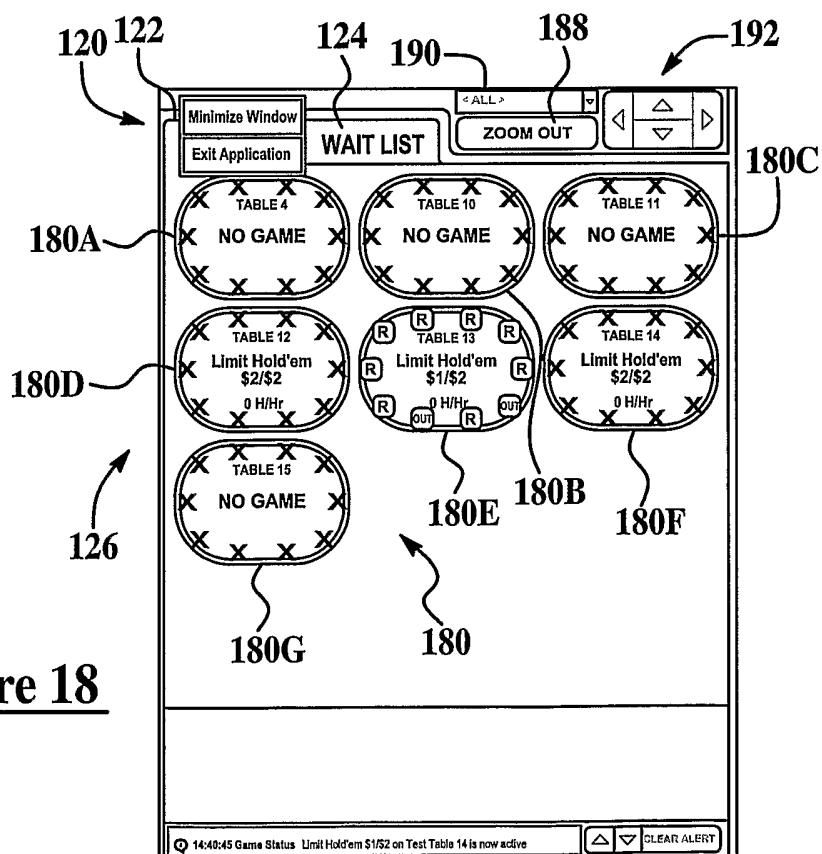
7/27

Figure 11Figure 12

8/27

Figure 13Figure 14

**Figure 15****Figure 16**

**Figure 17****Figure 18**

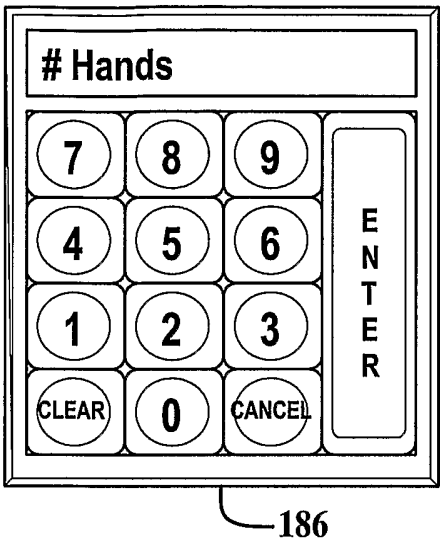


Figure 19

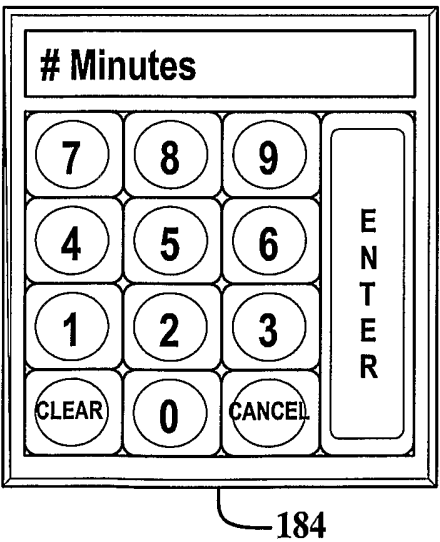
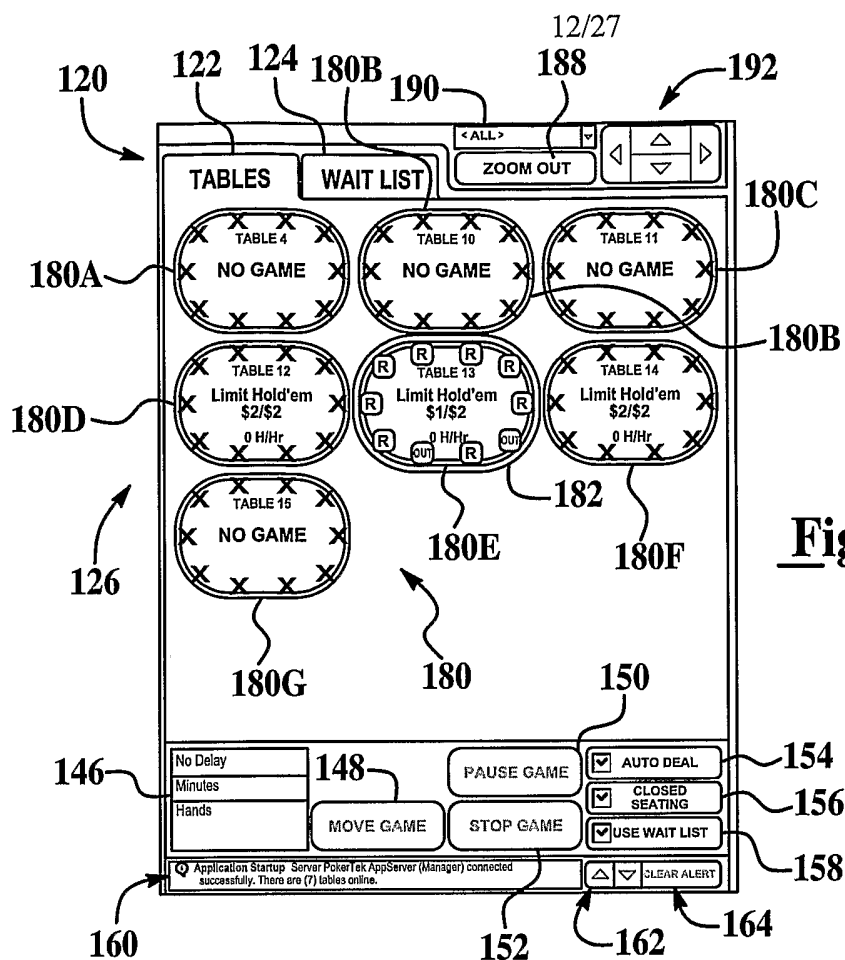
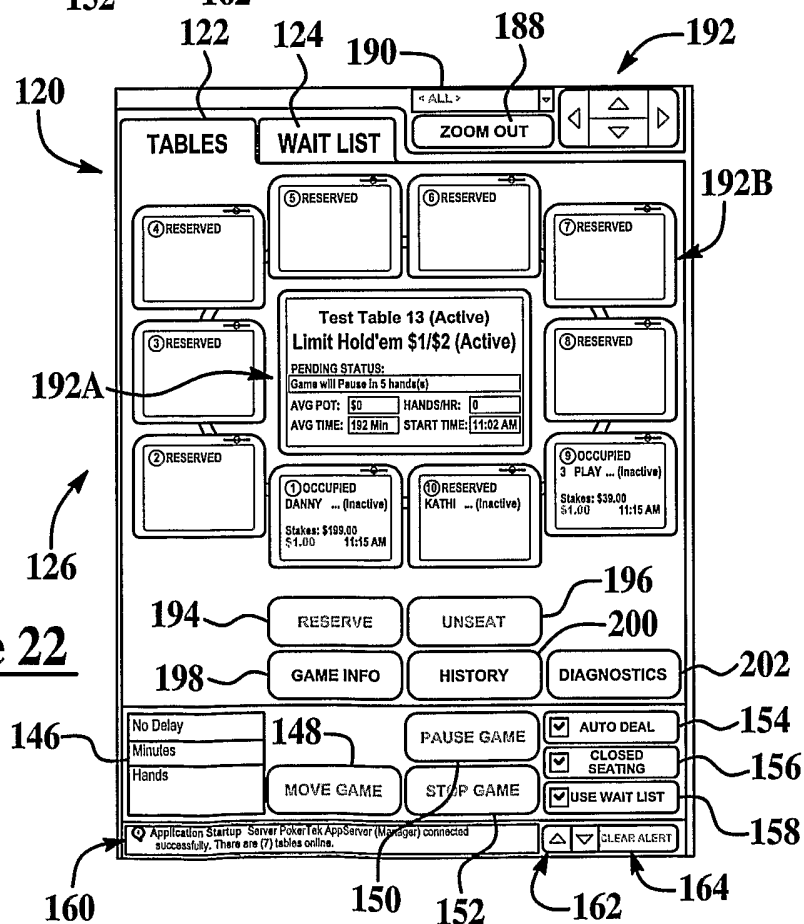


