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(54) **GAMES HAVING BINGO AND POKER LIKE ELEMENTS AND METHODS OF PLAYING THEREFOR**

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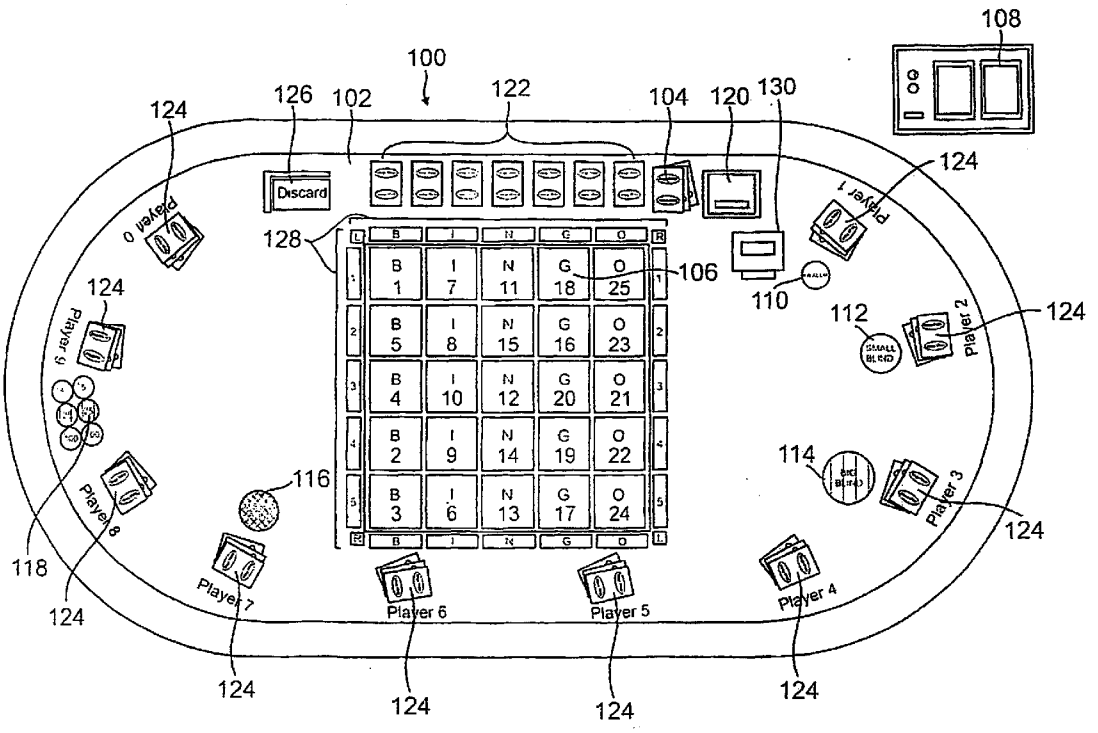
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of playing a bingo-poker-like game, including the steps of: providing a plurality of game elements to the participating player to form a player hand, wherein each game element is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game element including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game elements are capable of being arranged into a plurality of unique subsets of game elements by features within the discrete category of features; comparing the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria, wherein the predefined criteria relates to assigning a player hand ranking based on the features associated with the game elements forming the player hand and identifies a penalty condition associated with at least one feature of the plurality of features for which the player hand is automatically assigned a losing ranking; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to a player hand ranking if the penalty condition is not satisfied by the player hand; and assigning a ranking to the player hand.



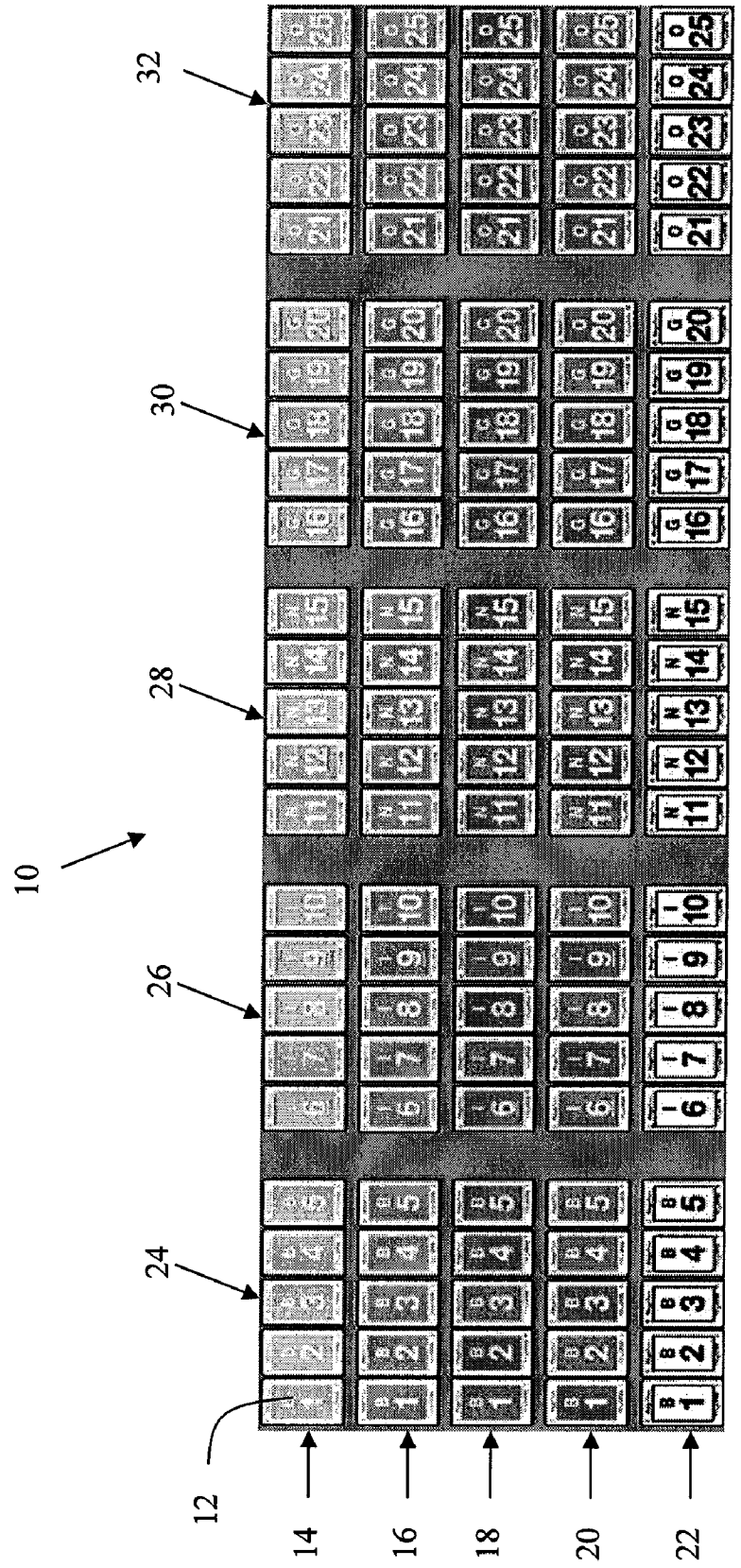


Fig. 1

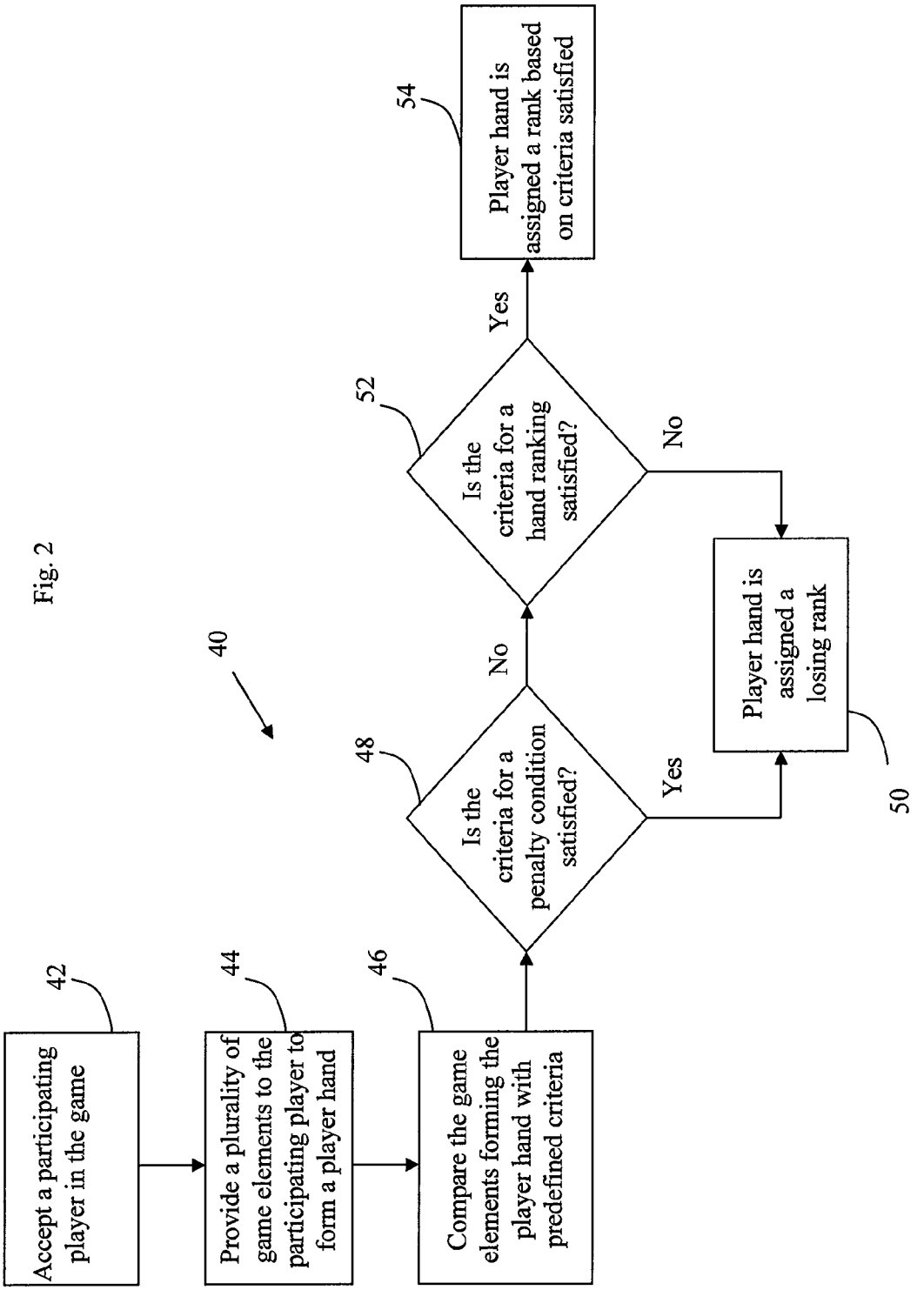

Accept a participating player in the game
42
Provide a plurality of game elements to the participating player to form a player hand
44
Compare the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria
46
Is the criteria for a penalty condition satisfied?
48
Yes
No
Player hand is assigned a losing rank
50
Is the criteria for a hand ranking satisfied?
52
Yes
No
Player hand is assigned a rank based on criteria satisfied
54
40

Fig. 2

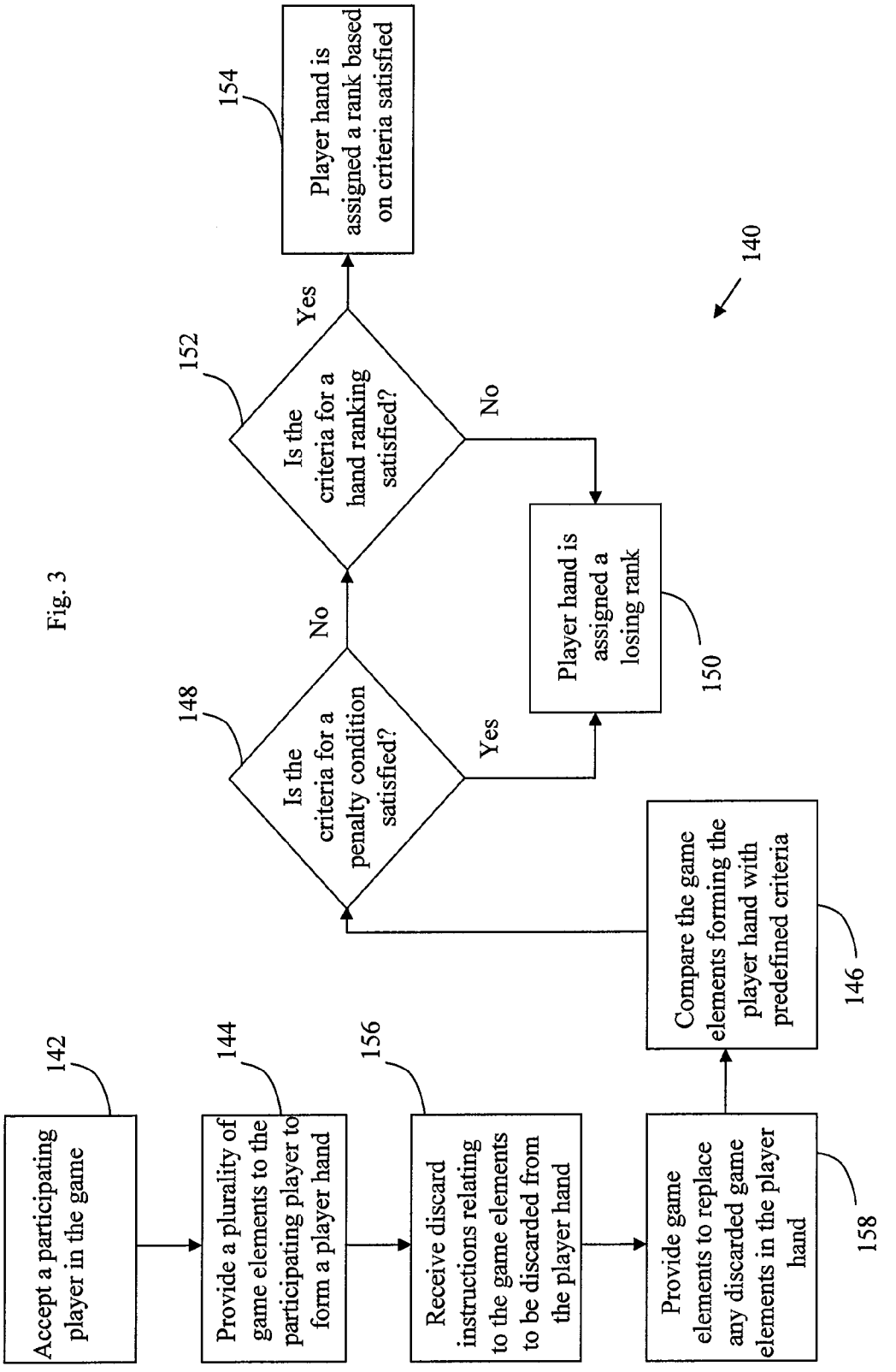

Accept a participating player in the game
142
Provide a plurality of game elements to the participating player to form a player hand
144
Receive discard instructions relating to the game elements to be discarded from the player hand
156
Provide game elements to replace any discarded game elements in the player hand
158
Compare the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria
146
Is the criteria for a penalty condition satisfied?
148
Yes
No
Player hand is assigned a losing rank
150
Is the criteria for a hand ranking satisfied?
152
Yes
No
Player hand is assigned a rank based on criteria satisfied
154
140

