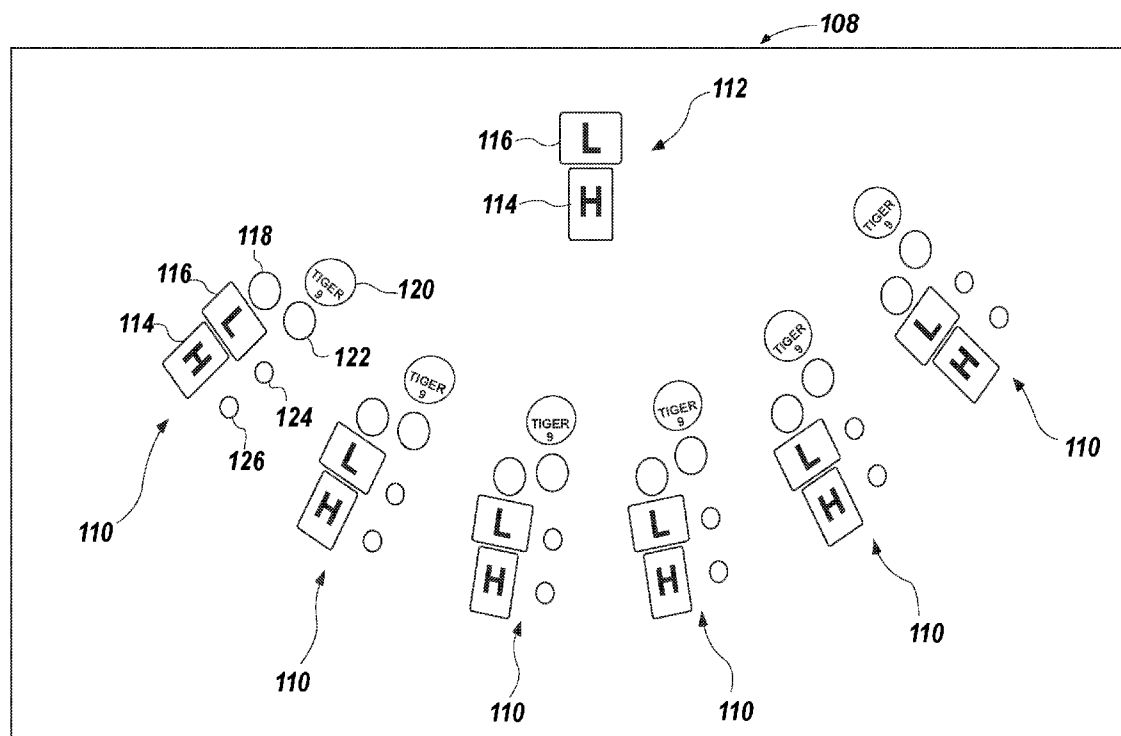


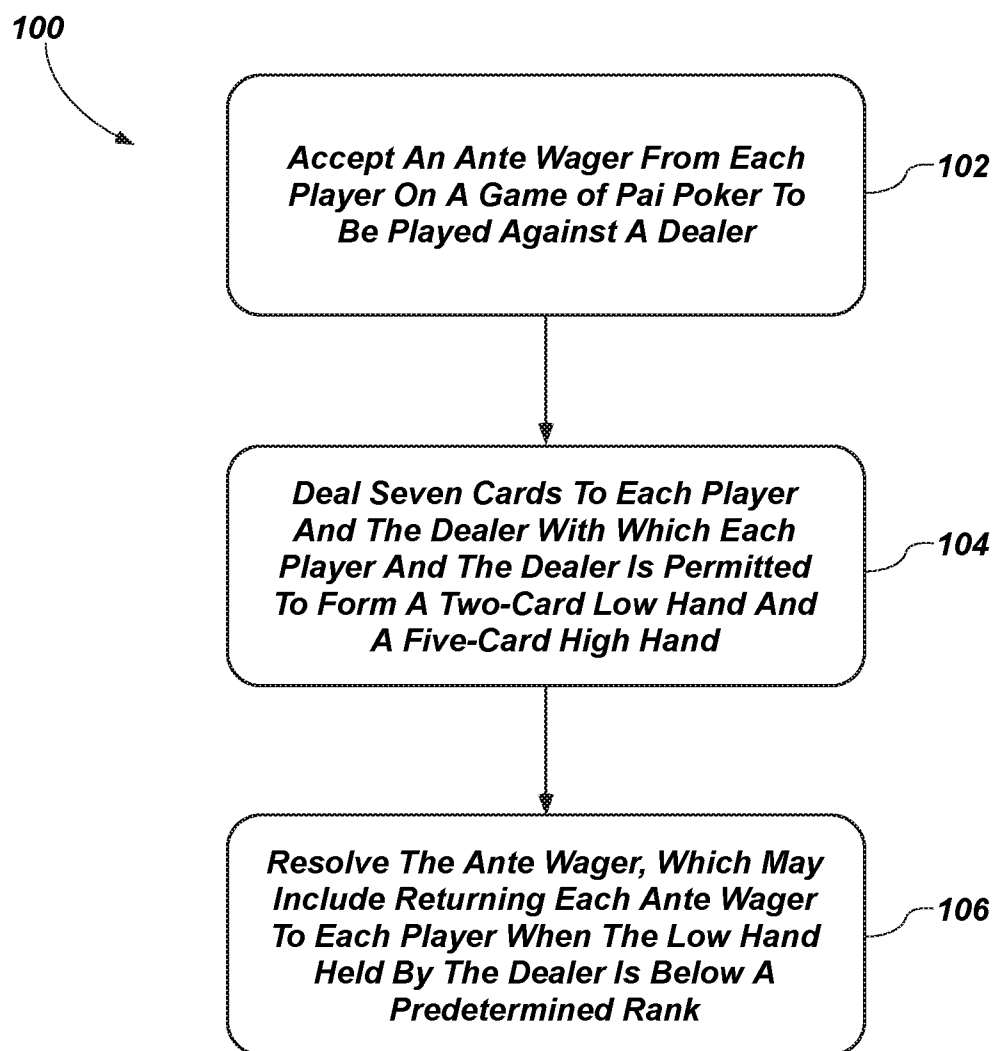


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Hemberger(10) **Pub. No.: US 2016/0151700 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 2, 2016**(54) **METHODS OF ADMINISTERING PAI GOW
POKER GAMES WITH BONUS SIDE BETS
AND RELATED APPARATUSES AND
SYSTEMS****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
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(2013.01)(71) Applicant: **Bally Gaming, Inc.**, Las Vegas, NV
(US)(72) Inventor: **John Hemberger**, Las Vegas, NV (US)(21) Appl. No.: **15/013,726**(22) Filed: **Feb. 2, 2016****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) Continuation of application No. 14/020,666, filed on
Sep. 6, 2013.(57) **ABSTRACT**

Methods of administering wagering games comprise accepting an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer. Seven cards are dealt to each player and the dealer, with which each player and the dealer is permitted to form a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand. The ante wager, wherein resolving the ante wager comprises returning each ante wager to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is of a predetermined disqualifying rank.



**FIG. 1**

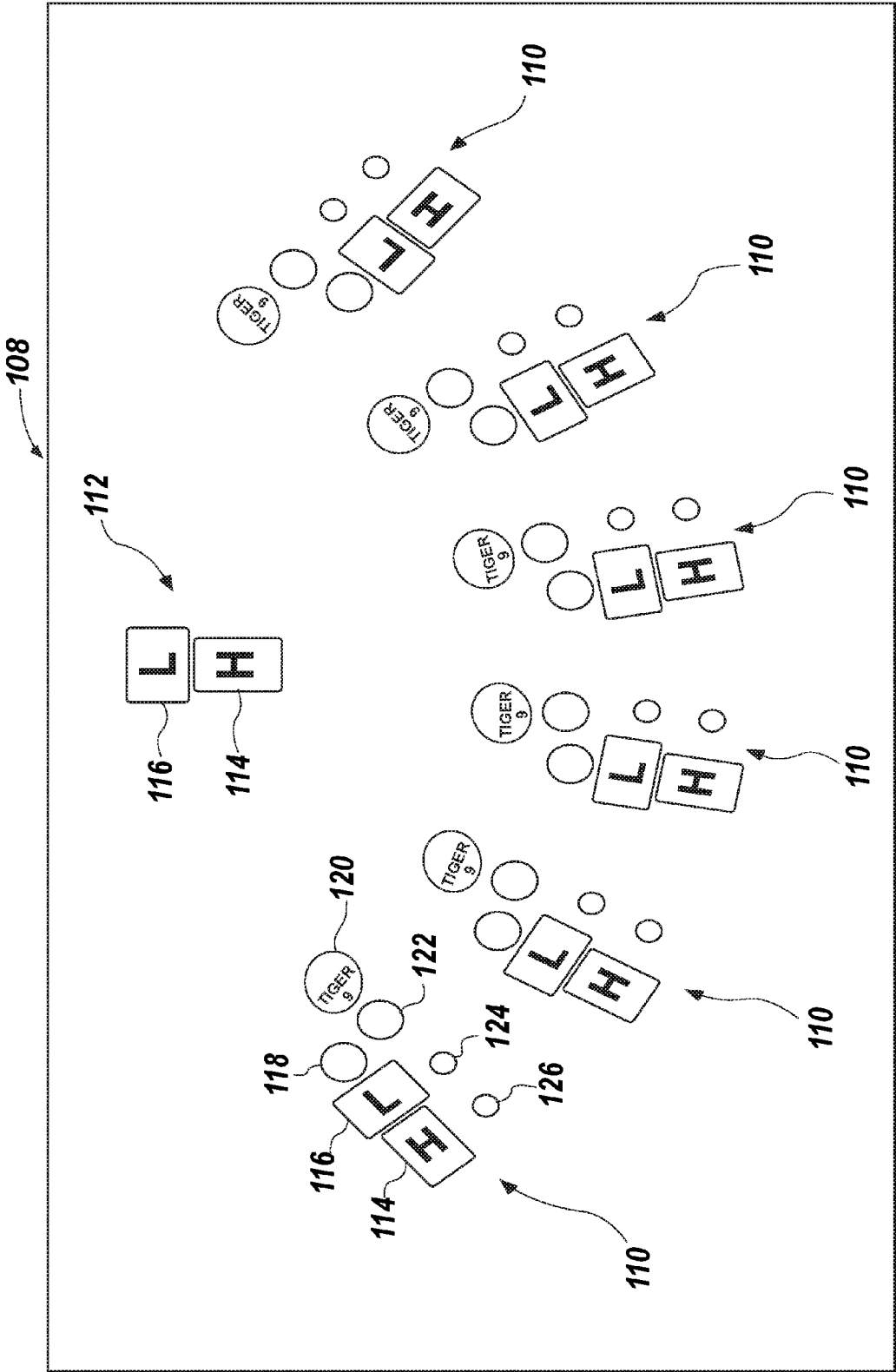


FIG. 2

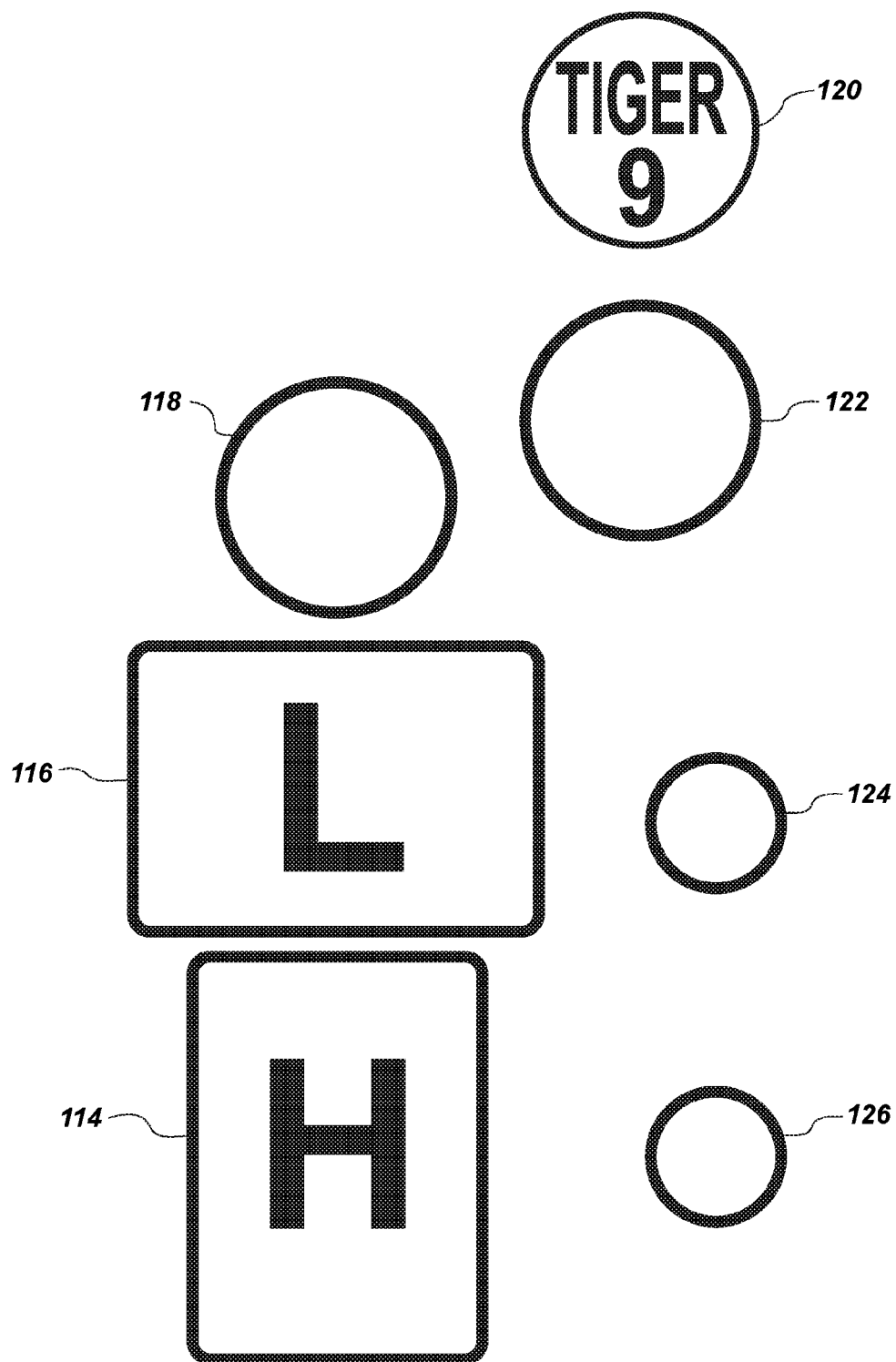


FIG. 3

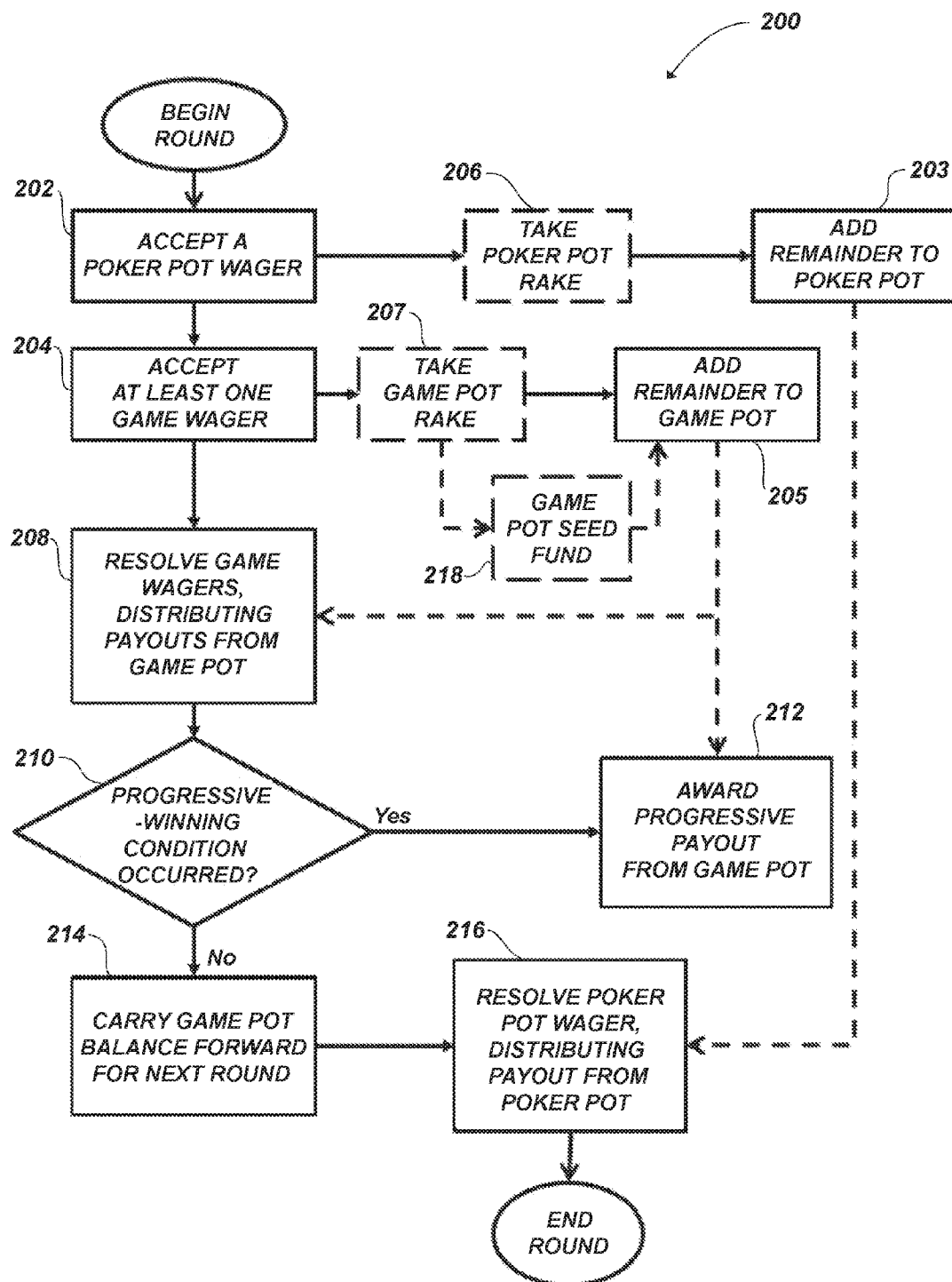
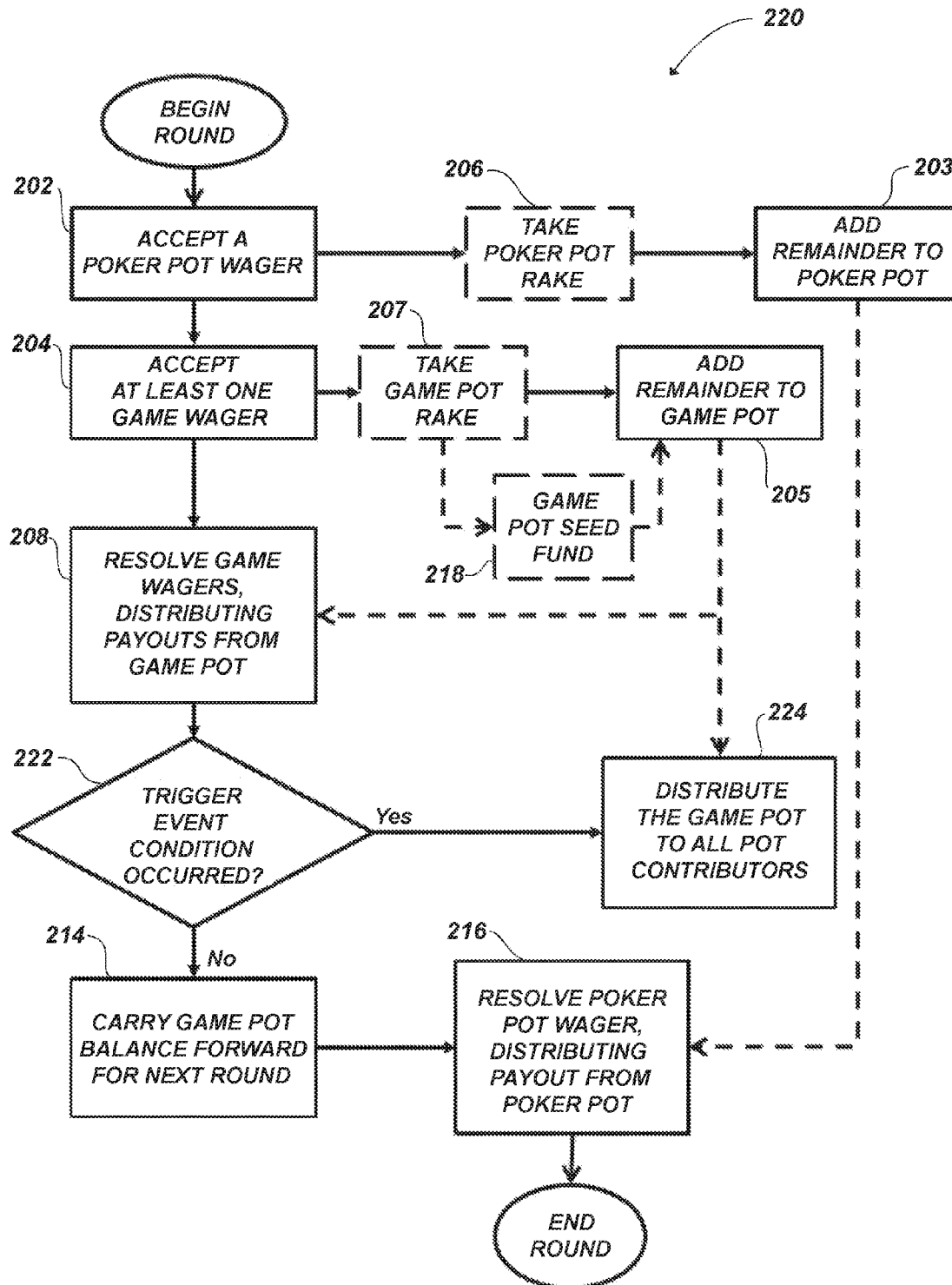