Figure 20

**Figure 21****Figure 22**

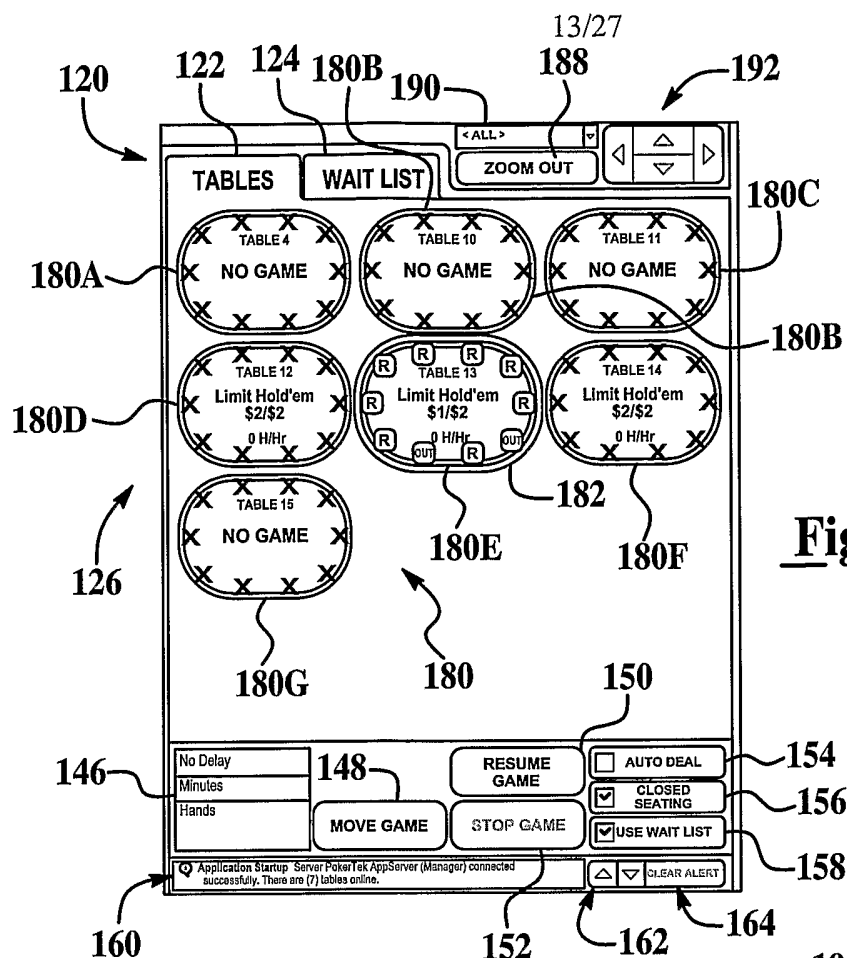
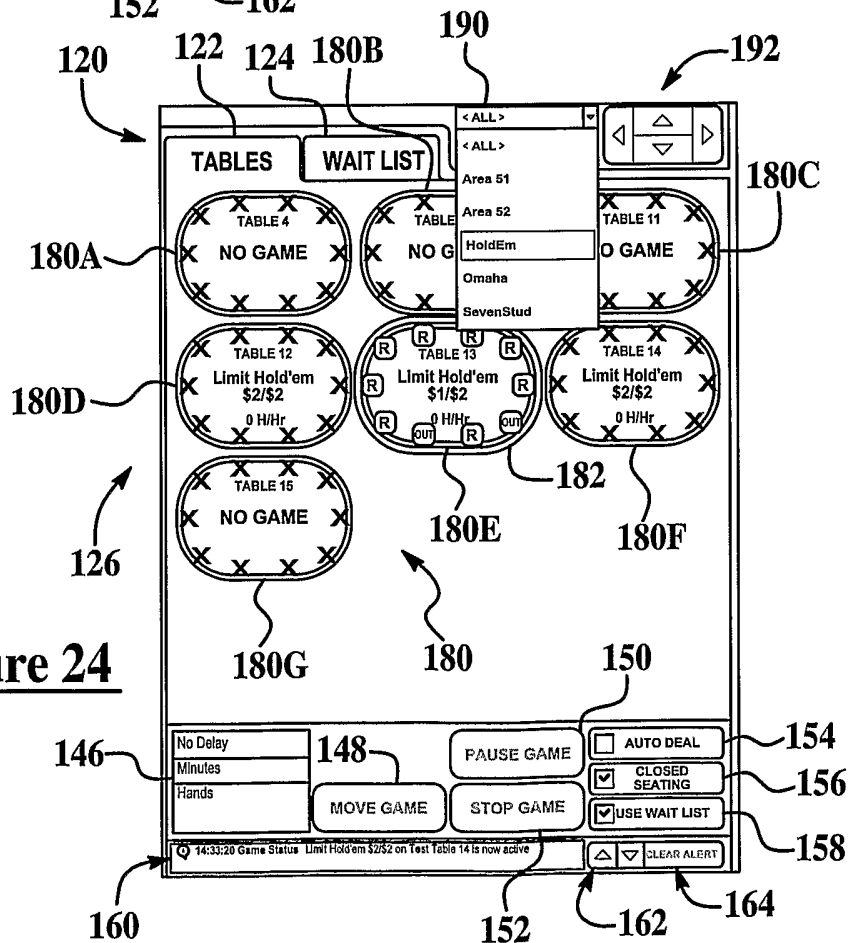
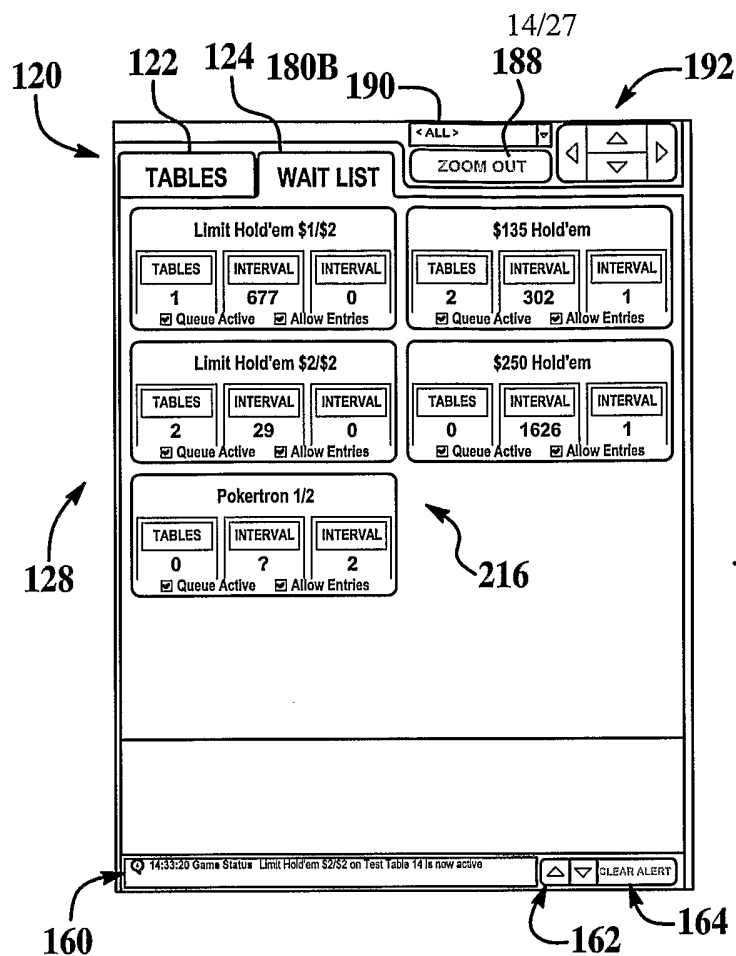
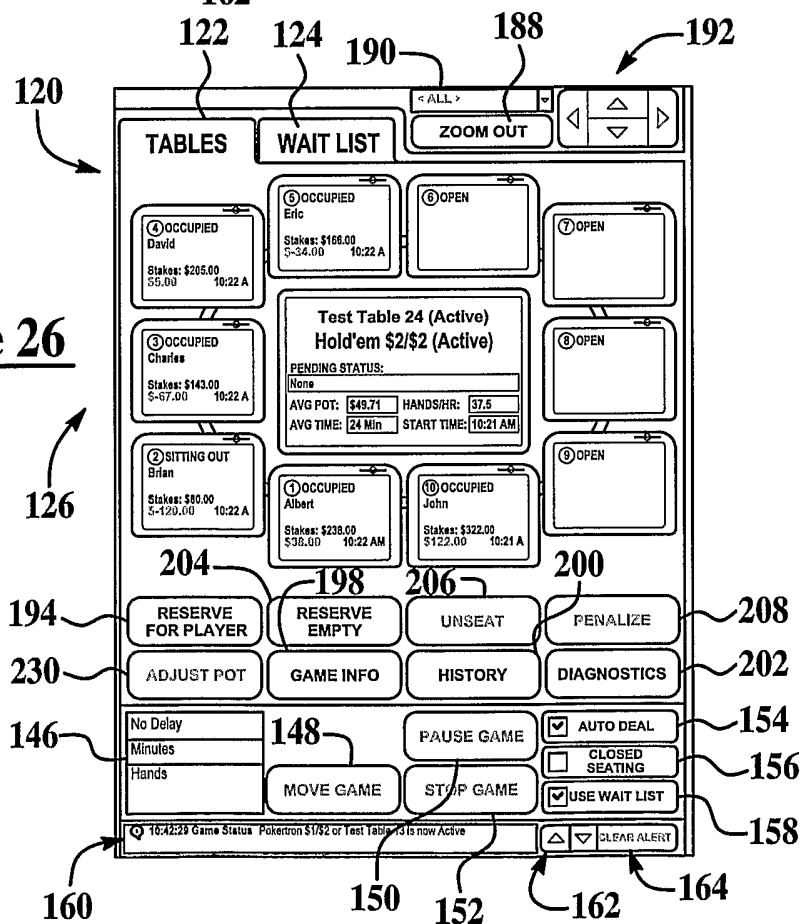


