



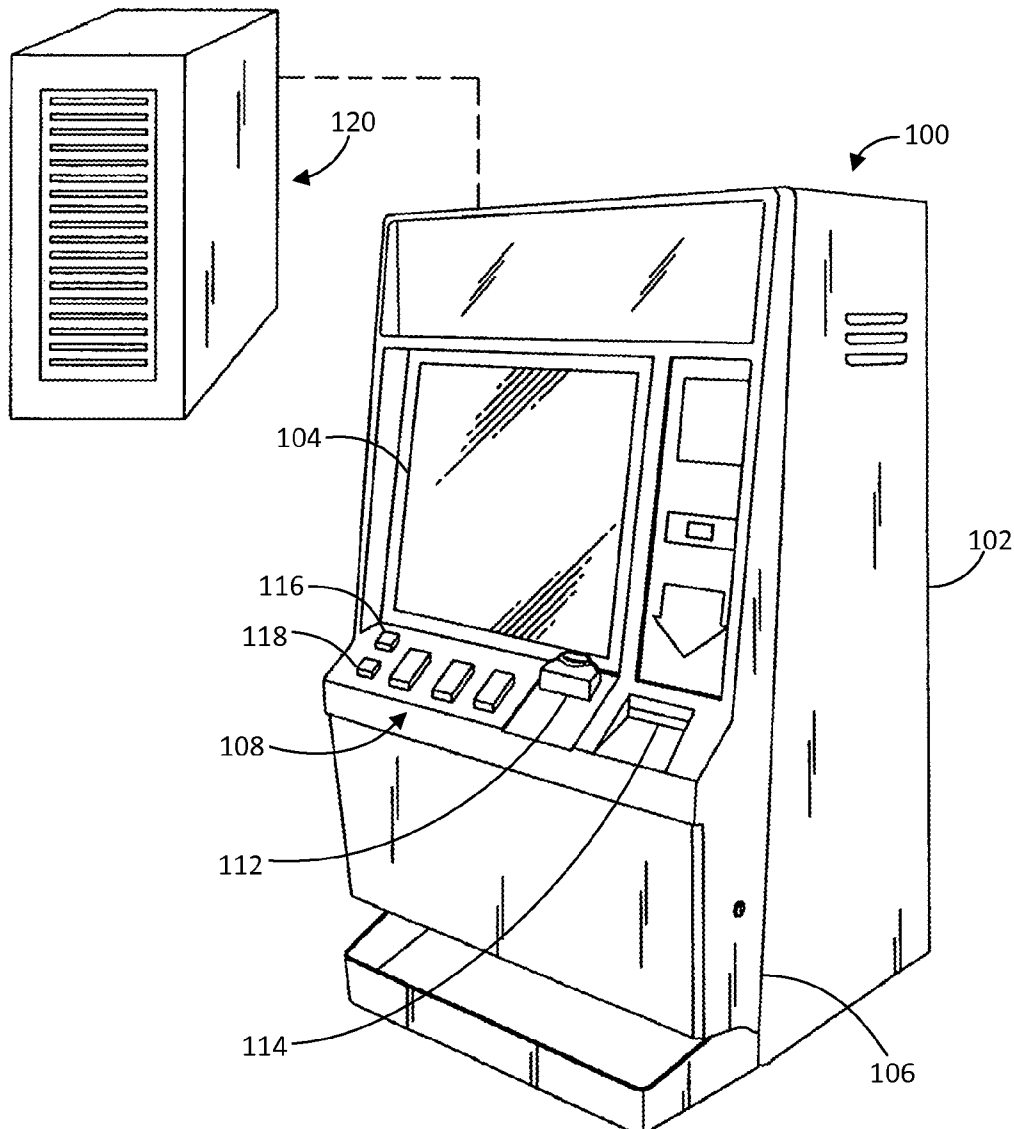
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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Scott(10) **Pub. No.: US 2012/0309503 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 6, 2012**(54) **MULTIPLAYER SYSTEM PROVIDING
CURRENT CASH VALUE FOR WAGERING
GAME INDICIA****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63F 9/24

(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **463/25**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A multiplayer gaming system for wagering games where non-final sets of indicia may be associated with an offer price for sale to other players. A non-final set of indicia may be created by a first player playing a wagering game offered by the system. Prior to receiving a final set of indicia, the first player may associate an offer price to his or her non-final set of indicia. A second player at a different gaming machine or other device may accept the offer price and payment for the non-final set of indicia may then be transferred from the second player to the first player. If the non-final set of indicia results in a winning outcome, the second player may be paid an associated award.

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(US)(21) **Appl. No.:** **13/420,031**(22) **Filed:** **Mar. 14, 2012****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 13/134,299,
filed on Jun. 3, 2011.

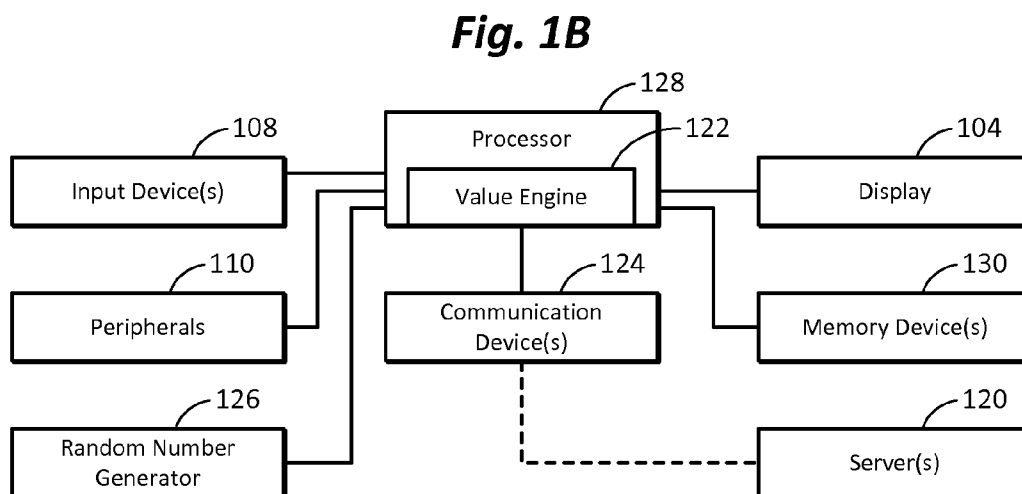
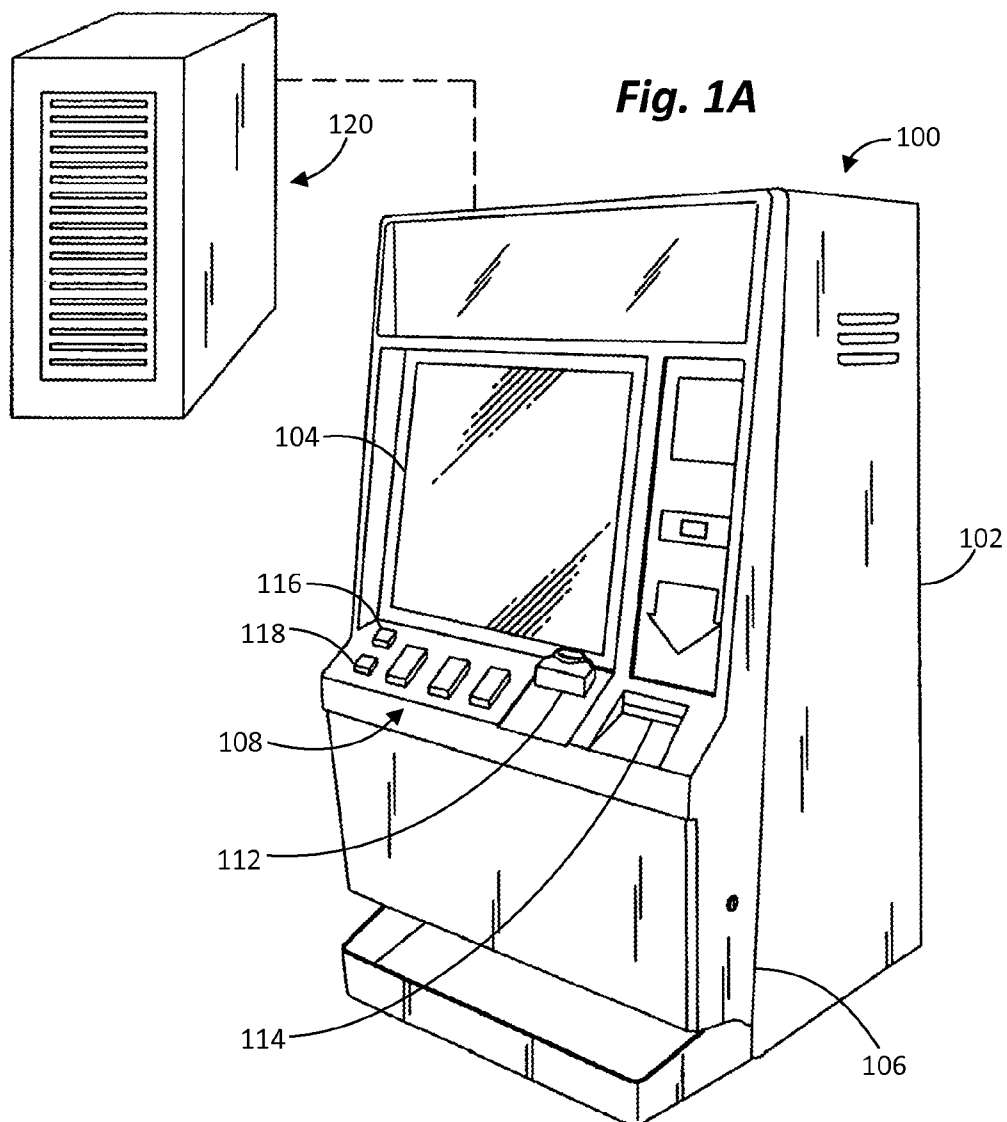