FIG. 4



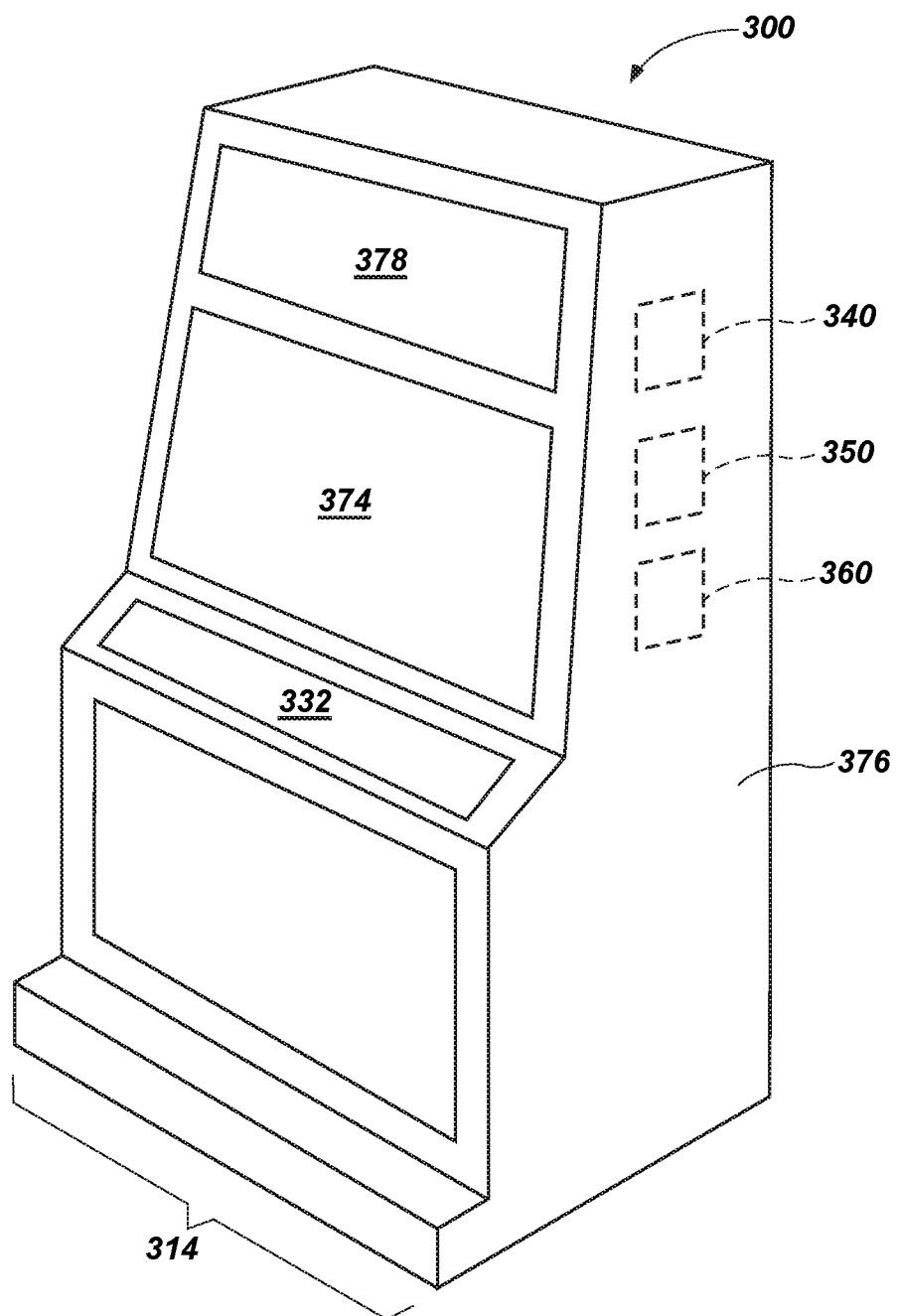


FIG. 6

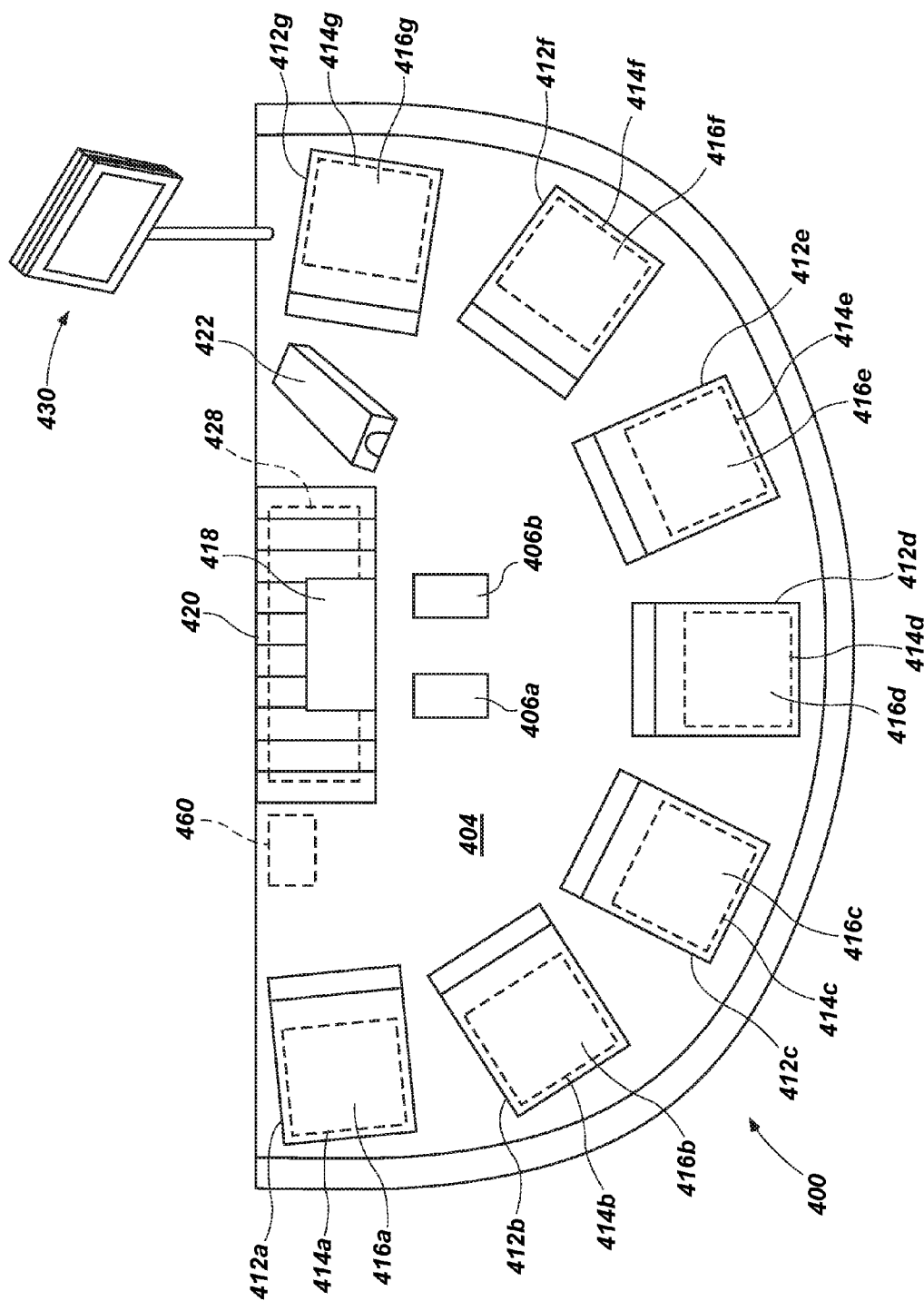


FIG. 7

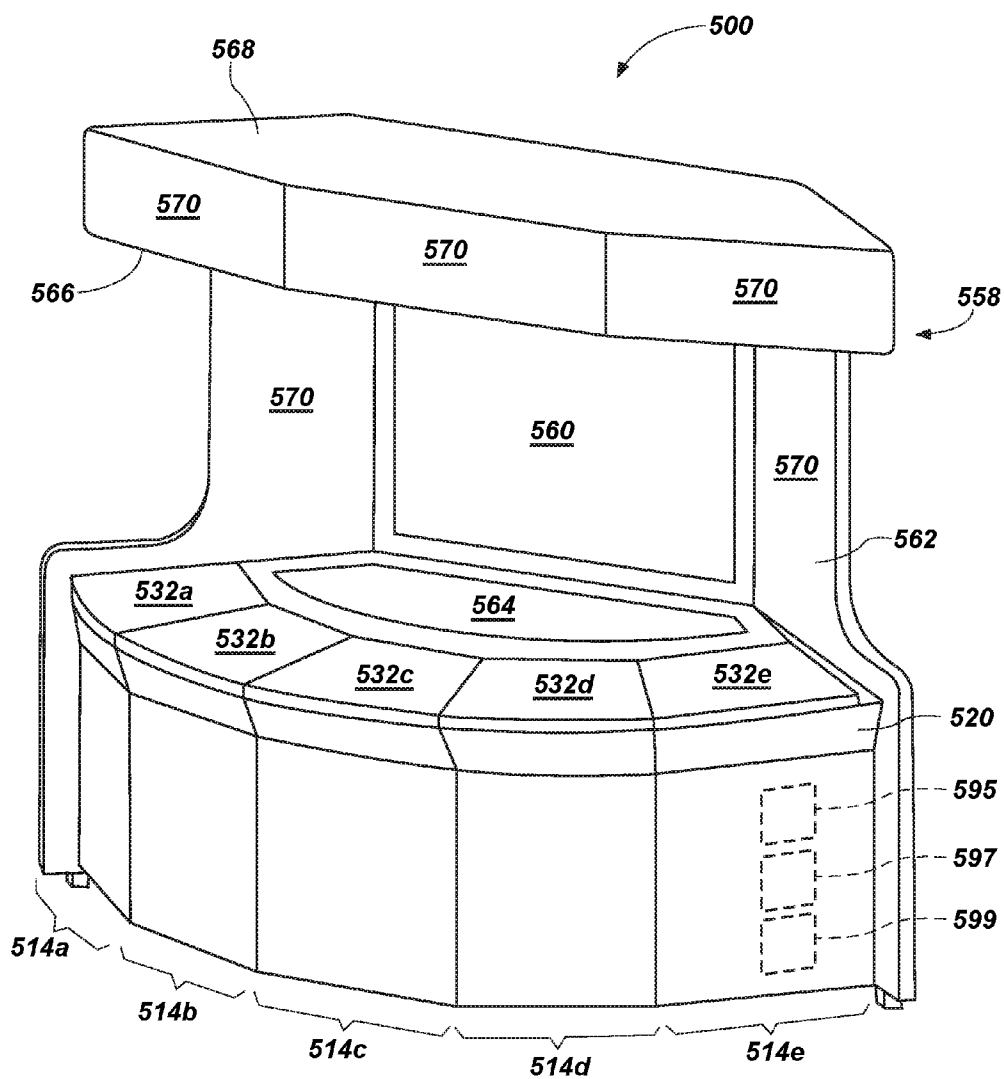
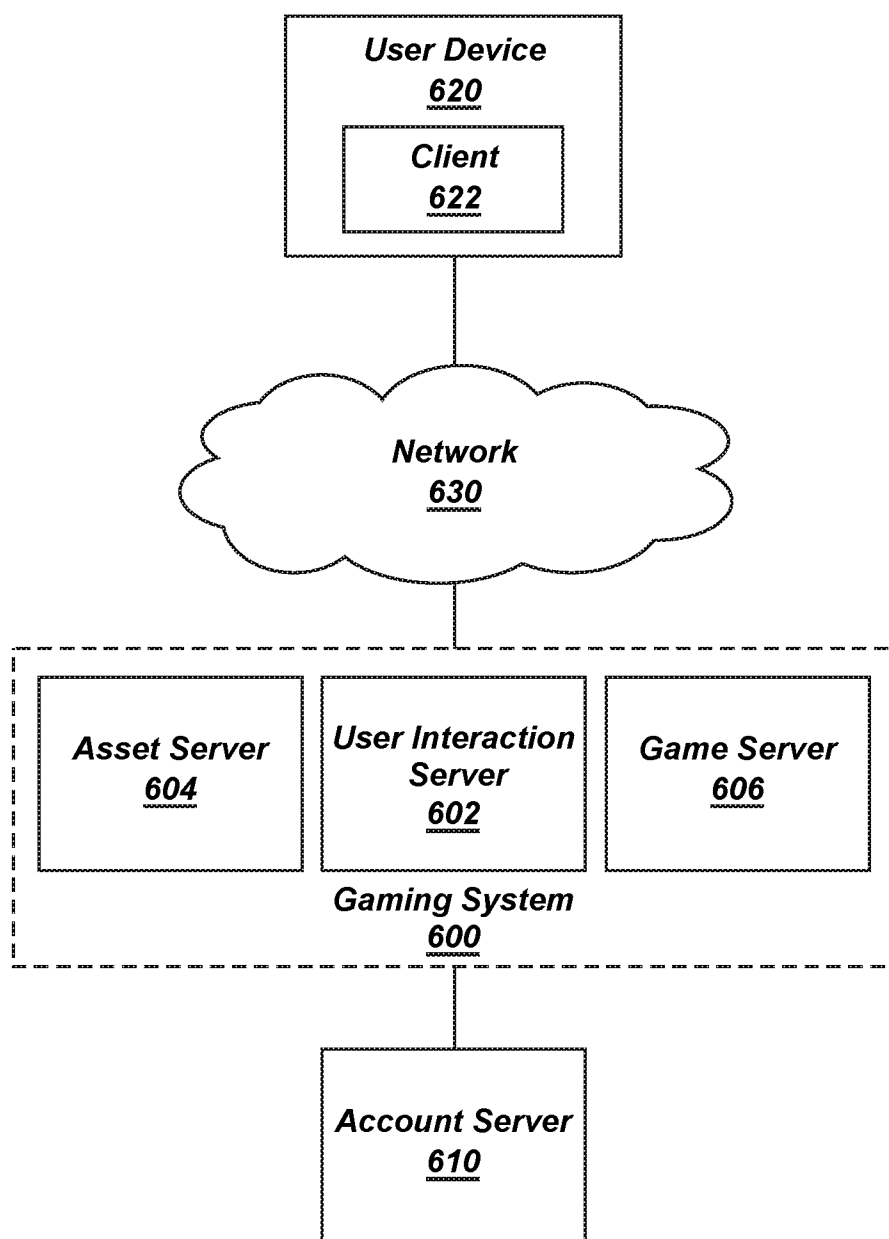