Fig. 3

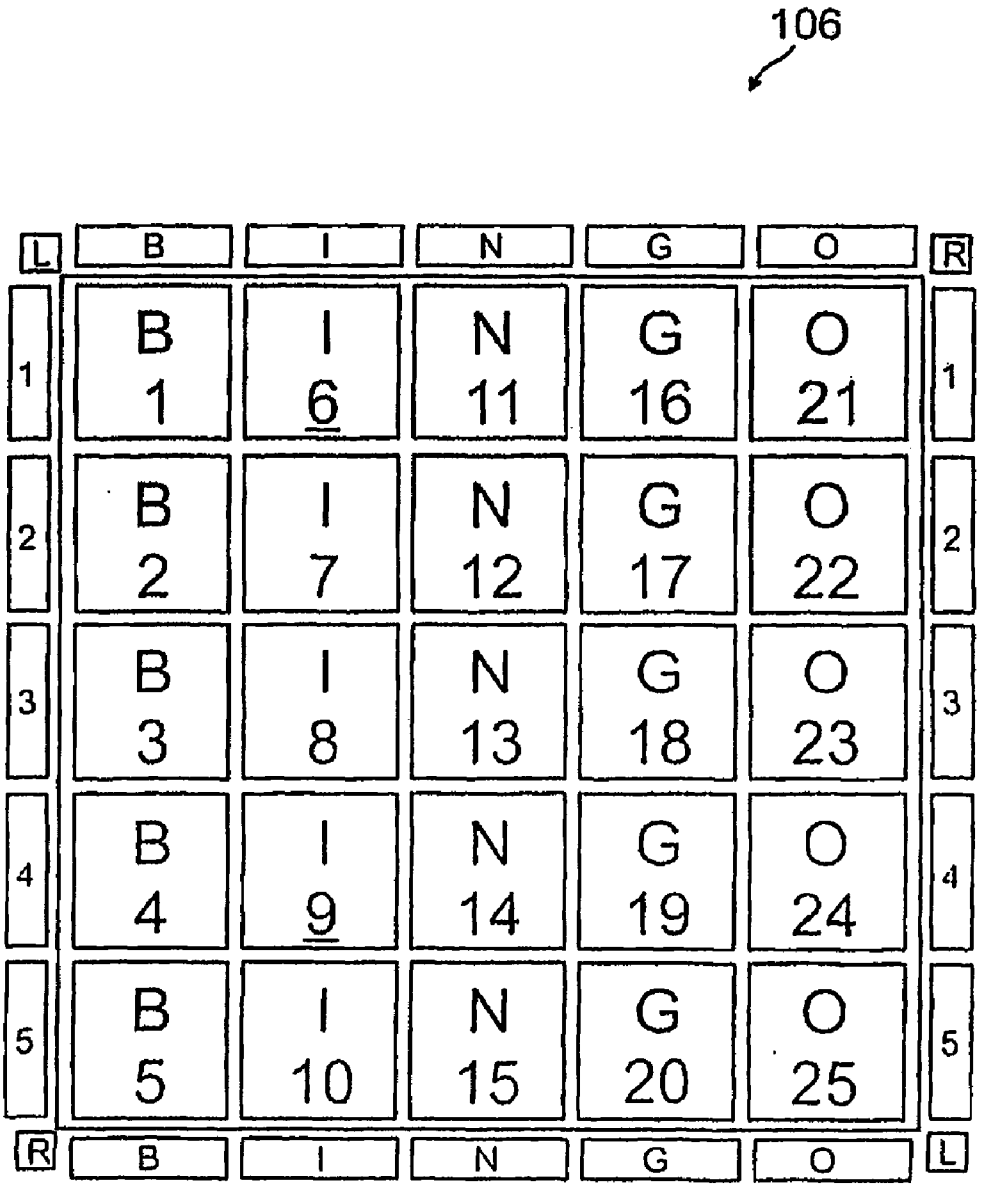

106
L
B
I
N
G
O
R
1
2
3
4
5
B 1
I 6
N 11
G 16
O 21
B 2
I 7
N 12
G 17
O 22
B 3
I 8
N 13
G 18
O 23
B 4
I 9
N 14
G 19
O 24
B 5
I 10
N 15
G 20
O 25

FIG. 4

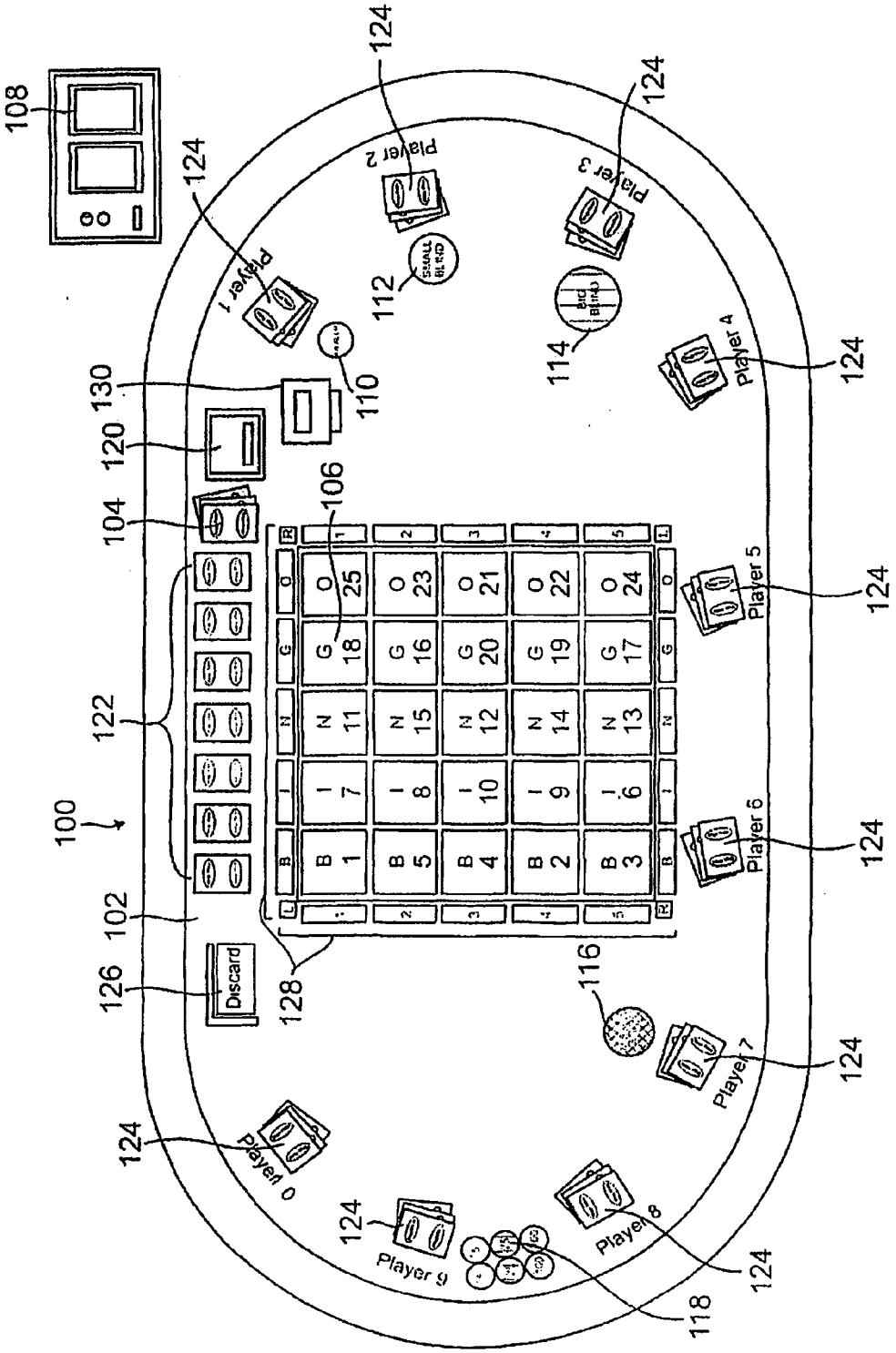

108
124
Player 1
Player 2
Player 3
Player 4
Player 5
Player 6
Player 7
Player 8
Player 9
Player 0
112
114
110
130
120
104
106
122
100
102
126
Discard
128
116
118
SMALL BLIND
BIG BLIND
B 1
B 5
B 4
B 2
B 3
I 7
I 8
I 10
I 9
I 6
N 11
N 15
N 12
N 14
N 13
G 18
G 16
G 20
G 19
G 17
O 25
O 23
O 21
O 22
O 24

FIG. 5

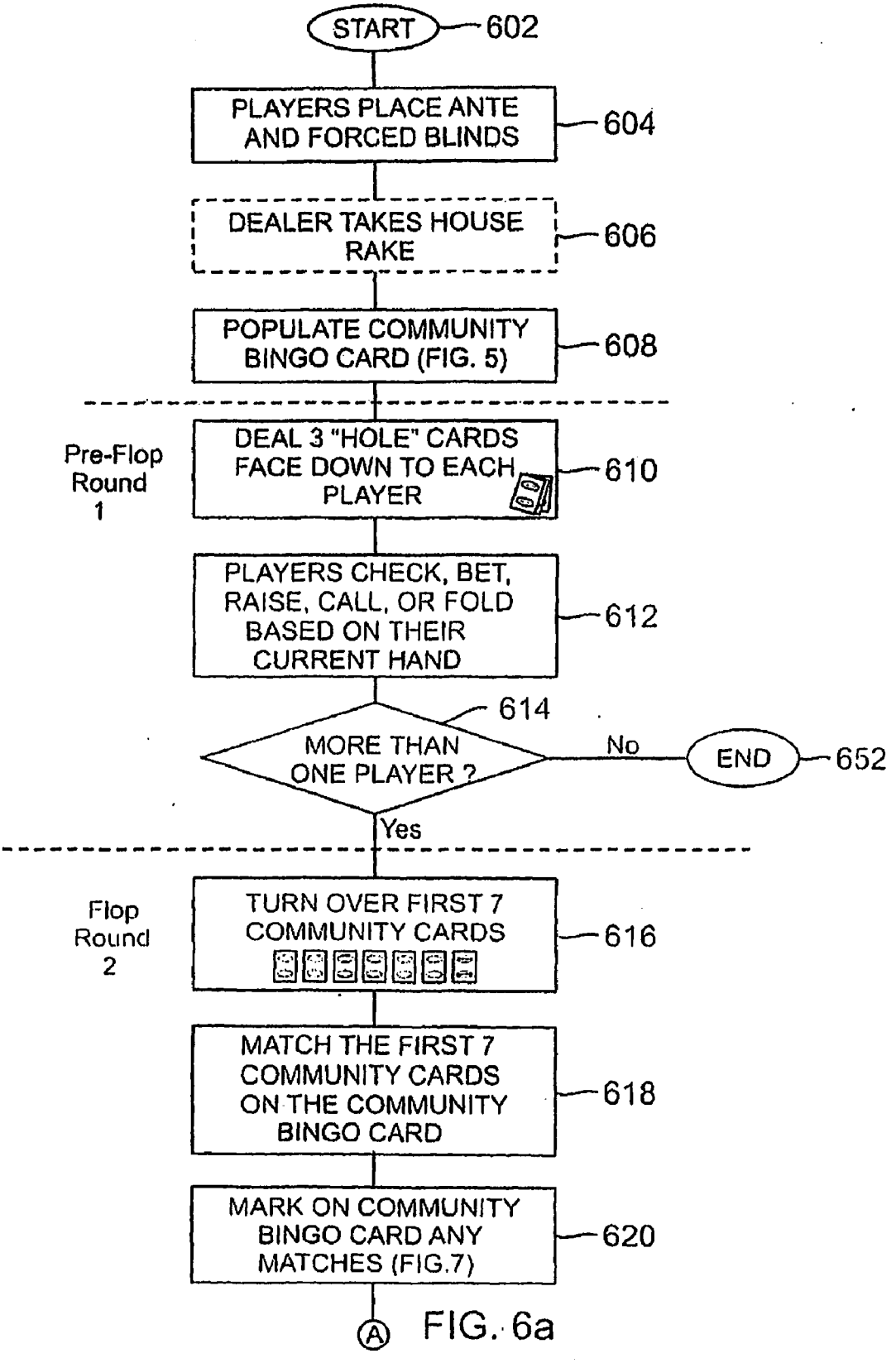

START
602
PLAYERS PLACE ANTE AND FORCED BLINDS
604
DEALER TAKES HOUSE RAKE
606
POPULATE COMMUNITY BINGO CARD (FIG. 5)
608
Pre-Flop Round 1
DEAL 3 "HOLE" CARDS FACE DOWN TO EACH PLAYER
610
PLAYERS CHECK, BET, RAISE, CALL, OR FOLD BASED ON THEIR CURRENT HAND
612
614
MORE THAN ONE PLAYER ?
No
END
652
Yes
Flop Round 2
TURN OVER FIRST 7 COMMUNITY CARDS
616
MATCH THE FIRST 7 COMMUNITY CARDS ON THE COMMUNITY BINGO CARD
618
MARK ON COMMUNITY BINGO CARD ANY MATCHES (FIG.7)
620
A