Fig. 2

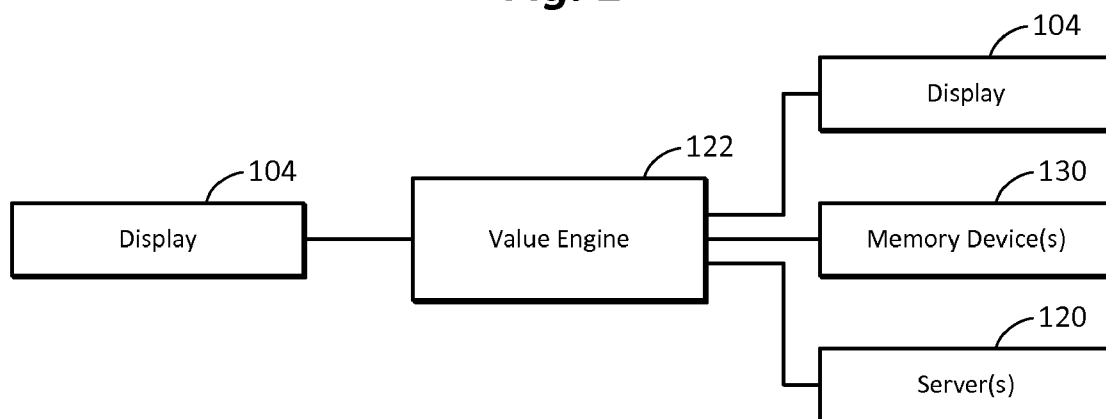


Fig. 3A

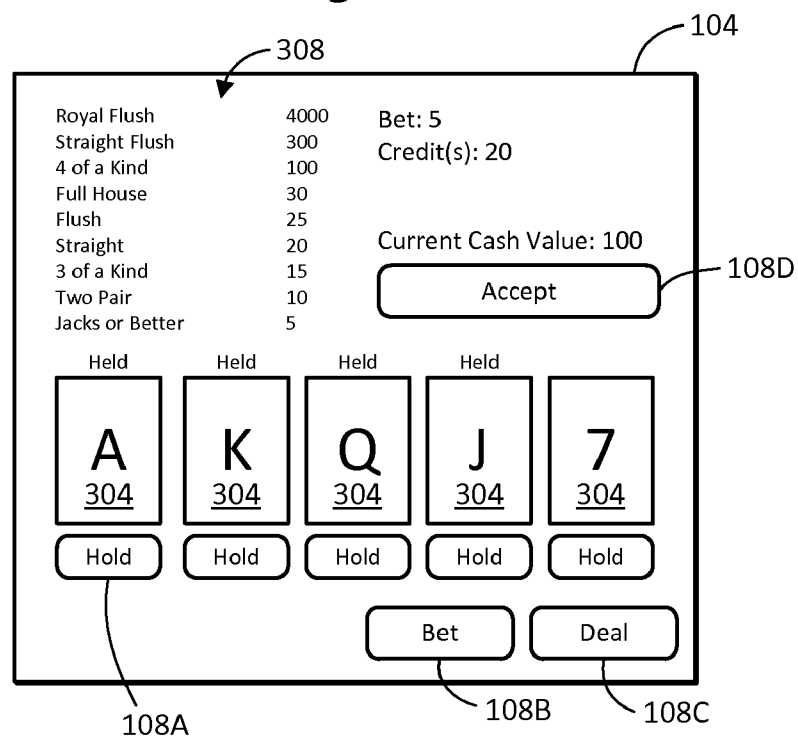


Fig. 3B

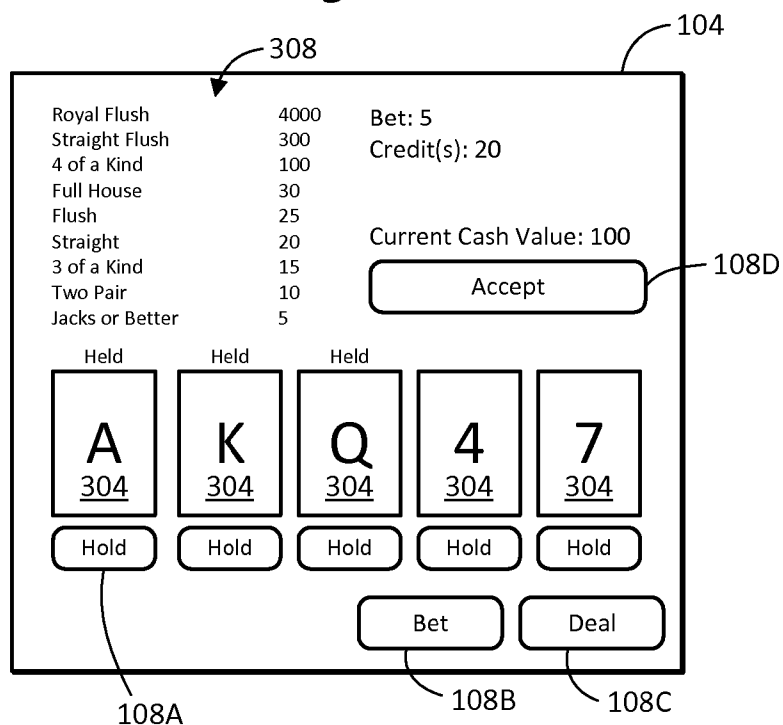


Fig. 3C

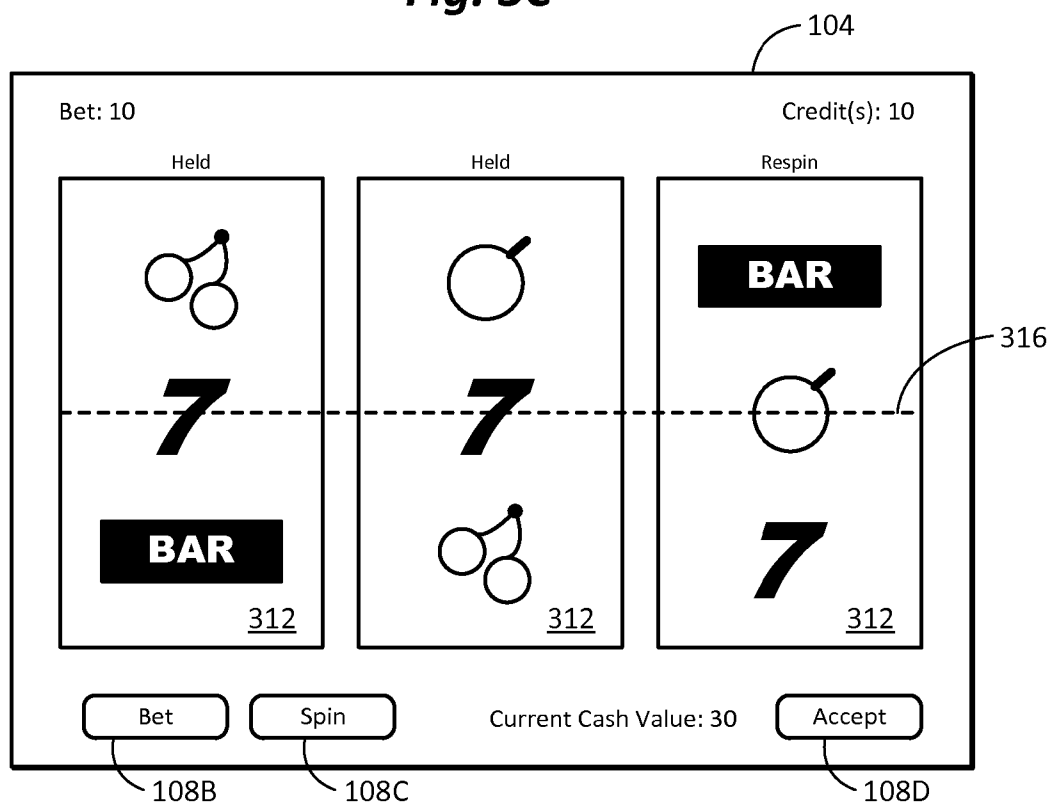


Fig. 4

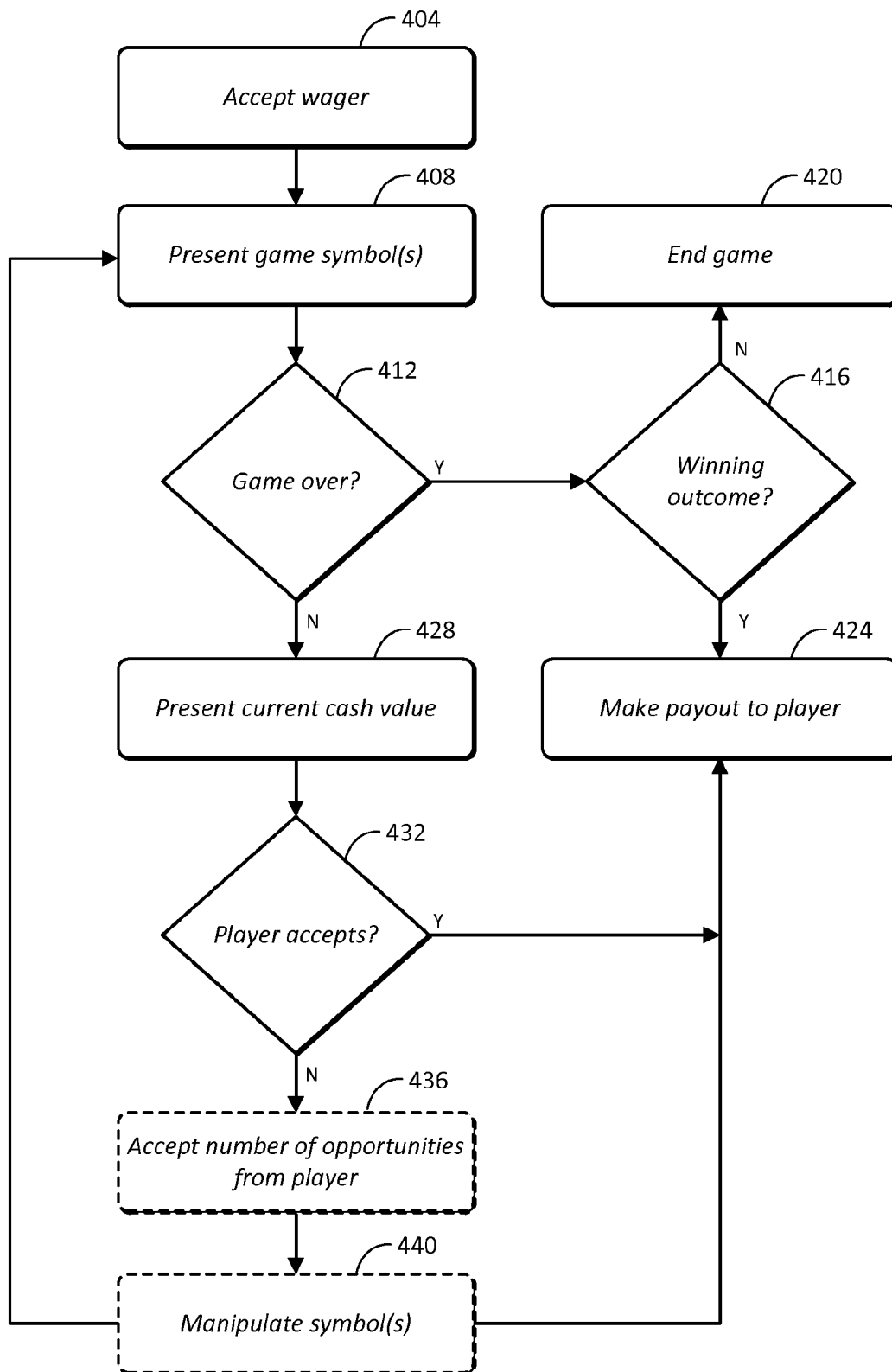


Fig. 5

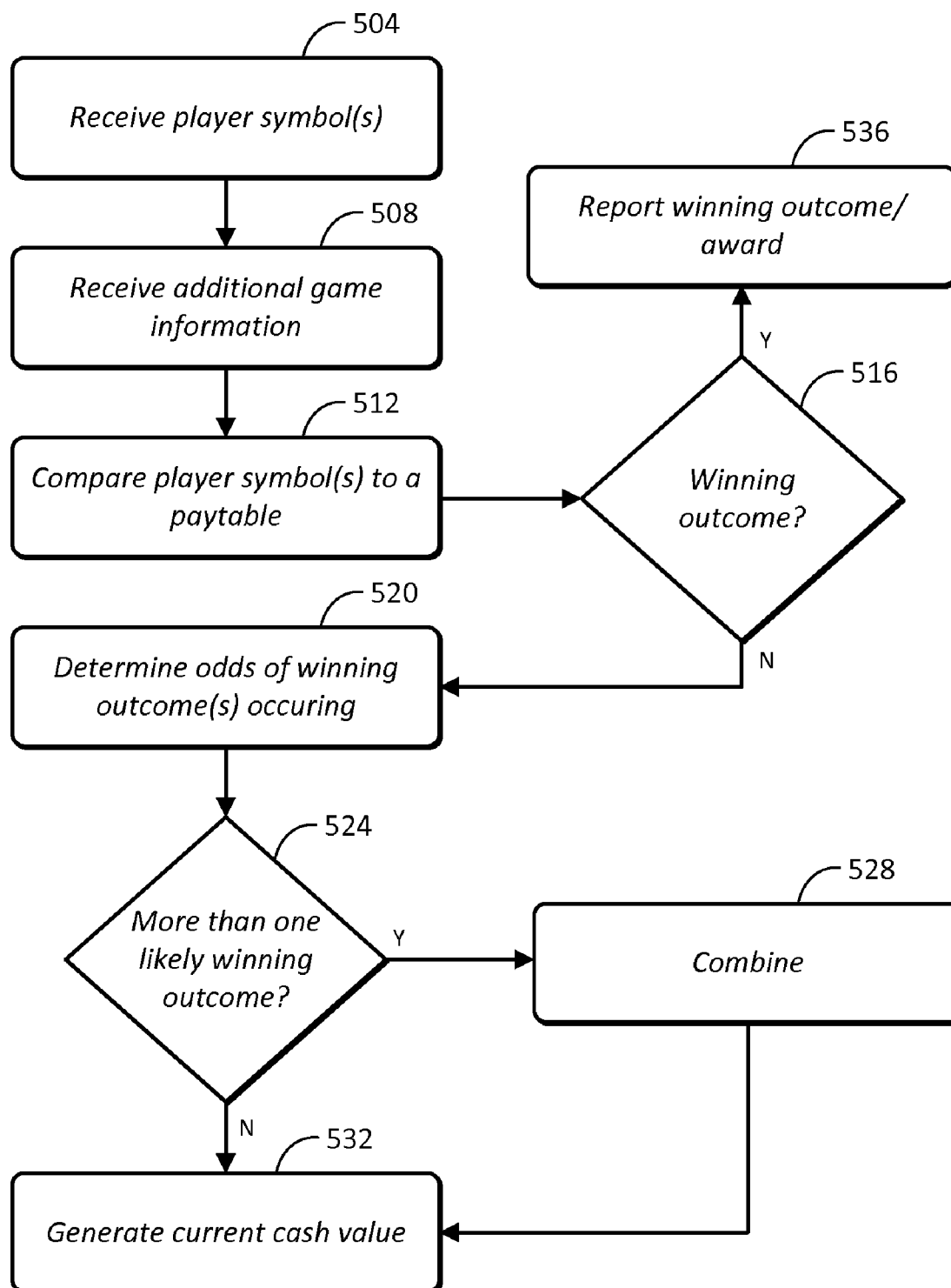


Fig. 6

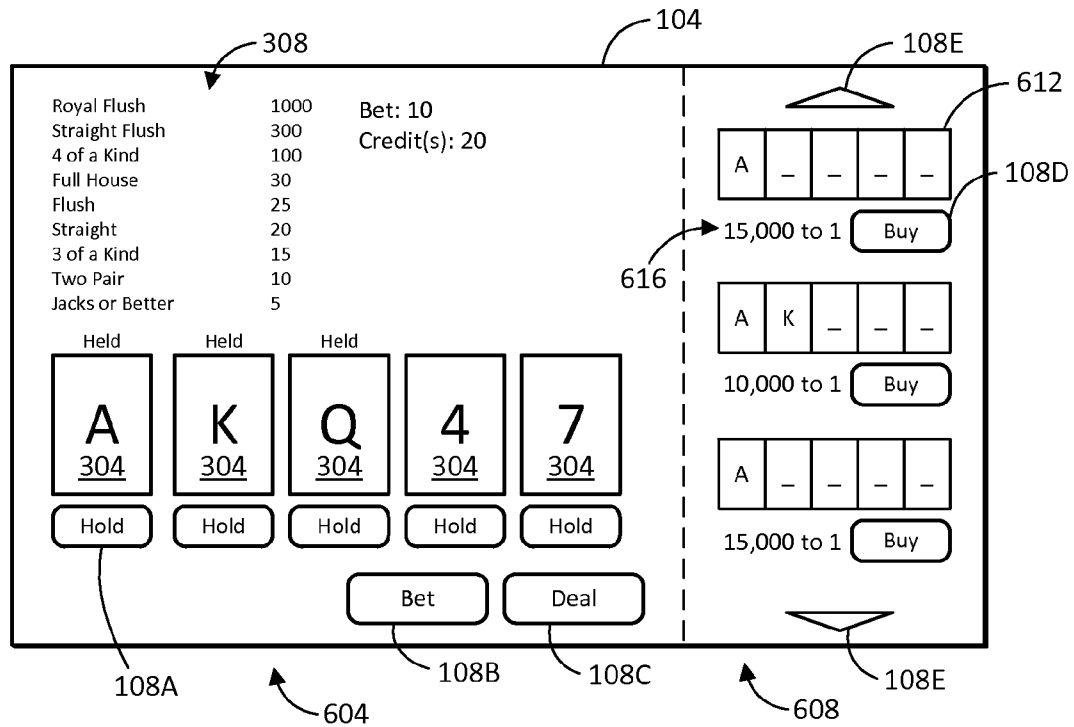


Fig. 7

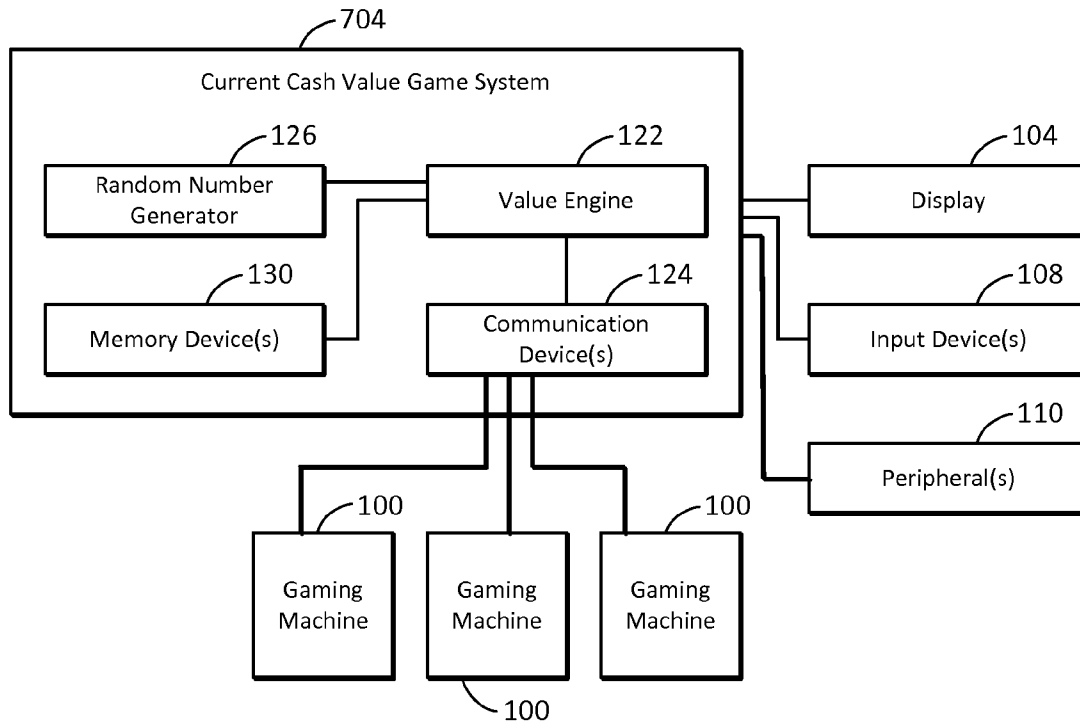


Fig. 8

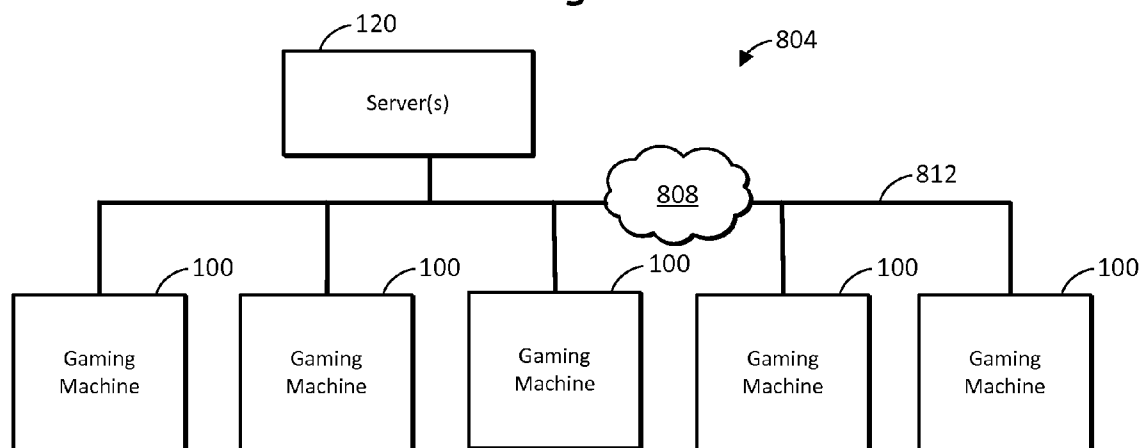
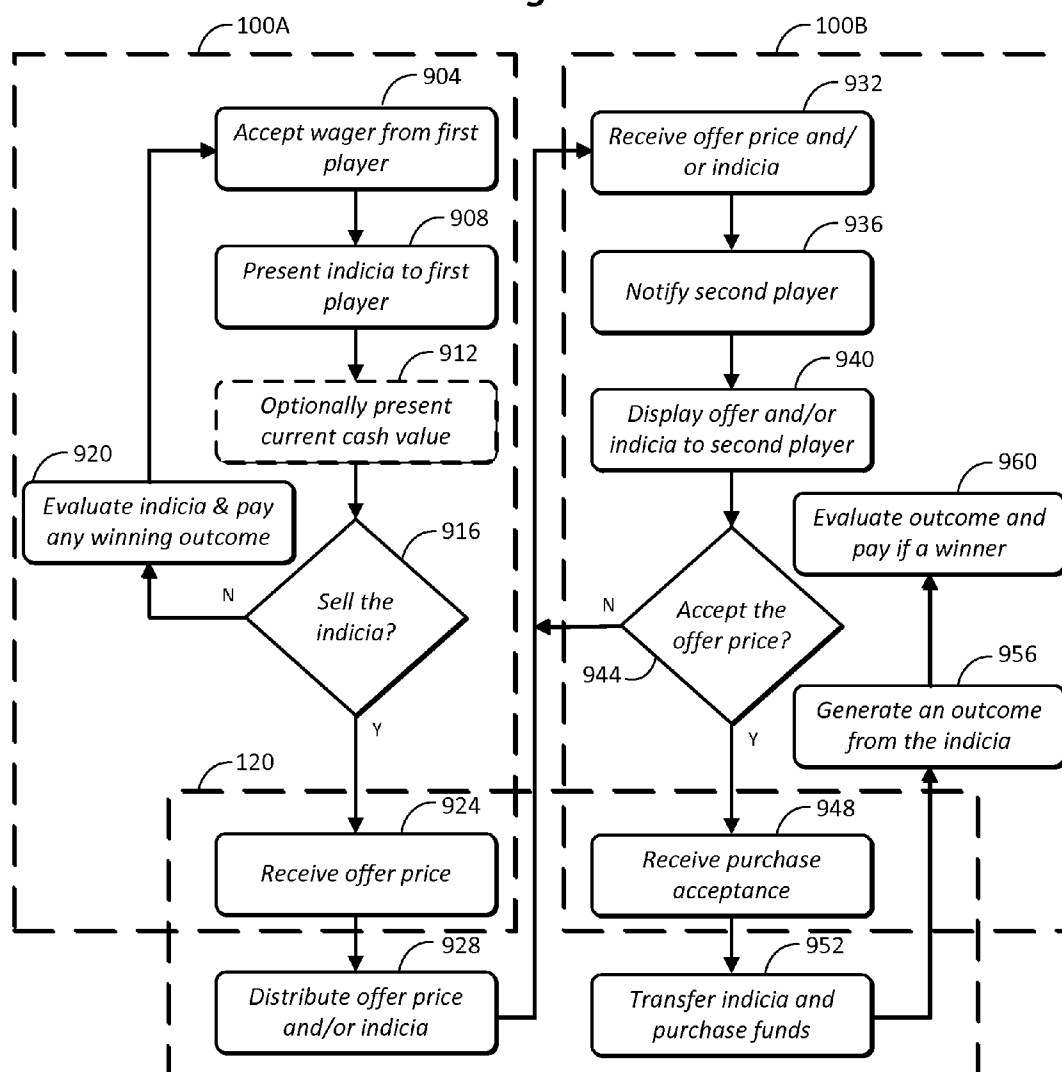


Fig. 9



MULTIPLAYER SYSTEM PROVIDING CURRENT CASH VALUE FOR WAGERING GAME INDICIA

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/134,299, titled Value Engine Providing Current Cash Value for Wagering Game Indicia, filed Jun. 3, 2011.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The invention relates to electronic wagering games and systems, particularly to a gaming machine configured to provide value for partial or incomplete game outcomes.

[0004] 2. Related Art

[0005] Traditional electronic wagering games and systems accept a wager, present a wagering game to a player, evaluate the outcome of the game, and then award the player if the outcome is a winning outcome. For example, in video poker, a player may place his or her wager to receive an initial draw of cards. The player may then choose which cards to hold and which to discard. If, at the end of the game, the player possesses cards which form a winning hand, the player wins an award. If not, the player loses his or her wager.

[0006] In the case of a slot game, the game proceeds in similar fashion. For example, a player places a wager to obtain a spin of one or more slot reels. If, at the end of the game, the reels stop such that a winning outcome is displayed, the player wins. If not, the player loses his or her wager.

[0007] The proliferation of gaming and wagering games has made players very familiar with traditional games. Thus, new games are continuously developed to attempt to renew the enticement and excitement of wagering games to such players. Unfortunately, in seeking newer and perhaps different players some games have become extraordinarily complex. In some cases, the number of ways a winning outcome can be obtained is so numerous and complex that a player cannot readily determine if he or she has won, without relying on the game to inform the player of the same. Though new players may be enticed to play, the player's sense of control and ability to actually play the game is lost since the correlation between player actions, the resulting game outcomes, and actual winning outcomes is not easily discernable.