FIG. 8

**FIG. 9**

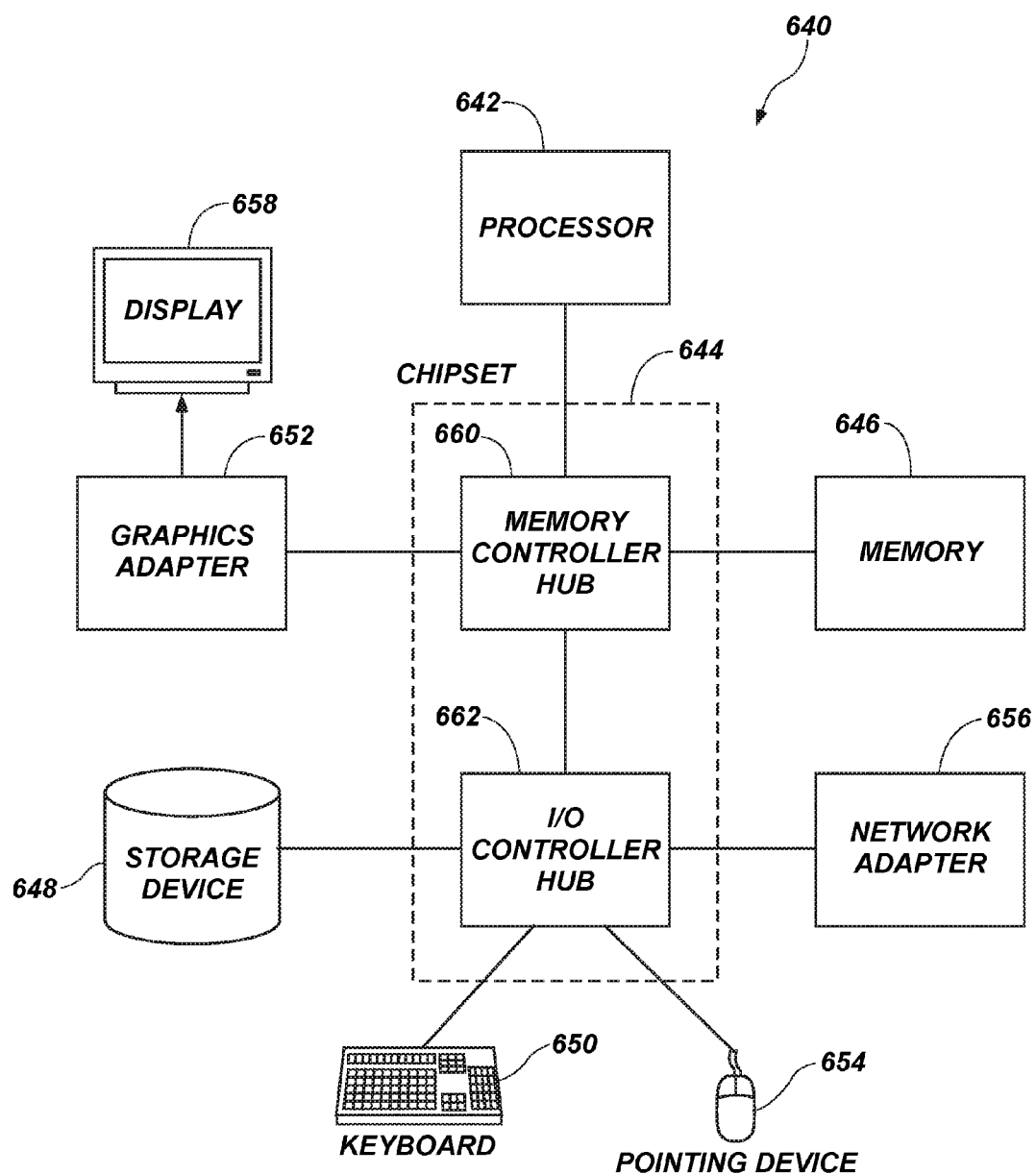


FIG. 10

**METHODS OF ADMINISTERING PAI GOW
POKER GAMES WITH BONUS SIDE BETS
AND RELATED APPARATUSES AND
SYSTEMS**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATION**

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/020,666, filed Sep. 6, 2013, pending, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference.

FIELD

[0002] The disclosure relates generally to methods of administering wagering games for casinos and other gaming establishments, and related systems and apparatuses. More specifically, disclosed embodiments relate to methods of administering pai gow poker games played against a dealer wherein no commission is paid to the house from winning player hands, and a dealer's low hand of a predetermined rank results in a push for players' ante bets.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Pai gow poker is a wagering game played in casinos and other gaming establishments. Conventional pai gow poker is frequently characterized by slow play. Many bets placed in conventional pai gow poker result in a push. In addition, the house conventionally collects a commission to improve the profitability of pai gow poker, such as, for example, by retaining 5% of all winning bets. Calculating and collecting the commission further slows game play.

[0004] Some attempts have been made to maintain the profitability of pai gow poker without the necessity to collect any commission. For example, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/618,597, filed Nov. 13, 2009, for "COMMISSIONLESS PAI GOW WITH DEALER QUALIFICATION," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference, discloses methods for administering commissionless pai gow poker games. Briefly, the dealer's hand must be of a predetermined rank or higher to continue according to otherwise conventional scoring and payout rules. If the dealer's hand does not achieve the predetermined rank or higher, player bets are paid a fixed odds payout of 1:2.

[0005] As another example, U.S. Pat. No. 8,262,450, filed Jul. 6, 2009 and issued Sep. 11, 2012, for "NON-COMMISSION PAI GOW POKER GAMES, DEVICES, SYSTEMS AND METHODS THEREOF," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference, discloses additional methods for administering non-commission pai gow poker games. Briefly, the players' ante wagers push when the dealer's high hand (i.e., the five-card hand) is ranked queen high. Players may make an optional side bet, which results in a 50:1 fixed odds payout when the dealer's high hand (i.e., the five-card hand) is ranked queen high.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0006] In some embodiments, methods of administering wagering games comprise accepting an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer. The "ante" wager for purposes of this disclosure is defined as the basic game wager that is resolved by comparing the player's high and low hand to the dealer high and low hand. Seven cards are dealt to each player and the dealer, with

which each player and the dealer are respectively permitted to form a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand. The ante wager is returned to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is of a predetermined disqualifying rank; for example, a nine high.

[0007] In other embodiments, gaming tables for administering wagering games comprise a playing surface including at least one player interface for at least one player position, at least one dealer interface for a dealer position, and at least one processor. The at least one processor is programmed to accept an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer, process rank and suit information for cards dealt to each player and the dealer, process rank information of a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand set by each player or the dealer from the cards dealt to each player and the dealer, and resolve the ante wager. Resolving the ante wager comprises authorizing return of each ante wager to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is ranked nine high.

[0008] In still other embodiments, electronic gaming machines for administering wagering games comprise at least one player display and at least one player interface, wherein the player interface is configured to accept player input, and at least one processor. The at least one processor is programmed to accept an ante wager via the at least one player interface from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer, display on the at least one player display rank and suit information for cards dealt to each player, display rank information of a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand selected by each player and the dealer from the cards dealt to each player and cards dealt to the dealer, and resolve the ante wager. Resolving the ante wager comprises authorizing return of each ante wager to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is ranked nine high.

[0009] In yet other embodiments, systems for administering wagering games over networks comprise a game server configured to be accessed by a client server. The game server is programmed to accept an ante wager via the client server from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer, transmit to the client server rank and suit information for cards dealt to each player, transmit to the client server rank information of a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand selected by each player and the dealer from the cards dealt to each player and cards dealt to the dealer, and resolve the ante wager. Resolving the ante wager comprises authorizing return of each ante wager to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is ranked nine high.

[0010] In additional embodiments, methods of administering player-banked wagering games over networks may comprise: designating at a game server a player to act as a dealer for a round of play and sending from a user interaction server an indication of which player has been designated as the dealer; receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to receive a player-banked ante wager and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the player-banked ante wagers have been added to a player-banked pot; receiving at the user interaction server authorization to receive a progressive wager from each player and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the progressive wagers have been added to a progressive pot separate from the player-banked pot; transferring a rake from the progressive pot to an account server; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven

cards allocated to each player; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player not designated as the dealer to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to the dealer into high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning one-half of the amount of each ante wager to each player not designated as the dealer; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning one-half of the amount of the ante wager to the dealer; resolving the ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand of each player to the high hands of the other players and the dealer and the low hand of each player to the low hands of the other players the dealer, wherein an entire remaining amount in the player banked pot is awarded to the player holding the highest ranked high hand, the highest ranked low hand, or the highest ranked high hand and low hand; and resolving the progressive wager by comparing at the game server the high hand or seven-card hand of each player and the dealer to a paytable, wherein at least a portion of the progressive pot, less the rake, is awarded to the player or the dealer holding a predetermined winning hand combination or a premium winning hand composition.

[0011] In yet additional embodiments, methods of administering player-banked wagering games over networks may comprise: designating at a game server a player to act as a dealer for a round of play and sending from a user interaction server an indication of which player has been designated as the dealer; receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to receive a player-banked ante wager and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the player-banked ante wagers have been added to a player-banked pot; receiving at the user interaction server authorization to receive another wager from each player and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the other wagers have been added to another pot separate from the player-banked pot; transferring a rake from the other pot to an account server; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven cards allocated to each player; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player not designated as the dealer to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to the dealer into high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning one-half of the amount of each ante wager to each player not designated as the dealer; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning one-half of the amount of the ante wager to the dealer; resolving the player-banked ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand of each player and the dealer to the high hands of the other players and the dealer and the low hand of each player and the dealer to the low hands of the other players and the dealer, wherein an entire remaining amount in the player-banked pot is awarded to the player holding the highest ranked high hand, the highest ranked low hand, or the highest ranked high hand and low hand; and resolving the other wager by determining at the game server whether a predetermined event has occurred, wherein at least

a portion of the other pot, less the rake, is distributed among the players and the dealer when the predetermined event has occurred.

[0012] In still further embodiments, methods of administering play-for-free wagering games over networks may comprise: sending from a user interaction server a quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within a predetermined time period to each player; receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to allocate at least one valueless chip to an ante wager; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven cards allocated to each player; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to a dealer into high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning each ante wager to each player; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, resolving the ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand and the low hand of each player to the high hand and the low hand of the dealer; and receiving authorization to redeem a valueless access token at the user interaction server from a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements or determining that the predetermined time period has lapsed for a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements and sending from the user interaction server another quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within another predetermined time period to the player.

[0013] Further embodiments may include one, some, or all of the following: The acts of the dealer may be carried out by a visual representation of a dealer, the visual representation being generated and/or displayed by a computer. The visual representation may be a virtual person (e.g., an animation), or may be a transmission (e.g., a video) of an actual person. The visual representation may be part of an online gaming experience of the disclosed game. The acts described in this disclosure associated with a dealer, including dealing cards, displaying or turning cards over, receiving or paying bets, or any other actions, may be represented in any way when used in an online environment. For example, the cards associated with a dealer action, described as being dealt or otherwise handled by a dealer, may appear as virtual cards or as transmitted pictures of physical cards. This may include a display of virtual card decks where each deck, individual card, and hand is displayed to an online player in a manner consistent with the game play disclosed herein, but may or may not include a visual representation of a dealer with the cards. Likewise, betting activity may be displayed in any manner to a player, including, but not limited to, virtual chips, betting pools, numbers, or other indicia of a bet amount.

[0014] The online experience may involve players playing remotely (e.g., in a different physical location) from the dealer, remotely from the location of a game server, or remotely from both, interacting through a networked connection that may include, but is not limited to, the Internet. The online game play may involve players who are also physically remote from each other. Remote connections may use networks involving several types of network links including, but not limited to, the Internet. Networked connections allowing

physically remote players to play a game using a game server or system may be part of an implementation of a virtual or online gaming environment.

[0015] Live, electronic, or online-implementations of the methods described herein may be configured for administration as either “play-for-pay” embodiments or “play-for-fun” embodiments. In play-for-pay embodiments, wagers having real-world monetary value are received and payouts having real-world monetary value may be distributed. Play-for-pay embodiments include “house-banked” embodiments and “player-banked” embodiments. In house-banked embodiments, payouts are paid by, and losses are retained by, the game administrator (e.g., a casino or other gaming establishment). In player-banked embodiments (e.g., “player-pooled progressive” configurations, “dividend refund” configurations), wagers are “raked” by the game administrator (i.e., a portion of the wagers are retained by the game administrator) and then pooled into a pot from which payouts are paid, which pot is eventually distributed to at least one player; thus, the game administrator retains only the raked amounts. Aside from play-for-pay embodiments, play-for-fun embodiments (e.g., “free play-for-fun” configurations, “social play-for-fun” configurations) involve receiving wagers having no real-world monetary value and distributing payouts having no real-world monetary value.

[0016] The actions described in this disclosure as the acts of a player, including betting, card selection (if any), card evaluation, card discards (if any), play elections, or any other actions, may be carried out over a network where the indicated actions are received as input to a device. The input-receiving device is typically physically remote from the game server or game host and is connected over a long-distance network, but may also be implemented over a wired or wireless LAN in one building, or even in one room, for example. In one embodiment, game play generated at the server or host location may be displayed on the same device as the receiving device. In some embodiments, game play may be conveyed to remote players in devices separate from the devices receiving input from a player, such as public screens or publicly broadcast data about a game coupled with individual or private input devices. The reception of an input at a device may be accomplished through any technology adapted for such a purpose including, but not limited to, keypads, keyboards, touchpads, touch screens, buttons, mice, optical location devices, eye movement/location detectors, sound input devices, etc. When discussing a device, it is understood the device may comprise multiple components and be complex, including hardware components combined with firmware and/or software, and may itself be a subcomponent of a larger system.

[0017] Yet other embodiments may comprise apparatuses and systems for administering wagering games according to embodiments of the disclosure.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] While the disclosure concludes with claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming embodiments within the scope of the disclosure, various features and advantages of embodiments encompassed by the disclosure may be more readily ascertained from the following description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0019] FIG. 1 is a flowchart diagram of a method of administering a wagering game;

[0020] FIG. 2 is a diagram of a playing surface for implementation of the wagering game;

[0021] FIG. 3 is an enlarged diagram of one of the player positions of the playing surface of FIG. 2;

[0022] FIG. 4 is a flowchart diagram of a method of administering a wagering game, which may be at least partially player banked, according to a player-pooled progressive embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0023] FIG. 5 is a flowchart diagram of a method of administering a wagering game, which may at least partially player banked, according to a dividend refund embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0024] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an individual electronic gaming device configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games in accordance with the present disclosure;

[0025] FIG. 7 is a top view of a table configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games in accordance with the present disclosure;

[0026] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a table configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games in accordance with the present disclosure, wherein the implementation includes a virtual dealer;

[0027] FIG. 9 is a schematic block diagram of a gaming system for implementing embodiments of wagering games in accordance with the present disclosure; and

[0028] FIG. 10 is a block diagram of a computer for acting as a gaming system for implementing embodiments of wagering games in accordance with the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0029] The illustrations presented herein are not meant to be actual views of any particular act in a method of administering a wagering game, apparatus for use in administering a wagering game, or component thereof, but are merely idealized representations employed to describe illustrative embodiments. Thus, the drawings are not necessarily to scale. Additionally, elements common between figures may retain the same or similar numerical designation. Elements with the same number, but including a different alphabet character as a suffix should be considered as multiple instantiations of substantially similar elements and may be referred generically without an alphabet character suffix. For example, elements **100a**, **100b**, and **100c**, may be a device that is instantiated three times and generically referred to herein as element **100**.

[0030] The terms “gaming,” “gambling,” or the like, refer to activities, games, sessions, rounds, hands, rolls, operations, and other events related to wagering games such as web-based games, casino games, card games, dice games, and other games the outcome of which is at least partially based on one or more random events (“chance” or “chances”), and on which wagers may be placed by a player. In addition, the words “wager,” “bet,” “bid,” or the like, refer to any type of wager, bet, or gaming venture that is placed on random events, whether of monetary or non-monetary value. Points, credits, and other items of value may be purchased, earned, or otherwise issued prior to beginning the wagering game. In some embodiments, purchased points, credits, or other items of value may have an exchange rate that is not one-to-one to the currency used by the user. For example, a wager may include money, points, credits, symbols, or other items that may have some value related to a wagering game. Wagers may be placed in wagering games that involve the risk of

real-world monetary value for the potential of payouts with real-world monetary value (e.g., the “play-for-pay,” “player-pooled progressive,” and “dividend refund” configurations, which are described in more detail below) or in wagering games that involve no real-world monetary risks for the player (e.g., the “play-for-fun” and “social play-for-fun” configurations, which are described in more detail below).

[0031] As used herein, the term “wager” includes any form of wagering value, including money, casino chips, other physical means for payment, and online or remote electronic authorization of a wager in any acceptable form to the casino or online or virtual game host. Also included are physical representations of money (e.g., casino chips) at a local gaming table **400**, or **500** (see FIGS. **2**, **7**, and **8**), or electronic authorizations of a transfer of money or digital representations of money (e.g., digital representations of bills or coins, digital representations of chips, numerical quantities of money, numerical quantities of points, or numerical quantities of credits) at a local or remote electronic gaming device **300**, **400**, **500**, **620**, or **640** (see FIGS. **6** through **10**). In the “play-for-fun” and “social play-for-fun” configurations, a “wager” may have a point value but does not have a cash value (i.e., a real-world monetary value).

[0032] For the purposes of this description, it will be understood that when an action related to accepting wagers, making payouts, dealing cards, selecting cards, or other actions associated with a player or a dealer are described, the description includes a player or a dealer taking the action, the results of the action on a live or virtual table or display, and, if applicable, the reception or detection of such an action in an electronic form where player and dealer choices, selections, or other actions are received at an electronic interface. This further includes the results of a virtual dealer and virtual players, where the actions described are actually generated by a computer (typically associated with an online game). By way of a further example, if dealing of a card is described herein, the description includes (but is not limited to) the following: the dealing of a card by a dealer from a deck, shuffler, a shoe, or other card source and the reception or placement of the card at a table location associated with a player or reception directly by a player; the generation and transmission of an electronic indication or representation of a card from a game play source or server to an electronic receiver, where the receiver may be at a table (using virtual cards) including players and/or virtual players and/or a dealer or virtual dealer, at a public display in a casino, at a remote location (e.g., using online or Internet game play), or at other locations. Also included is the representation of a card on a display or displays, and, if applicable to the action described, an electronic reception of an indication that the card has been received, selected, or otherwise interacted with at a location associated with a player, or, associated with a virtual player. In addition, dealing of a card may refer to revealing a representation of a card on a physical or virtual scratch-off card (also referred to as “scratchers”).