FIG. 6a

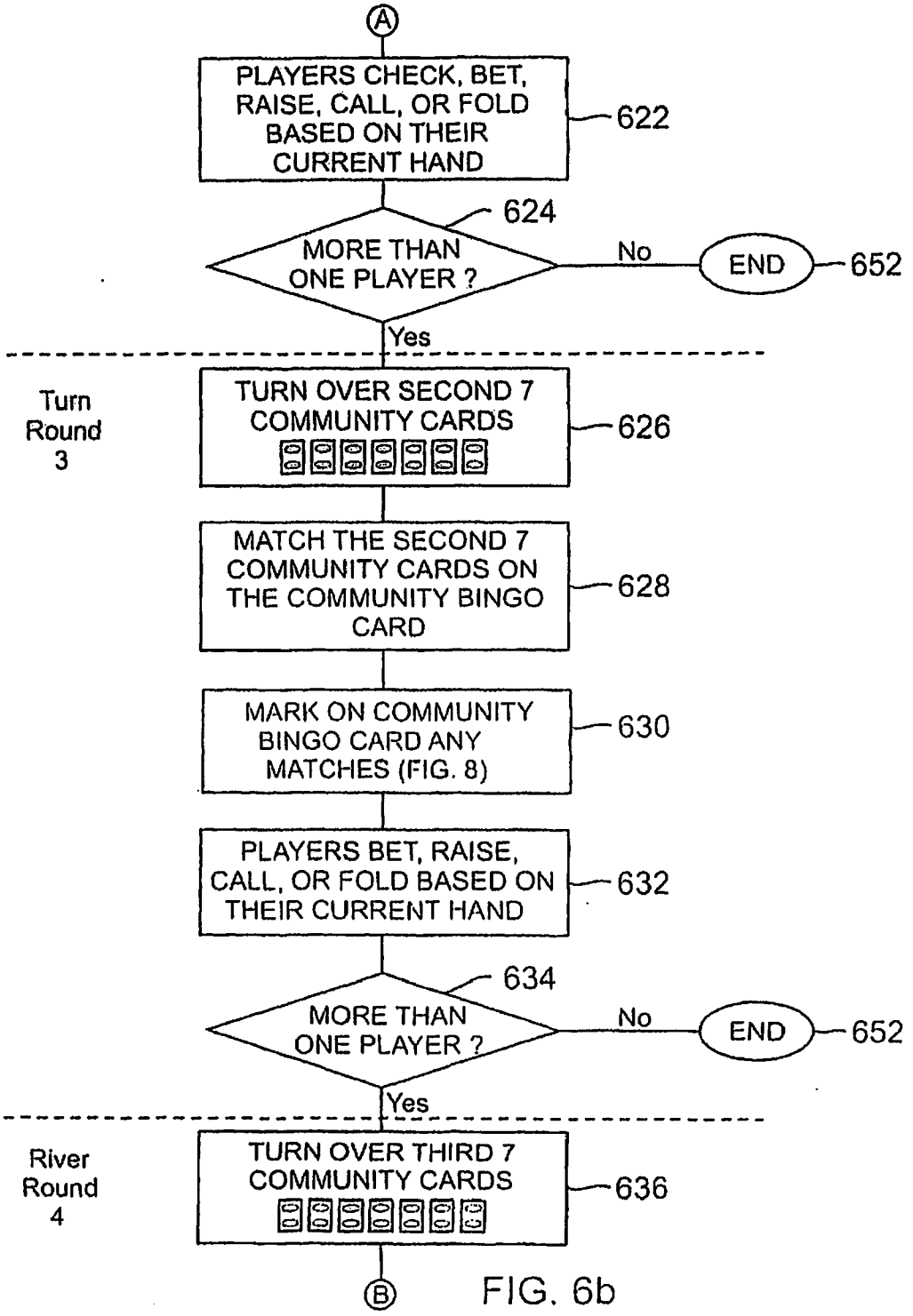

A
PLAYERS CHECK, BET, RAISE, CALL, OR FOLD BASED ON THEIR CURRENT HAND
622
624
MORE THAN ONE PLAYER ?
No
END
652
Yes
Turn Round 3
TURN OVER SECOND 7 COMMUNITY CARDS
626
MATCH THE SECOND 7 COMMUNITY CARDS ON THE COMMUNITY BINGO CARD
628
MARK ON COMMUNITY BINGO CARD ANY MATCHES (FIG. 8)
630
PLAYERS BET, RAISE, CALL, OR FOLD BASED ON THEIR CURRENT HAND
632
634
MORE THAN ONE PLAYER ?
No
END
652
Yes
River Round 4
TURN OVER THIRD 7 COMMUNITY CARDS
636
B

FIG. 6b

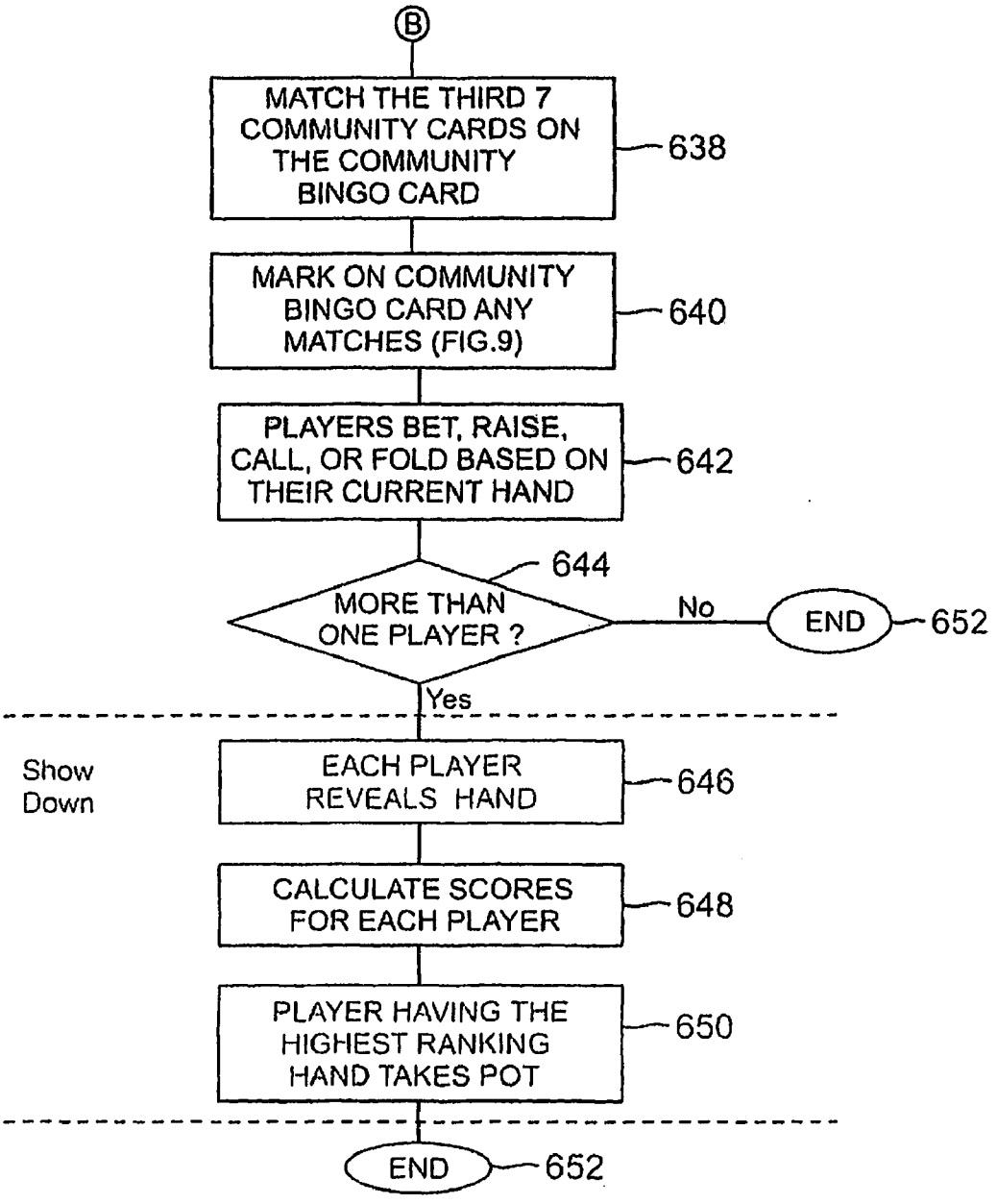
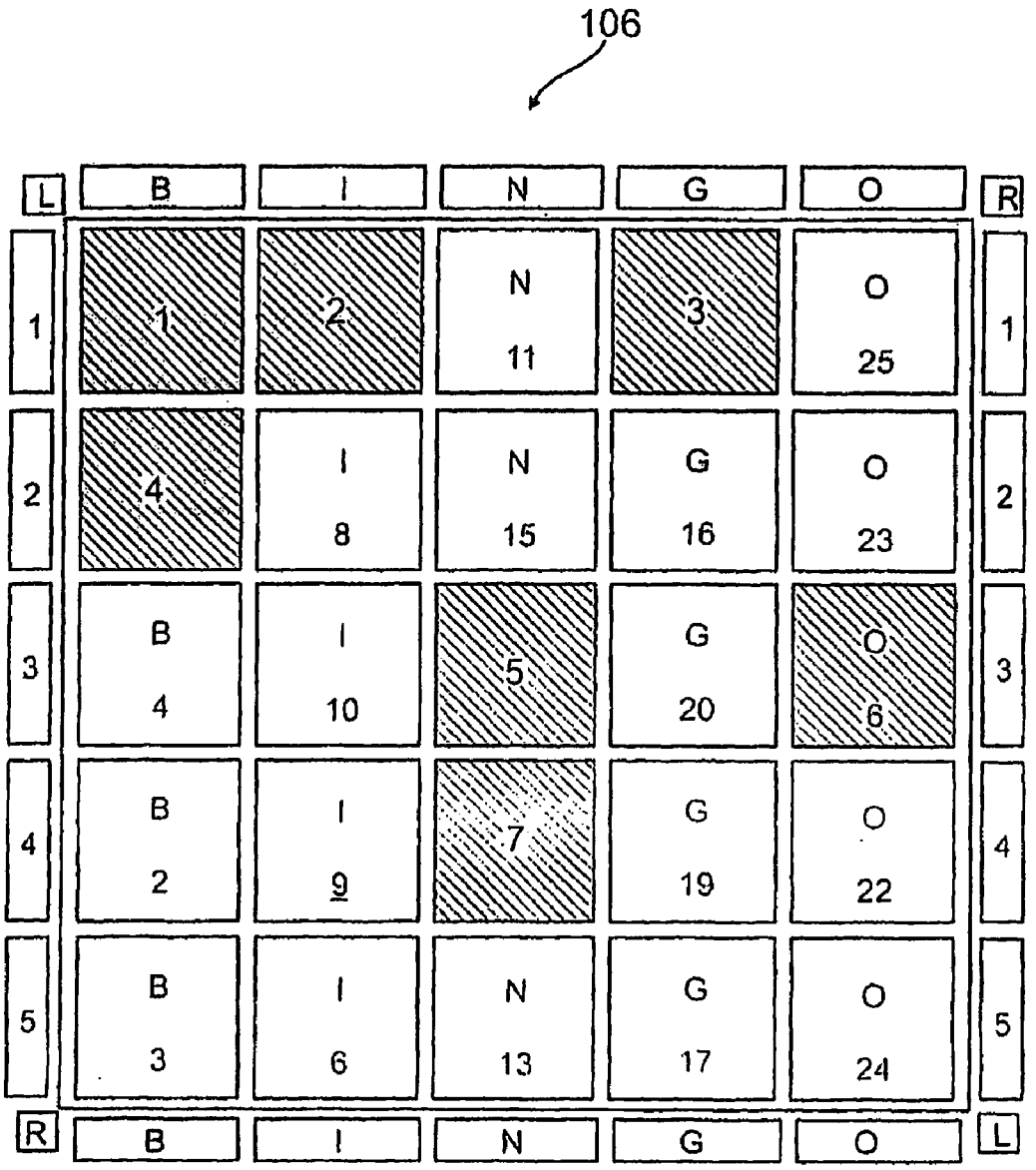

B
MATCH THE THIRD 7 COMMUNITY CARDS ON THE COMMUNITY BINGO CARD
638
MARK ON COMMUNITY BINGO CARD ANY MATCHES (FIG.9)
640
PLAYERS BET, RAISE, CALL, OR FOLD BASED ON THEIR CURRENT HAND
642
644
MORE THAN ONE PLAYER ?
No
END
652
Yes
Show Down
EACH PLAYER REVEALS HAND
646
CALCULATE SCORES FOR EACH PLAYER
648
PLAYER HAVING THE HIGHEST RANKING HAND TAKES POT
650
END
652