Figure 24



Figure 25Figure 26

Account #

|       |   |        |       |
|-------|---|--------|-------|
| 7     | 8 | 9      | ENTER |
| 4     | 5 | 6      |       |
| 1     | 2 | 3      |       |
| CLEAR | 0 | CANCEL |       |

210

Figure 27

Time Limit (Minutes)

|       |   |        |       |
|-------|---|--------|-------|
| 7     | 8 | 9      | ENTER |
| 4     | 5 | 6      |       |
| 1     | 2 | 3      |       |
| CLEAR | 0 | CANCEL |       |

212

Figure 28

120

Tournament Chop

|  |                                                         |                                                 |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|  | <div>5 %4.8<br/>16 PLAYER<br/>\$16 + 26</div>           |                                                 |
|  | <div>TOTAL PAYOUT<br/>\$327<br/>REMAINING<br/>\$0</div> |                                                 |
|  | <div>1 %10.7<br/>19 PLAYER<br/>\$35 + 26</div>          | <div>9 %84.5<br/>13 PLAYER<br/>\$276 + 26</div> |

0

|       |   |        |       |
|-------|---|--------|-------|
| 7     | 8 | 9      | ENTER |
| 4     | 5 | 6      |       |
| 1     | 2 | 3      |       |
| CLEAR | 0 | CANCEL |       |

☐ SPLIT MANUALLY

☐ SPLIT EVEN

☒ SPLIT BY TABLESTAKES

☒ REFUND RAKE

CANCEL

STOP & CHOP NOW

222

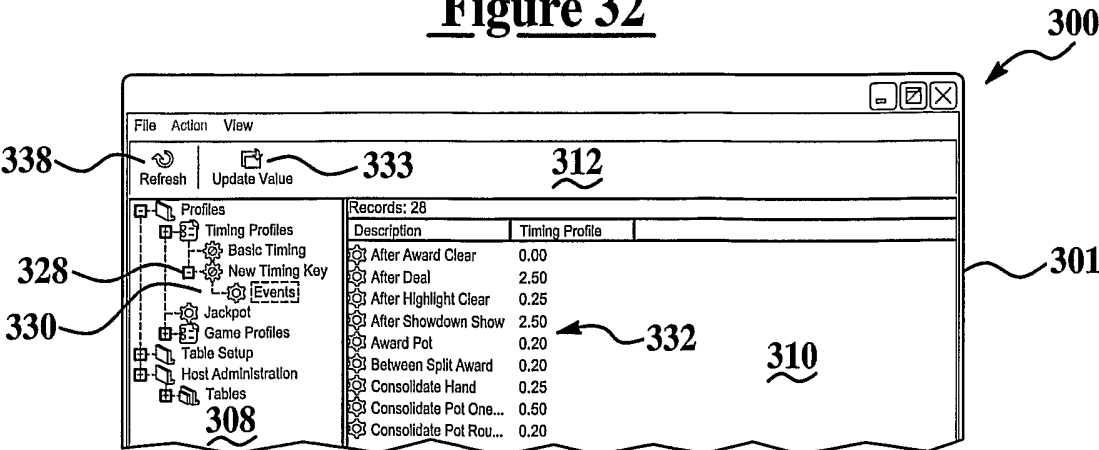
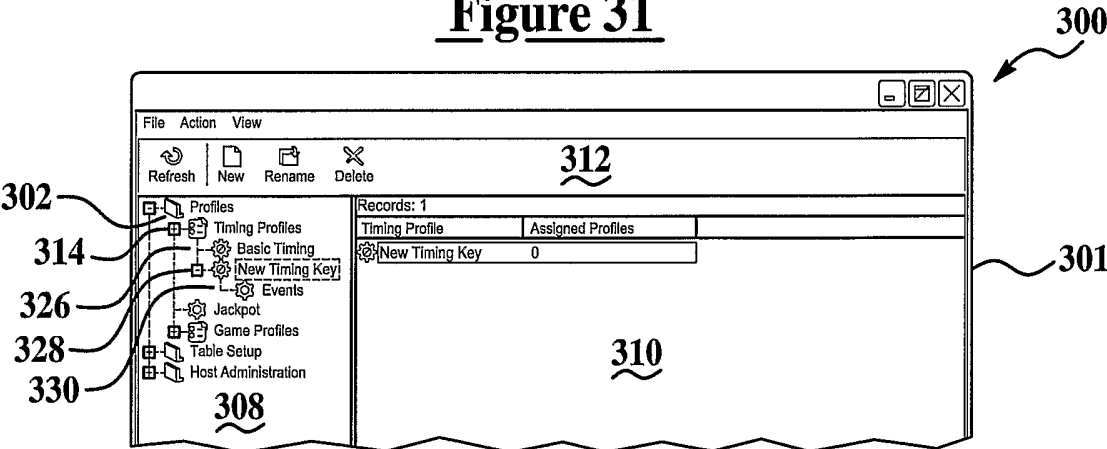
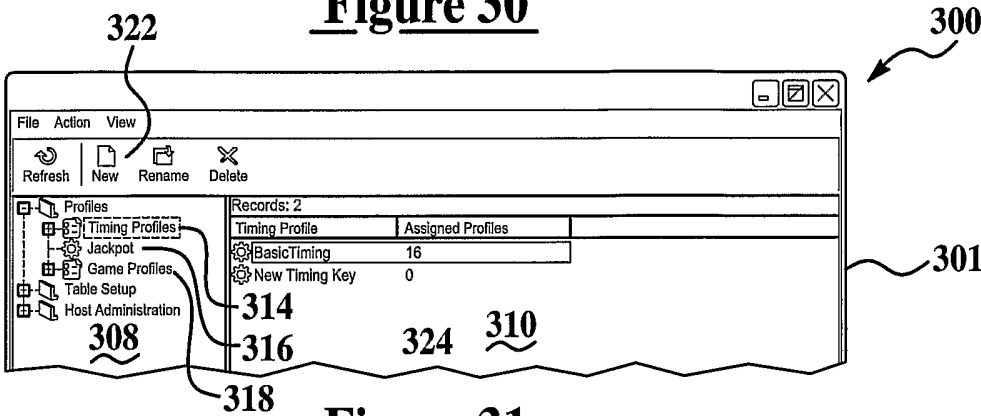
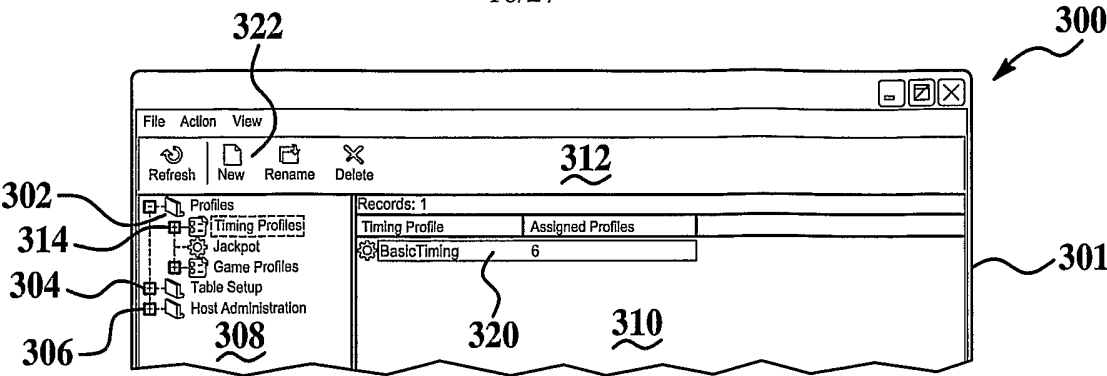
225