[0033] Referring to FIG. **1**, a flowchart diagram of a method **100** of administering a wagering game is shown. The method **100** may include accepting an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer, as indicated at **102**. For example, the ante wager may comprise a bet that both a five-card high hand and a two-card low hand held by a player will outrank the five-card high hand and the two-card low hand respectively held by the dealer in accordance with the rules of pai gow poker or the rules of a known

pai gow poker variant. The ante wager may be accepted, for example, by a dealer physically receiving money, a representation of money by receiving a player input signal indicating a wager has been placed, (e.g., a chip or token), or by receiving electronic authorization to charge a player account (e.g., a credit account or a bank account). More specifically, the ante wager may be accepted, for example, by physically receiving chips within an ante wager position **118** (see FIGS. **2** and **3**) on a playing surface **108** (see FIG. **2**) of a playing table **400** (see FIG. **7**), by receiving a signal from a user input **332** on a gaming machine (FIG. **6**) or by receiving electronic authorization at a processor **350**, **414**, **428**, **597**, or **642** (see FIGS. **6** through **8** and **10**) to charge a player account via a player interface **332**, **416**, **532**, **620**, **650**, or **654** (see FIGS. **6** through **10**), which player interface **332**, **416**, **532**, **620**, **650**, or **654** (see FIGS. **6** through **10**) may be remotely located from the dealer or processor **350**, **414**, **428**, **597**, or **642** (see FIGS. **6** through **8** and **10**) administering the wagering game in some embodiments.

[0034] In some embodiments, a bonus side wager may be accepted from at least one player. The bonus side wager may comprise, for example, a bet that the low hand held by the dealer will be a certain predetermined, disqualifying rank. The bonus side wager may be accepted by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the ante wager.

[0035] In some embodiments, a fortune side wager may be accepted from at least one player. The fortune side wager may comprise, for example, a bet that a high hand, a seven-card hand or a best five out of seven cards dealt to the player will be of a predetermined rank or higher. In some embodiments, the fortune side wager may comprise a payout when a best five-card hand held by a different player than the one placing the fortune side wager will be of a predetermined envy rank or higher. For example, the fortune side wager may qualify as a bet that the high hand or best five out of seven-card hand of a different player will be of the predetermined envy rank or higher when an amount of the fortune side wager is greater than or equal to a threshold amount. As a specific, non-limiting example, the fortune side wager may qualify as a bet that the high hand or best five-cards out of seven-card hand of a different player will be of the predetermined envy rank or higher when the amount of the fortune side wager is greater than or equal to five dollars. When a player places the fortune side wager in an amount less than the threshold amount, it may function only as a wager that the high hand or the best five out of seven-card hand achieved by the player will be of the predetermined fortune rank or higher. The fortune side wager may be accepted by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the ante wager.

[0036] In one embodiment, the fortune side wager pays according to the following payout schedule as shown in TABLE 1:

TABLE 1

Hand	Payout Odds	Envy Bonus (\$)
Seven-Card Straight Flush	8000:1	\$5,000.00
Royal Flush + Royal	2000:1	\$1,000.00
Match*	1000:1	\$ 500.00
Seven-Card Straight Flush with Joker		

TABLE 1-continued

Hand	Payout Odds	Envy Bonus (\$)
Five Aces	400:1	\$ 250.00
Royal Flush (5 cards)	150:1	\$ 50.00
Straight Flush (5 cards)	50:1	\$ 20.00
Four-of-a-Kind	25:1	\$ 5.00
Full House (5 cards)	5:1	
Flush (5 cards)	4:1	
Three-of-a-Kind	3:1	
Straight (5 cards)	2:1	

*King-Queen suited

[0037] In one embodiment, players win an envy bonus when another player holds a qualifying hand of a four-of-a-kind or better. Players cannot win an envy bonus on their own hands. Players also cannot win an envy bonus when the dealer holds a qualifying hand. If two players qualify for an envy bonus, all players win an envy bonus payout. In one example, envy bonus payouts are absolute amounts. In other embodiments, envy bonuses are odds payout amounts. When a player meets a minimum threshold amount, such as \$5.00 when making the fortune side wager, the dealer marks the player bet with a lammer or token. When a winning envy hand is achieved, players with lammers are paid an envy bonus payout according to the posted payable.

[0038] In some embodiments, a progressive side wager may be accepted from at least one player. The progressive side wager may comprise, for example, a bet that the high hand held by the player making the progressive side wager will be of a predetermined progressive rank or higher. Any progressive side wagers accepted may be pooled in a progressive pot, which may be linked to a group of players playing the wagering game. For example, all progressive side wagers made by players at the same table **400** (see FIG. 7), by players at a grouping of tables **400** (see FIG. 7), by players at a grouping of electronic gaming machines **300** (see FIG. 6), by players connected to a game server **606** (see FIG. 9), by players physically located at a gaming establishment, by players remotely connected to a gaming establishment, by all players participating in the wagering game offered by a gaming establishment, or by all players participating in the wagering game at multiple gaming establishments may be pooled into a progressive pot. In some embodiments, the progressive side wager may also be a bet that the cards held by the player making the progressive side wager will form a premium hand, such as, for example, a five-card hand not achievable using a standard, 52-card deck or a premium seven-card hand. The progressive side wager may be accepted by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the ante wager.

[0039] In some embodiments, a bad beat side wager may be accepted from at least one player. The bad beat side wager may comprise, for example, any of the bad beat side wagers disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2008/0224402, published Sep. 18, 2008, for “BAD BEAT SIDE BET ON HOUSE-BANKED CASINO CARD GAMES,” the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. Briefly, the bad beat side wager may comprise a bet that a high hand held by the player, a low hand held by the player, or both the high hand and the low hand held by the player will be of a predetermined bad beat rank or higher. The bad beat side wager may be accepted by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the ante wager.

[0040] Once all wagers have been accepted, seven cards may be dealt to each player and the dealer, which cards may be used to form a five-card high hand and a two-card low hand for each player and the dealer, as indicated at **104**. Dealing the cards to each player and the dealer may comprise, for example, physically placing playing cards in each participating player position and a dealer position or electronically displaying rank and suit information (e.g., images, text, or both) of playing cards electronically assigned to each participating player position and a dealer position. More specifically, the cards may be dealt, for example, by physically distributing playing cards within designated player card areas **114** and **116** (see FIGS. 2 and 3) in each participating player position **110** (see FIGS. 2 and 3) on a playing surface **108** (see FIG. 2) of a playing table **400** (see FIG. 7), displaying electronic representations including rank and suit information for randomly generated playing cards on a screen or on screens **374**, **416**, **430**, **532**, **564**, **560**, **620**, or **658** for each participating player (see FIGS. 6 through 10), or electronically transmitting electronic representations including rank and suit information for randomly generated playing cards to be displayed on a client screen or on screens **374**, **416**, **430**, **532**, **564**, **560**, **620**, or **658** for each participating player (see FIGS. 6 through 10).

[0041] After the cards have been distributed, the players may be permitted to select which cards from among the seven cards dealt to them they will include in a five-card high hand, with the remaining cards being included in a two-card low hand. For example, players may separate five of their seven cards to form a high hand from the remaining two cards, which may form a low hand, or may interact with a player interface to select cards for inclusion in the high hand or the low hand. More specifically, players may physically position five cards in a high hand area **114** (see FIGS. 2 and 3) to form the high hand and may physically position the remaining two cards in a low hand area **116** (see FIGS. 2 and 3) to form the low hand or may interact with a player interface **332**, **416**, **532**, **620**, **650**, or **654** (see FIGS. 6 through 10) to electronically indicate which cards are to be included in the high hand and which cards are to be included in the low hand. The players' selections may be received and accepted by, for example, visually inspecting the arrangement of physical cards, automatically detecting the arrangement of physical cards (e.g., using RFID sensors to detect RFID tags associated with cards or using an image capture device and image processing software to analyze the cards and their arrangement), or automatically processing the electronic indications made by players using a processor **350**, **414**, **428**, **597**, or **642** (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10). If a player's low hand outranks the player's high hand, the player may be required to revise the selected high and low hands such that the high hand outranks the low hand, in accordance with the rules of conventional pai gow poker. Revising the high and low hands, and accompanying receipt and acceptance, may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the original selection, receipt, and acceptance of the high and low hands.

[0042] The dealer may also select which of the seven dealer cards will form a five-card high hand and which cards will form a two-card low hand. In some embodiments, the method used by the dealer to form the high and low hands may be dictated by a set of rules for setting the high and low hands for the dealer, the set of rules commonly referred to as the “house way.” The house way of selecting the dealer's high and low

hands may comprise, for example, any of the house ways disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 8,342,529, filed Oct. 1, 2009 and issued Jan. 1, 2013, for "AUTOMATED HOUSE WAY INDICATOR AND ACTIVATOR," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. Briefly, the dealer's cards may be arranged to both ensure that the dealer's high hand outranks the dealer's low hand and increase the likelihood that at least one of the dealer's high and low hands will outrank the corresponding high hand or low hand of each player. In other embodiments, the dealer may select at will how to arrange cards into the high hand and the low hand, although it may still be required that the high hand outrank the low hand. The dealer may select the high hand and the low hand, for example, by performing any of the actions described previously in connection with the original selection of the player's high and low hands or the dealer's high and low hands may be automatically generated by a processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10), which may be programmed to apply the house way of forming the high and low hands.

[0043] In some embodiments, players may request that the dealer assist in setting the players high and low hands. The dealer may utilize the automated house way indicator and activator, described above, to assist in setting the player hands. In one embodiment, the dealer must set the player hand the house way if the player requests assistance.

[0044] After each player and the dealer has finished forming the high hand and the low hand from his or her cards, each wager may be resolved, as indicated for the ante wager at 106. For example, the dealer's low hand may be examined first to determine whether the dealer's hands are eligible to continue with the underlying game of pai gow poker. If the dealer's low hand is of a predetermined rank, the dealer's hands may be disqualified. Disqualification may result, for example, in a push, causing at least each ante wager to be returned to each player, as indicated at 106, or a dealer loss, resulting in a payout to each player. As another specific, nonlimiting example, a small, fixed odds payout of between 1:1.5 and 1:4 (e.g., 1:2) may be paid to each player when the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined rank. The predetermined, disqualifying rank may be, for example, a nine high. Disqualifying the dealer's hands based on the rank of the low hand may enable the game of pai gow poker to remain profitable for the casino or other gaming establishment without having to collect any commissions on player's winnings. By refraining from collecting commissions, and avoiding the necessity to calculate, potentially haggle over, rounding off numbers and collect the commission, the speed with which each round of play is administered is increased, which increases the profitability of pai gow poker because more wagers are being made per unit of time. In embodiments where a player is permitted to act as the banker, the house may take a commission on all the banking player's net winnings (e.g., 5% of net winnings). Furthermore, basing the decision on whether the dealer's hands are eligible on the low hand may reduce player disappointment when the dealer's hands are disqualified. For example, the dealer's hands may be disqualified even when the dealer's high hand ranks very high (e.g., is a royal flush, a straight flush, or a four-or-a-kind), which may be a relief to players who otherwise would have lost. When the disqualification decision is based on the high hand, by contrast, as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 8,262,450, players holding particularly strong hands may be disappointed because they may otherwise have won outright.

[0045] In embodiments where disqualification of the dealer's hands results in a push, each ante wager may be returned to a respective player. Returning the ante wagers to the players may comprise, for example, physically returning money or chips to a player or issuing electronic authorization to credit a player account. More specifically, the ante wager may be returned, for example, by physically removing chips from the ante wager position 118 (see FIGS. 2 and 3) on the playing surface 108 (see FIG. 2) of the playing table 400 (see FIG. 7), by receiving electronic authorization at the processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) to credit a player account via a dealer interface 418 (see FIG. 7), or by automatically generating electronic authorization at the processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10).

[0046] In embodiments where disqualification of the dealer's hands results in a payout, a payout may be paid to each player. Paying the payout may comprise, for example, physically giving money or chips or by granting electronic authorization to transfer funds to a player account. More specifically, the payout may be paid, for example, by physically placing chips within a player position 110 (see FIGS. 2 and 3) on a playing surface 108 (see FIG. 2) of a playing table 400 (see FIG. 7), by receiving electronic authorization at a processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) via a dealer interface 418 (see FIG. 7) to transfer funds from an account server 610 (see FIG. 9) to a player account, or automatically generating electronic authorization at the processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) to transfer funds from an account server 610 to a player account (see FIG. 9). The basis for the payout may be the amount of the ante wager in some embodiments. In other embodiments, the basis for the payout may further include the amount of the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, a progressive side wager or the side wager and the fortune side wager.

[0047] Determining whether the dealer hand qualifies to continue with the game of pai gow poker may also resolve the bonus side wager. For example, when the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined rank, the bonus side wager may lose, resulting in the dealer collecting the amount of the bonus side wager. For example, the bonus wager in one embodiment pays 30:1 when the dealer's low hand is a nine high. If the dealer holds any other hand, the wager is lost and the house takes the wager. Returning the amount of the bonus side wager may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the push on the ante wager resulting from the dealer's disqualifying low hand. Collecting the amount of the bonus side wager may be accomplished, for example, by physically retrieving money or chips or granting electronic authorization to transfer funds to a dealer account. More specifically, collecting the amount of the bonus side wager may be accomplished, for example, by physically retrieving chips from a bonus side wager position 120 (see FIGS. 2 and 3) on the playing surface 108 (see FIG. 2) of a playing table 400 (see FIG. 7), receiving electronic authorization at a processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) via a dealer interface 418 (see FIG. 7) to transfer funds from a player account to an account server 610 (see FIG. 9), or automatically generating electronic authorization at the processor 350, 414, 428, 597, or 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) to transfer funds from an account server 610 to a player account (see FIG. 9).

[0048] When the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined, disqualifying rank, a bonus payout may be paid on the bonus side wager. For example, a fixed odds bonus payout of between 25:1 and 35:1 (e.g., 30:1) may be paid on the bonus side wager when the dealer's low hand is disqualified. In one embodiment, this side bet is referred to as a "TIGER 9™" side bet. Thus, the bonus side wager may enable a player to receive a bonus payout when the player may not otherwise receive a payout because of the dealer's hands' disqualification (e.g., where the dealer's disqualifying low hand results in a push or a loss on the ante wager). Paying the bonus payout on the bonus side wager may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with paying the payout on the ante wager as a result of the dealer's disqualified low hand.

[0049] If the dealer's hands qualify to continue with the game of pai gow poker, the ante wager may be resolved by comparing the high hand and the low hand of each player to the high hand and the low hand of the dealer. If the player's high hand outranks the dealer's high hand, and the player's low hand outranks the dealer's low hand, a payout may be paid to the player. In some embodiments, wild cards may be used to form a more desirable hand than would otherwise be achieved based on the dealt cards alone. For example, the game may be played with a 53-card deck including a joker, which is semi-wild, meaning the joker may be used as an Ace or to complete a straight, flush, or straight flush. Paying the payout may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the payout resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand. The payout on the ante wager may be, for example, a fixed odds payout. As a specific, nonlimiting example, the payout on the ante wager may be, for example, between 1:1 and 2:1. In one example, the payout is 1:1 on the ante. The basis for the payout on the ante wager may be the amount of the ante wager itself in some embodiments. In other embodiments, the basis for the payout may further include the amount of the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, or the bonus side wager and the fortune side wager. If one of the dealer's high hand and low hand outranks the corresponding high hand or low hand of the player, and the other of the dealer's high hand and low hand is outranked by the corresponding high hand or low hand of the player, the ante wager may be a push, causing the ante wager to be returned to the player. Returning the ante to the player may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the push resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand. If the dealer's high hand outranks the player's high hand, and the dealer's low hand outranks the player's low hand, the amount of the ante wager may be collected by the dealer. Collecting the amount of the ante wager may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with collecting the bonus side wager.

[0050] In embodiments where the fortune side wager has been made in an amount less than the threshold amount, the fortune side wager may be resolved, for example, by evaluating the best five-card hand made from the seven cards dealt to the player to determine whether the best five-card hand is of the predetermined minimum fortune rank or higher. The predetermined minimum fortune rank may comprise, for example, two pair, three pair, three-of-a-kind, or a five-card straight. In one example, the minimum hand ranking for a winning fortune hand is a five-card straight. In another example, the minimum hand ranking is three-of-a-kind. In

some embodiments, the fortune side wager may remain in play regardless of whether the dealer's low hand is of the disqualifying rank. In other embodiments, the fortune side wager may receive the same consequences as the ante wager (i.e., may entitle the player to a small payout, may be a push, or may be collected) when the dealer's low hand is of the disqualifying rank. The fortune payout for the fortune side wager may be different from the payout for the ante wager. For example, the fortune payout on the fortune side wager may be a fixed odds payout that increases for the player's achievement of increasingly unlikely hands. An illustrative payable for the fortune payout on the fortune side wager portion may be as follows:

Hand Achieved by the Player	Fortune Payout
Seven-Card Straight Flush	8,000:1
Five-Card Royal Flush Plus Two-Card Royal Match	2,000:1
Seven Card Straight Flush Including a Joker	1,000:1
Five Aces	400:1
Royal Flush	150:1
Straight Flush	50:1
Four-of-a-Kind	25:1
Full House	5:1
Flush	4:1
Three-of-a-Kind	3:1
Straight	2:1
Three Pair	Push

Paying the fortune payout may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the payout resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand. When the five-card hand or seven-card hand achieved by the player is less than the predetermined fortune rank, the fortune side bet may be a push or may be collected by the dealer. Returning the fortune side bet to the player may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the push resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand, and collecting the fortune side bet may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with collecting the bonus side wager.

[0051] In embodiments where the fortune side wager has been made in an amount exceeding the threshold amount, resolving the fortune side wager may further include evaluating the best five out of seven-card hands of the players other than the player who made the fortune side wager. If at least one of the best five out of seven-card hands held by the other players is of a predetermined envy rank or higher, an envy payout may be paid to the other players. The predetermined envy rank may be, for example, a full house, four-of-a-kind, a straight flush, a royal flush, five-of-a-kind, five aces, a seven-card flush, a seven-card flush including a joker, or a royal flush. In some embodiments, a separate envy payout may be paid for each other player when one player has achieved a best five out of seven-card hand of the predetermined envy rank or higher. In other embodiments, only a single envy payout may be paid. The envy payout may be, for example, a fixed payout that increases in value when the other player achieves an increasingly unlikely hand. An illustrative payable for the envy payout may be as follows:

Hand Achieved by a Different Player	Envy Payout
Seven-Card Straight Flush	\$5,000
Five-Card Royal Flush Plus Two-Card Royal Match	\$1,000
Seven-Card Straight Flush Including a Joker	\$500
Five Aces	\$250
Royal Flush	\$50
Straight Flush	\$20
Four-of-a-Kind	\$5

Paying the envy payout may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the payout resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand.