FIG. 6c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7
G
19
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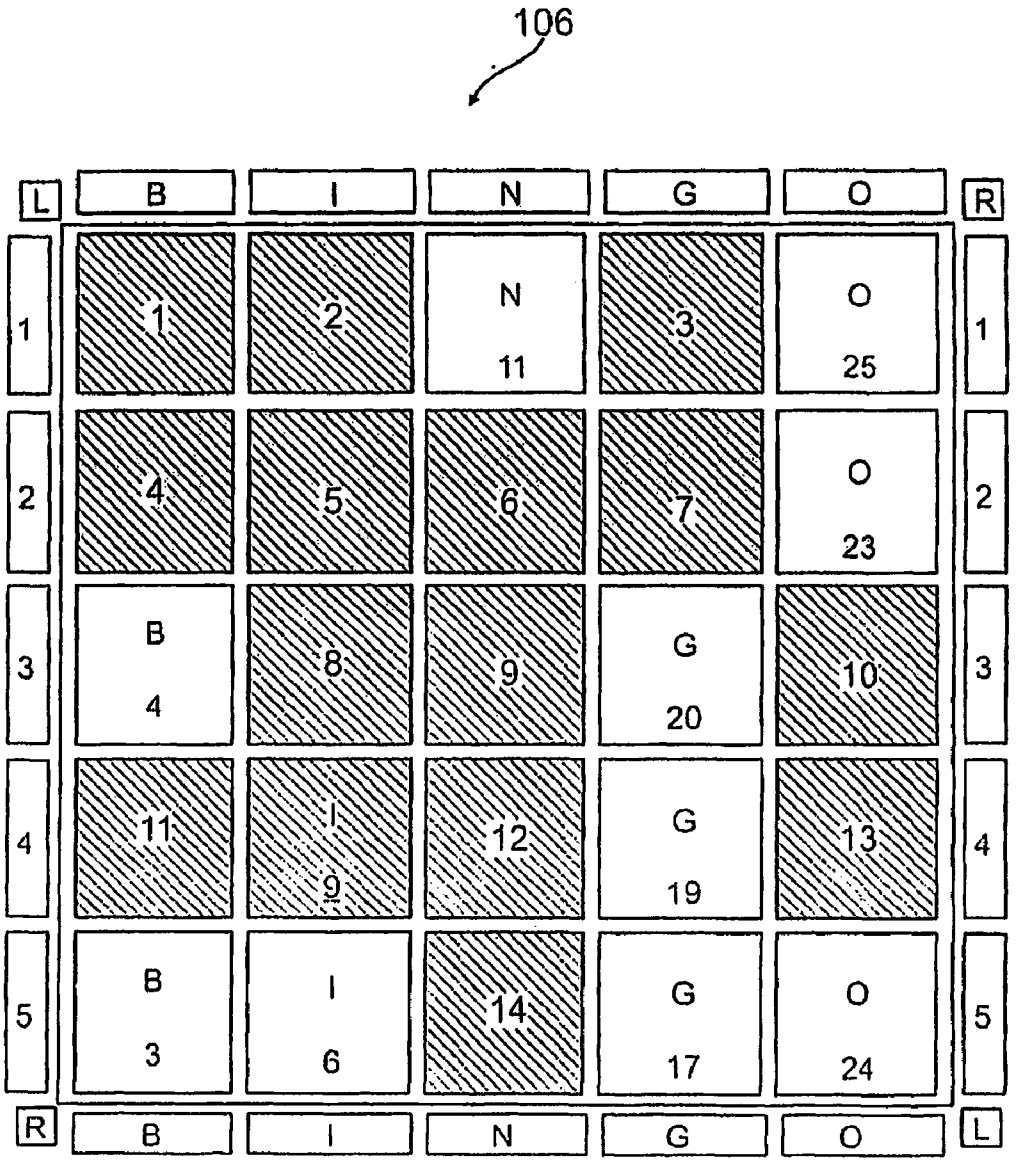
FIG. 7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12
13
14
N
11
O
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19
B
3
I
6
G
17
O
24

FIG. 8

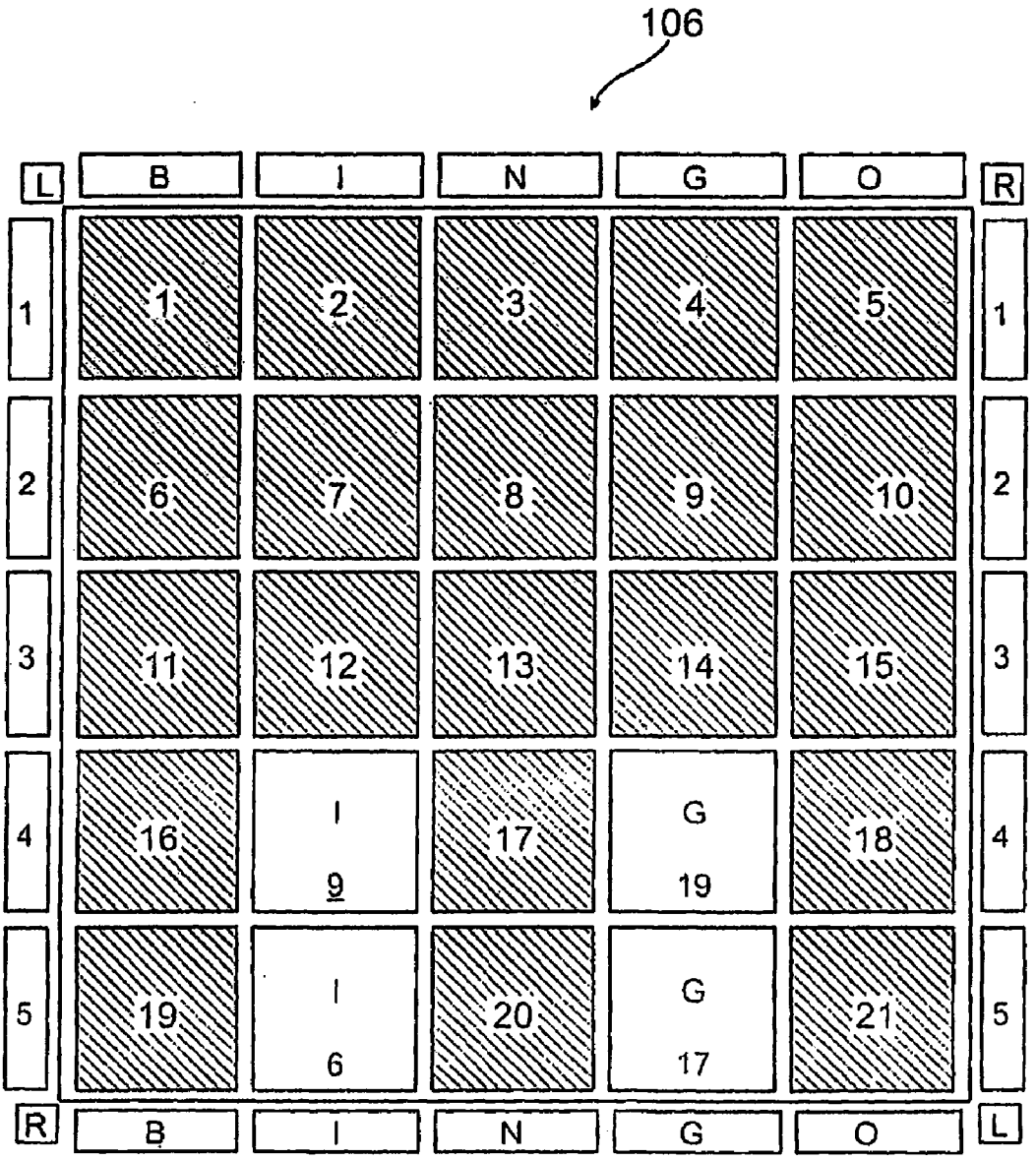
106
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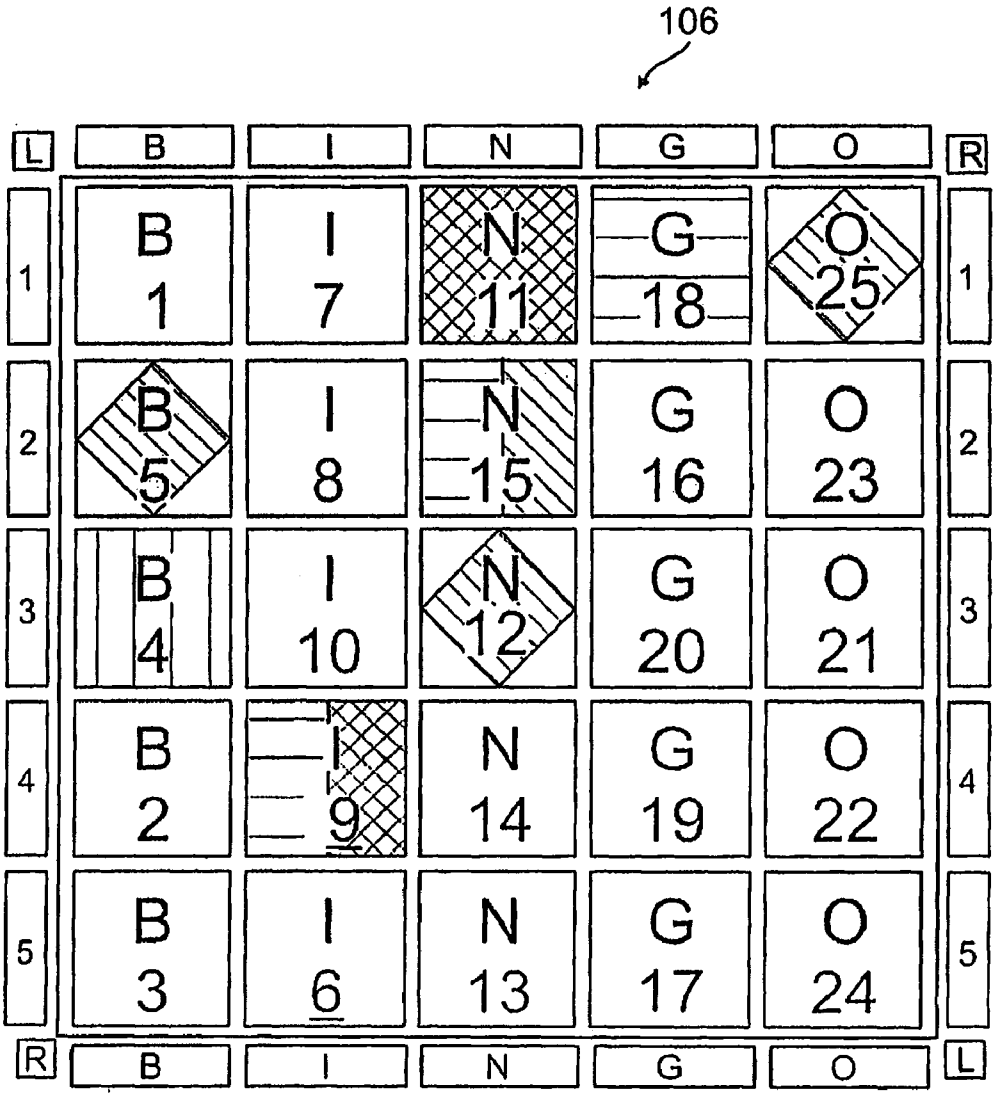
FIG. 9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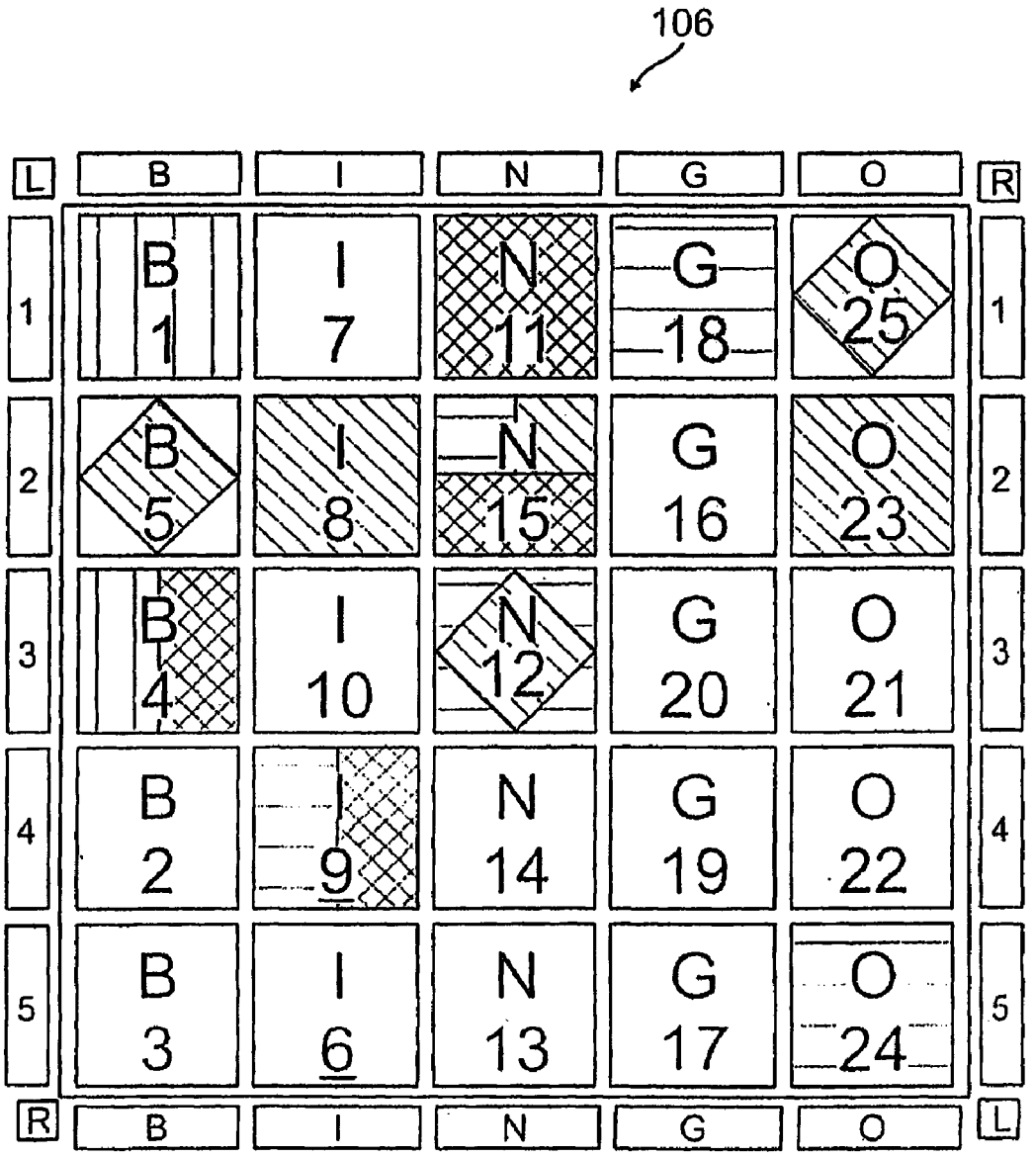
G 18
O 25
B 5
I 8
N 15
G 16
O 23
B 4
I 10
N 12
G 20
O 21
B 2
I 9
N 14
G 19
O 22
B 3
I 6
N 13
G 17
O 24

