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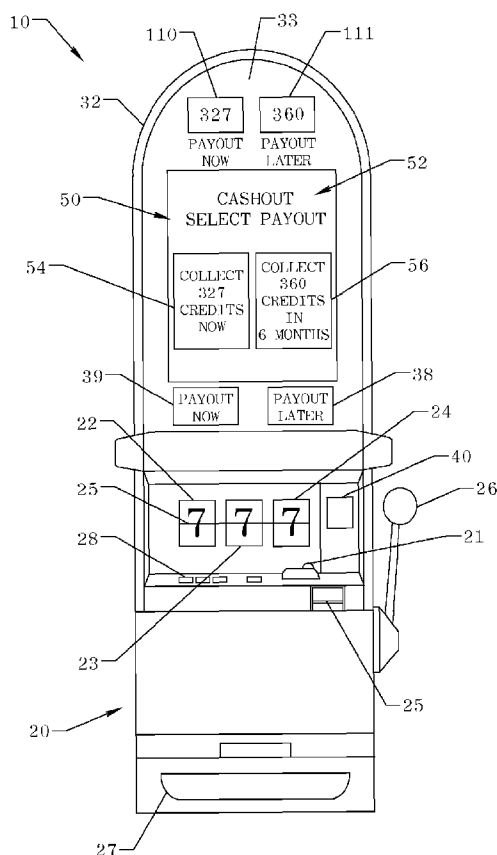
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(54) Title: GAMING DEVICE AND METHOD OF USE



(57) Abstract: A gaming apparatus allows players to collect accumulated credits at a future date in return for larger prizes or higher payback percentages during game play. The gaming apparatus includes a gaming device for playing a game. A display is coupled with the gaming device. A controller is in communication with the gaming device and the display. The controller is configured to receive a wager and determine a game outcome. The controller can determine a credit balance based on the game outcome. The controller receives a request to cashout the credit balance and determines a first and second payout. The first payout is paid at the present time and the second payout is paid at a future time. The first and second payouts are displayed to the player and the player is allowed to choose one of the payouts. The payout chosen by the player is awarded.



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GAMING DEVICE AND METHOD OF USE

[1] Field of the Invention

[2] The present invention relates to gaming devices and, more particularly, to a gaming device that provides the option of collecting accumulated credits or winnings at a future date.

[3] Background

[4] Gaming devices are well known in the art, and a large variety of gaming devices have been developed. In general, gaming devices allow users or players to play a game. In many casino-type gaming devices, the outcome of the game depends, at least in part, on a randomly generated event. For example, a gaming device may use a random number generator to generate a random or pseudo-random number (hereinafter, both types are referred to as a "random number").

[5] The random number can be used to determine a game outcome. For example, the random number may then be compared to a predefined table to determine a corresponding outcome of the event. If the random number falls within a certain range of numbers on the table, the player may win the corresponding predefined prize. The table may also contain display information that allows the gaming device to generate a display that corresponds to the outcome of the game. The gaming device may present the outcome of the game on a large variety of display devices, such as mechanical spinning reels or video screens.

[6] Some gaming devices award bonus prizes in addition to prizes that are awarded in a primary game. Of course, the prize in the primary game may simply be the opportunity to play the bonus game. A bonus prize is generally defined as a prize in addition to the prize obtained from the primary game and that is awarded to the player when a predefined event occurs. An example of a bonus game can be found in U.S. patent number 5,848,932 to Adams. Adams discloses a primary game having three spinning game reels and a bonus game having a bonus display with one spinning wheel. The spinning wheel is divided into multiple sections, and each section has a symbol representing a prize. When predetermined indicia are displayed on the spinning game reels of the primary game, the wheel of the bonus display spins and stops. The bonus prize is displayed as the

symbol on the wheel being pointed to by a pointer. The bonus prize is awarded in addition to any prizes awarded in the primary game. Another bonus game is disclosed in Baerlocher et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,336,863). Baerlocher et al. discloses a slot machine with a bonus award display. The bonus award display has a bonus wheel and a mechanical, movable pointer.

[7] Gaming devices in casinos are more successful when they are able to captivate and hold a game player's interest for a long period of time. When a game player plays a gaming device for a longer period of time, more revenue is generated for the casino. A game player may lose interest with a game that has a static display that changes very little over time or that the player deems to be unattractive.