[0008] From the discussion that follows, it will become apparent that the present invention addresses the deficiencies associated with the prior art while providing numerous additional advantages and benefits not contemplated or possible with prior art constructions.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] A multiplayer gaming system for wagering games is disclosed herein. The multiplayer gaming system allows non-final sets of wagering game indicia to be associated with an offer price for sale by one player to another player. The multiplayer system thus generates a marketplace for sale of non-final sets of indicia. This is highly advantageous in that the ability to sell non-final sets of indicia provides another avenue for players to be rewarded for playing a wagering game.

[0010] The multiplayer wagering game system may have various configurations. For example, in one embodiment, the

system may comprise a plurality of gaming machines configured to present one or more wagering games and at least one server. The plurality of gaming machines may themselves comprise a display device configured to present a plurality of game indicia according to rules of the one or more wagering games, one or more input devices configured to receive an offer price for a non-final set of game indicia from a first player, and a communication device may be used to transmit the offer price from the gaming machine;

[0011] The server may have one or more processors, memory devices, and communication devices. In operation the server may receive the offer price from the gaming machines through the one or more communication devices, and transmit the offer price to a subset of the plurality of gaming machines according to predefined distribution rules. This distributes the offer price to players at these gaming machines. It is noted that the offer price may be presented along with the non-final set of indicia on a display device of the one or more gaming machines in the subset.

[0012] The server may also be configured to receive an offer price acceptance from one or more second players via any gaming machine in the subset of the plurality of gaming machines. If an offer price acceptance is received, the non-final set of game indicia may be transferred to the second player gaming machine in the subset that transmitted the offer price acceptance. The non-final set of game indicia may then be presented on the display device of the second player's gaming machine after the transfer.

[0013] The second player's gaming machine may also be configured to present a final set of game indicia generated from the non-final set of game indicia on its display device. In addition, the second player's gaming machine may pay an award if the final set of game indicia matches a winning outcome defined by the rules of the one or more wagering games.

[0014] The server may be further configured to transfer payment from the second player's gaming machine to the first player after receipt of the offer acceptance. In addition, the server may be configured to transmit a notification to one or more mobile devices identified in the distribution rules after receiving the offer price. It is contemplated that the server may also be configured to receive a counter offer price from at least one of the subset of the plurality of gaming machines, and to transmit the counter offer price to the first player's gaming machine. This permits players to make and accept or decline counter offers for the non-final set of game indicia.

[0015] It is contemplated that a value engine configured to determine a current cash value for the non-final set of game indicia may be included in the system. The current cash value may be presented to the first player on the display device to aid the player in setting the offer price.

[0016] In another exemplary embodiment, the multiplayer system may comprise a gaming machine. Such gaming machine may be specially configured to include a primary game display area configured to present one or more non-final sets of primary game indicia and one or more final sets of primary game indicia to a player upon receipt of a wager from the player, and a first input device configured to receive an offer price from the player. The first input device may be enabled if a non-final set of primary game indicia is presented to the player, and may be disabled if a final set of primary game indicia is presented to the player. It is noted that the gaming machine may be various electronic devices, including desktop or mobile devices.

[0017] The gaming machine may also include a communication device configured to transmit the offer price to a server, and a controller. The controller may be configured to generate a new non-final set of primary game indicia for presentation on the primary game display area if the offer price is received from the player, and generate a final set of primary game indicia if an offer price is not received from the player. The controller may also or alternatively be configured to compare the final set of primary game indicia to one or more predefined winning outcomes, and to reward the player if the final set of primary game indicia is one of the predefined winning outcomes.

[0018] It is contemplated that a secondary game display area configured to display one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia may be part of the gaming machine. The one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia may have a predefined offer price associated and presented therewith. It is noted that the one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia are received from a remote device.

[0019] A second input device may be included to receive a selection of at least one of the one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia from the player. In such case, the controller may be configured to reward the player if a final set of secondary game indicia generated from a selected non-final set of secondary game indicia is a winning outcome.

[0020] Various methods of facilitating wagering game play are also disclosed herein. In one exemplary embodiment for example, a method for wagering game play at a multiplayer gaming system is provided. Such method may comprise generating a non-final set of game indicia at a gaming machine, receiving an offer price for the non-final set of game indicia via an input device of the gaming machine, and transmitting the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia to one or more gaming devices.

[0021] It is noted that the non-final set of game indicia may be generated after receiving a wager from a player at the gaming machine. In addition, the one or more gaming devices may be selected from a plurality of gaming devices based on predefined distribution rules, and in such case, the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia may be transmitted only to these selected gaming devices.

[0022] The method may also comprise receiving an offer price acceptance for the non-final set of game indicia from one of the one or more gaming devices, generating a final set of game indicia from the non-final set of indicia, presenting the final set of game indicia at the one of the one or more gaming devices, and providing an award if the final set of game indicia is a winning outcome. Play of the non-final set of game indicia at the game machine may be disabled once the offer price is received.

[0023] In the method, a current cash value for the non-final set of game indicia may be generated and presented at the gaming machine. In addition, an alert may be generated at the one or more gaming devices after the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia are received. This notifies the player that a new set of non-final indicia and offer price therefore have been received.

[0024] Other systems, methods, features and advantages of the invention will be or will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following figures and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional systems, methods, features and advantages be included

within this description, be within the scope of the invention, and be protected by the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] The components in the figures are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention. In the figures, like reference numerals designate corresponding parts throughout the different views.

[0026] FIG. 1A illustrates a gaming environment where a value engine may be used;

[0027] FIG. 1B is a block diagram of an exemplary gaming machine having the value engine;

[0028] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary arrangement of gaming machine components;

[0029] FIG. 3A illustrates a display showing a current cash value at an exemplary poker game;

[0030] FIG. 3B illustrates a display presenting a current cash value at an exemplary poker game;

[0031] FIG. 3C illustrates a display presenting a current cash value at an exemplary slot game;

[0032] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating operation of an exemplary value engine;

[0033] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating determination of current cash value by an exemplary value engine;

[0034] FIG. 6 illustrates a display presenting a secondary current cash value game;

[0035] FIG. 7 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary current cash value game system;

[0036] FIG. 8 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary multiplayer system; and

[0037] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram illustrating operation of an exemplary multiplayer system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0038] In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough description of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, to one skilled in the art, that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known features have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the invention.

[0039] In general, the value engine herein is configured to evaluate game outcomes at various stages of a game. The value engine can then determine a monetary or cash value for the current game outcome and present this value to a player. In one or more embodiments, the cash value may be offered to the player in exchange for something.

[0040] For example, the player may forgo an opportunity for a large award so that he or she may take the current cash value being offered.

[0041] The value engine is advantageous in that it adds a new element to wagering games that is compatible with a wide variety of wagering games. It is contemplated that the value engine may be used with any wagering game where game symbols or indicia (e.g., playing card symbols, slot symbols, keno numbers, bingo numbers, etc. . . .) are revealed in subsequent stages or steps of a game. For example, in a keno type game, the value engine may generate a cash value for a player's keno card based on the numbers the player currently has marked. The value engine may reevaluate the keno card as additional numbers are marked to determine a

cash value as each keno number is revealed and/or as individual numbers are marked on the keno card.

[0042] It can be seen from the above example, that determination of a current cash value can be triggered by various events. This is advantageous in that some events that occur during a wagering game may change the odds or other characteristics of a game without changing the game symbols or indicia. For example, in the keno example, the odds of a player winning may be altered when each subsequent number is revealed, even though each number is not marked on the player's keno card (i.e., the player's keno card remains unchanged).

[0043] Since the value engine may be used with a variety of wagering games, it is also advantageous in that it can be used to enhance traditional games, such as to encourage new players to play or to entice existing players to continue playing. In addition, the value engine provides feedback in the form of a current cash value for the player's current set of game symbols or indicia. This allows players to make a connection between their actions and the cash value presented by the value engine. Thus, players are able to actively play and participate in a game having the value engine. This gives players a sense of control which makes the game challenging and more entertaining.

[0044] The value engine may also attract new players who are attracted to games where they can easily see the results of their actions. It is noted that, in some embodiments, the value engine also provides the benefit of offering but not requiring players to act upon a cash value presented by the value engine. In this manner, players may play a wagering game as they desire. This reduces, if not eliminates, the risk that players of particular games will be alienated by the value engine.

[0045] FIGS. 1A-1B illustrate an exemplary gaming machine **100** at which the value engine **122** may be implemented or used. In one embodiment, the gaming machine **100** is a wager-based gaming machine configured to present one or more games to a player, which games offer the possibility of an award of winnings. Of course, the gaming machine **100** could be configured to present games or amusing activities based upon payment and either not award winnings or offer the opportunity for points, tickets, prizes or the like.

[0046] In one embodiment, the gaming machine **100** defines a generally enclosed interior space for housing one or more components. As illustrated, the gaming machine **100** generally comprises a housing or cabinet **102** for supporting and/or enclosing various components required for operation of the gaming machine. In the embodiment illustrated, the housing **102** may include a door **106** located at a front thereof, the door capable of being moved between an open position which allows access to the interior and a closed position in which access to the interior is generally prevented. The configuration of the gaming machine **100** may vary. In the embodiment illustrated, the gaming machine **100** has an "upright" configuration. However, the gaming machine **100** could have other configurations, shapes or dimensions (such as being of a "slant"-type or other configuration as is well known to those of skill in the art). It is noted that the configuration of the door **106** may vary, such as dependent upon the configuration of the gaming machine **100**.

[0047] The gaming machine **100** preferably includes at least one display device **104** configured to display game information. The display device **104** may be a mechanical, electro-mechanical or electronic display, such as one or more rotating reels, a video display or the like. When the display device **104**

is an electronic video display, it may comprise a cathode ray tube (CRT), high resolution flat panel liquid crystal display (LCD), projection LCD, plasma display, field emission display, digital micro-mirror display (DMD), digital light processing display (DLP), LCD touch screen, a light emitting display (LED) or other suitable displays now known or later developed, in a variety of resolutions, sizes and formats (e.g. 4:3, widescreen or the like). The display **104** may be capable of projecting or displaying a wide variety of information, including images, symbols and other indicia or information associated with game play, game promotion or other events. In one embodiment, the display **104** may be used to present one or more paytables associated with the opportunity for increased awards.

[0048] It is contemplated that if more than one display **104** is provided in the gaming machine **100**, each display **104** may present different information. For example, one display **104** may be used to present one or more paytables while another display is used to present a game. Alternatively or in addition, one display **104** may be used to display current cash values determined by the value engine **122**. The current cash value could also or alternatively be displayed on a main display **104** or a single display of a gaming machine **100**.

[0049] The gaming machine **100** may be configured to present various styles or configurations of games having the inventive features described herein. These may include games in Class III, such as video poker games, keno, slot-type games, and blackjack or other card, dice or various other games now known or later developed, as well as games in Class II, including central determinant games such as a video lottery, bingo and bingo-based games, and other games now known or later developed. The games may also be skill based or include one or more skill components. In one embodiment, certain game outcomes may be designated as winning outcomes. Awards may be provided for winning outcomes, such as monetary payments (or representations thereof, such as award of credits), prizes or the like. As is well known in the art, the number of winning outcomes may vary dependent upon the desired payout or winning percentage offered to the players as compared to wagers that are retained by the gaming establishment.

[0050] The gaming machine **100** may include one or more player input devices **108** (such as input buttons, a touch-screen display, joystick, touch-pad or the like) that may be utilized by the player to facilitate game play. For example, the gaming machine **100** may include a "bet credit" button **118**, "cash out" button **116** or the like, such as to permit a player to wager monetary credits credited to the machine. It is contemplated that the player input devices **108** may be physical buttons or touch buttons on a display **104** in one or more embodiments. The player input devices **108** may also or alternatively be other controls, such as sliders, switches, scroll bars, etc. . . . , implemented by physical structures or on a display **104**.

[0051] The gaming machine **100** may also include one or more peripherals **110**, such as a currency accepting mechanism **112** for accepting coins and/or a currency or card reader **114** for reading player tracking cards, credit cards, ATM cards, or the like. Some other exemplary peripherals **110** include speakers, voucher/payout ticket printers, voucher/payout ticket scanners, coin or currency dispensers, and the like.

[0052] The gaming machine **100** may include a means for paying a player any winnings accumulated during game play.