FIG. 10


106
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I 7
N 11
G 18
O 25
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B 5
I 8
N 15
G 16
O 23
3
B 4
I 10
N 12
G 20
O 21
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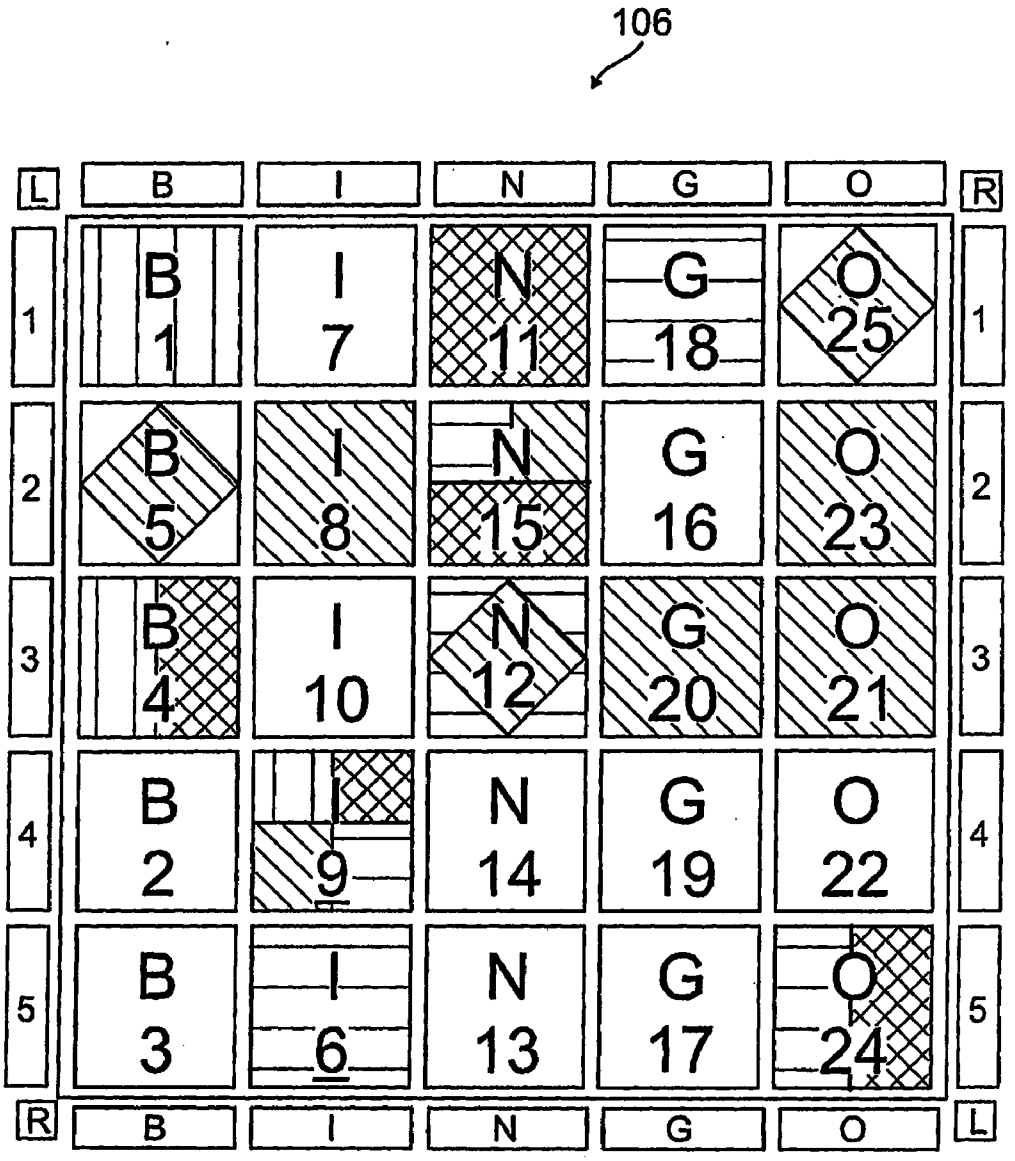
B 2
I 9
N 14
G 19
O 22
5
B 3
I 6
N 13
G 17
O 24

FIG. 11


106
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G 18
O 25
B 5
I 8
N 15
G 16
O 23
B 4
I 10
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N 14
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B 3
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N 13
G 17
O 24

FIG. 12

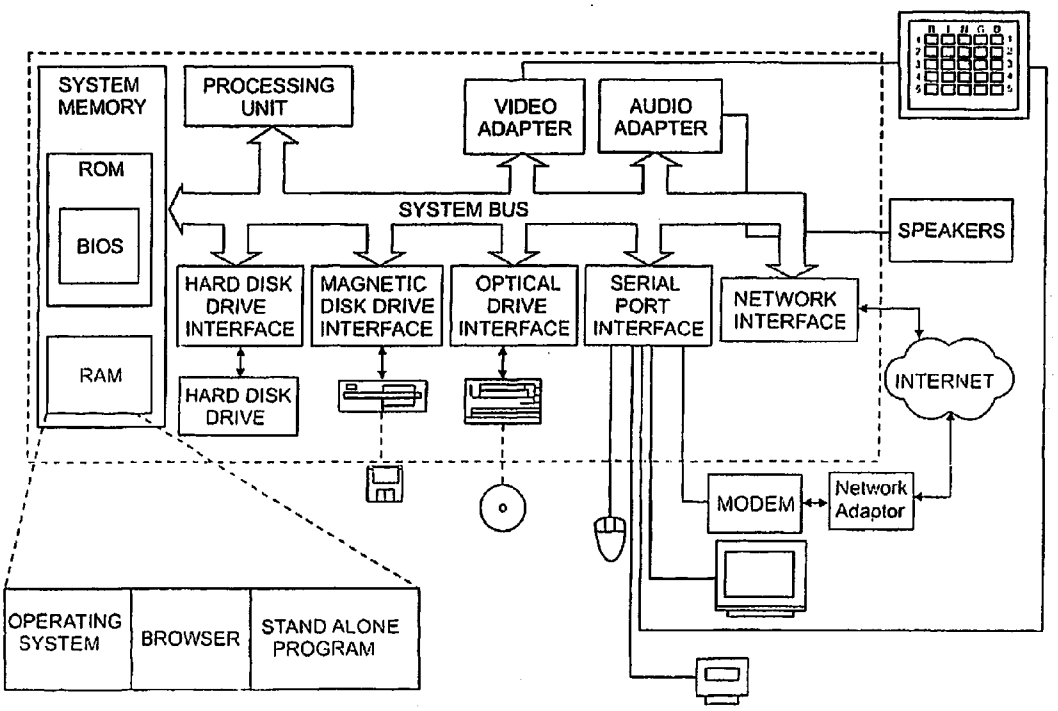
SYSTEM MEMORY
ROM
BIOS
RAM
PROCESSING UNIT
VIDEO ADAPTER
AUDIO ADAPTER
SYSTEM BUS
SPEAKERS
HARD DISK DRIVE INTERFACE
MAGNETIC DISK DRIVE INTERFACE
OPTICAL DRIVE INTERFACE
SERIAL PORT INTERFACE
NETWORK INTERFACE
INTERNET
HARD DISK DRIVE
MODEM
Network Adaptor
OPERATING SYSTEM
BROWSER
STAND ALONE PROGRAM

FIG. 13

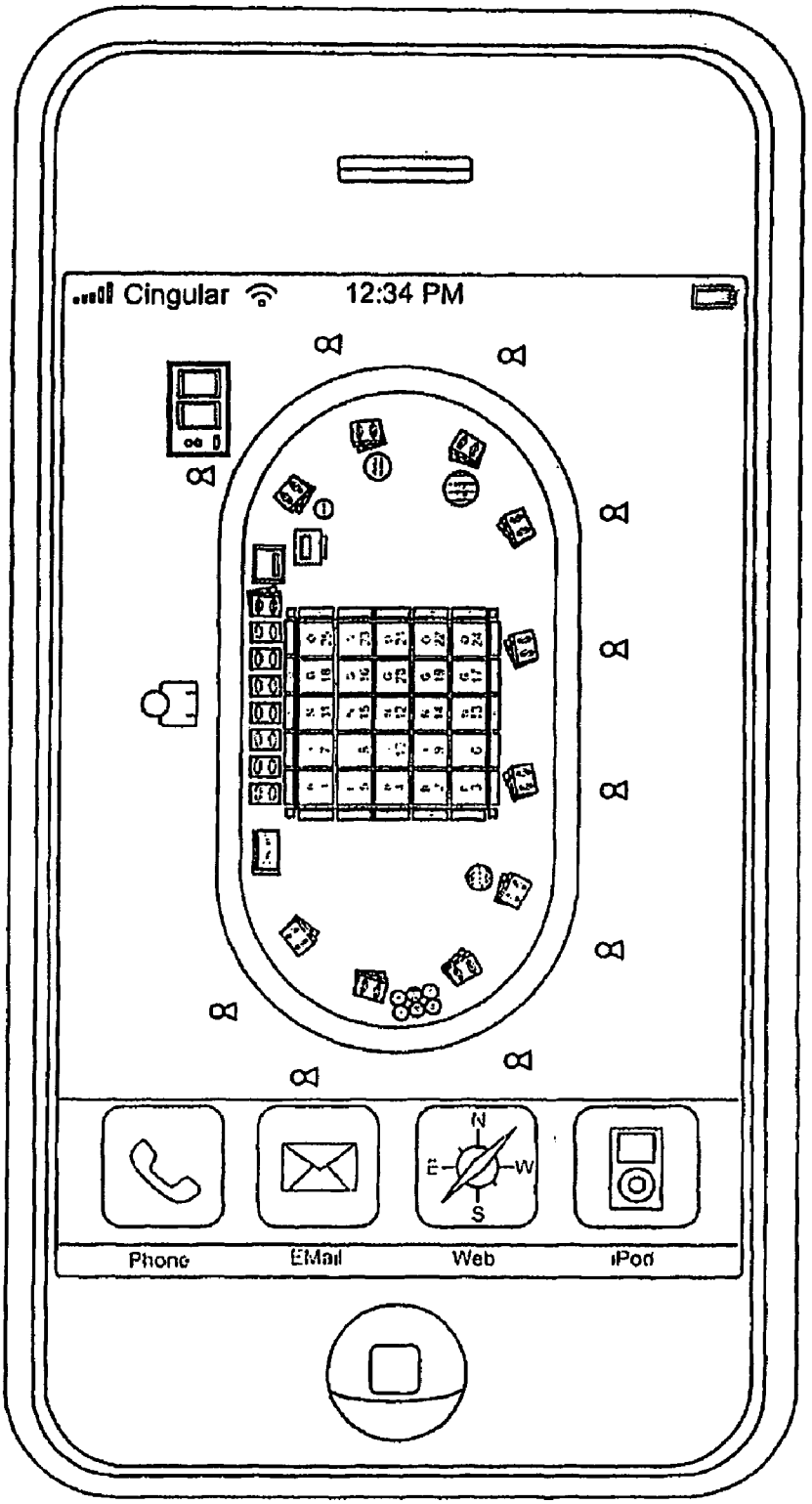

FIG. 14

GAMES HAVING BINGO AND POKER LIKE ELEMENTS AND METHODS OF PLAYING THEREFOR

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional application Ser. No. _____ filed May 7, 2009 and U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/321,971 filed Apr. 8, 2010, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention generally relates to games and more particularly to wagering games and methods of playing wagering games.

[0003] Bingo is a game in which players purchase at least one printed or electronic 5×5 matrix card having numbers thereon. The bingo cards contain twenty-five spaces delineated by five vertical columns and five horizontal rows. Each space in the grid contains a number, except for the center square, which is often filled. The highest number generally used is 75. The letters B, I, N, G, and O are pre-printed above the five vertical columns, with one letter appearing above each column. Typically, the center space is marked "free". The printed numbers on the card are restricted by the following arrangement: 1 through 15 in the B column; 16 through 30 in the I column; 31 through 45 in the N column; 46 through 60 in the G column, and 61 through 75 in the O column.

[0004] Randomly selected numbers are then drawn and players match those numbers to those appearing on the 5×5 card. These numbers are generally located on colored balls. The first person to have a card where the drawn numbers form a specified pattern is the winner. The winner typically yells out the word "Bingo!" to notify others and inform the caller of the win. Before the prize is distributed to the winner, the card is properly checked for accuracy before the win is officially confirmed at which time the prize is secured and a new game is begun. Many games require "Bingo!" to be called before the next ball.

[0005] Bingo patterns often include straight vertical or horizontal lines, but may also include diagonal lines. Alternatively, a complete blackout may be required for a bingo. Dependent on the caller, various implementations of bingo patterns may exist making bingo an exciting game in which players can have never ending fun.

[0006] Gaming establishments or casinos continually require new games to offer their players. Players are typically attracted to games that provide relatively decent odds of winning, as compared with other casino games, have exciting options and can be played rapidly. While many games have sought to capture the excitement of bingo in a poker-like wagering game, none have succeeded up to now.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In some embodiments, the invention is directed to a device for playing games, which includes a plurality of game elements, wherein each game element is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game element including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game elements are capable of being arranged into a plurality of subsets of game elements by features within the discrete category of features, wherein the discrete categories of features are selected from the group consisting of colors, alphabetic characters, ideographic characters and numerical values.

[0008] In some embodiments, the game elements may be playing cards, game tiles or virtual representations of cards.

[0009] In some embodiments, each game element includes a color, and alphabetic character and a numerical value. The game elements may be of different colors and each subset of game elements of different colors may include the same set of alphabetic characters and numerical values.

[0010] In some embodiments, the invention is directed to a method of playing a game, which includes the steps of: accepting a player to participate in the game; providing a plurality of game elements to the participating player to form a player hand, wherein each game element is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game element including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game elements are capable of being arranged into a plurality of unique subsets of game elements by features within the discrete category of features; comparing the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria, wherein the predefined criteria relates to assigning a player hand ranking based on the features associated with the game elements forming the player hand and identifies a penalty condition associated with at least one feature of the plurality of features for which the player hand is automatically assigned a losing ranking; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to a player hand ranking if the penalty condition is not satisfied by the player hand; and assigning a ranking to the player hand.

[0011] In some embodiments, the aforementioned method further includes the step of providing a payout amount to the player based on assigned player hand ranking.

[0012] In some embodiments, the step of accepting a player participating in the game in the aforementioned method further includes receiving a wager from the player.

[0013] In some embodiments, the plurality of game elements are randomly dealt to the participating player to form a player hand.

[0014] In some embodiments, the one or more categories of features comprise numeric values, alphabetic characters, colors, ideographic characters, symbols and graphics.

[0015] In some embodiments, the game elements are divisible into a plurality of subsets of game elements, whereby the game elements of each subset of the plurality include an exclusive feature from a sole category of features and the same combinations of the remaining features from other categories of features. In such embodiments, the penalty condition may be associated with one of the exclusive features.

[0016] In some embodiments, the aforementioned method further includes the steps of: receiving instructions from the participating player identifying game elements to be discarded from the player hand and providing the participating player with additional game elements to replace the game elements discarded.

[0017] In some embodiments, the penalty condition is associated with a feature, whereby a penalty subset of gaming elements associated with the penalty feature is identifiable and a player hand including a game element from the penalty subset will automatically be assigned a losing player hand

ranking irrespective of the player hand ranking unless the player hand includes only game elements from the penalty subset.