[8] One way gaming device manufactures have added additional enjoyment and excitement to gaming devices is through the use of larger prize amounts and higher payback percentages. Most games that have higher payback percentages require larger wagers. For example, a slot machine that accepts wagers in 25 cent increments may have a payback percentage of 88 percent, while a slot machine that accepts wagers in \$1.00 increments may have a payback percentage of 90 percent. A slot machine that accepts wagers in \$5.00 increments may have a payback percentage of 93 percent.

[9] Most games that have larger prizes typically require larger wagers. For example, a slot machine may offer a top prize of \$100.00 for a 25-cent wager and \$500.00 for a \$1.00 wager.

[10] Unfortunately, when a casino increases the size of the prize or the payback percentage on gaming devices with lower-wager minimum amounts, the profitability of the gaming device for the casino decreases.

[11] What is needed is a gaming device that can award larger prizes and higher payback percentages while still maintaining the same profit margin for a casino.

[12] SUMMARY OF ONE EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

[13] Advantages of One or More Embodiments of the Present Invention

[14] The various embodiments of the present invention may, but do not necessarily, achieve one or more of the following advantages:

[15] the ability to provide game players with a more exciting and desirable gaming experience;

- [16] the ability to attract more patrons to play a game;
 - [17] provide longer play times and a greater payout possibility for a player;
 - [18] provide greater revenues for gaming operators;
 - [19] provide a gaming device that can award higher payback percentages;
 - [20] provide a gaming device that can award larger prizes;
 - [21] provide a gaming device that may allow a player to select a time period to collect a payout or cashout;
 - [22] provide a gaming device that may allow a player to select a payable;
 - [23] provide a gaming device that allows a credit balance now or a larger amount at a future time; and
 - [24] provide a gaming device that allows a player to select a payable before beginning a game.
- [25] These and other advantages may be realized by reference to the remaining portions of the specification, claims, and abstract.

[26] Brief Description of One Embodiment of the Present Invention

[27] In certain embodiments, the present invention relates to a gaming apparatus that includes a gaming device for allowing a player to play a game. A display is coupled with the gaming device. A controller is in communication with the gaming device and the display. The controller is configured to receive a wager and determine a game outcome. The controller also can determine a credit balance based on the game outcome. The controller further is configured to receive a request to cash out the credit balance and determine a first and second payout. The first payout is paid at the present time and the second payout is paid at a future time. The first and second payouts are displayed to the player and the player is allowed to choose one of the payouts. The payout chosen by the player is awarded.

[28] In other embodiments, the present invention relates to a gaming method. The method includes receiving a wager and allowing a player to choose a time period when an account balance will be paid, the time period at least including a first time period at the end of a game and a second time period after the game has ended. The player is allowed to play the game. A payout amount is determined based on the time period that was selected. A cashout request is received and the payout amount is paid.

[29] The above description sets forth, rather broadly, a summary of one embodiment of the present invention so that the detailed description that follows may be better understood and contributions of the present invention to the art may be better appreciated. Some of the embodiments of the present invention may not include all of the features or characteristics listed in the above summary. There are, of course, additional features of the invention that will be described below and will form the subject matter of claims. In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of the construction and to the arrangement of the components set forth in the following description or as illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting.

[30] BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[31] Figure 1 is substantially a front view of a gaming device of the present invention.

[32] Figure 2 is substantially a schematic diagram of a portion of the gaming device of figure 1.

[33] Figure 3 is substantially a flowchart of a gaming method of the present invention.

[34] Figure 4 is substantially a front view of figure 1 showing an additional possible game display.

[35] Figure 5 is substantially a payable for use with the gaming device of figure 4.

[36] Figure 6 is substantially a flowchart of another gaming method of the present invention.

[37] Figure 7 is substantially a front view of figure 1 showing another possible game display.

[38] Figure 8 is substantially a payable for use with the gaming device of figure 7.

[39] DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN EMBODIMENTS OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

[40] In the following detailed description of the embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part of this application. The drawings show, by way of illustration, specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[41] Game Apparatus

[42] Referring to figure 1, one embodiment disclosed herein comprises a gaming apparatus or device, generally indicated by reference number 10. Gaming device 10 comprises a primary game apparatus 20 and a display 50. Game apparatus 20 may be any of a large number of devices that are adapted to allow players to play a game. For example, game apparatus 20 may utilize reel displays, such as spinning reels 22-24 or a video display (not shown), to display outcomes of the game. Means may also be provided for accepting wagers, such as a coin slot 21 or voucher and card reader 25, and for awarding prizes, such as a coin dispenser 27. Voucher and card reader 25 can read and print paper vouchers and can read and modify player tracking cards with monetary amounts and other information. A handle 26 and button 28 are provided for activating game apparatus 20 to begin a game. A cashout button 40 may be provided that allows a game player to collect an accumulated credit balance. In at least one embodiment, game apparatus 20 may be an S Plus model gaming device manufactured by International Game Technology in Reno, Nevada.