For example, as stated above, a “cash out” button **116** may be provided. The “cash out” button **116** may permit a player to be paid the winnings or redeeming any credits initially paid into the gaming machine **100**. The term “cash out” is used herein to define an event initiated by the player wherein the player receives a number of coins or currency that is equivalent to the value of the player’s accrued credit base. Typically when a player cashes out, the player receives either a paper currency voucher or currency in the form of a coin disbursement. If the player decides to receive a coin disbursement, the gaming machine **100** may activate a coin hopper/dispenser or coin handling device (not shown) which physically counts and delivers the proper number of coins to the player. The coin handling device is commonly configured to transport coins from a supply source (hopper or bin filled with coins) to a coin tray or payout receptacle where the player physically receives the coins. The player might also elect to cash out by having a ticket or other media dispensed, such as via a printer, or electronically such as by transferring credits or currency to the player’s bank account or player tracking account.

[0053] In one preferred embodiment, the gaming machine **100** includes one or more controllers or processors **128** for controlling the gaming machine, including receiving player input and sending output signals for controlling the various components of the machine **100** (such as generating game information for display by the display **104**). A processor **128** may be a microprocessor, chip, electronic circuit, or the like in one or more embodiments.

[0054] The processor **128** may be arranged to send signals for determining winning combinations and to cause the display **104** to display winning amount information. The processor **128** may communicate with input devices **108**, peripherals **110**, and one or more displays **104** (or other output devices) to allow a player to interact with and play a wagering game at the gaming machine **100**. In addition, the processor **128** may determine if a round of game play has resulted in a win, and if so, the amount to be paid to the player for that win. Also, one or more processors **128** may provide the value engine **122** and functionality thereof, as described herein, such as by being hardwired to form the value engine or by executing machine readable code that implements the value engine. For instance, as shown, the value engine **122** is provided by the processor **128** of FIG. 1B. It is noted that the value engine **122** may be a separate component, comprising for example a separate processor **128**, in some embodiments.

[0055] A processor **128** may access one or more memory devices **130**. A memory device **130** may be configured to store the machine readable code to implement and/or operate one or more wagering games. It is contemplated that a memory device **130** may also or alternatively be configured to store information to implement and/or operate the value engine **122**. For example, information related to the play or execution of a game and the value engine **122** such as but not limited to credits, amounts wagered, paytables, paylines, odds for a winning outcome, cards/symbols dealt, jackpot amounts, bonuses, and randomly generated numbers may be stored in a memory device **130**. This and other information may be stored in the memory device **130** for a period of time to the information to be used by a value engine **122** in determining a current cash value.

[0056] As stated, a memory device **130** may store machine readable code to implement a value engine **122**. For example, a processor **128** may retrieve and execute machine readable

code to provide the value engine **122**, its features, or its functionality as disclosed herein.

[0057] Though shown external to the processor **128**, it is contemplated that one or more memory devices **130** may be internal to the processor. A memory device **130** may utilize various storage technologies to accomplish data storage and retrieval. For example, a memory device may be optical or magnetic media, a hard drive, flash drive, optical drive, RAM, ROM, or the like.

[0058] The gaming machine **100** may include one or more random number generators **126** in some embodiments. In general, the random number generator **126** will be used to provide random game outcomes. For example, the random number generator **126** may be used to deal or present random game symbols or indicia to a player during a game. The random number generator **126** may be external to the processor **128** or may be integrated or be part of the processor in some embodiments.

[0059] The gaming machine **100** may be configured as a stand-alone device or be in communication with one or more external devices at one or more times, such as through one or more communication devices **124**. For example, the gaming machine **100** may be configured as a client-type device and obtain game code or game outcome information from a remote server **120** through network or other communications. These one or more gaming servers **120** may be configured to perform accounting, player tracking, bonusing, game generation, random number generation, or other functions. To illustrate, in some embodiments, the gaming machine **100** need not have a random number generator **126** since such functionality may be provided by a gaming server **120**.

[0060] The value engine **122** will typically utilize and/or be implemented by various elements of the gaming machine **100**. For example, one or more player input devices **108** may be used to interact with the value engine **122**. In one embodiment for example, a player input device **108** in the form of an “accept” button may be provided to allow a player to accept a current cash value presented on a display **104** by the value engine. One or more peripherals **110** may be used by the value engine **122** as well. For example, the value engine **122** may utilize a ticket printer or coin dispenser to award a current cash value to a player.

[0061] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating the value engine **122** in communication with various other components of a gaming machine. For example, as can be seen, the value engine **122** may be in communication with one or more displays **104**, input devices **108**, random number generators **126**, memory devices **130**, or various subsets/combinations thereof.

[0062] In operation, the value engine **122** may evaluate game information to determine a current cash value. For example, in one embodiment, the value engine **122** may receive game information identifying the game symbols or indicia the player currently has, the odds the player will win (or lose), the amount the player has wagered, or various combinations thereof. As shown in FIG. 2, the value engine **122** may obtain or be provided this information from another element of the gaming machine. For example, the value engine **122** may retrieve game information from a memory device **130** of the gaming machine.

[0063] The value engine **122** may process the game information to produce a current cash value for presentation to the player. In general, the value engine **122** will provide a current cash value based on the likelihood that a player will win an

award and/or the amount of that award. For example, as will be described further below, a player of a poker game may be given a current cash value for his or her partial hand based on the likelihood (i.e., odds) that the partial (or non-final) hand will become one or more particular winning hands as the poker game progresses. The current cash value may take into account the amount the player may win. For example, the current cash value will typically be lower than the amount the player would win if he or she achieved one of the winning hands. In this manner, the current cash value is an enticing amount, but is less than the amount the player could possibly win. It is noted that the current cash value may also take into account the player's wager so that the current cash value may be set above or below the player's wager amount. This allows a challenging and engaging choice to be presented to the player by the value engine 122. Namely, the player may choose between taking the current cash value of his or her hand or forgoing this value to attempt to win a larger award for the hand.

[0064] As can be seen, the value engine 122 may communicate the current cash value to a display 104 to present the current cash value to the player for evaluation. An input device 108, such as an "accept" button, may be provided to allow a player to indicate whether or not the player wishes to accept or take the current cash value. It is contemplated that a random number generator 126 may optionally be provided/used in one or more embodiments. For example, a random number generator may be used to increase or decrease the current cash value a random amount at random or predetermined times. In this manner, players will not be able to easily predict the current cash value and thus will continue to be engaged by the value engine 122.

[0065] FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate an exemplary display 104 showing the presentation of a current cash value at a poker-type game. As can be seen, the display 104 shows a set of dealt cards 304, a plurality of "hold" buttons 108A, a "bet" button 108B, and a "deal" button 108C. The "hold" buttons 108A may be used to hold one or more of the cards, while the "deal" button 108C is used to deal and/or replace one or more cards 304. The "bet" button 108B may be used to wager a desired amount of credits or currency. A payable 308 may also be shown on the display 104 (or elsewhere) to allow a player to determine the winning hands or outcomes and their associated award.

[0066] As can also be seen, the display 104 also presents the number of credits a player has, and the amount the player has wagered. In addition, the current cash value of the player's current hand is shown as well. As described above, the current cash value may be determined and presented by the value engine. In the poker example of FIG. 3A, the value engine has evaluated the player's cards 304 in light of the payable 308 and determined a current cash value for the cards of 100 credits. This amount is higher than the player's wager of 5 credits and so is enticing to the player. However, the current cash value of 100 credits is less than the 4,000 credits the player could win if he or she obtains the one card 304 needed to complete a royal flush.

[0067] Therefore, the player has a choice to accept the current cash value or to forgo this value and continue playing the game. As can be seen, one or more input devices 108 may be provided to allow the player to make his or her choice known. For example, FIG. 3A illustrates an "accept value" button 108D which, when engaged, would award the player the current cash value, such as by crediting the current cash

value to the player's credits or by otherwise paying out the current cash value. In the example of FIG. 3A, this would be the amount of the current cash value of 30 credits.

[0068] It is noted that a "decline" button could be provided in some embodiments. In such embodiments, the player may be required to accept or decline the current cash value before the game will continue. This brings attention to the current cash value. However, this is optional. In typical embodiments, the value engine will present current cash values and the game may proceed according to its rules, unless the player engages an "accept" button 108D or the like to indicate that he or she wishes to take the current cash value offered by the value engine.

[0069] FIGS. 3A-3B illustrate that the current cash value is dynamic and may be based on the current situation of the game being played. To illustrate, in FIG. 3A the player has four cards to a royal flush and thus is close to achieving the royal flush. As such, the value engine has determined a current cash value for this set of cards 304 as 30 credits. In FIG. 3B, the player requires two cards to achieve a royal flush. Because of the lower odds that a winning outcome will be achieved, the value engine has determined a lower current cash value of 15 credits for this set of cards 304. Both these current cash values are lower than the award of 100 credits that could be won if the player achieves a royal flush. Thus, the player is challenged to make a choice between the current cash value and the larger winning amount.

[0070] It is contemplated that the current cash value may be presented at stages of the game. For example, current cash value may be determined and presented after each card or other game symbol is dealt to a player. This may occur in real time or in substantially real time. For example, as each individual playing card or slot symbol is revealed, a new current cash value may be calculated. This provides an animated presentation which may be engaging to players. Alternatively, current cash value may be determined and presented at the end of each dealing stage of a game. For example, in a video poker game, current cash value may be presented after the initial deal, or after one or more replacement cards are dealt (assuming the game is not over after the replacement cards are dealt).

[0071] Similarly, in a slot type game, current cash value may be calculated for newly revealed slot symbols, held symbols, and/or replacement symbols (assuming the game is not over as a result of revealing such symbol(s)). For example, FIG. 3C illustrates a slot game where one or more reels 312 may be respun. This feature can be used to replace individual game symbols, such as slot symbols along a payline 316. In this manner, a player may attempt to obtain a winning outcome while retaining or holding one or more of his or her current slot symbols.

[0072] FIG. 3C illustrates an embodiment where the player is close to achieving a 777 jackpot of 1000 credits. As can be seen, the gaming machine offers the player a current cash value of 30 credits and an "accept" button 108D to allow the player to accept the current cash value. Alternatively, the player may forgo the current cash value and attempt to win the jackpot, such as by engaging the "spin" button 108C.

[0073] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating operation of an exemplary gaming machine having the value engine. FIG. 4 provides a high level illustration of the operation of the value engine that may be used with a variety of wagering games, such as slot type games, poker type games, keno games, bingo games, or other games.

[0074] At a step **404**, a wager may be received or accepted to begin a wagering game. The wager may be in the form of credits or currency and may be physically or electronically received by a payment acceptor of the gaming machine. At a step **408**, one or more game symbols or indicia may be presented, such as on a display of the gaming machine. This may occur in various ways. For example, in one embodiment, one or more slot symbols may be presented such as by spinning and then stopping one or more reels. Alternatively or in addition, one or more playing cards may be dealt. In a keno embodiment, one or more numbers may be presented so that those that match the player's keno card may be identified.

[0075] At a decision step **412**, it may be determined if the game is over or has concluded. At this stage, the game is most likely not over since the wager was just placed and the first game symbol(s) were just displayed. However, in the event the game is over at decision step **412**, it may then be determined if the player is a winner at a decision step **416**. For example, the player's game symbol(s) may be compared to a payable or otherwise evaluated to determine if they meet the requirements to be deemed a winning combination or winning outcome. If not, the game ends at a step **420** where the player's wager may be retained by the gaming establishment. If the player is a winner, then at a step **424**, the player may be paid an award associated with the winning outcome he or she has achieved. A payable may be consulted to determine this amount.

[0076] At the decision step **412**, if the game is not over, at a step **428**, a current cash value for the player's current game symbols may be generated and presented by the value engine of the gaming machine. It is noted that the player's game symbols may be the slot symbols or playing cards that are revealed to the player. Though a number of game indicia may be revealed it is contemplated that only some of them may be considered for purposes of determining current cash value. For example, only indicia along one or more active paylines or at one or more particular positions/locations on the gaming machine's display may be considered. In a keno (or bingo) embodiment, the numbers marked and their position relative to one another may be considered for purposes of determining current cash value. Alternatively, the unmarked numbers needed to win the keno game and their positions may be considered.

[0077] As stated above, the determination of current cash value occurs in various ways. In one embodiment, the odds of achieving a particular winning outcome and the award amount for this outcome may be used to determine current cash value. The award amount is typically determined based on the amount the player has wagered. In one or more embodiments, the goal of the value engine may be to provide an interesting or challenging choice to the player with the current cash value. Further details regarding the determination of current cash value will be described below.

