CLAIMS:

1. A system of monitoring game play on a table surface of a gaming table, the system comprising:

at least one camera configured to capture images of the table surface; and

a computing device in communication with the at least one camera, said computing device configured to

receive, in real time, images of the table surface captured by the at least one camera,

analyse, in real time, at least one captured image of the table surface to identify a presence of a game object on the table surface,

based on identifying the presence of a game object on the table surface, determine whether the game object is a game start trigger initiating game object by comparing at least one visual feature of the game object with stored configuration data relating to a prescribed game start trigger initiating game object,

in response to determining that the game object identified as present on the table surface is a game start trigger initiating game object, determine that a game start event has occurred and record a time stamp for a game event, and

transmit game event data to a server, the game event data including an indicator of the game start event and the time stamp for the game event.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the computing device is further configured to:

analyse, in real time, at least one captured image of the table surface to identify an absence of any game start trigger initiating game object on the table surface;

in response to any game start trigger initiating game object being identified as being absent from the table surface, determine that a game end event has occurred and recording a time stamp for a game event; and

transmit game event data to the server, the game event data including an indicator of the game end event and the time stamp for the game event.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein determination of whether the game object is a game start trigger initiating game object comprises:

pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-processed image;

identifying at least one contour in the pre-processed image; and

comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria to determine whether the at least one contour relates to a game start trigger initiating game object.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria comprises comparing an area defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined area that corresponds with an expected size of the game start trigger initiating game object.

5. The system of claim 3, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria comprises comparing a number of vertices defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined number of vertices that corresponds with an expected number of vertices of the game start trigger initiating game object.

6. The system of claim 3, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria comprises comparing the cosine of an angle between joint edges

defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined value.

7. A method of monitoring game play on a table surface of a gaming table, the method comprising:

receiving, in real time and by a computing device in communication with at least one camera, images of the table surface captured by the at least one camera;

analysing, in real time, at least one captured image of the table surface to identify a presence of a game object on the table surface;

based on identifying the presence of a game object on the table surface, determining whether the game object is a game start trigger initiating game object by comparing at least one visual feature of the game object with stored configuration data relating to a prescribed game start trigger initiating game object;

in response to determining that the game object identified as present on the table surface is a game start trigger initiating game object, determining that a game start event has occurred and recording a time stamp for a game event; and

transmitting, by the computing device, game event data to a server, the game event data including an indicator of the game start event and the time stamp for the game event.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

analysing, in real time, at least one captured image of the table surface to identify an absence of any game start trigger initiating game object on the table surface;

in response to any game start trigger initiating game object being identified as being absent from the table surface, determining that a game end event has occurred and recording a time stamp for a game event; and

transmitting, by the computing device, game event data to the server, the game event data including an indicator of the game end event and the time stamp for the game event.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the determining whether the game object is a game start trigger initiating game object comprises:

pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-processed image;

identifying at least one contour in the pre-processed image; and

comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria to determine whether the at least one contour relates to a game start trigger initiating game object.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-processed image comprises performing a canny edge detection process on the at least one captured image.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-pre-processed image comprises dilating an output of the canny edge detection process to remove any holes between edge segments.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria comprises comparing an area defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined area that corresponds with an expected size of the game start trigger initiating game object.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least

one contour criteria comprises comparing a number of vertices defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined number of vertices that corresponds with an expected number of vertices of the game start trigger initiating game object.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the comparing the at least one contour to at least one contour criteria comprises comparing the cosine of an angle between joint edges defined by the at least one contour with a pre-determined value.

15. The method of claim 9, wherein the pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-processed image comprises performing a global thresholding process on the at least one captured image.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the pre-processing the at least one captured image to obtain a pre-processed image comprises eroding the at least one captured image to remove objects smaller than a predetermined size.

17. The method of claim 7, wherein the game start trigger initiating game object is a playing card.

18. The method of claim 7, wherein the game start trigger initiating game object is a dolly or position marker.

19. The method of claim 7, wherein the images of the table surface are either colour images, greyscale images or infrared images.

20. A non-transitory computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform the method of claim 7.