[0018] In some embodiments, the invention is directed to an electronic gaming machine which includes an input device configured for accepting a player wager to participate in a bingo-poker hybrid game; a display configured for: displaying representations of bingo-poker hybrid cards; and a processor configured for randomly providing a plurality of representations of game cards to the participating player to form a player hand, wherein each game card is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game card including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game cards are capable of being arranged into a plurality of unique subsets of game cards by features within the discrete category of features; comparing the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria, wherein the predefined criteria relates to assigning a player hand ranking based on the features associated with the game elements forming the player hand and identifies a penalty condition associated with at least one feature of the plurality of features for which the player hand is automatically assigned a losing ranking; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition; determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to a player hand ranking if the penalty condition is not satisfied by the player hand; and assigning a ranking to the player hand. The aforementioned electronic gaming machine may further include an output device for providing a payout or credit if one of the predefined criteria is satisfied.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0019] In the descriptions that follow, like parts are marked throughout the specification and drawings with the same numerals, respectively. The drawing figures are not necessarily drawn to scale and certain figures may be shown in exaggerated or generalized form in the interest of clarity and conciseness or for other reasons.

[0020] FIG. **1** illustrates a plurality of exemplary game elements configured in accordance with some embodiments the invention;

[0021] FIG. **2** is a flow diagram of an exemplary game play method in accordance with some embodiments of the invention which may be carried out by a dealer or through an automated system and uses the game elements shown in FIG. **1**;

[0022] FIG. **3** is a flow diagram of another exemplary game play method in accordance with some embodiments of the invention which may be carried out by a dealer or through an automated system and uses the game elements shown in FIG. **1**;

[0023] FIG. **4** depicts an exemplary 5×5 matrix sorted and randomly populated with the game elements shown in FIG. **1** in accordance with some embodiments of the invention;

[0024] FIG. **5** is an exemplary illustration showing a standard "Texas Hold'em" style poker table configured and adapted to include a center spaced 5×5 bingo matrix card (digital or paper-based) populated with the game elements shown in FIG. **1** in accordance with one aspect of the invention;

[0025] FIGS. **6**A through **6**C depict a flow diagram illustrating exemplary processes performed in the bingo-like game in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0026] FIG. **7** illustrates the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after a first round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0027] FIG. **8** illustrates the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after the second round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0028] FIG. **9** illustrates the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after the third round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0029] FIG. **10** depicts another embodiment of the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after the first round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0030] FIG. **11** illustrates the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after the second round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0031] FIG. **12** illustrates the exemplary 5×5 bingo matrix card populated after the third round of a game played in accordance with an aspect of the invention;

[0032] FIG. **13** provides illustrative hardware adapatable to a gaming table, electronic gaming machine or multiplayer platform machine for providing a game for players to play in accordance with aspects of the invention; and

[0033] FIG. **14** illustrates hand held device for providing a game for players to play in accordance with embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Some embodiments relate to a game device or system having a plurality of unique game elements, such as for example, cards, tokens, tiles, and balls, as well as virtual or graphical representations thereof, which may be configured and adapted for use in a variety of game methods.

[0035] The game elements may each include features which are selected from one or more discrete categories of features. For example, each game element may include a feature relating to a specific color, such as blue, red, purple, white, etc. Other features included on each game element may be selected from discrete categories such as numerical values, alphabetic characters, ideographic characters, pictographs, names, symbols graphics or any other indicia having a common attribute or connection that enables categorization thereof. It should be readily apparent that the game elements are not limited to any specific features or categories thereof.

[0036] In some embodiments, the game elements include similar combinations of features, including one or more identical features from one or more discrete categories. However, at least one feature on each game element is selected to differentiate game elements so that all game elements are unique and there are no fully identical game elements. For example, in some embodiments, the distinct features include integers and letters, and may include game elements having the same letters or integers or both. Additionally, the letters may be selected to form words of any language. For example, Chinese characters may be used instead. Game elements with matching features also have at least one distinct additional feature which distinguishes these game elements, such as color or symbol.

[0037] The distribution of features among game elements allows the game elements to be arranged into subsets of game elements that share a common attribute. For example, in some embodiments discussed in detail herein, the game elements

may be separated into subsets of game elements having the same color, the same number and/or the same letter.

[0038] In an illustrative example shown in FIG. **1**, a game device **10** includes game elements **12** which generally comprise a deck of cards but may also be considered as a virtual representation thereof. Deck **12** includes one hundred and twenty five cards having features which may be generally categorized as colors, letters and numbers. The colored gaming elements (e.g., orange, green, blue, purple and white or non-colored) are capable of being arranged into twenty-five card subsets identified by arrows **14**, **16**, **18**, **20** and **22**. Cards **12** in subsets **14** through **22** include combinations of letters (i.e., B, I, N, G and O) and integers from 1 to 25.

[0039] In this embodiment, each subset **14** through **22** may be further arranged into five subsets of 25 cards each based on letters, in that a subset **24** of cards numbered from 1 to 5 is associated with the letter "B", a subset **26** of cards numbered from 6 to 10 is also associated with the letter "I", a subset **28** of cards numbered from 11 to 15 is also associated with the letter "N", a subset **32** of cards numbered from 16 to 20 is associated with the letter "G", and a subset **34** of cards numbered from 21 to 25 is also associated with the letter "O", among other things.

[0040] It should be understood that game device **10** is a non-limiting example of the many variations of a game device according to the invention, and other colors, letters or words and numbers may be employed in the spirit and scope of this invention. Wild cards may also be added to the game elements. In addition to game devices such as those described herein, the invention is also directed to game play methods that may utilize game devices according to the invention.

[0041] In some embodiments, a method **40** of playing a game according to the invention, such as game **10**, includes various steps as shown in FIG. **2**. It should be understood that the steps recited herein may be carried out in a variety of ways, such as by a dealer physically using game elements in a casino, via an electronic gaming machine (EGM) in a gaming establishment, through a computer or portable device, such as a mobile phone, capable of communicating via the Internet, global telecommunication network or world wide web.

[0042] In step **42**, a player interested in participating in the game is accepted. It should be understood that the step of accepting the player may be manifested in a variety of ways depending on the particular embodiment, and may further comprise receiving player information or identification data or a wager. For example, if game **40** is played through an online network, a player may be accepted as participating in the game after submitting information or actuating an online link.

[0043] In step **44**, a plurality of game elements are provided to the participating player to form a player hand. Again, this step may be manifested differently depending on the embodiment of the game according to the invention. For example, shuffled cards may be physically dealt by a dealer from a card shoe at a casino table to form the player hand, or virtual representations of the game elements may be randomly provided on a display of an EGM via a random number generator or from a pool of game elements.

[0044] In step **46**, the game elements in the player hand is compared with predefined criteria. The predefined criteria includes information relating the features of game elements in the player hand to a one or more particular player hand rankings and information relating to a penalty condition. The penalty condition may be associated with the presence of one or more game elements in the player hand having a particular feature, such as a specific color of a game element or certain letter, or certain combination of features. For example, using the game device **10**, the penalty condition may be associated with a player hand consisting of one or more game elements of a specific color but less than all game elements of that color, such as white, and less than a full hand of game elements with one or more other matching features, such as a player hand made up of game elements having all the same number or letter. It should be readily apparent that the penalty condition may be related to many different combinations of features that may be found in the game elements of the player hand. In alternative embodiments which include wild cards, the wild cards generally do not counteract the penalty condition.

[0045] If the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition is satisfied in step **48**, then the player hand is assigned a losing rank in step **50**. Depending on the embodiment, the player may forfeit the game and/or lose some or all of any wagers placed in the game. If the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition is not satisfied in step **48**, then it is determined whether the predefined criteria relating to the player hand ranking is satisfied in step **52**. The player hand ranking may comprise a pay table of rankings establishing a payout amount or award depending on the player hand achieved as measured by the presence, lack or combination of features associated with the game elements in the player hand. Alternatively, the presence, lack or combination of features associated with the game elements in the player hand may be used to assign a hand ranking that can be compared to the ranking of a dealer hand or the ranking of another player hand in the game.

[0046] If in step **52**, the predefined criteria relating to player hand rankings is not satisfied, then the player hand is assigned a losing rank as shown in step **50**, or the game otherwise ends in either a loss or tie, depending on the embodiment and/or presence of a competing dealer or player hand, determined. If a criterion of the predefined criteria relating to player hand rankings is satisfied in step **52**, then the player hand is assigned the rank associated with the criteria or criterion satisfied in step **54**. As previously mentioned, some embodiments may then involve comparing the predefined criteria with a paytable, other player hand or dealer hand to determine a payout amount, a game winner or outcome.

[0047] Game play method **40** partially resembles the game play of a "stud" poker-type game. Other game play methods using game device **10** or variations thereof are contemplated as being within the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, a game play method **140** resembles a "draw" poker-type game, in that step **156** involves receiving instructions relating to whether any game elements should be discarded from the player hand provided in step **144**. Depending on the embodiment, such instructions may be received by a dealer, through an EGM input keypad or touchpad or data input/output device for example. In step **158**, the player is provided with game elements to replace the discarded game elements, if any, in the same amount as the amount discarded. Unless further draw steps such as steps **156** and **158** are provided, the player hand is now in final form for comparison with the predefined criteria in step **158**. As in method **40**, if the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition is satisfied in step **158**, then the player hand is assigned a losing rank in step

150. In some embodiments, the penalty condition may be designated or selected, randomly or otherwise, during the play of the game.

[0048] In some embodiments, the penalty condition is preset or selected, designated or otherwise made known to the players prior to participating in the game. Thus, in such embodiments, players would likely opt to discard any game elements in step **156** that possess features that would trigger the penalty condition in step **158**. However, as in draw poker-type games, players may also choose to retain or replace game elements in an effort to improve the odds of achieving a desirable player hand ranking, that is, assuming the ranking system is preset or made known to the players prior to the start of the game. It should be readily apparent that discarding game elements in an attempt to improve the hand ranking of an initial player hand provided in step **144** involves a strategic risk. In particular, an initial player hand that would not satisfy the penalty condition may be changed to a final player hand which satisfies the penalty condition, as a result of the game elements provided in step **158**.

[0049] In some embodiments, game method **40** or **140** may be played with game device **10** as described above and with player hands comprising five cards. The rankings are generally based on obtaining the best set of five colored game elements in a row, also referred to as a "single line bingo." Additional steps may be included in the method to enable payouts to players achieving certain player hand rankings as set forth by the predefined criteria. The penalty condition relates to receiving a white card, which spoils any bingo payline, that is, the ranking achieved by the other cards in the player hand is nullified. In some embodiments, players may place insurance wagers to hedge against being dealt a white card.

[0050] An exemplary paytable for a method such as game method **140** played on an EGM is shown below. The player hand rank assumes that no white color game element is present and the payout is expressed as a multiple of the wager received to participate in the game.

Player hand rank*	Payout
Any pair (a pair of the same color game elements)	0
Two pair (a first pair the same color game elements and a second pair of the same color game elements but a different color than the first pair)	0
Three of a kind (three of the same color game elements	1
Full House (three game elements of the same color and two game elements of the same color but a different color than the three game elements)	1
Four of a kind (four of the same color game elements)	2
Flush (all five game elements having the same color)	3

*With no white colored game element. Any white colored game element pays nothing.

[0051] In this embodiment, the predefined criteria may also enable bonus payouts associated with a player hand achieving a bonus ranking based on the presence of game elements possessing certain features. For example, bonuses may be paid on number and letter straights and combinations. An exemplary bonus paytable for a method such as game method **140** played on an EGM is shown below. The player hand column refers to the player hand containing the features described, such as the letters BINGO or a series of numbers, and the payout is expressed as a multiple of the wager received to participate in the game. In this embodiment, bonuses are paid on any five colored card bingo or any white card flushes or any quintuplet.

Player hand	Payout
B-I-N-G-O (Any color combination excluding white)	1
Three number straight (Any color combination excluding white)	1
Four number straight (Any color combination excluding white)	2
Five number straight (Any color combination excluding white)	7
Five white cards (Any numbers)	10
B-I-N-G-O (Any flush of all the same color)	15
Any Letter Flush (all the same letters)	20
Triplicates (three game elements having the same letter and same number, with no white game element)	5
Quadruplicates (four game elements having the same letter and same number, with no white game element)	50
Quintuplets (five game elements having the same letter and same number)	200
Three number straight (Any flush)	50
Four number straight (Any flush)	250
Five number straight (Any flush)	1000
Royal Flush (Any flush with numbers 21 through 25)	2000

[0052] As can be seen by viewing the game elements **12**, more than one bonus and player hand ranking may be achieved naturally based on the configuration of game device **10**. For example, a royal flush will satisfy the predefined criteria for the any letter flush bonus and flush player hand ranking payouts. It should be understood that the tables above are merely illustrative and may be adjusted depending on the desired house advantage.

[0053] In some embodiments, a game method incorporating game elements **12** is configured and adapted for use in a reel slot-type format having five mechanical or virtual reels. The game elements are sorted amongst the reels by letter to spell the word BINGO as shown by the 5×5 matrix **106** in FIG. **4**. Thus, the "B" reel strip is restricted to a randomized arrangement of game elements of every color in a number range from 1 to 5 only. Likewise, the "I" reel strip contains game elements of every color in a number range from 6-10, the "N" reel strip contains game elements of every color in a number range from 11-15, the "G" reel strip contains game elements of every color in a number range from 16-20 and the "O" reel strip contains game elements of every color in a number range from 21-25. The reel strips may each include one or more subsets of twenty-five game elements depending on the odds desired. The reel may include any number of paylines and may be provided in a variety of matrix sizes, such as 3×5, 4×5 or 5×5.

[0054] The game plays similarly to a slot machine in that the reels either physically spin or appear to spin randomly. When the spinning is completed, the reels stop and the paylines wagered upon are shown as lines disposed over the matrix of stopped game elements. Some paylines are disposed straight across each row of the matrix while others extend diagonally to move up or down rows while crossing over at least one game element in each column. In this embodiment, the paylines will cross over five game elements on the matrix. In the case of a 5×5 matrix, a plurality of paylines may be employed, such as fully diagonal paylines and paylines which extend only along a column.

[0055] Payouts are based on the paylines including game elements having features which meet the predefined criteria. The predefined criteria may be based on the amount of matching colors associated with the game elements on each payline. For example, a payline consisting of five game elements

wherein three of the game elements have the same color and the remaining two game elements have a different color may payout a multiple of the original wager as a three of a kind. Various payouts may be established based on the odds of achieving certain combinations of features.