226

220

224

Figure 29



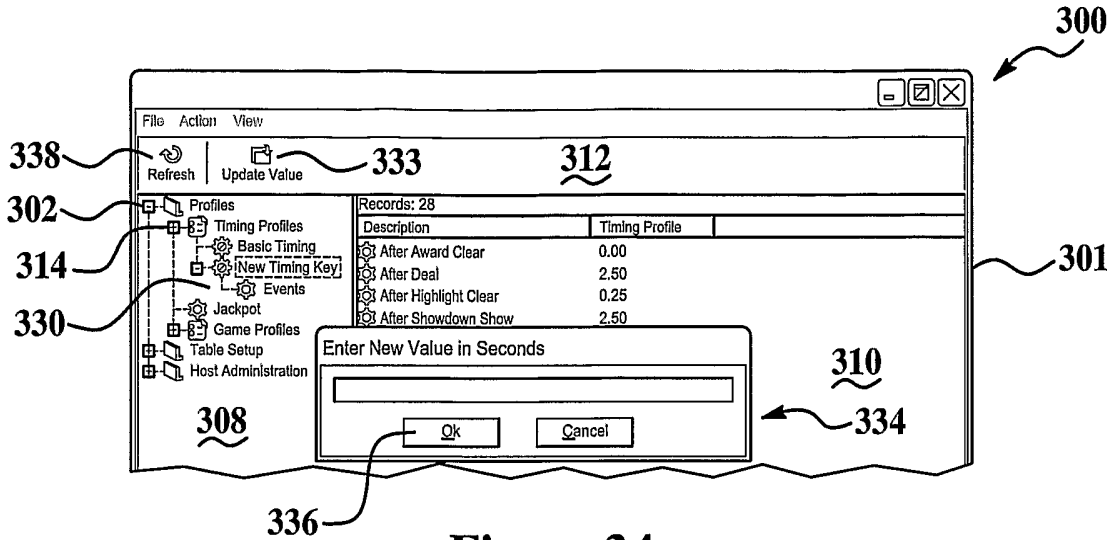


Figure 34

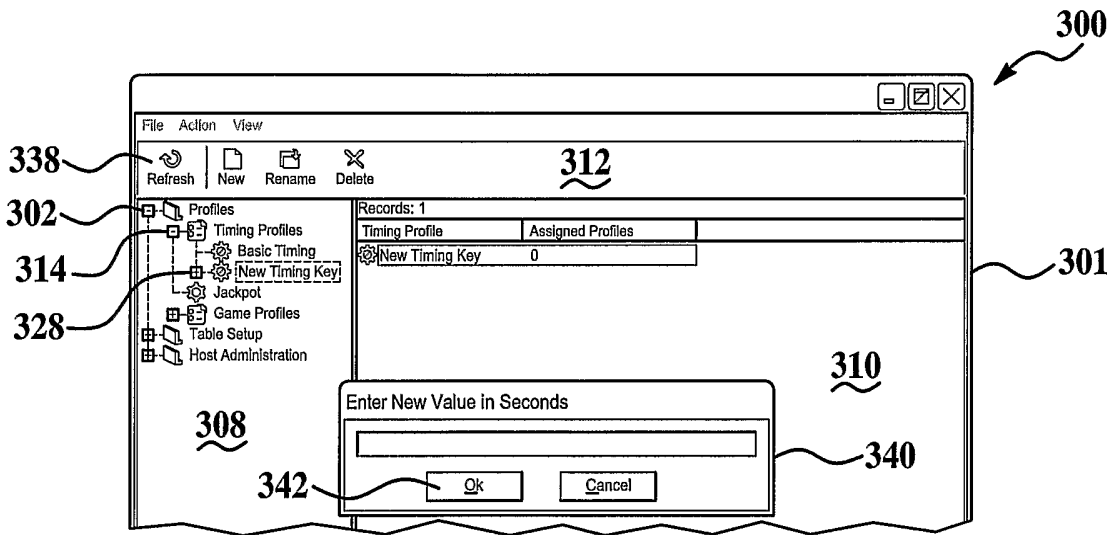


Figure 35

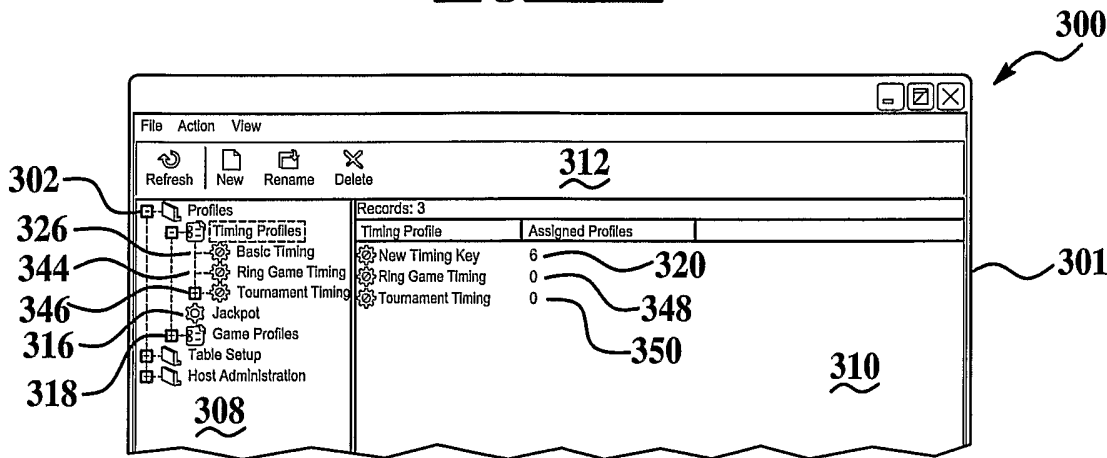


Figure 36

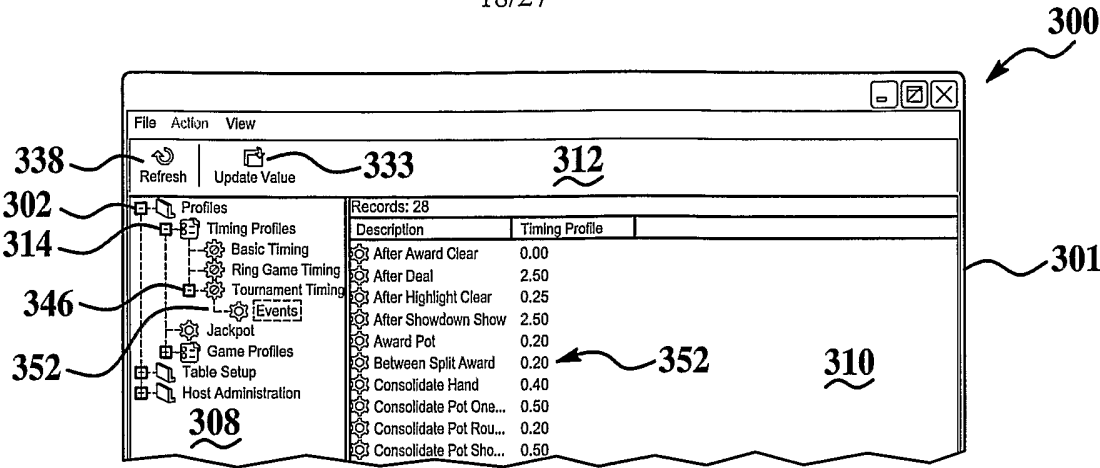


Figure 37

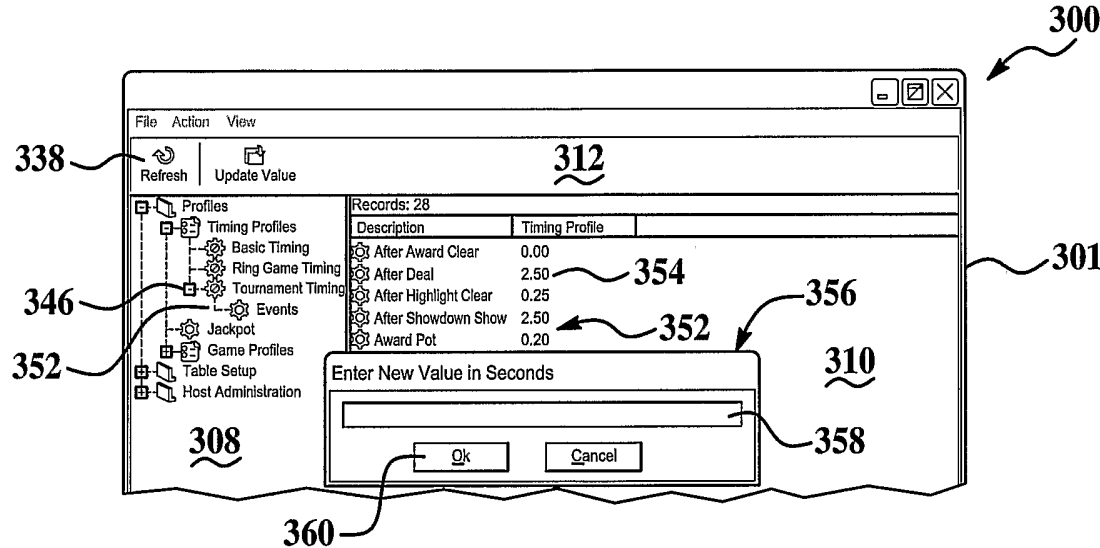


Figure 38

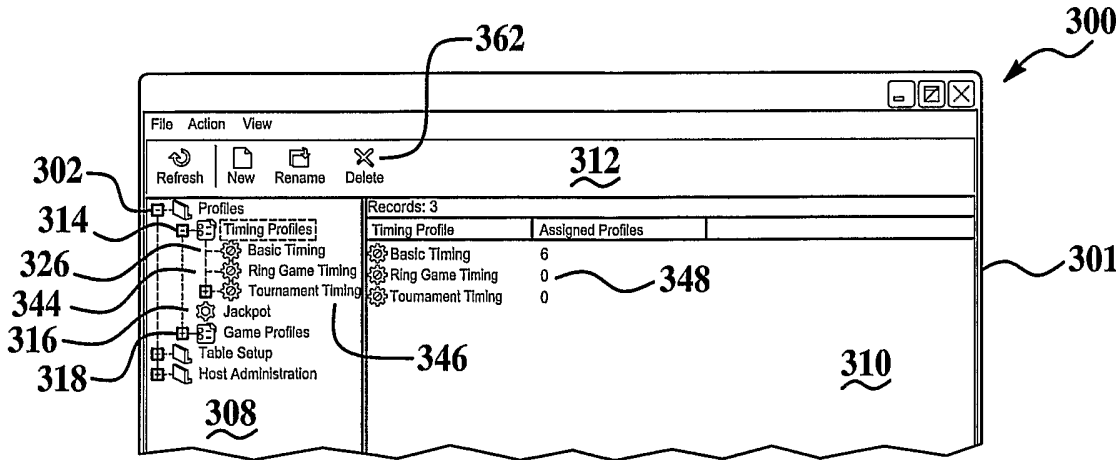
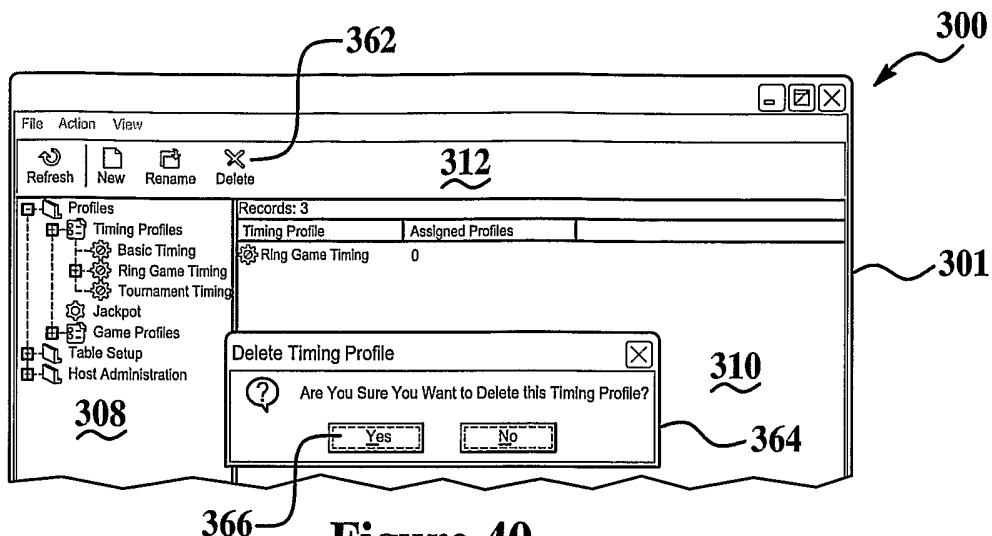
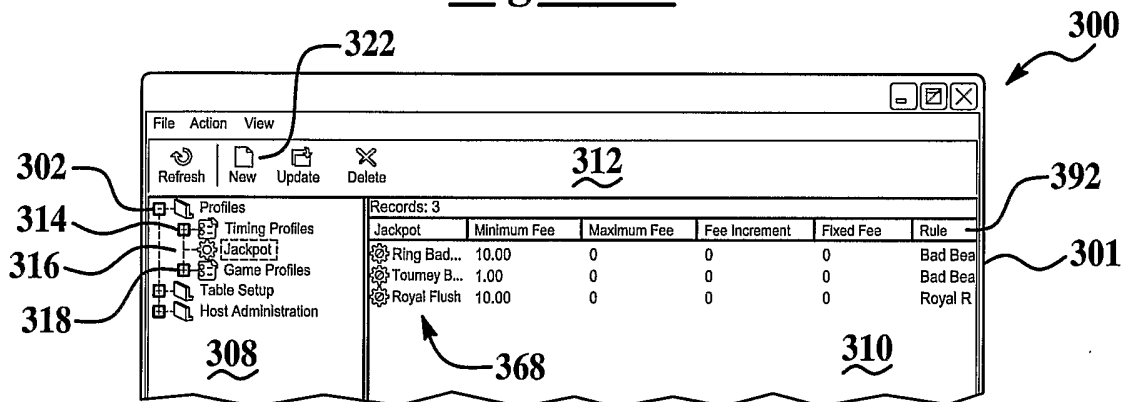