[0052] The progressive side wager may be resolved by evaluating the best five out of seven-card hand achieved by the player to determine whether the hand is of the predetermined progressive rank or higher. The predetermined progressive rank may be, for example, a straight, a flush, a four-of-a-kind, or a straight flush. If the hand achieved by the player is of the predetermined progressive rank or higher, a progressive payout may be given to the player. The progressive payout for achieving a hand of the predetermined progressive rank may be, for example, a fixed odds payout or a percentage of the progressive pot. In other embodiments, the payout may be a fixed amount. Resolving the progressive side wager may also comprise evaluating the best five out of seven-card hand achieved by the player to determine whether the hand is a premium hand. A greater progressive payout may be paid for achieving a premium hand than merely for achieving the predetermined progressive rank. For example, achieving a hand of the predetermined progressive rank may result in a fixed odds payout being paid to the player, and achieving a premium hand may result in a percentage of the progressive pot being paid to the player. An illustrative payable for the progressive payout may be as follows:

Hand Achieved by the Player	Progressive Payout
Seven-Card Straight Flush (Premium Hand)	100% of the Progressive Pot
Five Aces (Premium Hand)	10% of the Progressive Pot
Royal Flush	500:1
Straight Flush	100:1
Four-of-a-Kind	75:1
Full House	4:1

Paying the progressive payout may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the payout resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand. A rake may be taken on the progressive payout in some embodiments.

[0053] The bad beat side wager may be resolved by examining each player's high hand and low hand and, in some embodiments, comparing them to the high hand and low hand of the dealer. When the player's high hand, low hand, or both high hand and low hand are of a predetermined bad beat rank or higher, the player may be awarded a bad beat payout. In some embodiments, the player may only be eligible for the bad beat payout if the player achieves the predetermined bad beat rank or higher and still loses to the dealer according to the rules for the ante wager. In other embodiments, the player may only be eligible for the bad beat payout if the player achieves the predetermined bad beat rank or higher and wins against the dealer according to the rules of the ante wager. In some embodiments, whether a player win or a player loss

renders the player eligible for the bad beat payout may depend on the particular predetermined bad beat rank achieved by the player or on the difference in rank between the dealer's hands and the player's hands. An illustrative payable for the bad beat payout may be as follows:

Losing Hand Achieved	Bad Beat Payout
Straight Flush	10,000:1
Four-of-a-Kind	500:1
Full House	40:1
Flush	25:1
Straight	20:1
Three-of-a-Kind	9:1

Paying the bad beat payout may be accomplished by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with the payout resulting from a dealer's disqualifying low hand.

[0054] As a specific, nonlimiting example, a method of administering a wagering game may comprise: accepting an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer; dealing seven cards to each player and the dealer, with which each player and the dealer is permitted to form a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand; and resolving the ante wager, wherein resolving the ante wager comprises returning each ante wager to each player when the low hand held by the dealer is of a predetermined disqualifying rank.

[0055] As another specific, nonlimiting example, a method of administering a wagering game may comprise: accepting an ante wager from each player on a game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer by permitting each player to place a chip within an ante wager position on a playing surface of a table; dealing seven cards to each participating player position at the table and a dealer position, with which each player and/or the dealer is permitted to form a two-card low hand and a five-card high hand by arranging two cards within a low-hand area and five cards within a high-hand area on the table at each participating player position and the dealer position; and resolving the ante wager, wherein resolving the ante wager comprises returning each ante wager to each player by removing the chip from each ante wager position and returning the chip to a respective player when the low hand held by the dealer is of a predetermined disqualifying rank.

[0056] Various platforms are contemplated that are suitable for implementation of embodiments of wagering games according to the present disclosure. For example, embodiments of wagering games may be implemented such that wagers may be received from one or more players, and game play may be administered with the one or more players according to the rules of the wagering games. For example, wagering games may be implemented on gaming tables, which may include physical gaming features, such as physical cards and physical chips, and may include a live dealer and a shuffler or shoe. More specifically, a live dealer may deal physical cards, evaluate hands, accept wagers, accept player elections, issue payouts, and perform other administrative functions of game play. Some embodiments may be implemented on electronic devices enabling electronic gaming features, such as providing electronic displays for display of virtual cards, virtual chips, game instructions, paytables, etc. Some embodiments may include features that are a combination of physical and electronic features.

[0057] As an example, embodiments of wagering games may be implemented on an individual gaming device, such as a video poker machine, configured to accept wagers and having a display screen and input devices for enabling game play of the wagering games. Such an individual gaming device may be linked with other gaming devices that may be operated, for example, by other players. Some individual electronic gaming devices may be referred to as an individual player “electronic gaming machine” and may be stationary, such as being located on a casino floor. Other individual electronic gaming devices may be portable devices that may be carried to different locations by the player. Portable devices may include both display of the ongoing game play and input reception for game play by a player. Portable devices may, alternatively or additionally, be configured for receiving input from a player while the game play is displayed on a public monitor or other display device. Game play and game outcomes may also be displayed on a portable device.

[0058] As previously noted, any of the present methods and games may be played as a live casino table card game, as a hybrid casino table card game (with virtual cards or virtual chips), on a multi-player electronic platform (as disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/764,827, filed Jan. 26, 2004, published as U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0164759 on Jul. 28, 2005, now abandoned; U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/764,994, filed Jan. 26, 2004, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,661,676, issued Feb. 16, 2010; and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/764,995, filed Jan. 26, 2004, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,272,958, issued Sep. 25, 2012; the disclosure of each of which applications and patents is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference), on a personal computer for practice, on a hand-held game for practice, or on a legally-authorized site on the Internet.

[0059] For example, in one embodiment, the players may be remotely located from a live dealer, and a live dealer and a game table may be displayed to players on their monitors via a video feed. The players’ video feeds may be transmitted to the dealer and may also be shared among the players at the table. In a sample embodiment, a central station may include a plurality of betting-type game devices and an electronic camera for each game device. A plurality of player stations, remotely located with respect to the central station, may each include a monitor, for displaying a selected game device at the central station, and input means, for selecting a game device and for placing a bet by a player at the player’s station relating to an action involving an element of chance to occur at the selected game device. Further details on gambling systems and methods for remotely-located players are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,755,741 B1, issued Jun. 29, 2004, titled “GAMBLING GAME SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR REMOTELY-LOCATED PLAYERS,” the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference, and in connection with FIGS. 9 and 10.

[0060] Referring to FIG. 2, a diagram of a playing surface 108 for implementation of the wagering games within the scope of the present disclosure is shown. Such an implementation may comprise a felt layout on a physical gaming table 400 (see FIG. 6) or an electronic representation on a video display 374, 416, 430, 532, 564, 560, 620, or 658 (see FIGS. 5 through 7 and 9) for each participating player position 110 (see FIGS. 2 and 3). The playing surface 108 may include player positions 110 with which players may interact and a dealer position 112 with which the dealer may interact and within each of which the activity (e.g., wagering and card

dealing) may take place. The dealer position 112 may include, for example, a high hand area 114 within which cards forming the dealer’s high hand may be located and a low hand area 116 within which cards forming the dealer’s low hand may be located.

[0061] Referring to FIG. 3, an enlarged diagram of one of the player positions 110 of the playing surface 108 of FIG. 2 is shown. Each player position 110 may include a high hand area 114 within which cards forming the player’s high hand may be located and a low hand area 116 within which cards forming the player’s low hand may be located. Each player position 110 may further include an ante wager position 118 within which chips may be placed or displayed when the ante wager is accepted. A bonus side wager position 120 within which chips may be placed or displayed when the bonus side wager is accepted, a fortune side wager position 122 within which chips may be placed or displayed when the fortune side wager is accepted, a progressive side wager position 124 within which chips may be placed or displayed when the progressive side wager is accepted, and a bad beat side wager position 126 within which chips may be placed or displayed when the bad beat side wager is accepted may also be included in each player position 110.

[0062] In some embodiments, the wagering games described herein may be played against the game administrator, i.e., “the house” (i.e., be “house-banked”), which may involve the game administrator (e.g., a casino or other gaming establishment) receiving (via a dealer who may be employed by the administrator) wagers having real-world monetary value, comparing a player hand against a dealer hand, distributing payouts having real-world monetary value to winning players, and retaining lost wagers. For example, and referring collectively to FIGS. 2 and 3, the casino or other gaming establishment, acting as the dealer, may accept an ante wager from each player, which may be reflected by the presence of a chip or an image of a chip in the ante wager position 118 in the player positions 110 of each participating player. The casino or other gaming establishment may also accept any bonus side wagers, fortune side wagers, progressive side wagers, and bad beat wagers that players elect to make, which may be reflected by the presence of a chip or an image of a chip in the bonus side wager position 120, the fortune side wager position 122, progressive side wager position 124, and bad beat wager position 126.

[0063] The casino or other gaming establishment may deal seven cards to each player and to the dealer, which may be reflected by the presence of cards or images of cards in the player positions 110 and the dealer position 112. The players may arrange their cards into their chose high hand and low hand configurations, which may be reflected by the arrangement of five cards or five images of cards into the high hand area 114 and two cards or two images of cards into the low hand area 116 of each participating player position 110. The player may request the assistance of the dealer in setting the player hands. The casino or other gaming establishment may arrange its cards into the high hand and low hand configurations required by the house way, which may be reflected by the arrangement of five cards or five images of cards into the high hand area 114 and two cards or two images of cards into the low hand area 116 of the dealer position 112.

[0064] After the casino or other gaming establishment has set its high and low hands, the low hand may be evaluated to determine whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank. For example, the dealer’s low hand may be evaluated to

determine whether it is a nine high. If it is a nine high, the ante wager may be returned to each player and any players who made the bonus side wager in area 120 may receive a bonus payout of 30:1. If the dealer's low hand is not a nine high, the ante wager may be resolved by comparing the high hand of each player to the high hand of the dealer and the low hand of each player to the low hand of the dealer. If both player hands outrank the dealer's hands, a 1:1 payout may be given to the player. If one of the player hands outranks the corresponding dealer hand and the other player hand is outranked by the corresponding dealer hand, the ante wager may be returned to the player. If both player hands are outranked by the dealer's hands the ante wager may be collected by the casino or other gaming establishment. When the dealer's hand is not ranked nine high, any bonus side wagers may be collected by the casino or other gaming establishment.

[0065] Any fortune wagers may be resolved by comparing a best five-card hand formed from the seven dealt cards, or the player's high hand or the player's seven-card hand to a payable and awarding any corresponding fortune payout if the player achieves one of the predetermined winning fortune hand ranks. If the player does not achieve one of the predetermined winning fortune hand ranks, the fortune wager may be collected by the casino or other gaming establishment. If one player holds a best five-card hand (or high hands, or seven-card hands) that meets the minimum envy ranking, all other players who bet the threshold amount (or more) win an envy bonus.

[0066] Any progressive wagers may be resolved by comparing the player's high hand or seven-card hand to a payable and any corresponding progressive payout, less any rake retained by the casino or other gaming establishment, may be awarded if the player achieves one of the predetermined progressive hand ranks. If the player does not achieve one of the predetermined progressive hand ranks, the progressive wager may be added to a progressive pot. Any bad beat wagers may be resolved by comparing the player's high hand, low hand, or both high hand and low hand to a payable and any corresponding bad beat payout may be awarded if the player achieves one of the predetermined bad beat hand ranks and the player lost or would have lost to the dealer on the ante wager. If the player does not achieve one of the predetermined bad beat hands or wins or would have won the ante wager, the bad beat wager may be collected by the casino or other gaming establishment. Such "house-banked" embodiments may be implemented in the form of a live table game, in a virtual table game, in an electronic game, or in an online game configuration.

[0067] In other embodiments, the wagering games, or at least one wager associated with the wagering game, may qualify players to play against one another (i.e., be "player-banked"), with payouts on wagers being paid from a pot and losses on wagers being collected into the pot and eventually distributed to one or more players. Such player-banked embodiments may include a player-pooled progressive embodiment, in which a pot is eventually distributed when a predetermined progressive-winning hand combination or composition is dealt. Player-banked embodiments may also include a dividend refund embodiment, in which all or a portion of the pot is eventually distributed in the form of a refund distributed, e.g., pro-rata, to the players who contributed to the pot.

[0068] Referring to FIG. 4, shown is a flowchart diagram of a method 200 of administering a wagering game, which may

be at least partially player-banked, according to a player-pooled progressive embodiment. This format of play is well suited for electronic play and in particular, online play in jurisdictions that permit the play of "poker." The method 200 includes accepting a first mandatory wager, referred to herein as a "poker pot wager," as indicated at operation 202. At least a portion of the poker pot wager is added to a poker pot, as indicated at operation 203. The poker pot wager may be later resolved by comparing player hands to other player hands and awarding the poker pot, or at least a portion thereof, to the player with, for example, the highest-ranked high hand, low hand, or high and low hands during a round of play. In one example, only players playing at a single table contribute to the poker pot.

[0069] The poker pot may be a non-progressive pot in that all or substantially all of the poker pot may be distributed at the conclusion of each round of administration of the wagering game. In some embodiments, the poker pot wager may be a mandatory wager to qualify the player for play of the underlying wagering game. In other embodiments, the poker pot wager may be optional, and the wagering game may be administered with a player without receiving the poker pot wager and without qualifying the player for a potential payout from the poker pot.

[0070] The dealer may also accept at least one game wager, as indicated at operation 204. The game wagers may include, for example, a base game wager (e.g., ante wagers, blind wagers, play wagers, raises, and other wagers made on the underlying wagering game) and/or one or more side wagers. More specifically, the game wagers may comprise, for example, the ante wager, the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, or any combination of these wagers. The at least one game wager may be accepted, for example, by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with FIG. 1. At least a portion of the at least one game wager is added to a game pot, as indicated at operation 205.

[0071] Optionally, a third pot wager may be accepted and added to at least a third pot. The third pot may be separate from either or both of the poker pot and the game pot. For example, the poker pot, the game pot, and the third pot may include chips located in separate areas on a gaming table, when the wagering game is conducted live in a casino. As another example, the poker pot, the game pot, and the third pot may be displayed as separate amounts on one or more video displays 374, 404, 416, 418, 430, 532, 560, 564, and 658 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) (e.g., a monitor) controlled by one or more of processors 350, 414, 428, 597, and 642 (see FIGS. 6 through 8 and 10) and may be maintained in separate accounts when the wagering game is conducted online or in another electronic format.

[0072] In some embodiments, acceptance of the at least one game wager qualifies a player to be eligible to win an award in addition to the payouts available from the underlying game (i.e., the disqualification, bonus, ante, fortune, envy, and bad beat payouts), such as, for example, a progressive payout (e.g., a progressive jackpot awarded to one or more qualifying players). Therefore, in such embodiments, a progressive wager may be received, as one of the at least one game wagers, in addition to the other game wagers received from the player, such as the fortune side wager, the progressive side wager, the bad beat side wager, a separate pot side wager, or any combination of these wagers.

[0073] In some embodiments, the progressive wager may be a mandatory wager to qualify the player for play of the

underlying wagering game. In other embodiments, the progressive wager may be optional, and the wagering game may be administered without receiving the progressive wager, in addition to the other game wagers, from the player and without qualifying the player to be eligible to win the progressive payout from the game pot.

[0074] In some embodiments, the poker pot wager and the at least one game wager may be received as indistinct wagers, with a portion thereof being designated for the poker pot (a non-progressive pot) and another portion being designated for the game pot (a progressive pot).

[0075] The poker pot wager and the at least one game wager (including the progressive wager, depending on the embodiment) may be accepted, for example, by performing any of the acts described previously in connection with FIG. 1.

[0076] In some embodiments, the game pot may be a pooled or linked pot. For example, the game pot may include one or more game wagers accepted from multiple concurrent wagering games. As another example, the game pot may include pooled progressive wagers from those wagering games currently being played and/or may include accumulated game wagers from past wagering games. As specific, nonlimiting examples, the game pot may include all game wagers accepted from a group of tables or local wagering game administration devices at a casino, from multiple groups of remote devices connected to a network gaming architecture, or both. In other embodiments, the game pot may not be pooled, and awards for the game wager may be limited to the amounts wagered at a respective table, local wagering game administration device, or group of remote devices.

[0077] The gaming establishment (e.g., the “house”) may take a “rake,” (e.g., a commission for the house) on at least one wager, such as the poker pot wager, as indicated at operation 206, the at least one game wager, as indicated at operation 207, or both. In some embodiments, therefore, a rake may be taken on all wagers, or any wager. For example, the house may collect a portion of the poker pot wager at the time the poker pot wager is placed or may collect a portion of amounts awarded from the poker pot at the time the poker pot or a portion of the poker pot is awarded. Additionally or alternatively, the house may collect a portion of the game wagers at the time the game wagers are placed or may collect a portion of amounts awarded from the game pot at the time the game pot or a portion of the game pot is awarded.

[0078] The rake may comprise, for example, a fixed percentage of the wagers. More specifically, the percentage of the wagers collected for the rake may be, for example, greater than a theoretical house advantage for the underlying game. As another example, the rake may be less than an average house advantage for play of the wagering game by all players, including average and sub-average players, which may be calculated using a historical house advantage for the wagering game (e.g., a house advantage for the wagering game over the last 5, 10, or 15 years for a given casino or other gaming establishment). As specific, nonlimiting examples, the percentage of the wagers (i.e., either or both of the poker pot wager and the at least one game wager) collected for the rake may be between 3% and 8%, between 4% and 7%, or between 5% and 6%. In other embodiments, the portion of the wagers collected for the rake may comprise a variable percentage of the wagers or may comprise a fixed quantity (e.g., a flat fee) irrespective of the total amount for the wagers, a fixed percentage with a cap, or a time-based fee for increments of time

playing the wagering game. Thus, in lieu of, or in addition to, a rake taken on one or more wagers or from winnings, the house may be compensated in a number of other ways, including, without limitation, a flat fee per round of play, a percentage of wagers made with or without a cap, rental of a player “seat,” or otherwise as is known in the gaming art. All such compensation may be generally referred to as a “commission.”

[0079] All profits for the house may be made from the rake (or rakes or other commission) in some player-banked embodiments. In such embodiments, wagers in excess of the rake are distributed either in the form of, for example, a progressive payout (as in a “player-pooled progressive” embodiment (FIG. 4)), a dividend refund (as in a “dividend refund” embodiment (FIG. 5)), or some combination thereof. Thus, the profits for the house are limited. Such limiting of profits for the house and redistribution of wagers back to one or more players may increase the attractiveness of the wagering game to both inexperienced and highly skilled players. Because the amount earned by the house is known, highly skilled players may perceive that their skill will enable them to increase winnings, and inexperienced players may be enticed by the possibility of winning or otherwise earning a portion or all of one or more of the pots. In other embodiments, the house may make profits on the rake and on losses from one or more of the wagers (e.g., the ante wager, the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, the progressive side wager, and the bad beat wager), including losses resulting from optimal and suboptimal play.