[0078] Once presented, it may be determined at a decision step **432** whether or not the current cash value is accepted by the player. For instance, the player may engage an "accept" button or the like to indicate the current cash value has been accepted. It is contemplated that the player may decline current cash value for his or her game symbols by simply continuing to play the game without accepting, or by engaging a "decline" button or the like.

[0079] If the player accepts the current cash value for his or her game symbols at decision step **432**, the current cash value may be paid to the player at step **424**. The game may then end.

It is noted that the player may make one or more additional wagers, such as at step **404** to play one or more additional games.

[0080] In some embodiments, if the current cash value is not accepted, at a step **436**, the player may optionally be provided an option to split his or her potential winnings into multiple opportunities to obtain a winning outcome. For example, a player with four cards to a Royal Flush may decline the cash value and indicate a number of opportunities he or she wishes to have to win. This may be indicated via a button or other input device of a gaming machine. The award for a winning outcome may be divided by the number of opportunities. For example, for three opportunities, each winning outcome may pay an equal third of the total winning award. The cards or other indicia dealt or otherwise provided during each opportunity may be recycled into the deck so as to preserve the odds of the game. Also, in this manner, the player has a chance to achieve and thus be paid for the same winning outcome more than one time.

[0081] It is contemplated that in one embodiment the opportunities may only apply to particular winning outcomes. For example, a player with four (or other number of cards) to a particular winning outcome may indicate and subsequently receive a set number of opportunities to win that particular winning outcome. In such case, the player may not be paid if a winning outcome other than the particular winning outcome is achieved.

[0082] In addition or alternatively, if the current cash value is not accepted at decision step **432**, the player may optionally manipulate one or more of his or her game symbols at a step **440**. Such manipulation is optional and is generally to allow the player to further or attempt to further his or her progress towards a game outcome that is hopefully a winning game outcome. For example, in a poker type game, the player may hold one or more or none of the cards he or she currently holds at the symbol manipulation step **440**. In a slot type game the player may hold or retain one or more or no slot symbols at step **440**. In some games, the symbol manipulation step **440** may not be provided. For example, in a keno type game where players have already marked certain numbers, no symbol or number manipulation may be permitted.

[0083] Once the optional symbol manipulation at step **440** is completed, and/or the optional step of accepting a number of opportunities is completed at step **436**, the game may continue, such as by presenting one or more additional game symbols at step **408**. To illustrate, in a poker type game, the player may hit a "deal" button to indicate that symbol manipulation is complete and the unheld cards should be replaced by newly presented cards at step **408**. In a slot type game, the player may engage a "spin" button or the like to continue to step **408** where one or more new slot symbols may be presented. If a number of opportunities has been identified at step **436**, it is contemplated that the subsequently presented symbol or symbols may be recycled into the deck prior to presentation of each opportunity to preserve the odds of the game.

[0084] It is noted that the process of presenting current cash value for a player's game symbols may continue with newly presented game symbols until the game is over at decision step **412** or until the player accepts a current cash value for his or her set of symbols at decision step **432**.

[0085] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating how current cash value may be determined by an exemplary value engine. In general, the process may begin by the value engine receiv-

ing various game information from which it may generate a current cash value. At a step 504, one or more game symbols or indicia belonging to a player may be received by the value engine. For example, a player's hand of cards, slot symbols, keno numbers, or bingo numbers may be received or retrieved by the value engine. It is contemplated that only the symbol's available to the player may be considered the player's symbols. For example, only held cards in a poker game, marked numbers in a keno game, or slot symbols along one or more active paylines may be considered the player's symbols. The other symbols may be considered unavailable since they would not be usable to form a winning hand/outcome according to the rules of the underlying wagering game. In one exemplary embodiment, a processor of the gaming machine may provide the player symbols to the value engine. In addition or alternatively, as described above, the player's symbols may be retrieved from a memory device.

[0086] At a step 508, additional information may be received or retrieved by the value engine. For example, the amount wagered, cards or symbols remaining to be dealt, and other information related to a wagering game may be collected at the value engine. This information may be used in determining a current cash value. For example, since a winning award may vary based on the amount wagered, the current cash value may also vary based on the amount wagered. In one or more embodiments, the current cash value may be greater for larger wagers and smaller for smaller wagers.

[0087] Once the desired or necessary information is received, the value engine may evaluate the player's symbols. For example, at a step 516, the player's symbols may be compared to one or more paytables (defining winning outcomes and their associated awards). In general, a payable would include one or more sets of game symbols or indicia associated with an award. A player would have a winning outcome if his or her outcome matches one of these sets of game symbols.

[0088] At a decision step 516, it may be determined if the player's symbols form a winning outcome. If yes, then in one or more embodiments there may not be a need to determine a current cash value per say. The "current cash value" for player symbols forming a winning outcome may be that defined by the payable for instance. Alternatively, the current cash value could be determined. For instance, if a better outcome could be formed from the current winning outcome a current cash value higher than the award for the winning outcome may be provided. To illustrate, a player having a three of a kind that would ordinarily pay 15 credits, may be offered a current cash value of 17 credits, since it is possible for a four of a kind outcome that pays 100 credits (in this example) to be achieved from the three of a kind. If the player possesses the best possible winning outcome (i.e., the highest paying winning outcome), then it is contemplated that no current cash value may be provided. For instance, in a poker embodiment, no current cash value may be provided to a player having a royal flush, or five wild cards.

[0089] In the embodiment of FIG. 5, this current cash value is reported by the value engine at a step 536 if the player symbols are a winning outcome. It is contemplated that the value engine may notify the processor (or other element(s) of the gaming machine) that the player's symbols are a winning outcome as well. It is noted that decision step 516 and the subsequent reporting/notification step 536 may not be in all

embodiments, since the gaming machine may not run or activate the value engine if the player has a winning outcome.

[0090] If at decision step 516, the player's symbols do not form a winning outcome, the likelihood or odds that the player will achieve a winning outcome from his or her current symbols may be determined at a step 520. For example, the player's symbols may be compared to each winning outcome in a payable to determine odds on whether the winning outcome will be achieved from the players' current symbols. For example, in a poker type game, the players' current hand may be compared to winning poker hands to determine how likely it is for the player to achieve each of these hands with his or her current hand. The percentage determined at this step for the winning outcomes may be stored on a memory device.

[0091] At a decision step 524, it may be determined if more than one of the winning outcomes is likely given the player's current symbols. This may occur in various ways. For example, a winning outcome may be deemed likely if the odds of it occurring from the player's current symbols are above a particular threshold. The value engine may compare the odds of one or more of the winning outcomes to this threshold to identify winning outcomes that are likely. The threshold may be various values and may be changed. For example in one embodiment, the threshold may be 30% while in other embodiments a higher or lower threshold may be selected.

[0092] At decision step 524, if more than one winning outcome is likely, the value engine may take this into account at step 528. Typically, the current cash value will be based at least in part on the potential award amount that a player could win. Since a single current cash value is typically desired, it may be beneficial to combine award amounts, odds, and other information from the multiple winning outcomes in generating the single current cash value. For example, the awards for all possible winning outcomes that may arise from a player's current cards (or other gaming indicia) may be used to determine a current cash value.

[0093] The current cash value may be generated at a step 532. For example, in one embodiment, the total amount of awards from all likely winning outcomes may be averaged and this average value may be used to set the current cash value for the winning outcome. Alternatively, the median of the winning amounts may be used to set the current cash value. In another embodiment, only the highest winning amount may be used to determine the current cash value. In another embodiment, only the most likely winning outcome's award amount may be used to determine current cash value. In one embodiment, the current cash value may be a percentage of a likely winning outcome's award amounts or a combination of more than one likely winning outcome's award amount.

[0094] The current cash value may then be presented to the player, such as via a display of the gaming machine. As described above, the player may then choose whether or not to accept the current cash value for his or her symbols. If the player accepts, the player will typically be paid the current cash value, and the game may subsequently end. If the player declines, the underlying wagering game will typically continue according to its rules.

[0095] As stated, the determination of a current cash value for a player's symbols may occur at various stages of a game. This is advantageous for the reasons stated above. In addition, the determination of a current cash value can be used for other advantageous purposes. For example, it is contemplated that

current cash value can itself be the basis of a wagering game. In one embodiment for example, a player of a current cash value wagering game may be presented with one or more sets of one or more game symbols or indicia and be provided a payable. The payable is provided to allow the player to determine the winning outcomes for the game. For example, list of winning poker hands may form the payable in some embodiments.

[0096] The player may evaluate the sets of game symbols and select one or more of them to play. Each set may have a current cash value associated therewith. To illustrate, one or more non-final poker hands with associated current cash values may be presented to the player for evaluation. The current cash value may be determined based on the symbols in the set and a payable (among other things) such as described above. It is contemplated that the player may need to purchase the selected set(s) of symbols before he or she may play them to completion. For example, a set may be purchased by placing a wager on the selected set of symbols. The purchase price may be based on or equal to the current cash value associated with the set of symbols. It is noted that the purchase price may, in some embodiments, be expressed in terms of credits to allow the player to quickly determine how much he or she must wager to purchase a particular set of symbols.

[0097] Alternatively, the player may be provided an opportunity to select one or more sets upon the occurrence of a triggering event. For example, a player achieving a bonus at a base game may be allowed to select one or more sets for free as a result of obtaining the bonus. In such embodiments, the current cash value game functions as a bonus game.

[0098] It is noted that the current cash value game could be periodically or constantly displayed as a secondary game on a gaming machine's display. For example, list of sets of symbols having associated current cash values may be presented to a player while the player is playing a different game. In this way, if a particular set of symbols catches the player's eye, he or she may purchase the set to attempt to win from it. Since the player can see the symbols and the current cash value, the player can attempt to find sets of symbols that are a bargain, purchase these sets, and attempt to form a winning outcome therefrom. The goal would be to form a winning outcome that has a larger award than the player's purchase/wager amount.

[0099] In a similar vein, it is contemplated that a player may sell his or her symbols in one or more embodiments. For example, a player having achieved a particular set of symbols (e.g., playing card or slot symbols) may decide that he or she is better off selling the hand to another player than to take the current cash value or to attempt to achieve a winning outcome from the symbols. It is contemplated that the player may engage a "sell" button or the like to suspend the current game and solicit wagers or credits from other players who may purchase the symbols from the player. The player's symbols may then enter an electronic marketplace for sets of symbols. The player may play a new game at this point, while awaiting the sale of the symbols. Alternatively, the player could simply wait for the symbols to be sold before playing again. With a number of players electronically connected, it can be seen that a substantial marketplace for non-final sets of game symbols may be constructed. It is noted that sets of symbols may not be resold in one or more embodiments. This ensures that the sets are played to completion rather than repeatedly bought and sold. The marketplace for non-final sets of symbols may be displayed as a secondary or bonus game, such as described above with regard to the current cash value game.

[0100] FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary game display device **104** or screen having a secondary game in the form of a current cash value game. In one or more embodiments, the secondary current cash value game can be presented in a predefined area of the game display, or via a separate display or screen. For instance, as shown in FIG. 6, the secondary current cash value game is presented in a separate secondary game area **608**, while a base game or primary game may be presented in a primary game area **604**. In this manner, a player may play the primary game and/or the secondary current cash game independently of one another. It is noted that the primary game may itself offer current cash value, or may be a traditional game without current cash value offers.

[0101] The secondary current cash value game may operate in various ways. As discussed, the secondary current cash value game may display different sets of game indicia to a player along with an associated current cash value for each set of indicia. The player may then be given the option to purchase any set of game indicia for its stated current cash value. The game indicia will typically be a partial or incomplete "hand", so that it may be played out to a winning or losing outcome. If a winning outcome is achieved, the player is paid an award according to the payable. If not, the current cash value that the player paid to purchase the set of game indicia is retained by the gaming establishment providing the secondary current cash value game.

[0102] Referring to FIG. 6 for example, the secondary current cash value game presents a number of sets of game indicia in the form of partial or incomplete poker hands **612**. For example, FIG. 6 illustrates partial hands **612** each comprising a set of game indicia, with at least one of the indicia being visible or revealed.

[0103] As can be seen, each partial hand **612** may have a current cash value **616**. As shown, the current cash value is represented in terms of odds **616**. In FIG. 6, exemplary odds of 15,000 to 1 has been provided. This means that a winning outcome from this would pay the player 15,000 times his or her purchase price or wager for the partial hand. As described above, the current cash value can also be represented by a value, such as a monetary or credit value. For example, if the award for a winning outcome is \$1,000, the current cash value may be shown as \$0.01. (The current cash value of \$0.01 in this example could be shown as equivalent odds of 100,000 to 1). In this manner, a player purchasing the partial hand **612** for \$0.01 would be paid \$1,000 if a winning outcome is achieved.