[0056] As in the previous embodiments, the predefined criteria includes a penalty condition. In some embodiments, the penalty condition relates to the presence of a white colored game element on a payline such that one or more white colored game elements on a payline results in a loss of a portion or all of the wager on that payline, irrespective of the other game elements in the payline.

[0057] Other embodiments describe further alternative games of the invention in which the game includes bingo and poker like elements and uses game elements **12**.

[0058] In some embodiments of games according to the invention, the white color game elements are provided in the form a 5×5 matrix sorted by letter to spell the word BINGO as shown by matrix **106** in FIG. **4**. Thus, when using game elements **12**, the white color game elements in each column contain a restricted distribution of features, that is, restricted to a randomized arrangement of numbers within a particular range. For example, the "B" column is restricted to a randomized arrangement of numbers from 1 to 5 only. Likewise, the white color game elements in the "I" column contain a restricted distribution of features are randomized numbers 6-10, the white color game elements in the "N" column contain a restricted distribution of features are randomized numbers 11-15, the white color game elements in the "G" column contain a restricted distribution of features are randomized numbers 16-20, and the white color game elements in the "O" column contain a restricted distribution of features are randomized numbers 21-25.

[0059] Many games may be played using matrix **106**. For example, one or more players may be dealt a hand of cards to play directly against the house, either against a dealer hand or predefined criteria such as a paytable rankings, wherein the relative rankings may be based on the most five card bingos achieved and/or highest value five card bingos achieved. Alternatively, one or more players may play a game in which the players receive a partial hand and community cards are dealt, wherein each final player hand is composed of the player's partial hand and community cards and the ranking is based on the most five card bingos and/or highest value five card bingos achieved.

[0060] It should be understood that different size matrixes may be employed for different games in accordance with the invention. For example, a 3×3 matrix in which bingo hands are based on three cards may be an option to change the dynamics of the game.

[0061] It should also be understood that the game may be played without a matrix, wherein the best or highest ranking player hand wins either against other players, a dealer hand or in comparison with a predefined criteria such as a paytable listing hand rankings and payouts. For example, a game may be played in which three card, five card or seven card hands may be dealt to each player. The game may be played similar to stud poker or include a draw step as described in previous embodiments. Further embodiments may include a dealer and/or player qualification step in which a hand must be of at least a certain ranking to reach a final outcome or payout. It should be readily apparent that game elements as described herein are easily adaptable to form unique variations or alternatives to other wagering games, such as roulette, blackjack, while also adding new characteristics thereto, such as a penalty condition.

[0062] In one game which may be considered a variation of Texas Hold 'em poker, a partial player hand of game elements is provided to a player. Additional cards are then dealt for use with the partial player hand to form a final complete hand. As in Texas Hold'em poker, multiple portions of the community cards may be systematically dealt or revealed similar to the flop, turn and river. In some embodiments, the partial player hand consists of three game elements and the community cards consist of twenty one game elements, shown in portions of seven game elements at one time.

[0063] The game progresses by marking the cell on matrix **106** that corresponds to the letter and number of the game element with the color of the game element. The marks are placed on matrix **106** as the game elements are received or revealed, much like in traditional bingo, with the ultimate goal being to obtain as many bingo paylines as possible. Bingo paylines on matrix **106** consist of five colored cells and can be generated either through straight, vertical, or diagonal lines. Nonetheless, different bingo patterns can be used. These patterns can be chosen by the players, dealer, or randomly. The partial player hand or "hole" cards may be marked on corresponding cells of matrix **106** by a colored diamond, circle or other means for identifying it as a hole card and corresponding to the color of the hole card. Game elements that provide duplicate numbers shown on matrix **106** may be indicated by dividing the corresponding cell on matrix **106** into colored portions corresponding to the color of the game elements. For example, if orange and blue game elements associated with the number 17 are received then the corresponding cell in matrix **106** may be colored half blue and half orange.

[0064] The aforementioned game may be incorporated in an EGM and provide payouts depending on the amount of bingo paylines achieved and provide a bonus based on flush bingos, that is, a bingo payline in which the same colors have been marked off as described above. For example, a result of 5 total bingo paylines may pay 100 to 1, and if 2 of those bingo paylines are all the same color, then a bonus of 500 to 1 is added.

[0065] The game may also be played in a multiplayer format in which players compete against other players as shown in FIG. **5**, which depicts a game **100** that includes a standard "Texas Hold'em" style poker table **102**, deck of cards **104**, and a 5×5 bingo matrix **106**. Additionally, an automated card shuffler **108**, dealer button **110**, small blind button **112**, big blind button **114**, missed blind button **116**, poker chips **118** for each player, house rake box **120**, 2 to 10 players, discard pile **126**, and optionally, a dealer can be included into game **100**.

[0066] Bingo matrix card **106** can be printed onto paper and changed each game **100**. Alternatively, and more preferably, bingo matrix card **106** can be fitted to a screen that electronically populates matrix **106** each time a new game is requested. A touch-screen can be provided so that spaces on card **106** can be populated and easily marked. Alternatively, an automated card reader **130** integrated into the plasma screen can scan and automatically mark bingo matrix **106** based on card **104** that is turned over in play.

[0067] While a 5×5 matrix **106** is in this embodiment game **100** is not limited to twenty-five spaces. As such, bingo matrix **106** can have fewer or more rows and columns. Furthermore,

the number of rows do not necessarily have to match the number of columns and can be longer or wider such that card **106** does not form a square.

[0068] In some embodiments, the middle space of matrix **106** can be marked with "Free". The free space indicates that players do not need to fill in the space to generate bingos. While the free space is generally placed in the middle of matrix **106**, the space may be placed anywhere on card **106**. Preferably, however, no free space is provided.

[0069] Game elements **12** may be considered for illustrative purposes as cards having "suits" that are distinguished by colors such as green, orange, purple or blue. Alternatively, cards **12** can be distinguished with suits such as spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. Still yet, cards **12** can be distinguished by color and spades, hearts, diamonds, or clubs. One skilled in the relevant art will appreciate that card **12** suits can be distinguished by shading or different patterns and is not limited to any one way or method. As will be shown, the suit determines whether a flush or non-flush bingo can be achieved through the community cards **122** and hole cards **124**.

[0070] Matrix **106** can be marked with matching cards **12** either by a dealer or automatically. Game **100** can include an automated card reader to mark the matrix **106**. The card reader can read both the suit and number indicated on any card **12** and automatically populate bingo matrix card **106**. While it is preferable that 2 to 10 players can play game **100**, it is not necessary. In a game having a deck of 100 cards **12**, is envisioned that a maximum number of 26 players can play the game with each player having three hole cards **124** and a total of twenty-one community cards **122** dealt.

[0071] With reference now to FIG. **6***a*, a flow diagram illustrating exemplary processes performed in game **100** is presented. The process to play game **100** begins at block **602**. At this point, game **100** has two or more players. In some embodiments, deck of cards **104** are shuffled by a human dealer or in automated card shuffler **108**. Cards **104** may further be grouped into three groups of seven community cards **122**.

[0072] At block **604**, players place an ante and forced blinds similar to "Texas Hold'em" poker or an alternative method. For example and as provided above, one player can place a small blind into the pot, while another player places a big blind into the pot.

[0073] At optional block **606**, a dealer can take a house rake from the pot. Similar to other casino table games, the house takes a rake in order to generate revenue for the casino. Typically, the dealer is generally not a player. In a home version where friends are playing together, no house rake is needed.

[0074] Continuing with FIG. **6**, a community bingo card **106** is populated at block **608**. Generally, game **100** includes four rounds. Each round is indicated by a dotted line as shown in FIG. **6**. Round **1** begins at block **610**. Round **1** is known as the pre-flop round. In this round, three hole cards **124** are given face down to each player. Hole cards **124** are taken from the deck of 100 cards **12**. The hole cards **124** are concealed so that no other player may see the cards **124**. If necessary, these cards **124** can be revealed at the showdown, a final stage of game **100**. These cards **124** represent the unique hand that a player may have in trying to obtain a bingo based on bingo matrix card **106** that the other players cannot see.

[0075] While three hole cards **124** are typically given, in some embodiments, fewer or more hole cards **124** may be given. At block **612**, a pre-flop bet is placed. As described above, players may check, bet, raise, call or fold based on their three hole cards **124**. Strategically, a player having three hole cards **124** positioned within the populated bingo matrix card **106** that can obtain the maximum number of bingos will likely stay in game **100**. On the other hand, if the player's hole cards **124** had a slight chance of forming a bingo, then the player would be less inclined to raise or bet and would rather check, call, or fold. At block **614**, a determination is made whether more than one player is still in game **100**. If only one player is left, that player is awarded the pot and game **100** ends at block **652**.

[0076] Round **2** begins at block **616**. After the pre-flop betting round and assuming that there are at least two players taking part in game **100**, the dealer deals a flop. The flop consists of seven community cards **122** from deck **12**. These cards **122** are dealt face up. At block **618**, the seven community cards **122** in the flop are matched with spaces on the bingo matrix card **106** and the bingo matrix card **106** is marked corresponding to those matches at block **620**. In the card **106** provided above, matches are shown in FIG. **7**. As shown in FIG. **7**, spaces on the grid including column B/row **1**, column B/row **2**, column I/row **1**, column N/row **3**, column N/row **4**, column G/row **1**, and column O/row **3** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the first seven community cards **122** in the flop round.

[0077] Continuing with round **2**, a flop betting round begins at block **622**. Players can once again check, bet, raise, call or fold based on their three hole cards **124** and the seven community cards **122**. At block **624**, a determination is made whether more than one player is still in game **100**. If only one player is left, that player is awarded the pot and game **100** ends at block **652**.

[0078] If at least two or more players remain, round **3** begins at block **626**, also known as the turn round. The turn in game **100** consists of turning an additional seven community cards **122**. These cards **122** are dealt face up. At block **628**, the seven community cards **122** in the turn are matched with spaces on the bingo matrix card **106** and the bingo matrix card **106** is marked corresponding to those matches at block **630** as shown in the exemplary card **106** provided in FIG. **8**. As shown in FIG. **8**, spaces on matrix **106** including column B/row **4**, column I/row **2**, column I/row **3**, column N/row **2**, column N/row **5**, column G/row **2**, and column O/row **4** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the second seven community cards **122** in the turn round.

[0079] Continuing with round **3**, a turn betting round begins at block **632**. Players can check, bet, raise, call or fold based on their three hole cards **124**, the first seven community cards **122** and the second seven community cards **122**. At block **634**, a determination is made whether more than one player is still in game **100**. If only one player is left, that player is awarded the pot and game **100** ends at block **652**.

[0080] If two or more players remain, round **4** begins at block **636**, known as the river round. The river consists of seven community cards **122**. These cards **122** are dealt face up. At block **638**, the seven community cards **122** in the river are matched with spaces on the bingo matrix card **106** and the bingo matrix card **106** is marked as such at block **640**. As shown in FIG. **9**, spaces on matrix **106** including column B**3**, column B/row **5**, column N/row **1**, column G/row **3**, column O/row **1**, column O/row **2**, and column O/row **5** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the third seven community cards **122** in the river round.

[0081] Continuing with round **4**, a river betting round begins at block **642**. Players can check, bet, raise, call or fold based on their three hole cards **124**, flop seven community cards **122**, turn seven community cards **122**, and the river seven community cards **122**. At block **644**, a determination is made whether more than one player is still in game **100**. If only one player is left, that player is awarded the pot and game **100** ends at block **652**. The remaining player typically does now show their hole cards **124**.

[0082] If two or more players remain after the final betting round, a showdown occurs. In the showdown, each remaining player reveals their hole cards **124** at block **646**. A score is generated based on the three hole cards **124** and the twenty-one community cards **122**, which will be described below, at block **648**. A total score is developed based on every bingo achieved by the player. Thereafter, the player having the highest score takes the pot at block **650** ending the process at block **652**.

[0083] While several steps have been recited, not all of them necessarily need to occur in this order. Also, more or less rounds may be used, each round having varying amounts of community cards **122**. In one embodiment, game **100** can include one or two rounds having eight or nine community cards **122**. Alternatively, game **100** can include a single round having twenty-one community cards **122**. One skilled in the relevant art will appreciate that game **100** may come in a variety of forms.

[0084] With reference now to FIGS. **11**, **12**, and **13**, an illustration of how these types of duplicate, triplicate, and quadruplicate matches can be made are shown after each round of game **100**. FIG. **11** depicts another embodiment of bingo matrix card **106** populated after the first round. As shown, spaces on grid **128** including column B/row **3**, column I/row **4**, column N/row **1**, column N/row **2**, and column G/row **1** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the first seven community cards **122** in the flop round. Noticeably, spaces in column I/row **4** and column N/row **2** have been matched two times with different community cards **122** making it less likely for a player to obtain a bingo.

[0085] FIG. **12** depicts the previous bingo matrix card **106** after an additional seven community cards **122** are turned face up. Spaces on grid **128** including column B/row **1**, column B/row **3**, column I/row **2**, column I/row **4**, column N/row **1**, column N/row **2**, column G/row **1**, column O/row **2**, and column O/row **5** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the additional seven community cards **122** in the turn round. Spaces in column B/row **3** and column I/row **4** have been matched two times with different community cards **122** and the space in column N/row **2** has been matched three times with different community cards **122**.

[0086] FIG. **13** depicts the previous bingo matrix card **106** populated after the third round. Spaces on the matrix **106** grid including column B/row **1**, column B/row **3**, column I/row **2**, column I/row **4**, column I/row **5**, column N/row **1**, column N/row **2**, column N/row **3**, column G/row **1**, column G/row **2**, column G/row **3**, column O/row **2**, column O/row **3**, and column O/row **5** have been marked on bingo matrix card **106** corresponding to the additional seven community cards **122** in the river round. Spaces in column B/row **3** and column O/row **5** have been matched two times, the space in column N/row **2** has been matched three times, and the space in column I/row **4** has been matched four times with different community cards **122**.

[0087] An exemplary hardware and operating environment for implementing table **102** can include a general purpose computer system as shown in FIG. **13**. Furthermore the hardware/software described below can be used for other electronic versions of game **100**. The computer system may include a processing unit, system memory, and system bus that operatively couples various system components, including the system memory to the processing unit. There may be only one or there may be more than one processing unit, such that the processor of the computer comprises a single central processing unit (CPU), or a plurality of processing units, commonly referred to as a parallel processing environment. The computer may be a conventional computer, a distributed computer, a web server, a file server, or any other type of computer.