[0080] The rake may be maintained in a rake account, and profits for the house may be deducted from the rake account. When and if taken from the poker pot wagers, the poker pot rake (operation 206) may be taken by, for example, electronically transferring funds from the poker pot wagers or the poker pot itself to a poker pot rake account (e.g., as instructed by a game server 606 (see FIG. 9) using casino account servers 610 (see FIG. 9)) or physically removing or exchanging money or representations of money from the poker pot wagers or the poker pot itself on a live table. Likewise, when and if taken from the game wagers, the game pot rake (operation 207) may be taken by, e.g., electronically transferring funds from the game pot wagers or the game pot itself to a game pot rake account (e.g., as instructed by the game server 606 (see FIG. 9) using casino account servers 610 (see FIG. 9)) or physically removing or exchanging money or representations of money from the game wagers or the game pot itself on a live table.

[0081] In some embodiments, the poker pot wager may be accepted (operation 202) at the beginning of a round of administration of the wagering game. One or more of the game wagers may be accepted (operation 204) at the beginning of the round as well, e.g., the ante wager, the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, the progressive side wager, and the bad beat wager. In some embodiments, additional game wagers may be accepted (operation 204) during game play, possibly raked (operation 207), and added to the game pot (operation 205) in the intermediate segments of the round of play, e.g., any play wagers, raises, etc.

[0082] The underlying wagering game may be played as described above, including resolving the game wagers received during the round of play, as indicated at operation 208. For example, the underlying wagering game may be played at least substantially as described previously in connection with FIGS. 1 through 3, including accepting wagers,

dealing cards, and selecting high and low hands. Payouts to be distributed as a result of resolving the game wagers (e.g., the ante wager, the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, or any combination of these wagers) are paid from the game pot.

[0083] It is contemplated that only a portion of the game pot may be distributed, at operation **208**, in the form of odds payouts on the underlying game. At least in embodiments in which the game pot is configured as a progressive pot (e.g., if one of the game wagers is a progressive wager), all or substantially all of the remaining portion of the game pot may be designated for a potential progressive payout. For example, administering the player-pooled progressive embodiment of the player-banked method **200** may include determining whether a progressive-winning condition has occurred, as indicated at operation **210**. A progressive-winning condition may be predefined as a predetermined winning hand combination being dealt or a premium winning hand composition being dealt. If such a progressive-winning condition has occurred during the round of game administration, a progressive payout may be awarded to the winning-hand-holding player, with the progressive payout being paid from the game pot, as indicated at operation **212**. As just one example, a game may pay a progressive payout to a player holding a high hand or a seven-card hand of a straight or higher, a flush or higher, four-of-a-kind or higher, or a straight flush or higher. If no progressive-winning condition has occurred, a progressive payout may not be paid from the game pot, but, rather, the game pot balance may be carried forward for the next round of play and so on, as indicated at operation **214**, until a progressive-winning condition occurs during a subsequent round. Thus, the game pot may not be awarded at the end of each round of play, but may grow during each successive round in which no player is dealt a predetermined winning hand combination or a premium winning hand composition. However, if the underlying game payouts distributed at operation **208**, or if a progressive payout is awarded at operation **212**, without draining the game pot, the game pot may decrement until such time as the game pot contributions, at operation **205**, rebuild the game pot.

[0084] A predetermined winning hand combination may comprise, for example, a four-of-a-kind, a full house, a flush, a straight, a three-of-a-kind, two pair, or one pair. The hands qualifying as new winning hand combinations may be predetermined at the beginning of each round of play in some embodiments. In other embodiments, new winning hand combinations may be predetermined at the beginning of play and may remain fixed until it is determined that at least one player hand achieves a predetermined winning hand combination, at which time new winning hand combinations may be predetermined. In still other embodiments, the hand combinations qualifying as winning hand combinations may be predetermined at the outset of the wagering game and remain fixed for the duration of the wagering game. The hands qualifying as winning hand combinations may be predetermined at random from a list of possible winning hand combinations, from among a schedule with a fixed rotation of possible winning hand combinations, or using a fixed table of winning hand combinations.

[0085] A premium winning hand composition may comprise, for example, a seven-card straight flush, or a five-card royal flush plus a royal match. The hand compositions qualifying as premium winning hand compositions may remain fixed throughout the duration of the wagering game or may change during the wagering game. For example, after it has

been determined that a player hand has achieved a premium winning hand composition, the hand compositions qualifying as premium winning hand compositions may be made more restrictive or less restrictive. As a specific, nonlimiting example, after identification of a player hand achieving a seven-card straight flush, the hand compositions qualifying as premium winning hand compositions may be restricted to royal flushes or may be expanded to include four-of-a-kinds or other hands. The hands qualifying as premium winning hand compositions may be predetermined at random from a list of possible premium winning hand compositions, following a schedule with a fixed rotation of possible premium winning hand compositions, or according to a fixed table of premium winning hand compositions.

[0086] In embodiments in which the game pot is a progressive pot, the amount awarded from the game pot for achieving a premium winning hand composition may be a progressive payout at least as great as a maximum progressive payout for achieving a predetermined winning hand composition. For example, the entire game pot may be awarded when a player or multiple players are dealt a premium winning hand composition, and only a portion of the game pot may be awarded when a player or multiple players are dealt a predetermined winning hand combination.

[0087] Awarding the game pot or a portion of the game pot may comprise crediting a player account with funds from the game pot or may comprise distributing physical money or physical representations of money from the game pot to the player.

[0088] Before, between, or after resolving the game wagers (operation **208**), determining whether a progressive-winning condition occurred (operation **210**), awarding a progressive payout (operation **212**), or any combination thereof, the poker pot wager may be resolved, and the poker pot may be awarded to at least one player, as indicated at operation **216**. Each successive round of receiving wagers, dealing cards, and resolving wagers may constitute a round of play, and the poker pot may be awarded to at least one player before the end of each round of play. The player to whom the poker pot is awarded may hold a, highest-ranked high hand, highest-ranked low hand, or highest-ranked high and low hands when compared to the hands of the other players at the table.

[0089] Awarding the poker pot or the portion of the poker pot may comprise crediting a player account of each winning player or may comprise distributing physical money or physical representations of money to each winning player.

[0090] In some embodiments, an entire amount of the poker pot may be awarded to at least one player before the end of each round of play. In such embodiments, the poker pot may be a non-progressive pot. Awarding the entire poker pot to at least one player at the end of each round of play may enable an online implementation of the wagering game to qualify as a legal form of online gambling under relevant statutes. For example, in games that require player vs. player play, and providing a mandatory poker pot bet, the game may qualify as "poker" to gaming authorities, especially for online versions of the games. Awarding the entire amount of a poker pot to at least one player at the end of each round of play redistributes lost poker wagers attributable to suboptimal play to other players, rather than to the house. Accordingly, such a wagering game may be particularly attractive to players who perceive themselves as being highly skilled in the wagering game and, therefore, more able to take advantage of suboptimal play by other players.

[0091] In some embodiments, the entire poker pot may be awarded to at least one player at the end of each round of play (operation **216**). Providing a poker pot wager and payout in each round of play may enable the wagering game to qualify as a legal form of online poker play under relevant statutes. The rake taken may comprise, for example, between 1% and 8%, between 2% and 6%, or between 3% and 5% of the first wager. The rake amounts on each wager may be more than, less than, or equal to the rake taken on other wagers in some embodiments.

[0092] In still other embodiments, a portion of the value of the poker pot may remain in the poker pot or may be redistributed to another pot (e.g., the game pot) to be awarded in a subsequent round of play as a progressive payout or as a dividend refund (see FIG. 5). In such an example, the portion of the poker pot wager remaining in the poker pot or redistributed to another pot may comprise, for example, a fixed percentage of the poker pot wager, a variable percentage of the poker pot wager (e.g., an odds payout may be awarded and the remainder retained in the poker pot or redistributed to the other pot), or a fixed amount.

[0093] In some embodiments involving a no-house-advantage poker pot awarded at the end of each round and a progressive game pot that receives all other game wagers, all players participating in the wagering game from whom the at least one game wager has been received may be eligible to win the poker pot or a portion of the poker pot.

[0094] In some embodiments, the game pot may be seeded with money from the game pot rake account or a reserve account (as indicated at operation **218**) at the beginning of play, after the game pot or a portion of the game pot has been awarded, or both. In some embodiments, a minimum account balance sufficient to cover expected losses is retained when distributing a progressive payout (operation **212**) such that no seed money is required in the game pot. For example, the game pot may be seeded from the rake account of the house (operation **218**), and the house may maintain an amount of funds in the rake account sufficient to significantly reduce (e.g., to essentially eliminate) the likelihood that any payouts made from the rake account and any seeding amounts withdrawn from the rake account exhaust or overdraw the rake account. In some embodiments, a casino reserve account may be provided to fill the rake account in the event of an overdraw. Such seeding may incentivize players to participate in the wagering game, and specifically to place a game wager (e.g., a progressive wager) to be eligible for the progressive payout from the game pot. In addition, such seeding may reduce the likelihood that the amount of funds in the game pot may be insufficient to cover all the payouts to players. For example, where a player hand achieves a premium winning hand composition in one round of play, a player hand achieves a predetermined winning hand combination in the immediately following round of play, and a fixed odds payout is to be awarded to the player holding the predetermined winning hand combination, the amount seeded to the game pot between those rounds of play may be at least as great as the maximum fixed odds payout awardable for any predetermined winning hand combination. The game pot may be seeded each time the game pot is awarded in its entirety or each time the amount in the game pot is lower than the maximum fixed odds payout.

[0095] As a specific, nonlimiting example, a player-banked wagering game with a player-pooled progressive configuration may comprise designating a player to act as the dealer

and accepting a player-banked ante wager from each player and adding the player-banked ante wagers to a player-banked pot, which may be reflected by the presence of the chips or images of the chips grouped together with one another on the playing surface **108**. The player-banked pot may be a no-house-advantage pot that is awarded to the player holding the highest-ranking high and low hands at the end of each round of play. Any bonus side wagers may also be accepted, which may be reflected by the presence of a chip or an image of a chip in the bonus side wager position **120** or by adding the chip or image of a chip to the player-banked pot. Any fortune side wagers, progressive side wagers, and bad beat wagers may also be accepted and added to the same pot, which may be reflected by the presence of a chip or an image of a chip in the fortune side wager position **122**, progressive side wager position **124**, and bad beat wager position **126** or by the presence of chips or image of chips in a second pot area on the playing surface **108**, which may correspond to one or more of the fortune side wager and the progressive side wager.

[0096] Seven cards may be dealt to each player and to the dealer, which may be reflected by the presence of cards or images of cards in the player positions **110** and the dealer position **112**. The players may arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations, which may be reflected by the arrangement of five cards or five images of cards into the high hand area **114** and two cards or two images of cards into the low hand area **116** of each participating player position **110**. The cards dealt to the player acting as the dealer may be arranged into the high hand and low hand configurations required by the house way, which may be reflected by the arrangement of five cards or five images of cards into the high hand area **114** and two cards or two images of cards into the low hand area **116** of the dealer position **112**.

[0097] After the dealer's high and low hands have been arranged, the dealer's low hand may be evaluated to determine whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank. For example, the dealer's low hand may be evaluated to determine whether it is a nine high. If it is a nine high, one-half of the amount of the ante wagers may be returned to each player and any players who made the bonus side wager may receive a bonus payout from the player-banked pot of 30:1. If the dealer's low hand is not a nine high, the ante wager may be resolved by comparing the high hand of each player to the high hands of the other players and the dealer and the low hand of each player to the low hands of the other players the dealer. The player holding the highest ranked high hand, the highest ranked low hand, or the highest ranked hand and low hand may be awarded the entire player-banked pot. When the dealer's hand is not ranked nine high, any bonus side wagers may remain in the player-banked pot.

[0098] In some embodiments, any fortune wagers may be resolved by comparing the player's best five-card out of seven-card hand to a paytable and awarding any corresponding fortune payout if the player achieves one of the predetermined fortune hand ranks. If the player does not achieve one of the predetermined fortune hand ranks, the fortune wager may remain in the pot or retained in a separate progressive fortune pot, which may be awarded, less a rake, to a player when a player achieves one of the predetermined fortune hand ranks. If the amount of the fortune wager is greater than the threshold amount, the best five-card hands held by the other players may be compared to the paytable, and a corresponding envy payout may be awarded to any of the other players holding a premium hand.

[0099] In some embodiments, the game may allow a separate optional progressive wager that awards a progressive payout for a premium hand, such as a seven-card royal flush. Any progressive wagers may be resolved by comparing the player's hand to a paytable. A progressive payout may be awarded if the player achieves one of the predetermined winning progressive hand ranks. If the player does not achieve one of the predetermined progressive hand ranks, the progressive wager may be maintained in a progressive pot.

[0100] Referring to FIG. 5, shown is a flowchart diagram of a method 220 of administering a wagering game, which may be at least partially player-banked, according to a dividend refund embodiment. The method 220 is largely the same as the method 200 of the player-pooled progressive (FIG. 4), with the exception that, rather than determining whether a progressive-winning condition has occurred (operation 210 (FIG. 4)), the method 220 includes determining whether a trigger event condition has occurred, as indicated at operation 222, and, if so, distributing the game pot to one or more past or present players of the wagering game, as indicated at operation 224 (rather than distributing the game pot as a progressive payout as at operation 212 (FIG. 4)). In such embodiment, the game pot may accumulate between rounds of play, and, to periodically reduce the balance, a dividend (e.g., a share of the game pot awarded to each participating player) may be awarded to players from the game pot. Thus, wagered amounts that would otherwise be the profits from lost wagers, less amounts raked by the house, are redistributed back to the players, rather than collected by the house as revenue. Thus, the distribution is not a payout on the underlying game, but a refund.

[0101] The game pot, less any game pot rake taken, may be distributed among a plurality of players upon the occurrence of a predetermined event (referred to herein as a "trigger event"), as indicated at operation 222. The predetermined trigger event may not be based, for example, on player skill or chance events occurring in the underlying wagering game. The predetermined trigger event may comprise, for example, determination that at least one player participated for a predetermined number of hands; at least one player completed a predetermined number of rounds of play at a given table, electronic gaming machine, or remote gaming device; a predetermined number of rounds of play have been completed by any number of players at a given table, electronic gaming machine, or remote gaming device; a predetermined time limit has been reached since play commenced; or a predetermined amount has accumulated within the game pot. The predetermined trigger event or condition may be time-based, pot-based (or pool-based), game-based, or based on some other nonchance aspect of the wagering game. Further details on pot distributions based on predetermined trigger events and conditions are disclosed in the U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/871,824, filed Apr. 26, 2013, titled "DISTRIBUTING SUPPLEMENTAL POT IN WAGERING GAMES BASED ON PREDETERMINED EVENT," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference.

[0102] The dividend distributions may be divided at least among players currently participating in the wagering game. In some embodiments, the dividend distributions may also be paid to players who previously contributed to the game pot but who have since ceased participating in the wagering game. In some embodiments, the dividend distributions may not be paid to players from whom contributions to the game pot have not been received since the last dividend distribution

was paid. The percentage of the game pot, less the rake, refunded to each player as a dividend distribution may be, for example, approximately equal to the percentage of hands won by each player, the percentage of first pot winnings won by each player based on game play, the percentage of total wager amounts received from each player, the proportional number of wagers received from each player, the proportional length of time spent playing the wagering game by each player, or an equal percentage for each player eligible to receive a dividend distribution from the game pot.

[0103] The dividend refund may be distributed in the form of a credit made to the receiving players' accounts. In some embodiments, the refund may be paid without concurrently alerting the player, though the refund may be noticeable when and if the player next checks his or her balance in her player account.

[0104] In some embodiments, wagering games may be administered without players risking money in connection with the wagers (i.e., "play-for-fun" games). Access to play-for-fun wagering games may be granted on a time period basis in some embodiments. For example, upon initially joining the wagering game, each player may automatically be given a plurality of wagering elements, such as, for example, chips, points, or simulated currency, that is of no redeemable value. After joining, the player may be permitted to place bets using the wagering elements and a timer may track how long the player has been participating in the wagering game. If the player exhausts his or her supply of the wagering elements before a predetermined period of time has expired, the player may be permitted to simply wait until the period of time passes to rejoin the game, at which time another quantity of the wagering elements may be distributed to the player to permit the player to resume participation in the wagering game.

[0105] In some embodiments, a hierarchy of players may determine the quantity of wagering elements given to a player for each predetermined period of time. For example, players who have been participating in the wagering game for a longer time, who have played closest to optimal strategy for the game, who have won the largest percentage of wagers, who have wagered the most in a play-for-pay environment, or who have won the largest quantities of wagering elements from their wagers may be given more wagering elements for each allotment of time than players who have newly joined, who have played for a lesser amount of time, who have played according to poor strategy, who have lost more frequently, or who have lost larger quantities of wagering elements. In some embodiments, the hierarchy of players may determine the duration of each allotment of time. For example, players who have been participating in the wagering game for a longer time, who have played closest to optimal strategy for the game, who have won the largest percentage of wagers, or who have won the largest quantities of wagering elements from their wagers may be given shorter allotments of times to wait for an award of more wagering elements than players who have newly joined, who have played according to poor strategy, who have lost more frequently, or who have lost larger quantities of wagering elements. In some embodiments, players who have not run out of wagering elements after the period of time has expired may have the balance of their wagering elements reset for a subsequent allotment of time. In other embodiments, players who have not run out of wagering elements may be allowed to retain their remaining wagering elements for subsequent allotments of time, and may be given

additional wagering elements corresponding to the new allotment of time to further increase the balance of wagering elements at their disposal. Players may be assigned to different categories of players, which determine the number of wagering elements awarded. In a given period of time, higher level players, or players who have invested more time playing the game may be allotted more wagering elements per unit of time than a player assigned to a lower level group.

[0106] Therefore, in some embodiments, the wagering game may be administered by receiving wagers (e.g., the ante wager, the bonus side wager, the fortune side wager, the progressive side wager, and the bad beat wager) of no real-world monetary value, and payouts (e.g., disqualification, bonus, ante, fortune, envy, and bad beat payouts) may be paid without transferring real-world monetary value to the players. Such embodiments, referred to herein as “free play-for-fun” embodiments are nonetheless contemplated as modes of carrying out the methods described herein.