Figure 38

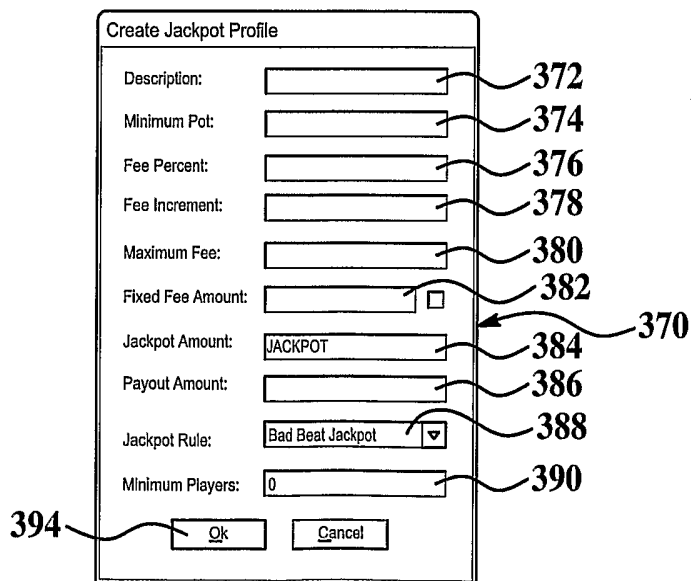
19/27



**Figure 40**



**Figure 41**



**Figure 42**

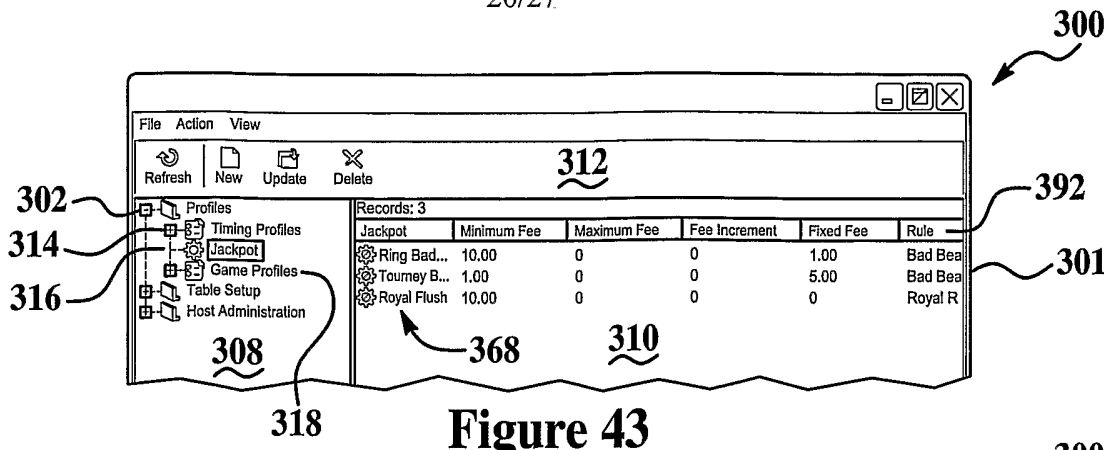


Figure 43

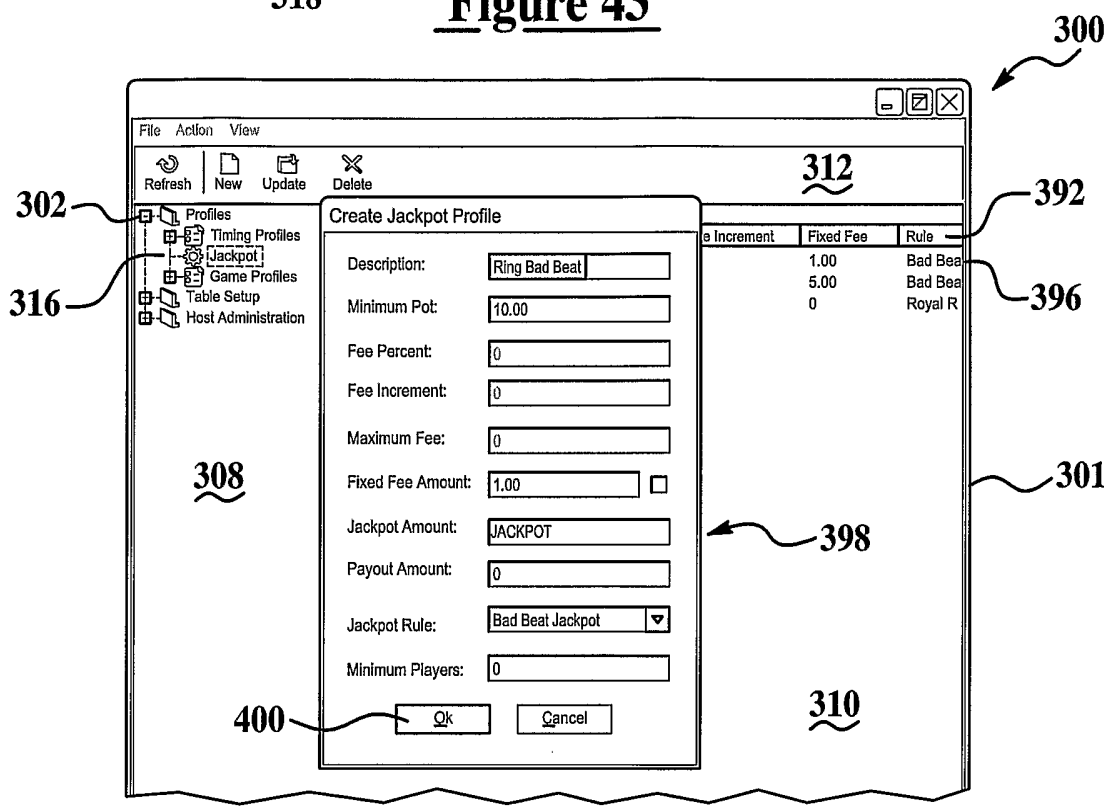