[0088] The system bus may be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, a switched fabric, point-to-point connections, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. The system memory may also be referred to as simply the memory, and includes read only memory (ROM) and random access memory (RAM). A basic input/output system (BIOS), containing the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements within the computer, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM. The computer further includes a hard disk drive for reading from and writing to a hard disk, not shown, a magnetic disk drive for reading from or writing to a removable magnetic disk, and an optical disk drive for reading from or writing to a removable optical disk such as a CD ROM or other optical media.

[0089] The hard disk drive, magnetic disk drive, and optical disk drive are connected to the system bus by a hard disk drive interface, a magnetic disk drive interface, and an optical disk drive interface, respectively. The drives and their associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of computer-readable instructions; data structures, e.g., a catalog and a context-based index; program modules, e.g., a web service and an indexing robot; and other data for the computer. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that any type of computer-readable media that can store data that is accessible by a computer, for example, magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, RAM, and ROM, may be used in the exemplary operating environment.

[0090] A number of program modules may be stored on the hard disk, magnetic disk, optical disk, ROM, or RAM, including an operating system, one or more application programs, other program modules, and program data. A user may enter commands and information into the personal computer through input devices such as a keyboard and pointing device, for example, a mouse. Other input devices (not shown) may include, for example, a microphone, a joystick, a game pad, a tablet, a touch screen device, a satellite dish, a scanner, a facsimile machine, a video camera, a touch screen board as described above, single player wells, and an automated card reader. Input devices can also be individual player wells. These and other input devices are often connected to the processing unit through a serial port interface that is coupled to the system bus, but may be connected by other interfaces, such as a parallel port, game port or a universal serial bus (USB).

[0091] A monitor or other type of display device for bingo matrix **106** is also connected to the system bus via an interface, such as a video adapter. In addition to the monitor, computers typically include other peripheral output devices,

such as a printers and speakers. These and other output devices are often connected to the processing unit through the serial port interface that is coupled to the system bus, but may be connected by other interfaces, such as a parallel port, game port, or a universal serial bus (USB).

[0092] The computer may operate in a networked environment using logical connections to one or more remote computers. These logical connections may be achieved by a communication device coupled to or integral with the computer; the application is not limited to a particular type of communications device. The remote computer may be another computer, a server, a router, a network personal computer, a client, a peer device, or other common network node, and typically includes many or all of the elements described above relative to the computer, although only a memory storage device has been illustrated in FIG. **13**. Computer can be logically connected to the internet. The logical connection can include a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), personal area network (PAN), campus area network (CAN), metropolitan area network (MAN), or global area network (GAN). Such networking environments are commonplace in office networks, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets and the Internet, which are all types of networks.

[0093] When used in a LAN environment, the computer may be connected to the local network through a network interface or adapter, which is one type of communications device. When used in a WAN environment, the computer typically includes a modem, a network adapter, or any other type of communications device for establishing communications over the wide area network. The modem, which may be internal or external, is connected to the system bus via the serial port interface. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to the personal computer, or portions thereof, may be stored in a remote memory storage device. It is appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of and communications devices for establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.

[0094] The technology described herein may be implemented as logical operations and/or modules in one or more systems. The logical operations may be implemented as a sequence of processor-implemented steps executing in one or more computer systems and as interconnected machine or circuit modules within one or more computer systems. Likewise, the descriptions of various component modules may be provided in terms of operations executed or effected by the modules. The resulting implementation is a matter of choice, dependent on the performance requirements of the underlying system implementing the described technology. Accordingly, the logical operations making up the embodiments of the technology described herein are referred to variously as operations, steps, objects, or modules. Furthermore, it should be understood that logical operations may be performed in any order, unless explicitly claimed otherwise or a specific order is inherently necessitated by the claim language.

[0095] One skilled in the relevant art will appreciate that the computer system can include code that is loaded from a hard drive to be run on the processor. Alternatively, the system can be saved on a suitable storage medium such as a diskette, a CD, or like devices.

[0096] The system can take the form of an entirely hardware embodiment, an entirely software embodiment or an embodiment containing both hardware and software elements. In one embodiment, the system is implemented in software, which includes but is not limited to firmware, resident software, microcode, etc.

[0097] Furthermore, the system can take the form of a computer program product accessible from a computer-usable or computer-readable medium providing program code for use by or in connection with a computer or any instruction execution system. For the purposes of this description, a computer-usable or computer readable medium can be any apparatus that can contain, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

[0098] The medium can be an electronic, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic, infrared, or semiconductor system (or apparatus or device) or a propagation medium. Examples of a computer-readable medium comprise a semiconductor or solid-state memory, magnetic tape, a removable computer diskette, a random access memory (RAM), a read-only memory (ROM), a rigid magnetic disk and an optical disk. Current examples of optical disks comprise compact disk-read only memory (CD-ROM), compact disk-read/write (CD-R/W) and DVD.

[0099] A data processing system suitable for storing and/or executing program code comprises at least one processor coupled directly or indirectly to memory elements through a system bus. The memory elements can include local memory employed during actual execution of the program code, bulk storage, and cache memories that provide temporary storage of at least some program code in order to reduce the number of times code is retrieved from bulk storage during execution.

[0100] Input/output or I/O devices (including but not limited to keyboards, displays, pointing devices, etc.) can be coupled to the system either directly or through intervening I/O controllers.

[0101] Network adapters may also be coupled to the system to enable the data processing system to become coupled to other data processing systems or remote printers or storage devices through intervening private or public networks. Modems, cable modem and Ethernet cards are just a few of the currently available types of network adapters.

[0102] Described above, aspects of the present application are embodied in a World Wide Web ("WWW") or ("Web") site accessible via the Internet. As is well known to those skilled in the art, the term "Internet" refers to the collection of networks and routers that use the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol ("TCP/IP") to communicate with one another. The internet can include a plurality of local area networks ("LANs") and a wide area network ("WAN") that are interconnected by routers. The routers are special purpose computers used to interface one LAN or WAN to another. Communication links within the LANs may be wireless, twisted wire pair, coaxial cable, or optical fiber, while communication links between networks may utilize 56 Kbps analog telephone lines, 1 Mbps digital T-1 lines, 45 Mbps T-3 lines or other communications links known to those skilled in the art.

[0103] Furthermore, computers and other related electronic devices can be remotely connected to either the LANs or the WAN via a digital communications device, modem and temporary telephone, or a wireless link. It will be appreciated that the internet comprises a vast number of such interconnected networks, computers, and routers.

[0104] The Internet has recently seen explosive growth by virtue of its ability to link computers located throughout the world. As the Internet has grown, so has the WWW. As is

appreciated by those skilled in the art, the WWW is a vast collection of interconnected or "hypertext" documents written in HTML, or other markup languages, that are electronically stored at or dynamically generated by "WWW sites" or "Web sites" throughout the Internet. Additionally, client-side software programs that communicate over the Web using the TCP/IP protocol are part of the WWW, such as web browsers, SOAP clients, JavaScript, Java Applets, instant messaging, e-mail, browser plug-ins, Macromedia Flash, chat and others. Other interactive hypertext environments may include environments such as those provided in America Online or other online service providers, as well as the "wireless Web" provided by various wireless networking providers, especially those in the cellular phone industry. It will be appreciated that the present application could apply in any such interactive communication environments, however, for purposes of discussion, the Web is used as an exemplary interactive hypertext environment with regard to the present application.

[0105] A website is a server/computer connected to the Internet that has storage capabilities for storing hypertext documents and that runs administrative software for handling requests for those stored hypertext documents as well as dynamically generating hypertext documents. Embedded within a hypertext document are a number of hyperlinks, i.e., highlighted portions of text which link the document to another hypertext document possibly stored at a website elsewhere on the Internet. Each hyperlink is assigned a URL that provides the name of the linked document on a server connected to the Internet. Thus, whenever a hypertext document is retrieved from any web server, the document is considered retrieved from the World Wide Web. Known to those skilled in the art, a web server may also include facilities for storing and transmitting application programs, such as application programs written in the JAVA® programming language from Sun Microsystems, for execution on a remote computer Likewise, a web server may also include facilities for executing scripts and other application programs on the web server itself.

[0106] A remote access user may retrieve hypertext documents from the World Wide Web via a web browser program. A web browser, such as Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft's Internet Explorer, is a software application program for providing a user interface to the WWW. Upon request from the remote access user via the web browser, the web browser requests the desired hypertext document from the appropriate web server using the URL for the document and the hypertext transport protocol ("HTTP"). HTTP is a higher-level protocol than TCP/IP and is designed specifically for the requirements of the WWW. HTTP runs on top of TCP/IP to transfer hypertext documents and user-supplied form data between server and client computers. The WWW browser may also retrieve programs from the web server, such as JavaScript or JAVA applets, for execution on the client computer. Finally, the WWW browser may include optional software components, called plug-ins, that run specialized functionality within the browser.

[0107] In other embodiments, game **100** can be played on a hand held device as shown in FIG. **14**. As depicted, the device can be used to challenge other players on an online system.

[0108] It should be understood that a game according to the present invention may be incorporated in a fully or partially automated or interactive, computerized platform supporting multiple player positions. It should be readily apparent that additional computerized or manual systems may be employed in accordance with the present invention in order to achieve its full implementation.

[0109] Those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the method described above may be incorporated in an electronic gaming machine or system in accordance with the invention. Such system or machine may include various computer and network related software and hardware, such as programs, operating systems, memory storage devices, input/output devices for data or monetary transfers, display devices, processors, servers with links to data communication systems, wireless or otherwise, and data transceiving terminals. Those skilled in the art will further appreciate that the precise types of software and hardware used are not vital to the full implementation of the present invention so long as players and operators of the present invention are provided with useful access thereto as described in exemplary embodiments herein.

[0110] While exemplary methods and applications of the methods of the present disclosure, have been described herein, it should also be understood that the foregoing is only illustrative of exemplary embodiments, as well as principles of the invention, and that various modifications can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, the described embodiments should not be considered as limiting of the invention in any way. Accordingly, the invention embraces alternatives, modifications and variations which fall within the spirit and scope of the invention as described and claimed.

[0111] The foregoing description is provided to enable any person skilled in the relevant art to practice the various embodiments described herein. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the relevant art, and generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments. Thus, the claims are not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown and described herein, but are to be accorded the full scope consistent with the language of the claims, wherein reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean "one and only one" unless specifically stated, but rather "one or more." All structural and functional equivalents to the elements of the various embodiments described throughout this disclosure that are known or later come to be known to those of ordinary skill in the relevant art are expressly incorporated herein by reference and intended to be encompassed by the claims. Moreover, nothing disclosed herein is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether such disclosure is explicitly recited in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A device for playing games, comprising a plurality of game elements, wherein each game element is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game element including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game elements are capable of being arranged into a plurality of subsets of game elements by features within the discrete category of features, wherein the discrete categories of features are selected from the group consisting of colors, alphabetic characters, ideographic characters and numerical values.

2. A game device as in claim **1**, wherein the game elements are playing cards.

3. A game device as in claim **1**, wherein the game elements are game tiles.

4. A game device as in claim **1**, wherein the game elements are virtual representations of cards.

5. A game device as in claim **1**, wherein each game element includes a color, and alphabetic character and a numerical value.

6. A game device as in claim **1**, wherein the game elements are of different colors and each subset of game elements of different colors include the same set of alphabetic characters and numerical values.

7. A method of playing a game, comprising the steps of:

a. accepting a player to participate in the game;

b. providing a plurality of game elements to the participating player to form a player hand, wherein each game element is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game element including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game elements are capable of being arranged into a plurality of unique subsets of game elements by features within the discrete category of features;

c. comparing the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria, wherein the predefined criteria relates to assigning a player hand ranking based on the features associated with the game elements forming the player hand and identifies a penalty condition associated with at least one feature of the plurality of features for which the player hand is automatically assigned a losing ranking;

d. determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition;

e. determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to a player hand ranking if the penalty condition is not satisfied by the player hand; and

f. assigning a ranking to the player hand.

8. A method according to claim **7**, wherein the step of accepting a player participating in the game further comprises receiving a wager from the player.

9. A method according to claim **7**, wherein the plurality of game elements are randomly dealt to the participating player to form a player hand.

10. A method according to claim **7**, wherein the one or more categories of features comprise numeric values, alphabetic characters, colors, ideographic characters, symbols and graphics.

11. A method according to claim **7**, wherein the game elements are divisible into a plurality of subsets of game elements, whereby the game elements of each subset of the plurality include an exclusive feature from a sole category of features and the same combinations of the remaining features from other categories of features.

12. A method according to claim **11**, wherein the penalty condition is associated with one of the exclusive features.

13. A method according to claim **7**, further comprising the steps of:

a. receiving instructions from the participating player identifying game elements to be discarded from the player hand; and

b. providing the participating player with additional game elements to replace the game elements discarded.

14. A method according to claim **7**, wherein the penalty condition is associated with a feature, whereby a penalty subset of gaming elements associated with the penalty feature is identifiable and a player hand including a game element from the penalty subset will automatically be assigned a losing player hand ranking irrespective of the player hand ranking unless the player hand includes only game elements from the penalty subset.

15. An electronic gaming machine comprising:

a. a input device configured for accepting a player wager to participate in a bingo-poker hybrid game;

b. a display configured for displaying representations of bingo-poker hybrid cards;

c. a processor configured for:

i. randomly providing a plurality of representations of game cards to the participating player to form a player hand, wherein each game card is associated with a plurality of features, each feature of the plurality of features being selected from a discrete category of features, each game card including a feature from each discrete category of features, whereby the plurality of game cards are capable of being arranged into a plurality of unique subsets of game cards by features within the discrete category of features;

ii. comparing the game elements forming the player hand with predefined criteria, wherein the predefined criteria relates to assigning a player hand ranking based on the features associated with the game elements forming the player hand and identifies a penalty condition associated with at least one feature of the plurality of features for which the player hand is automatically assigned a losing ranking;

iii. determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to the penalty condition;

iv. determining whether the player hand satisfies the predefined criteria relating to a player hand ranking if the penalty condition is not satisfied by the player hand; and

v. assigning a ranking to the player hand.

16. An electronic gaming machine according to claim **15**, wherein the one or more categories of features comprise numeric values, alphabetic characters, colors, ideographic characters, symbols and graphics.

17. An electronic gaming machine according to claim **15** further comprising an output device for providing a payout if one of the predefined criteria is satisfied.

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