[0107] In some embodiments, referred to herein as “social play-for-fun” embodiments, a player may be permitted to redeem an access token of no redeemable face value, such as, for example, points associated with a player account (e.g., social media account credits, online points associated with a transacting account, etc.), to compress the period of time and receive more wagering elements. The access tokens may be sold or may be given without directly exchanging money for the access tokens. For example, access tokens may be allocated to players who participate in member events (e.g., complete surveys, receive training on how to play the wagering game, share information about the wagering game with others), spend time participating in the wagering game or in a player account forum (e.g., logged in to a social media account), or view advertising. Thus, an entity administering social play-for-fun wagering games may not receive money from losing player wagers or may not take a rake on wagers, but may receive compensation through advertising revenue or through the purchase of access tokens redeemable for time compressions to continue play of the wagering game or simply to increase the quantity of wagering elements available to a player.

[0108] After receipt of an indication that a player has stopped participating in a play-for-fun wagering game (e.g., a free play-for-fun embodiment, a social play-for-fun embodiment), any remaining quantities of the wagering elements may be relinquished by the player and in some embodiments, retained for later play. For example, receipt of an indication that the player has logged out of a play-for-fun wagering game administered over the Internet may cause any remaining wagering elements associated with a respective player to be lost. Thus, when the player rejoins the play-for-fun wagering game, the quantity of wagering elements given to the player for an allotment of time may not bear any relationship to the quantity of wagering elements held by the player when he or she quit playing a previous session of the wagering game. In other embodiments, upon receipt of an indication that a player has stopped playing, the quantity of wagering elements held by the player at that time may be retained and made available to the player, along with any additional quantities of wagering elements granted for new allotments of time, upon receipt of an indication that the player has rejoined the wagering game.

[0109] As a specific, nonlimiting example, a free play-for-fun wagering game may involve granting access to a quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within a predeter-

mined time period to each player. Each player may allocate at least one valueless wagering element to an ante wager. Seven cards may be allocated to each player and a dealer. Each player may arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations. The player may receive assistance from a virtual dealer in setting his or her high and low hands. A house way of arranging cards allocated to the dealer may be applied to arrange the cards into a high hand and a low hand configuration. The dealer's low hand may be evaluated to determine whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank. When the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, each ante wager may be returned to each player. When the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, the ante wager may be resolved by comparing the high hand and the low hand of each player to the high hand and the low hand of the dealer. A valueless access token may be redeemed by a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements or the predetermined time period may lapse for a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements and access to another quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within another predetermined time period may be granted to the player.

[0110] Referring to FIG. 6, illustrated is an example of an individual electronic gaming device **300** (e.g., an electronic gaming machine (EGM)) configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games according to the present disclosure. The individual electronic gaming device **300** may include an individual player position **314** that includes a player input area **332** configured to enable a player to interact with the individual electronic gaming device **300** through various input devices (not shown). The individual electronic gaming device **300** may include a gaming screen **374** configured to display indicia for interacting with the individual electronic gaming device **300**, such as through processing one or more programs stored in memory **340** to implement the rules of game play at the individual electronic gaming device **300**. Accordingly, game play may be accommodated without involving physical playing cards, poker chips, and/or live personnel. The action may instead be simulated by a control processor **350** operably coupled to the memory **340** and interacting with and controlling the individual electronic gaming device **300**.

[0111] Although the figure has an outline of a traditional gaming cabinet, the individual electronic gaming device **300** may be implemented in any number of ways, including, but not limited to, client software downloaded to a portable device, such as a smart phone, tablet, or laptop personal computer. The individual electronic gaming device **300** may also be a non-portable personal computer (e.g., a desktop or all-in-one computer) or other computing device. In some embodiments, client software is not downloaded but is native to the device or is otherwise delivered with the device when distributed to a player.

[0112] A communication device **360** may be included and operably coupled to the processor such that information related to operation of the individual gaming device **300**, information related to the game play, or combinations thereof may be communicated between the individual gaming device **300** and other devices (not shown) through a suitable communication media, such as, for example, wired networks, Wi-Fi networks, and cellular communication networks.

[0113] The gaming screen **374** may be carried by a generally vertically extending cabinet **376** of the individual elec-

tronic gaming device **300**. The individual electronic gaming device **300** may further include banners (not shown) configured to communicate rules of game play and/or the like, such as along a top portion **378** of the cabinet **376** of the individual electronic gaming device **300**. The individual electronic gaming device **300** may further include additional decorative lights (not shown), and speakers (not shown) for transmitting and/or receiving sounds during game play. Further detail of an example of an individual electronic gaming device **300** (as well as other embodiments of tables and devices) is disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/215,156, filed Aug. 22, 2011, published as U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013/0053117 on Feb. 28, 2013, and titled "SIX CARD POKER GAME," the disclosure of which is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference.

[0114] Some embodiments may be implemented at locations that include a plurality of player stations. Such player stations may include an electronic display screen for display of game information, such as displaying virtual cards, virtual chips, and game instructions, and for accepting wagers and facilitating credit balance adjustments. Such player stations may, optionally, be integrated in a table format, may be distributed throughout a casino or other gaming site, or may include both grouped and distributed player stations. While some features may be automated through electronic interfaces (e.g., virtual cards, virtual chips, etc.), some features may remain in the physical domain. As such, the game play may be administered by a live dealer, a virtual dealer, or a combination of both.

[0115] Referring to FIG. 7, an example of a suitable table **400** configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games according to the present disclosure is shown. The table **400** may include a playing surface **404**. The table **400** may include a plurality of player stations **412a** through **412g**. Each player station **412a** through **412g** may include a player interface **416a** through **416g**, which may be used for displaying game information (e.g., game instructions, input options, wager information including virtual chips, game outcomes, etc.). The player interface **416a** through **416g** may include a display screen in the form of a touch screen, which may be at least substantially flush with the playing surface **404** in some embodiments. Each player interface **416a** through **416g** may be coupled respectively with its own local game processor **414a** through **414g** (shown in dashed lines), although, in some embodiments, a central game processor **428** (shown in dashed lines) may be employed and may communicate directly to player interfaces **416a** through **416g**. In some embodiments, a combination of individual local game processors **414a** through **414g** and the central game processor **428** may be employed.

[0116] A communication device **460** may be included and may be operably coupled to one or more of the local game processors **414**, the central game processor **428**, or combinations thereof, such that information related to operation of the table **400**, information related to the game play, or combinations thereof may be communicated between the table **400** and other devices (not shown) through a suitable communication media, such as, for example, wired networks, Wi-Fi networks, and cellular communication networks.

[0117] The table **400** may further include additional features, such as a dealer chip tray **420**, which may be used by the dealer to cash players in and out of the wagering game, whereas wagers and balance adjustments during game play may be performed using virtual chips. For embodiments

using physical cards **406a**, **406b**, the table **400** may further include a card-handling device **422** that may be configured to shuffle, read, and deliver physical cards for the dealer and players to use during game play or, alternatively, a card shoe configured to read and deliver cards that have already been randomized. For embodiments using virtual cards, such virtual cards may be displayed at the individual player interfaces **416a** through **416g**. Common virtual cards may be displayed in a common card area (not shown).

[0118] The table **400** may further include a dealer interface **418**, which, like the player interfaces **416a** through **416g**, may include touch screen controls for assisting the dealer in administering the wagering game. The table **400** may further include an upright display **430** configured to display images that depict game information such as paytables, hand counts, historical win/loss information by player, and a wide variety of other information considered useful to the players. The upright display **430** may be double sided to provide such information to players as well as to the casino pit.

[0119] Further detail of an example of a table and player displays is disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010/0016050, filed Jul. 15, 2008, published Jan. 21, 2010, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,262,475, issued Sep. 11, 2012, and now titled "CHIPLESS TABLE SPLIT SCREEN FEATURE," the disclosure of each of which application and patent is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. Although an embodiment is described showing individual discrete player stations, in some embodiments, the entire playing surface **404** may be an electronic display that is logically partitioned to permit game play from a plurality of players for receiving inputs from, and displaying game information to, the players, the dealer, or both.

[0120] Referring to FIG. 8, another example of a suitable table **500** configured for implementation of embodiments of wagering games having a virtual dealer according to the present disclosure is shown. The table **500** may include player positions **514a** through **514e** that are arranged in a bank about an arcuate edge **520** of a video device **558** that may comprise a card screen **564** and a dealer screen **560**. The dealer screen **560** may display a video simulation of the dealer (i.e., a virtual dealer) for interacting with the video device **558**, such as through processing one or more stored programs stored in memory **595** to implement the rules of game play at the video device **558**. The dealer screen **560** may be carried by a generally vertically extending cabinet **562** of the video device **558**. The card screen **564** may be configured to display at least one or more of the dealer's cards, community cards, and/or player's cards by the virtual dealer on the dealer screen **560** (virtual dealer not shown in FIG. 8).

[0121] Each of the player positions **514a** through **514e** may include a player interface area **532a** through **532e** that is configured for wagering and game play interactions with the video device **558** and/or virtual dealer. Accordingly, game play may be accommodated without involving physical playing cards, poker chips, and/or live personnel. The action may instead be simulated by a control processor **597** interacting with and controlling the video device **558**. The control processor **597** may be located internally within, or otherwise proximate to, the video device **558**. The control processor **597** may be programmed, by known techniques, to implement the rules of game play at the video device **558**. As such, the control processor **597** may interact and communicate with display/input interfaces and data entry inputs for each player interface area **532a** through **532e** of the video device **558**.

Other embodiments of tables and gaming devices may include a control processor that may be similarly adapted to the specific configuration of its associated device.

[0122] A communication device 599 may be included and operably coupled to the control processor 597 such that information related to operation of the table 500, information related to the game play, or combinations thereof may be communicated between the table 500 and other devices (not shown) through a suitable communication media, such as, for example, wired networks, Wi-Fi networks, and cellular communication networks.

[0123] The video device 558 may further include banners (not shown) configured to communicate rules of play and/or the like, which may be located along one or more walls 570 of the cabinet 562. The video device 558 may further include additional decorative lights (not shown) and speakers (not shown), which may be located on an underside surface 566, for example, of a generally horizontally depending top 568 of the cabinet 562 of the video device 558 generally extending toward the player positions 514a through 514e.

[0124] Further detail of an example of a table and player displays is disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/764,995, filed Jan. 26, 2004, published as U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0164762 on Jul. 28, 2005, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,272,958, issued Sep. 25, 2012, and titled "AUTOMATED MULTIPLAYER GAME TABLE WITH UNIQUE IMAGE FEED OF DEALER," the disclosure of each of which application and patent is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. Although an embodiment is described showing individual discrete player stations, in some embodiments, the entire playing surface (e.g., player interface areas 532a through 532e, card screen 564, etc.) may be an electronic display that is logically partitioned to permit game play from a plurality of players for receiving inputs from, and displaying game information to, the players, the dealer, or both.

[0125] Wagering games in accordance with embodiments of the disclosure may be administered over the Internet, or otherwise online, in one embodiment using a gaming system employing a client server architecture. Referring to FIG. 9, illustrated is a schematic block diagram of a gaming system 600 for implementing wagering games according to an embodiment of the present disclosure. The gaming system 600 enables end users to access proprietary and/or non-proprietary game content. Such game content may include, without limitation, various types of wagering games such as card games, dice games, big wheel games, roulette, scratch off games ("scratchers"), and any other wagering game where the game outcome is determined, in whole or in part, by one or more random events. This includes, but is not limited to, Class II and Class III games as defined under 25 U.S.C. §2701 et seq. ("Indian Gaming Regulatory Act"). Such games may include banked and/or non-banked games.

[0126] The wagering games supported by the gaming system 600 may be operated with real currency or with virtual credits or other virtual (e.g., electronic) value indicia. For example, the real currency option may be used with traditional casino and lottery-type wagering games in which money or other items of value are wagered and may be cashed out at the end of a game session. The virtual credits option may be used with wagering games in which credits (or other symbols) may be issued to a player to be used for the wagers. A player may be credited with credits in any way allowed, including, but not limited to, a player purchasing credits;

being awarded credits as part of a contest or a win event in this or another game (including non-wagering games); being awarded credits as a reward for use of a product, casino, or other enterprise, time played in one session, or games played; or may be as simple as being awarded virtual credits upon logging in at a particular time or with a particular frequency, etc. Although credits may be won or lost, the ability of the player to cash out credits may be controlled or prevented. In one example, credits acquired (e.g., purchased or awarded) for use in a play-for-fun game may be limited to non-monetary redemption items, awards, or credits usable in the future or for another game or gaming session. The same credit redemption restrictions may be applied to some or all of credits won in a wagering game as well.

[0127] An additional variation includes web-based sites having both play-for-fun and wagering games, including issuance of free (non-monetary) credits usable to play the play-for-fun games. This may attract players to the site and to the games before they engage in wagering. In some embodiments, a limited number of free or promotional credits may be issued to entice players to play the games. Another method of issuing credits includes issuing free credits in exchange for identifying friends who may want to play. In another embodiment, additional credits may be issued after a period of time has elapsed to encourage the player to resume playing the game. The gaming system 600 may enable players to buy additional game credits to allow the player to resume play. Objects of value may be awarded to play-for-fun players, which may or may not be in a direct exchange for credits. For example, a prize may be awarded or won for a highest scoring play-for-fun player during a defined time interval. All variations of credit redemption are contemplated, as desired by game designers and game hosts (the person or entity controlling the hosting systems).

[0128] The gaming system 600 may include a gaming platform that establishes a portal for an end user to access a wagering game hosted by a game server 606 through a user interaction server 602. The user device 620 may communicate with a user interaction server 602 of the gaming system 600 using a network 630 (e.g., the Internet). The user interaction server 602 may communicate with the game server 606 and provide game information to the user. In some embodiments, the game server 606 may also be a game engine. In some embodiments, a single user device communicates with a game provided by the game server 606, while other embodiments may include a plurality of user devices 620 configured to communicate and provide end users with access to the same game provided by the game server 606. In addition, a plurality of end users may be permitted to access a single user interaction server 602, or a plurality of user interaction servers 602, to access the game server 606.

[0129] The user interaction server 602 may communicate with the user device 620 to enable access to the gaming system 600. The user interaction server 602 may enable a user to create and access a user account and interact with gaming server 606. The user interaction server 602 may enable users to initiate new games, join existing games, and interface with games being played by the user.

[0130] The user interaction server 602 may also provide a client 622 for execution on the user device 620 for accessing the gaming system 600. The client 622 provided by the gaming system 600 for execution on the user device 620 can comprise a variety of implementations according to the user device 620 and method of communication with the gaming

system 600. In one embodiment, the user device 620 connects to the gaming system 600 using a web browser, and the client 622 executes within a browser window or frame of the web browser. In another embodiment, the client 622 is a stand-alone executable on the user device 620.

[0131] In one embodiment, the client 622 may comprise a relatively small amount of script (e.g., JAVASCRIPT®), also referred to as a “script driver,” including scripting language that controls an interface of the client 622. The script driver may include simple function calls requesting information from the gaming system 600. In other words, the script driver stored in the client 622 may merely include calls to functions that are externally defined by, and executed by, the gaming system 600. As a result, the client 622 may be characterized as a “thin client.” As that term is used herein, the client 622 may be little more than a script player. The client 622 may simply send requests to the gaming system 600 rather than performing logic itself. The client 622 receives player inputs, and the player inputs are passed to the gaming system 600 for processing and executing the wagering game. In one embodiment, this includes providing specific graphical display information to client 622 as well as game outcomes.

[0132] In other embodiments, the client 622 comprises an executable file rather than a script. In that case, client 622 may do more local processing than does a script driver, such as calculating where to show what game symbols upon receiving a game outcome from game server 606 through user interaction server 602. In one embodiment, it may be that portions of an asset server 604 are loaded onto the client 622 and are used by the client 622 in processing and updating graphical displays. Due to security and integrity concerns, most embodiments will have the bulk of the processing of the game play performed in the gaming system 600. However, some embodiments may include significant game processing by client 622 when the client and user device 620 are considered trustworthy or when there is reduced concern for security and integrity in the displayed game outcome. In most embodiments, it is expected that some form of data protection, such as end-to-end encryption, will be used when data is transported over network 630. Network 630 may be any network, including, but not limited to, the Internet.

[0133] In an embodiment where the client 622 implements further logic and game control methodology beyond the thin client, the client 622 may parse and define player interactions prior to passing the player interactions to the gaming system 600. Likewise, when the client 622 receives a gaming interaction from the gaming system 600, the client 622 may be configured to determine how to modify the display as a result of the gaming interaction. The client 622 may also allow the player to change a perspective or otherwise interact with elements of the display that do not change aspects of the game.

[0134] The gaming system 600 may include an asset server 604, which may host various media assets (e.g., audio, video, and image files) that may be sent to the client 622 for presenting the various wagering games to the end user. In other words, in this embodiment, the assets presented to the end user may be stored separately from the client 622. In one embodiment, the client 622 requests the assets appropriate for the game played by the user; in other embodiments, especially those using thin clients, just those assets that are needed for a particular display event will be sent by game server 606 when the game server 606 determines they are needed, including as few as one asset. In one example, the client 622

may call a function defined at the user interaction server 602 or asset server 604, which may determine which assets are to be delivered to the client 622 as well as how the assets are to be presented by the client 622 to the end user. Different assets may correspond to the various clients that may have access to the game server 606 or to different games to be played.

[0135] The game server 606 is configured to perform game play methods and determine game play outcomes that are provided to the user interaction server 602 to be transmitted to the user device 620 for display on the end user's computer. For example, the game server 606 may include game rules for one or more wagering games, such that the game server 606 controls some or all of the game flow for a selected wagering game as well as the determined game outcomes. The game server 606 may include paytables and other game logic. The game server 606 also performs random number generation for determining random game elements of the wagering game. In one embodiment, the game server 606 is separated from the user interaction server 602 by a firewall or other method of preventing unauthorized access to the game server 606 from the general members of the network 630.

[0136] The user device 620 may present a gaming interface to the player and communicate the user interaction to the gaming system 600. The user device 620 may be any electronic system capable of displaying gaming information, receiving user input, and communicating the user input to the gaming system 600. As such, the user device 620 can be a desktop computer, a laptop, a tablet computer, a set-top box, a mobile device (including, but not limited to, a smart phone), a kiosk, a terminal, or another computing device. The user device 620 operating the client 622 may comprise an interactive electronic gaming system 300 (see FIG. 6), as described above. The client 622 may be a specialized application or may be executed within a generalized application capable of interpreting instructions from an interactive gaming system, such as a web browser.