Figure 44

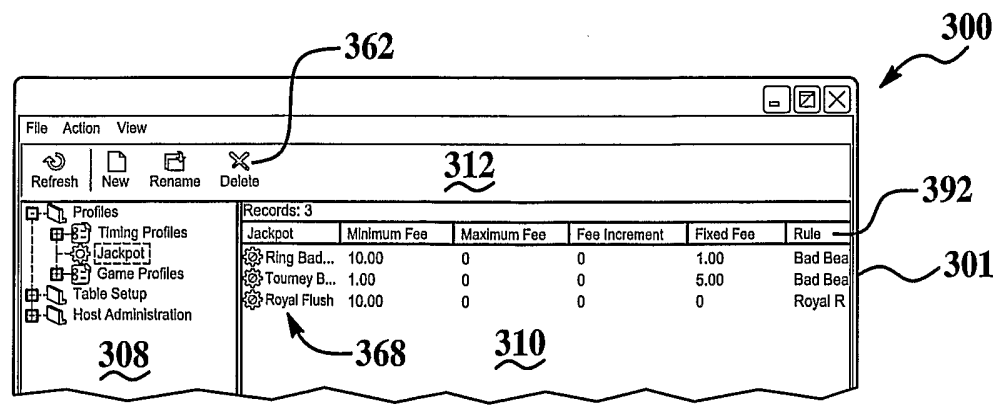
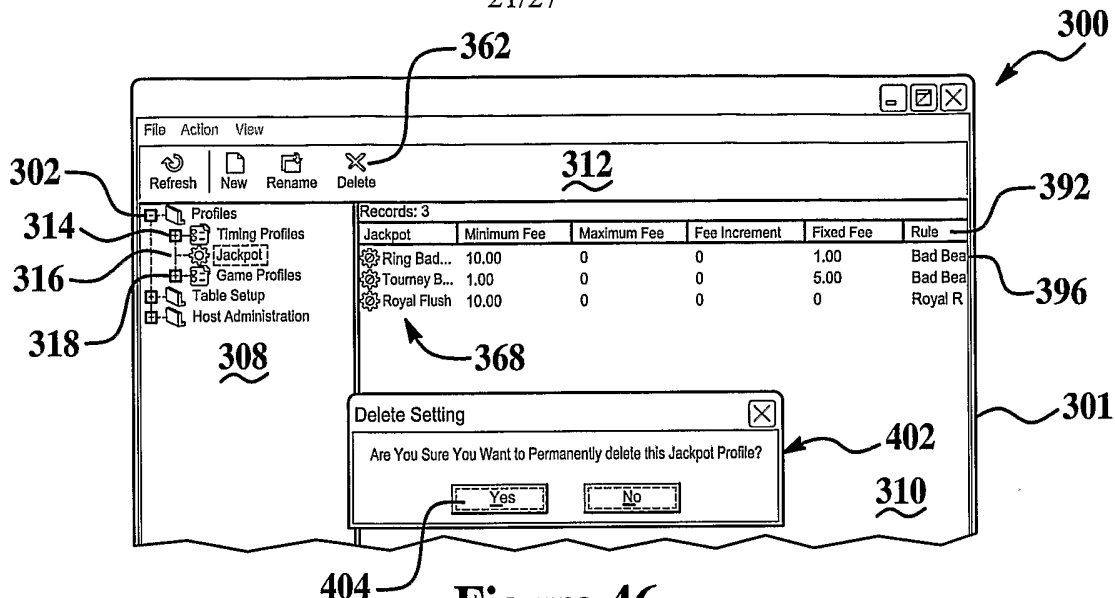
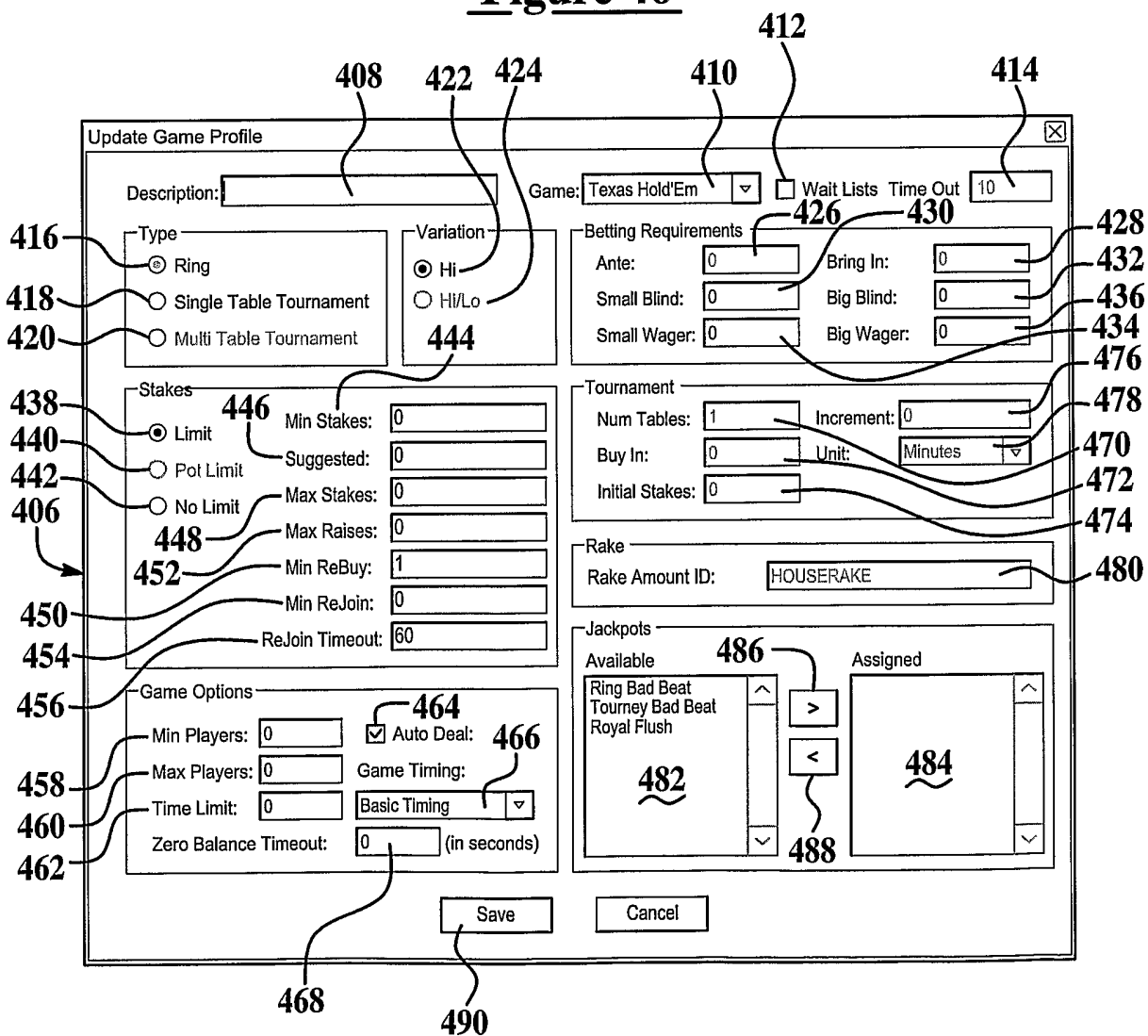
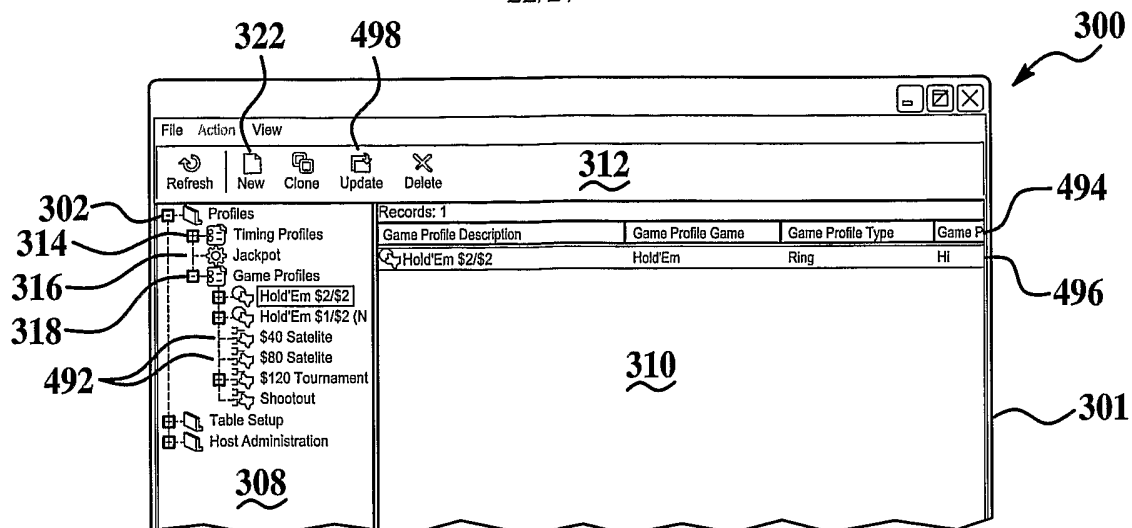