[0104] As stated, current cash value, such as odds **616**, may be generated based on one or more winning outcomes, their odds of occurring, and their associated payouts/awards. In one or more embodiments, this is true for the secondary current cash value game as well. To illustrate, the odds **616**, such as shown in FIG. 6, may be for a royal flush (because of their relatively high payout). Alternatively, the odds **616** may be determined based on the combination of odds/awards for multiple winning outcomes.

[0105] A button **108D** or other input may be provided to allow players to select one or more partial hands **612** for purchase. The partial hands **612** may themselves be selectable, thus allowing a player to purchase a partial hand by touching or tapping the desired partial hand. It is noted that embodiments showing current cash value as odds **616** may allow partial hands **612** to be purchased for various amounts. The payout for achieving a winning outcome would thus be based on the purchase price. In one or more embodiments, the purchase price may function as a multiplier. For example, at

15,000 to 1, a winning player would be paid 15,000 credits if he or she purchased the partial hand **612** for 1 credit. The same player would be paid 30,000 credits if he or she purchased the partial hand **612** for 2 credits however. In some embodiments, a predefined range of acceptable purchase prices may be set to prevent players from purchasing partial hands **612** at too low or too high of a price.

[0106] In one or more embodiments, the partial hands **612** may change periodically or continuously in an automated fashion. For example, different partial hands **612** may scroll past the player in various directions. In FIG. 6 for example, the partial hands **612** may continuously scroll in a vertical direction within the secondary game area **608**. The partial hands **612** need not scroll continuously in all embodiments. For example, in some embodiments some or all the partial hands **612** currently being displayed may be replaced or changed at predefined periods. The replacement of partial hands **612** may occur according to a predefined sequence (e.g., top to bottom, bottom to top, left to right, right to left) or may occur by randomly selecting one or more partial hands for replacement. It is contemplated that a countdown timer or the like may be presented on the display device **104** in some embodiments to inform players when one or more partial hands **612** will be replaced.

[0107] The limited time of availability created by automatically replacing/moving the partial hands **612** creates excitement and entices players to purchase partial hands they desire before they are no longer available (i.e., disappear from the screen). Once a partial hand **612** becomes unavailable it may not appear again for some time. It is contemplated however that, in some embodiments, the player may be permitted to recall partial hands **612**, such as by scrolling or moving them back into view.

[0108] The partial hands **612** may also be changed manually. For example, in some embodiments, one or more buttons **108E** or other inputs may be provided to allow the player to replace one or more of the partial hands **612**. As shown in FIG. 6 for instance, “Up” and “Down” buttons **108E** have been provided to allow the player to move the partial hands **612** up or down, thus revealing new partial hands as the player desires. It is noted that, in addition or instead of buttons, the gaming machine may recognize touch gestures such as “swiping” to move and reveal the partial hands **612**.

[0109] A player may purchase a partial hand **612** with currency, credits, or the like. For example, the player may insert coins, tokens, or other forms of currency via a currency acceptor or the like. The player may also use his or her credits that are already in a gaming machine to purchase a partial hand **612**. After a partial hand **612** has been purchased, the partial hand may be played to a conclusion to determine if it is a winning or losing hand. For example, in a poker embodiment, additional cards (or other gaming indicia) may be dealt to complete the partial hand **612**, transforming it into a final hand.

[0110] In a draw poker embodiment, individual cards may be held or replaced to create a final hand that will be evaluated to determine winners and losers.

[0111] It is noted that the final hand, the process of replacing, removing, and/or adding indicia to form the final hand, or both may be presented to the user on the display device **104**. This presentation may occur in the primary game area **604** or the secondary game area **608**. In some embodiments, the secondary current cash game may temporarily occupy a

larger section or all of the display device’s screen when a partial hand **612** is being played.

[0112] It is noted that though described as a “hand”, the “partial hand” could be a non-final set or collection of various gaming indicia that may be played according to different game rules. For example, a non-final set of indicia **612** could be slot or other symbols in a slot type embodiment. In such an embodiment, the non-final sets of indicia **612** (e.g., slot symbols) may be combined with new symbols to form a final set of indicia. The final set of indicia may be evaluated to determine a winner or loser. As an example of use of different game rules, a non-final set of indicia comprising playing card symbols could be played (once purchased) according to various poker and blackjack, or other card game rules. Some other examples of indicia and games that could be implemented are keno and bingo. In such embodiments, the non-final sets of indicia may be incomplete keno or bingo cards.

[0113] FIG. 7 illustrates an exemplary secondary current cash value game system **704** for generating and providing the non-final sets of indicia. As can be seen, non-final sets of indicia may be generated using a random number generator **126**. The partial hands may be processed by the value engine **122** to determine a current cash value (in terms of odds or a value) for each hand. This current cash value can then be used as the “price” at which the hand may be purchased as discussed above. A memory device **130** accessible to the value engine **122** may store one or more winning outcomes and/or available cards (or other gaming indicia) so that the odds of a winning outcome may be determined.

[0114] In some embodiments, a communication device **124** may transmit the non-final sets of indicia along with their current cash value to one or more gaming machines **100** for display, purchase, and play. The gaming machines **100** may present the non-final sets of indicia as a secondary game, such as shown in FIG. 6. Alternatively, in some embodiments, the “secondary” game may be the only game or available on a particular gaming machine.

[0115] It is noted that the secondary game system **704** may be a standalone gaming device. For example, the secondary game system **704** may optionally comprise a display **104**, one or more inputs devices **108**, and/or peripherals **110** to allow the non-final sets of indicia to be played directly via the secondary game system **704**. It is noted that the secondary game system **704** may be configured similar to a gaming machine in such embodiments. Thus, the secondary game system **704** may include currency acceptors, ticket or coin dispensers and other elements of a gaming machine.

[0116] As stated, players may offer non-final sets of indicia for sale as well. FIG. 8 illustrates a multiplayer system **804** where non-final sets of indicia may be sold by players to buyers (other players). As can be seen, the multiplayer system **804** may comprise one or more servers **120** in communication with one or more gaming machines **100**. Though described in the following with reference to gaming machines **100**, it is noted that other client devices (such as computers, mobile devices, handhelds, and the like), upon which one or more wagering games may be played, can be used in the multiplayer system **804**. In general, non-final sets of indicia may be formed at the gaming machines **100** and then offered for sale at the players’ discretion. For example, a player playing a poker game at a gaming machine **100** may sell his or her partial hand through the multiplayer system **804**.

[0117] It is noted that the multiplayer system **804** may offer its own games in some embodiments. For example, the mul-

tiplayer system **804** may provide various bonus or secondary games that multiple players may play. To illustrate, in one embodiment, the multiplayer system **804** may provide a collection game where a player that collects a particular group of final sets of indicia (e.g., all possible Royal Flush draws in a poker embodiment) may win a bonus or other award. The necessary final sets of indicia may be deemed collected when they are achieved during game play at one of the multiplayer system's gaming machines **100**. Alternatively, a player may purchase or transfer a non-final set of indicia to his or her gaming machine. A necessary final set of indicia may also result from one of these purchased or transferred non-final sets of indicia. One benefit of such a bonus or secondary game is that it generates a desire to purchase non-final sets of indicia, since these non-final sets of indicia can turn into a final set of indicia that the player is looking to achieve to complete a collection (and thus win a bonus).

[0118] The multiplayer system **804** may utilize various communication mediums in its operation. For example, the multiplayer system **804** may communicate via wireless and/or wired communications. The multiplayer system **804** may communicate via one or more communication networks **808** and/or communication links **812**. For example, in one or more embodiments, the multiplayer system **804** may utilize or include a local area, wide area network, or both. Such network may be a closed or private system such as a private LAN or WAN. Alternatively or in addition, the network may include or utilize a public network such as the Internet.

[0119] In these ways, the multiplayer system **804** can span large distances, thus allowing large numbers of players to use the multiplayer system. In addition, a variety of different devices may be used to access or communicate with the multiplayer system **804**, including gaming machines **100** and other computing devices (such as desktop, mobile, and handheld computing devices). It is contemplated that these devices may execute machine readable code or the like to access the multiplayer system **804**. In one or more embodiments, the machine readable code may be downloaded or otherwise transmitted to the devices from a server **120**.

[0120] Players may utilize the gaming machines **100** to sign up or establish a user account at the server **120** to access the server. This process may include collecting and sending payment, address, and/or personal identification information from a player to the server. Typically, a player will not be able to access the multiplayer system until he or she creates an account. Once created, the player may log in to the account by entering in authenticating information, such as a username and password or the like.

[0121] Logging in allows the multiplayer system to determine that a particular player is at a particular gaming machine. In this manner, notifications for that player may reach such player by being transmitted to the gaming machine the player is using. It is noted that other ways of associating a gaming machine to a particular player could also be used. For example, with mobile or other handheld device, a login may be used. Alternatively, it could be assumed that such devices are being used by a particular player since these are personal devices.

[0122] Operation of an exemplary multiplayer system will now be described with reference to the flow diagram of FIG. 9. For the purpose of explanation, the steps of FIG. 9 have been grouped according to the element of the multiplayer system that may perform such steps. For instance, steps within box **100A** may be performed by a first gaming

machine, steps within box **120** may be performed by a server, and steps within box **100B** may be performed by a second gaming machine. Again, though referred to as gaming machines, a variety of client computing devices configured to communicate with the server may be used. It is noted that the groupings of steps herein are exemplary, and that various elements of the multiplayer system may perform various operations of the multiplayer system. In FIG. 9 for example, some of the boxed groupings may encompass the same steps indicating that a step may be performed at one or more elements of the multiplayer system.

[0123] At a step **904**, a wager may be received at a first gaming machine **100A** to initiate play of a wagering game where a non-final set of indicia may be generated. As can be seen, at a step **908**, wagering indicia may be provided/presented to a first player via the first gaming machine **100A** once the wager has been received. For example, in a slot game embodiment, one or more reels may be spun to reveal slot symbols. In a poker embodiment, one or more cards may be dealt to the player. It is noted that placement of a wager may but need not be a prerequisite to obtaining the indicia in the multiplayer system.

[0124] During step **908**, a wagering game or portions/stages thereof may be presented to the player. Therefore, in step **908** one or more rounds of a game may occur where one or more indicia may be added, removed, and/or replaced. For example, in a poker game step **908** may comprise dealing playing cards in stages according to the rules of the poker game.

[0125] The current cash value of the indicia may be optionally determined and provided, such as by a value engine of the first gaming machine **100A**, at optional step **912**. The current cash value provided by the multiplayer system may be used to aid the player in valuing his or her indicia if the first player decides to sell the indicia. However, this is not required as players may independently set a value or price for their indicia, as will be described further below.

[0126] As long as the first player has a non-final set of indicia, an option for the player to sell the indicia may be made available. For example, the first gaming machine **100A** may have a button or other input, such as a "Sell" button, that may be engaged or activated to sell the player's non-final set of indicia. If the first player continues to play the wagering game such that a final set of indicia is generated, the option to sell will be disabled. At a decision step **916**, if the first player decides not to sell, the final set of indicia may be compared to a payable or other predefined winning outcome(s) of the wagering game at a step **920**, to determine if the player has won or lost. The process may then return to step **904** where another wager may be received, such as to start a new game.

[0127] If the first player decides to sell, then an offer price (i.e., purchase price) may be requested from the first player. For example, the first gaming machine **100A** may prompt the user to input an offer price for his or her non-final set of indicia. The offer price is received by the first gaming machine **100A** at a step **924**. The offer price may then be transmitted by the first gaming machine **100A** to the server **120**. This receipt by the server **120** is also shown by step **924** in FIG. 9. It is noted that the non-final set of indicia may also be transmitted to the server **120** so that it may be associated with the offer price. Alternatively, an identifier of the non-final set of indicia may need to be transmitted to the server **120**, such as in server-based gaming systems.

[0128] Typically, the offer price will be set to the player's desire, however, it is noted that the offer price may be limited to a predefined range in some embodiments. As stated, the current cash value of the player's non-final set of indicia (in the form of odds or a monetary or other value) may be provided, such as on the display device of his or her gaming machine, to aid the player in setting an offer price. However, the player is free to ignore this value in setting his or her offer price.