[0137] The client 622 may interface with an end user through a web page or an application that runs on a device including, but not limited to, a smartphone, a tablet, or a general computer, or the client 622 may be any other computer program configurable to access the gaming system 600. The client 622 may be illustrated within a casino webpage (or other interface) indicating that the client 622 is embedded into a webpage, which is supported by a web browser executing on the user device 620.

[0138] In one embodiment, the gaming system 600 may be operated by different entities. The user device 620 may be operated by a third party, such as a casino or an individual, that links to the gaming system 600, which may be operated, for example, by a wagering game service provider. Therefore, in some embodiments, the user device 620 and client 622 may be operated by a different administrator than the operator of the game server 606. In other words, the user device 620 may be part of a third-party system that does not administer or otherwise control the gaming system 600 or game server 606. In another embodiment, the user interaction server 602 and asset server 604 are provided by a third-party system. For example, a gaming entity (e.g., a casino) may operate the user interaction server 602 or user device 620 to provide its customers access to game content managed by a different entity that may control game server 606, amongst other functionality. In some embodiments, these functions are operated by the same administrator. For example, a gaming entity (e.g., a casino) may elect to perform each of these functions in-house,

such as providing both the access to the user device **620** and the actual game content and providing administration of the gaming system **600**.

[0139] The gaming system **600** may communicate with one or more external account servers **610**, optionally through another firewall. For example, the gaming system **600** itself may not directly accept wagers or issue payouts. That is, the gaming system **600** may facilitate online casino gaming but may not be part of a self-contained online casino itself. Instead, the gaming system **600** may facilitate the play of wagering games owned and controlled by a company offering games and gaming products and services, such as SHFL entertainment, Inc. Another entity (e.g., a casino or any account holder or financial system of record) may operate and maintain its external account servers **610** to accept bets and make payout distributions. The gaming system **600** may communicate with the account servers **610** to verify the existence of funds for wagering and to instruct the account server **610** to execute debits and credits.

[0140] In some embodiments, the gaming system **600** may directly accept bets and make payout distributions, such as in the case where an administrator of the gaming system **600** operates as a casino. As discussed above, the gaming system **600** may be integrated within the operations of a casino rather than separating out functionality (e.g., game content, game play, credits, debits, etc.) among different entities. In addition, for play-for-fun wagering games, the gaming system **600** may issue credits, take bets, and manage the balance of the credits according to the game outcomes, but the gaming system **600** may not permit payout distributions or be linked to an account server **610** that permits payout distributions. Such credits may be issued for free, through purchase, or for other reasons, without the ability for the player to cash out. Such play-for-fun wagering games may be administered on platforms that do not permit traditional gambling, such as to comply with jurisdictions that do not permit online gambling.

[0141] The gaming system **600** may be configured in many ways, from a fully integrated single system to a distributed server architecture. The asset server **604**, the user interaction server **602**, the game server **606**, and the account server **610** may be configured as a single, integrated system of code modules running on a single server or machine, where each of the servers is functionally implemented on a single machine. In such a case, the functionality described herein may not be implemented as separate code modules. The asset server **604**, the user interaction server **602**, the game server **606**, and the account server **610** may also be implemented as a plurality of independent servers, each using its own code modules running on a separate physical machine, and may further include one or more firewalls between selected servers (depending on security needs). Each server could communicate over some kind of networked connection, potentially as varied as that described for network **630**. Further, each single server shown in FIG. 9 may be implemented as a plurality of servers with load balancing and scalability factors built into the embodiment. All such embodiments and variations are fully contemplated.

[0142] Additional features may be supported by the game server **606**, such as hacking and cheating detection, data storage and archival, metrics generation, messages generation, output formatting for different end user devices, as well as other features and operations. For example, the gaming system **600** may include additional features and configurations as described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/353,

194, filed Jan. 18, 2012, and application Ser. No. 13/609,031, filed Sep. 10, 2012, both titled “NETWORK GAMING ARCHITECTURE, GAMING SYSTEMS, AND RELATED METHODS,” the disclosures of which are incorporated herein in their entirety by this reference.

[0143] The network **630** may enable communications between the user device **620** and the gaming system **600**. A network (not shown) may also connect the gaming system **600** and account server **610**, and, further, one or more networks (not shown) may interconnect one or more of the other servers shown collectively as the game system **600**. In one embodiment, the network **630** uses standard communications technologies and/or protocols. Thus, the network **630** can include links using technologies such as Ethernet, 802.11, worldwide interoperability for microwave access (WiMAX®), 3G, digital subscriber line (DSL), asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), INFINIBAND®, PCI Express Advanced Switching, etc. Similarly, the networking protocols used on the network **630** can include multiprotocol label switching (MPLS), the transmission control protocol/Internet protocol (TCP/IP), the User Datagram Protocol (UDP), the hypertext transport protocol (HTTP), the simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP), the file transfer protocol (FTP), etc. The data exchanged over the network **630** can be represented using technologies and/or formats including the hypertext markup language (HTML), the extensible markup language (XML), etc. In addition, all or some of the links can be encrypted using conventional encryption technologies such as secure sockets layer (SSL), transport layer security (TLS), virtual private networks (VPNs), Internet Protocol security (IPsec), etc. In another embodiment, the entities can use custom and/or dedicated data communications technologies instead of, or in addition to, the ones described above. Depending upon the embodiment, the network **630** can include links comprising one or more networks such as the Internet.

[0144] Referring to FIG. 10, a high-level block diagram of a computer system **640** for acting as the gaming system **600** (see FIG. 9) according to one embodiment is shown. Illustrated are at least one processor **642** coupled to a chipset **644**, as indicated in dashed lines. Also coupled to the chipset **644** are memory **646**, a storage device **648**, a keyboard **650**, a graphics adapter **652**, a pointing device **654**, and a network adapter **656**. A display **658** is coupled to the graphics adapter **652**. In one embodiment, the functionality of the chipset **644** is provided by a memory controller hub **660** and an I/O controller hub **662**. In another embodiment, the memory **646** is coupled directly to the processor **642** instead of to the chipset **644**.

[0145] The storage device **648** is any non-transitory computer-readable storage medium, such as a hard drive, a compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM), a DVD, or a solid-state memory device (e.g., a flash drive). The memory **646** holds instructions and data used by the processor **642**. The pointing device **654** may be a mouse, a track pad, a track ball, or another type of pointing device, and it is used in combination with the keyboard **650** to input data into the computer system **640**. The graphics adapter **652** displays images and other information on the display **658**. The network adapter **656** couples the computer system **640** to a local or wide area network.

[0146] As is known in the art, the computer system **640** can have different and/or other components than those shown in FIG. 10. In addition, the computer system **640** can lack cer-

tain illustrated components. In one embodiment, the computer system **640** acting as the gaming system **600** (FIG. **9**) lacks the keyboard **650**, pointing device **654**, graphics adapter **652**, and/or display **658**. Moreover, the storage device **648** can be local and/or remote from the computer system **640** (such as embodied within a storage area network (SAN)). Moreover, other input devices, such as, for example, touch screens may be included.

[0147] The network adapter **656** (may also be referred to herein as a communication device) may include one or more devices for communicating using one or more of the communication media and protocols discussed above with respect to FIG. **9**.

[0148] In addition, some or all of the components of this general computer system **640** of FIG. **10** may be used as part of the processor and memory discussed above with respect to the systems of FIGS. **6**, **7**, and **8**.

[0149] The gaming system **600** (FIG. **9**) may comprise several such computer systems **640**. The gaming system **600** may include load balancers, firewalls, and various other components for assisting the gaming system **600** to provide services to a variety of user devices.

[0150] As is known in the art, the computer system **640** is adapted to execute computer program modules for providing functionality described herein. As used herein, the term “module” refers to computer program logic utilized to provide the specified functionality. Thus, a module can be implemented in hardware, firmware, and/or software. In one embodiment, program modules are stored on the storage device **648**, loaded into the memory **646**, and executed by the processor **642**.

[0151] Embodiments of the entities described herein can include other and/or different modules than the ones described here. In addition, the functionality attributed to the modules can be performed by other or different modules in other embodiments. Moreover, this description occasionally omits the term “module” for purposes of clarity and convenience.

[0152] Some portions of the disclosure are presented in terms of algorithms (e.g., as represented in flowcharts, prose descriptions, or both) and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the means used by those skilled in the data processing arts to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. An algorithm is here, and generally, conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps (instructions) leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical, magnetic, or optical signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It is convenient at times, principally for reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like. Furthermore, it is also convenient at times to refer to certain arrangements of steps requiring physical manipulations or transformation of physical quantities or representations of physical quantities as modules or code devices, without loss of generality.

[0153] However, all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise as apparent from the following discussion, it is appreciated that throughout the description,

discussions utilizing terms such as “processing,” “computing,” “calculating,” “determining,” “displaying,” “determining,” or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer system, or similar electronic computing device (such as a specific computing machine), that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (electronic) quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission, or display devices.

[0154] Certain aspects of the embodiments include process steps and instructions described herein in the form of an algorithm. It should be noted that the process steps and instructions of the embodiments can be embodied in software, firmware, or hardware, and, when embodied in software, could be downloaded to reside on and be operated from different platforms used by a variety of operating systems. The embodiments can also be in a computer program product that can be executed on a computing system.

[0155] Some embodiments also relate to an apparatus for performing the operations herein. Such an apparatus may be specially constructed for the purposes, e.g., a specific computer, or it may comprise a general-purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by a computer program stored in the computer. Such a computer program may be stored in a computer-readable storage medium, such as, but is not limited to, any type of disk including floppy disks, optical disks, CD-ROMs, magnetic-optical disks, read-only memories (ROMs), random access memories (RAMs), EPROMs, EEPROMs, magnetic or optical cards, application specific integrated circuits (ASICs), or any type of media suitable for storing electronic instructions, and each coupled to a computer system bus. Memory can include any of the above and/or other devices that can store information/data/programs and can be a transient or non-transient medium, where a non-transient or non-transitory medium can include memory/storage that stores information for more than a minimal duration. Furthermore, the computers referred to in the specification may include a single processor or may be architectures employing multiple processor designs for increased computing capability.

[0156] The algorithms and displays presented herein are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus. Various general-purpose systems may also be used with programs in accordance with the teachings herein, or it may prove convenient to construct more specialized apparatus to perform the method steps. The structure for a variety of these systems will appear from the description herein. In addition, the embodiments are not described with reference to any particular programming language. It will be appreciated that a variety of programming languages may be used to implement the teachings of the embodiments as described herein, and any references herein to specific languages are provided for the purposes of enablement and best mode.

[0157] As another specific, nonlimiting example, a method of administering a player-banked wagering game over a network may comprise: receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to receive a pot wager and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the pot wagers have been added to a poker pot; receiving at the user interaction server authorization to receive at least one pot wager from each player and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the pot wagers have been added to the pot; transferring a rake from at least the pot wager to an account server; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven cards allocated to each player;

sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for a seven-card dealer hand; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations or receiving a user instruction to set the player hand the house way; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to the dealer into high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning one-half of the amount of each ante wager to each player; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank; resolving the ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand of each player to the high hands of the other players and the dealer and the low hand of each player to the low hands of the other players the dealer, wherein an entire amount in the poker pot is awarded to the player holding the highest ranked high hand, the highest ranked low hand, or the highest ranked high hand and low hand; and resolving the pot wager by comparing at the game server a rank of the high hand and low hand of each player and the dealer, comparing a best 5-card hand of each player making a fortune bonus wager to a payable, and paying odds payouts for winning hands from the pot, wherein at least a portion of the pot, less the rake, is awarded to the player or the dealer holding a predetermined winning hand combination or a premium winning hand composition.

[0158] As yet another specific, nonlimiting example, a method of administering a player-banked wagering game over a network may comprise: receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to receive at least an ante wager and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the ante wagers have been added to a first pot; receiving at the user interaction server authorization to receive a poker wager from each player and sending from the user interaction server an indication that the poker wagers have been added to a poker pot separate from the first pot; transferring a rake from at least one of the first pot and poker pot to an account server; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven cards allocated to each player; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations or receiving an instruction to set the player cards a house way; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to the dealer into a high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning the ante wager to each player not designated as the dealer; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, resolving the ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand of each player to the high hand of the dealer and the low hand of each player to the low hand of the dealer, wherein an entire remaining amount in the poker pot is awarded to the player holding the highest ranked high hand, the highest ranked low hand, or the highest ranked high hand and low hand. Additional wagers may be resolved by determining at the game server whether a predetermined event has occurred, wherein at least a portion of the first pot, less the rake, is distributed to a player when the predetermined event has occurred.

[0159] As still another specific, nonlimiting example, a method of administering a play-for-free wagering game over a network may comprise: sending from a user interaction server a quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within a predetermined time period to each player; receiving at the user interaction server authorization from each player to allocate at least one valueless chip to an ante wager; sending from the user interaction server rank and suit information for seven cards allocated to each player; receiving at the user interaction server user instructions from each player to arrange their cards into their chosen high hand and low hand configurations or receiving an instruction to set the player cards a house way; applying at a game server a house way and arranging cards allocated to a dealer into high hand and a low hand configuration; evaluating at the game server the dealer's low hand and determining whether it is of a predetermined disqualifying rank: if the dealer's low hand is of the predetermined disqualifying rank, returning each ante wager to each player; if the dealer's low hand is not of the predetermined disqualifying rank, resolving the ante wager by comparing at the game server the high hand and the low hand of each player to the high hand and the low hand of the dealer; and receiving authorization to redeem a valueless access token at the user interaction server from a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements or determining that the predetermined time period has lapsed for a player who has exhausted the quantity of valueless wagering elements and sending from the user interaction server another quantity of valueless wagering elements usable within another predetermined time period to the player.

[0160] While certain illustrative embodiments have been described in connection with the figures, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize and appreciate that embodiments encompassed by the disclosure are not limited to those embodiments explicitly shown and described herein. Rather, many additions, deletions, and modifications to the embodiments described herein may be made without departing from the scope of embodiments encompassed by the disclosure, such as those hereinafter claimed, including legal equivalents. In addition, features from one disclosed embodiment may be combined with features of another disclosed embodiment while still being within the scope of the disclosure, as contemplated by the inventor.

1. A method of administering a wagering game, comprising:

- accepting an ante wager from a player on a base game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer by receiving a physical, monetarily valuable wagering element in a designated wagering area on a playing surface of a gaming table;
- dealing seven cards from a set of randomized, physical cards comprising a deck of playing cards to the player at a player position at the gaming table and the dealer at a dealer position at the gaming table;
- accepting an arrangement of the cards dealt to the player into a two-card player low hand and a five-card player high hand, the player low hand having a lower poker ranking than the player high hand;
- arranging the cards dealt to the dealer into a two-card dealer low hand and a five-card dealer high hand, the dealer low hand having a lower poker ranking than the dealer high hand; and
- returning the ante wager to the player when the dealer low hand has a predetermined disqualifying poker ranking

by transferring each wagering element associated with the ante wager to the player.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein returning the ante wager when the dealer low hand has the predetermined disqualifying poker ranking returning the ante wager when the dealer low hand has a poker ranking of nine high.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising accepting a bonus side wager from the player by receiving another physical, monetarily valuable wagering element in another designated wagering area on the playing surface of the gaming table and paying a bonus payout on the bonus side wager to the player when the dealer low hand has the predetermined disqualifying poker ranking by transferring an additional physical, monetarily valuable wagering element to the player.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein paying the bonus payout comprises paying a fixed odds bonus payout of greater than 10:1.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein paying the bonus payout comprises paying a fixed odds bonus payout of greater than 30:1.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising accepting a fortune side wager from the player by receiving another physical, monetarily valuable wagering element in another designated wagering area on the playing surface of the gaming table and resolving the fortune side wager independently from resolution of the ante wager based upon a poker ranking of a fortune hand derived from the player's seven cards.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising maintaining the fortune side wager in play when the dealer low hand has the predetermined disqualifying poker ranking.

8. The method of claim 6, further comprising paying an envy payout on the fortune side wager to the player when an accepted amount of the fortune side wager is greater than or equal to a threshold amount and when a high hand held by another player has a poker ranking of four-of-a-kind or higher.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising accepting a progressive side wager from the player by automatically detecting the presence of another physical, monetarily valuable wagering element in another designated wagering area on the playing surface of the gaming table, sending an electronic signal from a processor indicating that transfer of at least a portion of an amount of the progressive side wager to a pot is authorized, retaining the at least a portion of the amount of the progressive side wager in the pot when the player high hand is ranked below a predetermined progressive rank, and generating an electronic signal at the processor indicating that payment of a progressive payout from the pot to the player is authorized when the player hand is of the predetermined progressive rank or higher.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising generating the electronic signal at the processor indicating that payment of the progressive payout is authorized without regard to whether the low dealer low hand is only of the single, specific predetermined disqualifying rank.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein generating the electronic signal at the processor indicating that payment of the progressive payout is authorized comprises generating the

electronic signal at the processor indicating that payment of a fixed percentage of the pot is authorized when a best five-card hand formable from the seven cards dealt to the player is a premium hand.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising refraining from collecting a commission on winning wagers.

13-19. (canceled)

20. An apparatus for administering a wagering game, comprising:

a table comprising a table top;

means for receiving an ante wager from a player on a base game of pai gow poker to be played against a dealer on the table top;

means for receiving seven cards from a set of randomized, physical cards comprising a deck of playing cards for the player on the table top;

means for receiving seven cards from the set of randomized, physical cards for the dealer on the table top;

means for receiving an arrangement of the cards available to the player into a two-card player low hand and a five-card player high hand, the player low hand having a lower poker ranking than the player high hand;

means for receiving an arrangement of the cards available to the dealer into a two-card dealer low hand and a five-card high dealer hand, the dealer low hand having a lower poker ranking than the dealer high hand; and

means for receiving a return of the ante wager to the player when the dealer low hand has a predetermined disqualifying poker ranking.

21. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising means for receiving a bonus side wager from the player winnable by the player when the dealer low hand fails to have the predetermined disqualifying poker ranking.

22. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising means for displaying that the predetermined disqualifying poker ranking is nine high.

23. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising means for automatically randomizing the set of physical cards supported by the table.

24. The apparatus of claim 23, wherein means for automatically randomizing the set of physical cards comprises an automatic card-shuffling device.

25. The apparatus of claim 20, further comprising means for accepting a fortune side wager from the player based upon a poker ranking of a fortune hand derived from the player's seven cards.

26. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the means for receiving the ante wager comprises a printed wagering area and wherein the table top comprises a felt surface.

27. The apparatus of claim 20, wherein the means for receiving the arrangement of the cards available to the player into the two-card player low hand and the five-card player high hand comprise printed areas on the table top and wherein the table top comprises a felt surface.

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