Figure 45

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**Figure 46****Figure 47**

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**Figure 48**
**Figure 49**

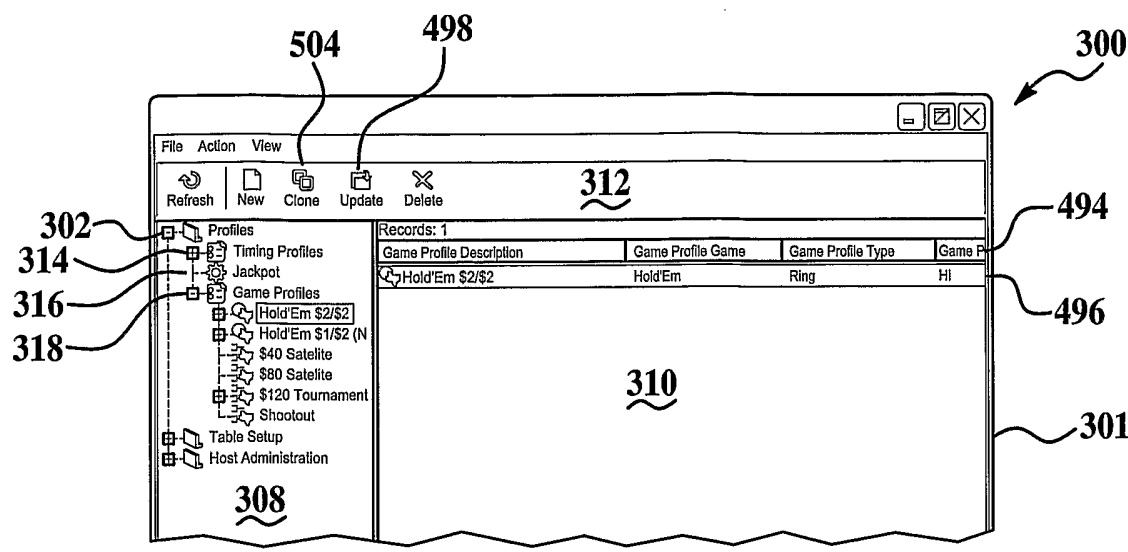


Figure 50

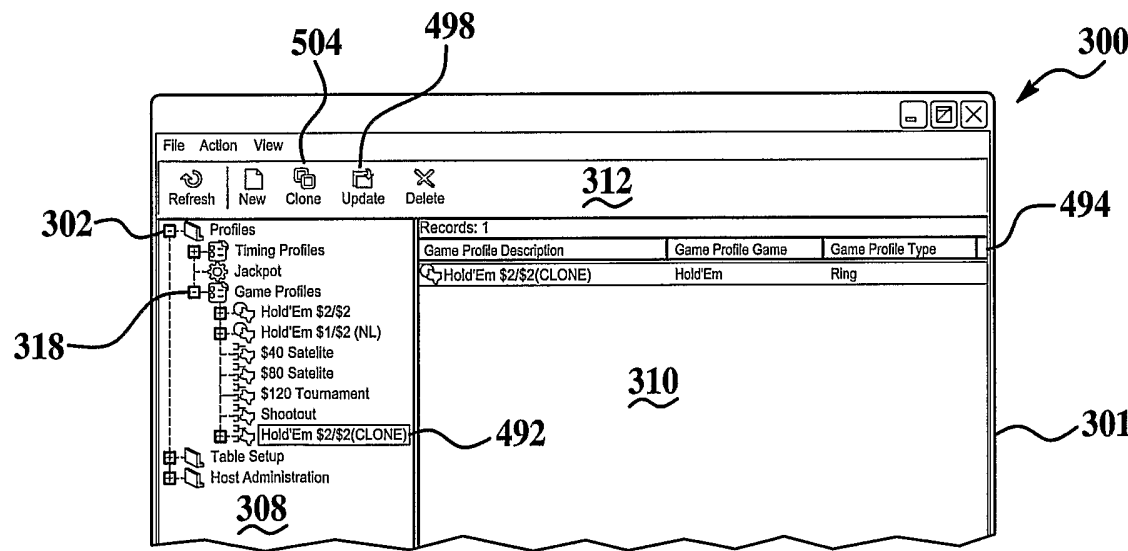


Figure 51

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500

408

Update Game Profile ✕

Description:  Game:  ☐ Wait Lists Time Out

Type

☒ Ring

☐ Single Table Tournament

☐ Multi Table Tournament

Variation

☒ Hi

☐ Hi/Lo

Betting Requirements

Ante:  Bring In:

Small Blind:  Big Blind:

Small Wager:  Big Wager:

Stakes

☒ Limit Min Stakes:

☐ Pot Limit Suggested:

☐ No Limit Max Stakes:

Max Raises:

Min ReBuy:

Min ReJoin:

ReJoin Timeout:

Tournament

Num Tables:  Increment:

Buy In:  Unit:

Initial Stakes:

Game Options

Min Players:  ☒ Auto Deal:

Max Players:  Game Timing:

Time Limit:

Zero Balance Timeout:  (in seconds)

Rake

Rake Amount ID:

Jackpots

Available

Ring Bad Beat

Tourney Bad Beat

Royal Flush

Assigned

**Figure 52**

300

498

File Action View ☐ ☑ ✕

Refresh New Clone Update Delete

302

Profiles

- Timing Profiles
- Jackpot
- Game Profiles
  - Hold'Em \$2/\$2
  - Hold'Em \$1/\$2 (NL)
  - \$40 Satellite
  - \$80 Satellite
  - \$120 Tournament
  - Shootout
  - Jackpot Hold'Em \$2/\$2
- Table Setup
- Host Administration

318

308

Records: 1

| Game Profile Description | Game Profile Game | Game Profile Type |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Jackpot Hold'Em \$2/\$2  | Hold'Em           | Ring              |

310

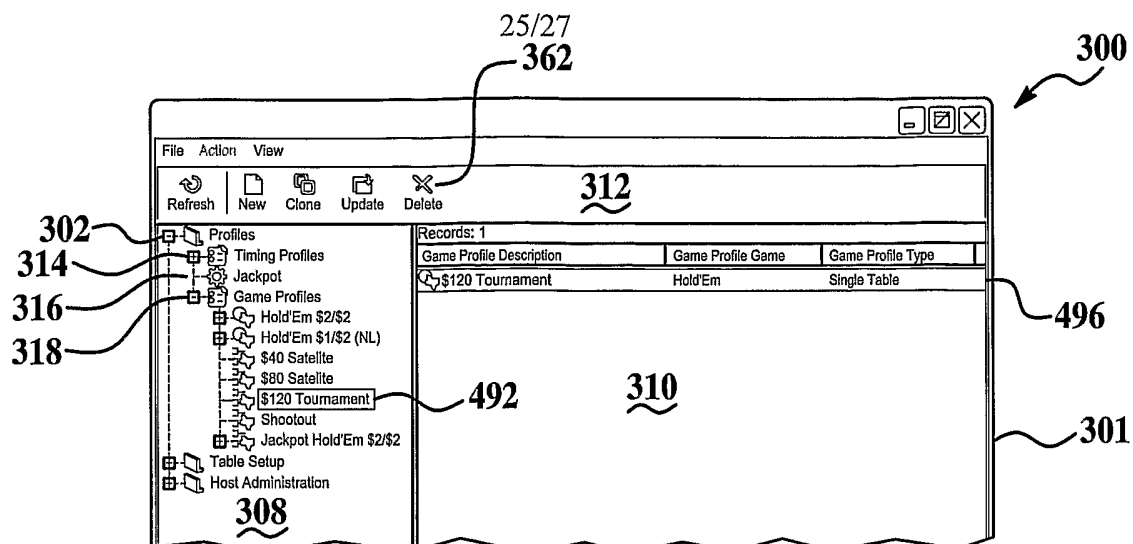
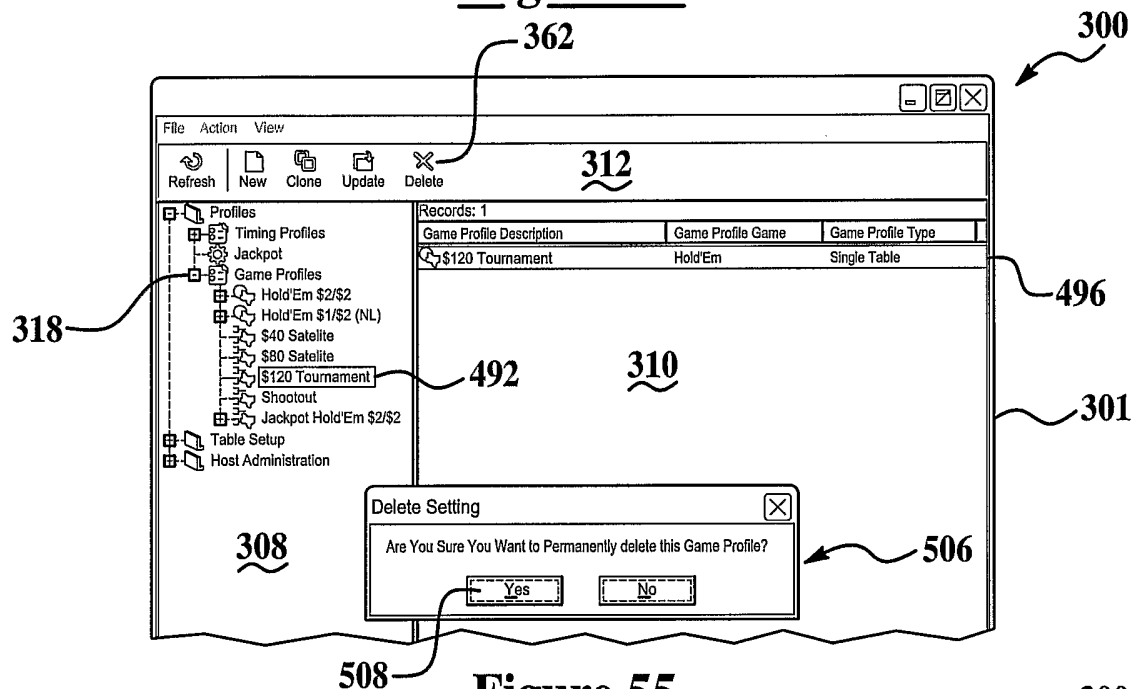
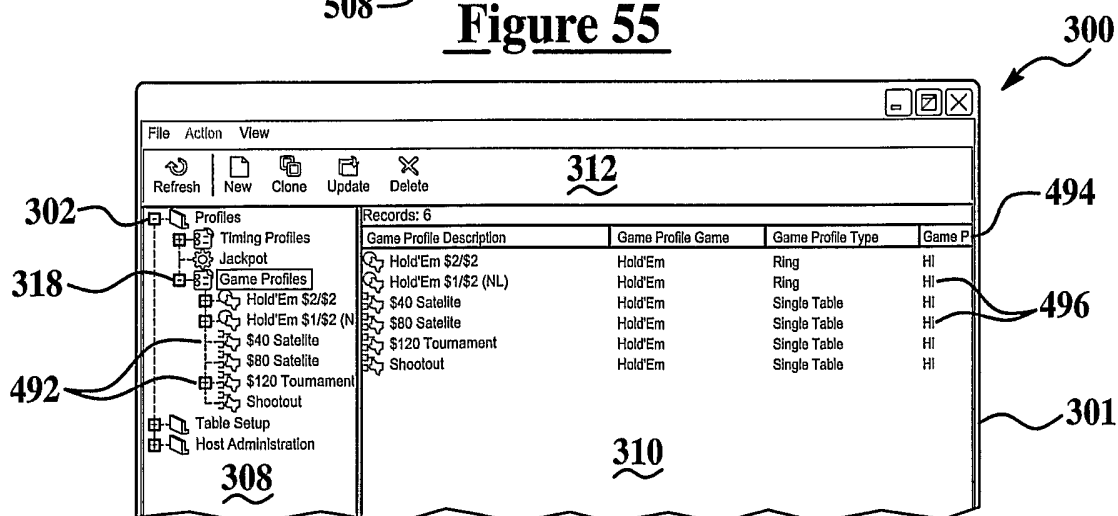
492