[0129] It is contemplated that players will set their offer price based on the amount of a possible winning award that is attainable from the non-final set of indicia. For instance, a player in a poker embodiment that is four cards to a royal may set his or her offer price relative to the winning award for the royal flush. It is predicted that this amount will typically be lower than the winning award for the royal flush, and in many cases significantly lower. To illustrate, the first player may set an offer price of 500 when the royal flush pays 10,000. In this manner, the first player can obtain payment for his or her four cards (the non-final set of indicia), while the buyer of these cards obtains the opportunity to achieve a net gain should the four cards result in a royal flush.

[0130] The first player's game may be suspended or paused if he or she has decided to sell the non-final set of indicia. For example, the first gaming machine 100A, may prevent further manipulation of the non-final set of indicia once the indicia have been offered for sale. In some embodiments, the first player may begin a new game while waiting for his or her non-final set of indicia to be sold. In other embodiments, the first gaming machine 100A may require the player to wait until the indicia are sold. It is contemplated that if the indicia do not sell within a predetermined time period, the indicia may be withdrawn from sale in some embodiments, thus requiring the player to continue playing the indicia to a final set of indicia.

[0131] In yet other embodiments, the multiplayer system may allow the player to leave once the non-final set of indicia have been offered for sale. In such embodiments, the non-final set of indicia will typically be associated with the player, such as with the player's player tracking or other account. Alternatively, a ticket or other media having a unique identifier of the non-final set of indicia may be dispensed to the player. This identifier could also be provided electronically, such as via email, SMS, or the like. The player may then use his or her account or ticket to later claim the sale proceeds if/when the non-final set of indicia sells. Sale proceeds may be automatically credited to a player tracking or other account as well.

[0132] At a step 928 the server 120 may distribute the offer price to a pool of potential buyers by transmitting the offer price to one or more second gaming machines 100B of one or more second players. In one embodiment, the server 120 may simply relay the offer price for the non-final set of indicia to these second players. In other embodiments, the server 120 may store various distribution rules for distributing the offer price. These distribution rules may for example define which buyers receive the offer price. For example, some players may only wish to see offers for particular non-final sets of indicia or within a predefined price range. The server 120 may receive these definitions from the buyers.

[0133] In one or more embodiments, the location of the first and/or second players may determine where the offer price is distributed. For example, if the first and second players are not within jurisdictions where such offer is legally permitted,

then the offer price may not be distributed. The gaming machines of the players may report their location, such as via a GPS device or the like, to the server 120 so that distribution may occur accordingly. In some embodiments, the server 120 may be configured to determine a gaming machine's location, such as via the network address or communication link the gaming machine is utilizing to communicate with the server.

[0134] At a step 932 the offer price may be received at the one or more second gaming machines 100B of the one or more second players (i.e., buying players). A second player may optionally be notified of such receipt at a step 936. For instance, a second gaming machine 100B may generate an alert notifying the player that an offer price has been received. The alert may be audible, visual, tactile or various combinations thereof.

[0135] At a step 940, the offer price may be presented to the second player, such as via a display device of the second gaming machine 100B. The offer price will typically be shown along with its associated non-final set of indicia. This way, the second player can evaluate the indicia along with the offer price and make a purchasing decision thereafter at a decision step 944.

[0136] It is contemplated that the offer price may be displayed in a secondary area of the second gaming machine's display device, such as in cases where the second player is currently playing his or her own game. It is contemplated that the offer price and associated non-final set of indicia could be displayed in a secondary game area, as illustrated in and described with regard to FIG. 6. In some embodiments, player non-final sets of indicia may be displayed along with non-final sets of indicia offered by a gaming establishment in the secondary game area for purchase.

[0137] In embodiments where the second player is currently not playing a game, the offer price (and associated non-final set of indicia) may be displayed more prominently. For example, the player may receive a notification on his or her mobile device or other computing device regardless of what the player is currently doing. The player may then review the offer price and associated non-final set of indicia and then decide whether or not to accept. It is contemplated that if a number of offers have been received, all such offers may be saved for later review and possible acceptance on the second gaming machine.

[0138] The second player may decline to purchase the non-final set of indicia. If so, the second player may go about his or her business until another offer price is received at step 932. For instance, the second player may continue playing any game he or she was already playing on the second gaming machine 100B. This may be accomplished by entering corresponding input into his or her second gaming machine 100B. For instance, the second player may press or engage a "Decline" button or the like. Likewise, the second player may accept an offer price (i.e., purchase the non-final set of indicia) by entering corresponding input indicating that he or she will pay the offer price for the non-final set of indicia. For example, an "Accept" button or the like may be engaged by the second player to accept the offer price. The second player may be required to insert tokens, currency or make other payment as well to accept the offer price.

[0139] It is contemplated that the second player may counter the offer price in some embodiments. In one embodiment for example, rather than accepting an offer price, the second player may propose his or her own different price or counter offer. The first player may be notified or alerted to this

counter offer, and be provided an option to accept or decline the counter offer. In some embodiments, the first player may be permitted to propose his or her own counter offer, and counter offers may continue to be made between the players until a counter offer is accepted or declined. The server **120** may be configured to facilitate transmission of counter offers as well as the acceptance or rejection of the counter offers. Once a counter offer is accepted, the process may continue as described in the following.

[0140] The second player's acceptance of an offer price may be received at a step **948** by the second gaming machine **100B**. The acceptance may then be transmitted to the server **120** by the second gaming machine **100B**. The receipt of the acceptance indicator by the server **120** is also shown by step **948**. The server may then transfer the non-final set of indicia from the first player to the second player at a step **952**. In addition, the tokens, credits, funds or other consideration used to purchase the non-final set of indicia may be transferred from the second player to the first player. A transaction fee may be collected by the gaming establishment providing the multiplayer system as well. A message or notification may be transmitted to the first gaming machine **100A** to notify the first player that his or her non-final set of indicia has been purchased. As described above, the first player will no longer be able to play the non-final set of indicia, and the server **120** will transfer the indicia to the second player's gaming machine **100B**. For example, the non-final set of indicia may be marked as disabled or removed from view on the first gaming machine **100A**, and then shown on the second gaming machine **100B**.

[0141] Once the non-final set of indicia is transferred, it may be played to a conclusion or final set of indicia on the second gaming machine **100B** at a step **956**. For instance one or more indicia may be removed, replaced, or added to form a final set of indicia. This final set of indicia may then be compared to a payable or other winning outcomes to determine if it is a winner or a loser. This payable may be the same as the payable at the first gaming machine **100A** in one or more embodiments. The second player is then paid at a step **960** if the final set of indicia is a winning outcome. This may occur by paying the player electronically or by dispensing physical tokens, tickets, currency or the like. If the final set of indicia is not a winning outcome, the offer price is retained by the first player minus the transaction fee collected by the gaming establishment (if the establishment wished to collect such fee). It is noted that the transaction fee may be a pre-defined percentage of the offer price, a fixed fee, or other amount.

[0142] The multiplayer system has been described above with reference to first and second gaming machines, which are respectively used to create and purchase non-final sets of indicia. It is intended that, in one or more embodiments, both the first and second gaming machines may be configured to allow players to create, sell, purchase, and play the non-final sets of indicia. It is also intended that the multiplayer system be configured to support a substantial number of players to allow a marketplace for non-final sets of indicia to be established. In this manner, the indicia can be more quickly bought and sold and a wider variety of indicia may be generated by and provided to players.

[0143] The multiplayer system may have various aspects that may affect the current cash value and/or player's mindset in setting offer prices. For instance, in some embodiments, the multiplayer system may include bonus awards. Therefore, if

a non-final set of indicia could trigger such bonus its value and/or offer price may be higher. For example, one embodiment of the multiplayer system may offer a bonus jackpot for player's that collect a particular set of final sets of indicia. For example, a player having collected a number of distinct royal flushes in a poker embodiment may be paid a bonus award of a substantial sum. In such case, players may set higher offer prices for a non-final set of indicia that could result in a royal flush since these indicia could trigger the bonus award for one of the players in the multiplayer system. It is noted that players looking for a royal or other final set of indicia may request to be alerted of non-final sets of indicia that might result in a royal. The server would then notify this player (via the player's gaming machine) when such a non-final set of indicia is received.

[0144] While various embodiments of the invention have been described, it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that many more embodiments and implementations are possible that are within the scope of this invention. In addition, the various features, elements, and embodiments described herein may be claimed or combined in any combination or arrangement.

What is claimed is:

1. A multiplayer wagering game system comprising:
 - a plurality of gaming machines configured to present one or more wagering games, the plurality of gaming machines each comprising:
 - a display device configured to present a plurality of game indicia according to rules of the one or more wagering games;
 - one or more input devices configured to receive an offer price for a non-final set of game indicia from a first player; and
 - a communication device configured to transmit the offer price from the gaming machine;
 - a server having one or more processors, memory devices, and communication devices, the server configured to:
 - receive the offer price through the one or more communication devices;
 - transmit the offer price to a subset of the plurality of gaming machines according to predefined distribution rules;
 - receive an offer price acceptance from a second player's gaming machine in the subset of the plurality of gaming machines; and
 - after the offer price acceptance is received, transfer the non-final set of game indicia to the second player's gaming machine, wherein the non-final set of game indicia is presented on the display device of the second player's gaming machine after the transfer.
2. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1, wherein the offer price is presented along with the non-final set of indicia on a display device of the one or more gaming machines in the subset.
3. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1, wherein the server is further configured to transfer payment from the second player's gaming machine to the first player after receipt of the offer acceptance.
4. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1, wherein the server is further configured to transmit a notification to one or more mobile devices identified in the distribution rules after receiving the offer price.
5. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1 further comprising a value engine configured to determine a current cash

value for the non-final set of game indicia, wherein the current cash value is presented to the first player on the display device to aid the player is setting the offer price.

6. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1, wherein the second player's gaming machine is configured to present a final set of game indicia generated from the non-final set of game indicia on its display device.

7. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 6, wherein the second player's gaming machine pays an award if the final set of game indicia matches a winning outcome defined by the rules of the one or more wagering games.

8. The multiplayer gaming system of claim 1, wherein the server is further configured to:

receive a counter offer price from at least one of the subset of the plurality of gaming machines; and
transmit the counter offer price to the first player's gaming machine.

9. A gaming machine comprising:

a primary game display area configured to present one or more non-final sets of primary game indicia and one or more final sets of primary game indicia to a player upon receipt of a wager from the player;

a first input device configured to receive an offer price from the player, wherein the first input device is enabled if a non-final set of primary game indicia is presented to the player, and is disabled if a final set of primary game indicia is presented to the player;

a communication device configured to transmit the offer price to a server; and

a controller configured to:

generate a new non-final set of primary game indicia for presentation on the primary game display area if the offer price is received from the player; and

generate a final set of primary game indicia if an offer price is not received from the player.

10. The gaming machine of claim 9, wherein the controller is configured to compare the final set of primary game indicia to one or more predefined winning outcomes, and to reward the player if the final set of primary game indicia is one of the predefined winning outcomes.

11. The gaming machine of claim 9 further comprising a secondary game display area configured to display one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia, each of the one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia having a predefined offer price associated and presented therewith.

12. The gaming machine of claim 11, wherein the one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia are received from a remote device.

13. The gaming machine of claim 11 further comprising a second input device configured to receive a selection of at least one of the one or more non-final sets of secondary game indicia from the player, wherein the controller is configured to reward the player if a final set of secondary game indicia generated from a selected non-final set of secondary game indicia is a winning outcome.

14. The gaming machine of claim 9 wherein the gaming machine is a mobile device.

15. A method for wagering game play at a multiplayer gaming system comprising:

generating a non-final set of game indicia at a gaming machine;

receiving an offer price for the non-final set of game indicia via an input device of the gaming machine;

transmitting the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia to one or more gaming devices;

receiving an offer price acceptance for the non-final set of game indicia from one of the one or more gaming devices;

generating a final set of game indicia from the non-final set of indicia;

presenting the final set of game indicia at the one of the one or more gaming devices; and

providing an award if the final set of game indicia is a winning outcome.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the non-final set of game indicia are generated after receiving a wager from a player at the gaming machine.

17. The method of claim 15 further comprising disabling play of the non-final set of game indicia at the game machine once the offer price is received.

18. The method of claim 15 further comprising generating a current cash value for the non-final set of game indicia, and presenting the current cash value at the gaming machine.

19. The method of claim 15 further comprising generating an alert at the one or more gaming devices after the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia are received.

20. The method of claim 15 further comprising selecting the one or more gaming devices from a plurality of gaming devices based on predefined distribution rules, wherein the offer price and the non-final set of game indicia are transmitted only to selected gaming devices.

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