494

496

301

**Figure 53**

**Figure 54****Figure 55****Figure 56**

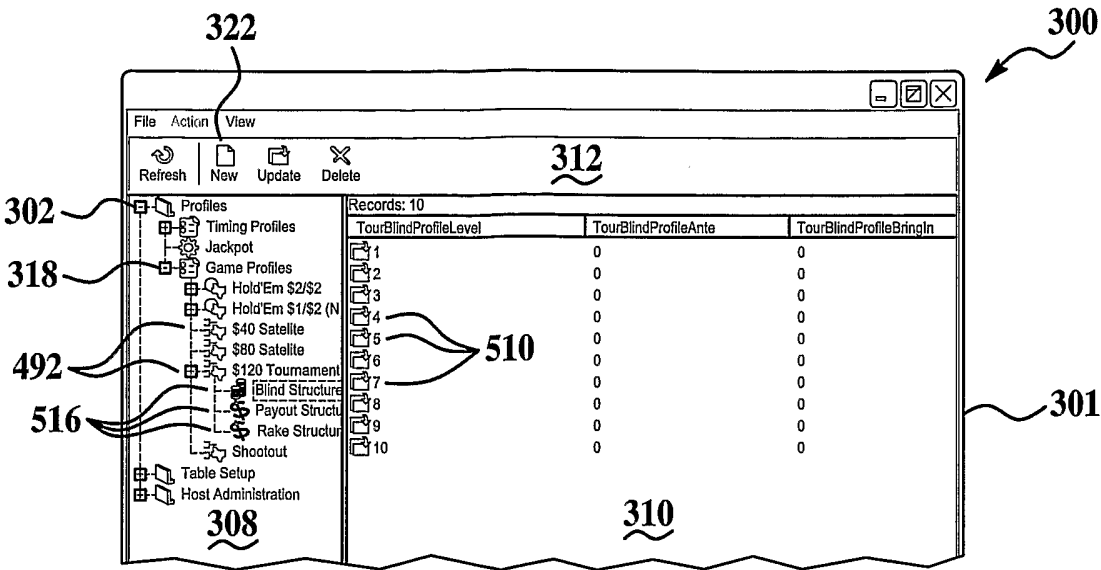


Figure 57

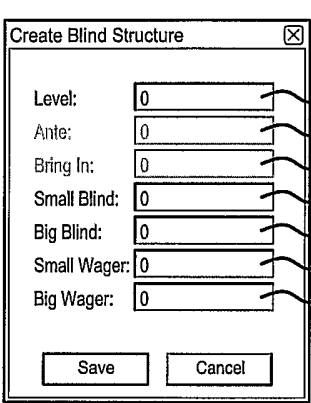


Figure 58

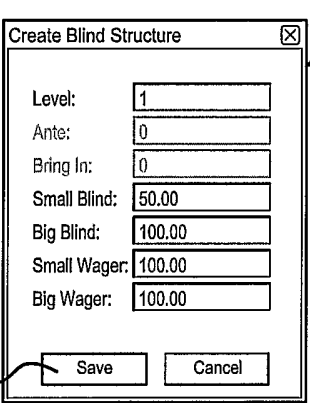


Figure 59

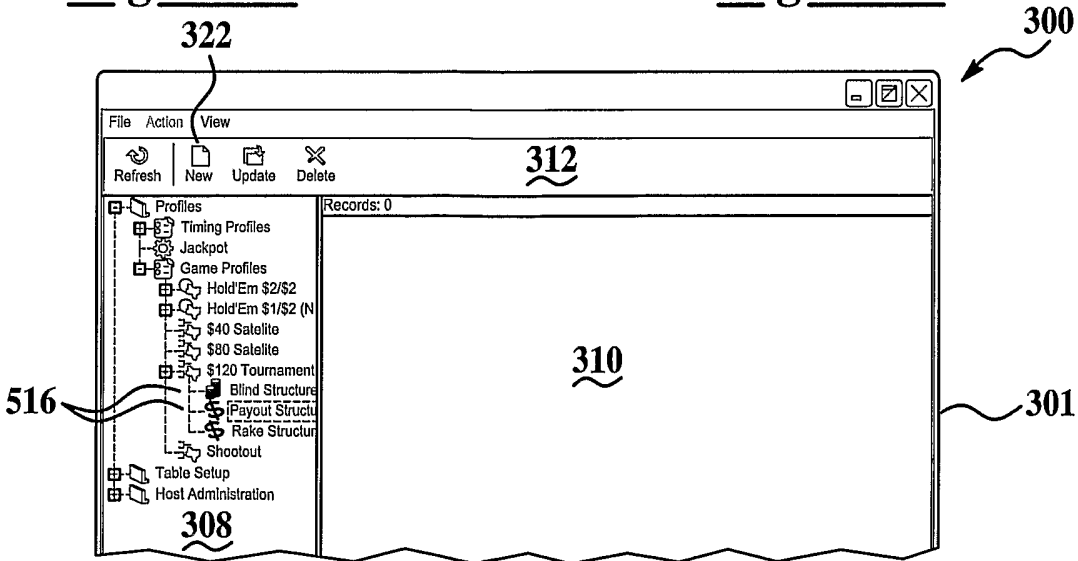


Figure 60

Figure 61 shows a 'Create Payout Structure' dialog box. It contains three input fields: 'Place' with value 0, 'Percent' with value 0, and 'Amount' with value 0. There are radio buttons next to each field, with the 'Percent' radio button selected. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Reference numerals 538, 540, 536, 542, and 544 point to the dialog box, its title bar, the radio buttons, the buttons, and the dialog box respectively.

Figure 61

Figure 62 shows a 'Create Payout Structure' dialog box. It contains three input fields: 'Place' with value 1, 'Percent' with value 35, and 'Amount' with value 0. There are radio buttons next to each field, with the 'Percent' radio button selected. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Reference numerals 538, 540, 536, 542, and 544 point to the dialog box, its title bar, the radio buttons, the buttons, and the dialog box respectively.

Figure 62

Figure 63 shows a main application window with a menu bar (File, Action, View), a toolbar (Refresh, New, Clone, Update, Delete), and a tree view on the left (308) containing 'Profiles', 'Timing Profiles', 'Jackpot', 'Game Profiles', 'Hold'em \$2/\$2', 'Hold'em \$1/\$2 (NL)', '\$40 Satellite', '\$80 Satellite', '\$120 Tournament', 'Blind Structure', 'Payout Structure', 'Rake Structure', 'Shootout', 'Table Setup', and 'Host Administration'. The main area (310) displays a table with columns 'Game Profile Description', 'Game Profile Game', 'Game Profile Type', and 'Game P'. A single record is shown: 'Hold'em \$1/\$2 (NL)', 'Hold'em', 'Ring', and 'HI'. Reference numerals 300, 312, 310, 301, and 308 point to the window, its title bar, the main area, the right side, and the tree view respectively.

Figure 63

Figure 64 shows a 'Create Rake Structure' dialog box. It contains two input fields: 'Pot Size' with value 0 and 'Rake Amount' with value 0. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Reference numerals 514, 550, 548, 552, and 554 point to the dialog box, its title bar, the input fields, the buttons, and the dialog box respectively.

Figure 64

Figure 65 shows a 'Create Rake Structure' dialog box. It contains two input fields: 'Pot Size' with value 55.50 and 'Rake Amount' with value 6.00. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons. Reference numerals 514, 550, 548, 552, and 554 point to the dialog box, its title bar, the input fields, the buttons, and the dialog box respectively.

Figure 65