[43] Game apparatus 20 may be controlled by an electronic controller 82 (see figure 2) that utilizes a random number generator 83 (figure 2). The random number generator produces a random or pseudo-random number for each game. The outcome of the game may be determined by comparing the random number to a table of outcomes or payable stored in a memory and accessed by controller 82. A number of different paytables may be used, and different tables may be used for different games. The paytables can be designed so that different prizes have different probabilities of being awarded. Such design techniques are well known in gaming. Examples of such designs are shown in U.S. patent number 4,448,419, issued to Telnaes, and U.S. patent number 5,456,465, issued to Durham. Controller 82 causes reels 22-24 or the video display to show the outcome of the game that corresponds to the outcome of the random number generator. It is recognized that game apparatus 20 may operate in many other ways and still achieve the objects of the present invention.

[44] Payout Display

[45] Referring to figures 1 and 2, gaming device 10 may have a housing 32 with a front panel 33. Housing 32 can be made from many different materials such as metal or plastic and can include decorative coverings (not shown) or attachments and lights (not shown). A pair of player input devices 38 and 39 can be mounted in

housing 32. Player input devices 38 and 39 can be buttons or handles (not shown) or rotary knobs (not shown). Player input devices 38 and 39 could also be touch screen displays. Player input device 38 may have a label "Payout Later" and player input device 39 may have a label "Payout Now". Player input devices 38 and 39 can allow a game player to provide input to gaming device 10. A display such as a credit meter can be used to display prizes or credit balances won on gaming device 10.

[46] Payout now credit meter 110 can display the credit balance that can be paid if a player chooses to collect a payout at the end of a game. Payout later credit meter 111 can display the credit balance that can be paid if a player chooses to collect a payout at a future time after the game has ended. Using both credit meters 110 and 111 can allow a game player to view both credit balances during a game.

[47] A display 50 such as a video display can be mounted in front panel 33. Display 50 can be any suitable display including video displays, plasma displays, LCD displays, LED meters and the like. Display 50 may be a single display or can be more than one display.

[48] Display 50 may be activated upon the occurrence of a payout or cashout event in primary game apparatus 20. A payout event may be started when a game player depresses cashout button 40 in game apparatus 20.

[49] Several gaming devices 10 may be in communication with a computer network server 60 (figure 2) and with other gaming devices 10 through a cable 62 such as an Ethernet cable. Server 60 can be a conventional network server that contains software that can operate on a processor. Server 60 can collect and transmit game information and instructions between server 60 and gaming device 10.

[50] As seen in figure 1, display 50 is shown displaying an instruction set 52. Instruction set 52 can inform a game player of a selection or choice for the player to make. In figure 1, instruction set 52 asks the player to select a payout. Display 50 can also show several payout options. For example, assume that the game player has selected to cash out of the game and collect their accumulated credits, credit balance or winnings by depressing cashout button 40. Display 50 may present the game player with several options as to how and when to collect their credit balance.

[51] Display 50 may show a payout now option 54 and a payout later option 56. Payout now option 54 would pay the game player's credit balance now or at the present time. Payout later option 56 would pay the game player's credit balance at a future time or date. The future time may be any period of time such as minutes, hours, days, weeks, months or years. In return for allowing the casino or game operator to retain the player's money for a period of time, the credits to be paid back to the player at a future date are increased.

[52] Figure 1 shows a game display of gaming device 10 that is in the process of cashing out. The game player has a credit balance of 327 credits as shown on payout now credit meter 110 and a credit balance of 360 credits as shown on payout later credit meter 111. The credit balance is the sum of the player's initial deposit into gaming device 10 and any additions through game winnings and any subtractions through placing wagers or bets.

[53] Payout now option 54 indicates that the game player can collect a credit balance of 327 credits at the present time. If the player depresses player input device 39, the credit balance of 327 credits is paid to the player immediately using voucher and card reader 25 or coin dispenser 27. Other methods of dispensing the player's credit balance may also be used.

[54] Payout later credit meter 111 shows that 360 credits may be paid out to the player at a future time. Payout later option 56 indicates that the game player can collect their credit balance at a future time or date. If the player depresses player input device 38, a larger number of credits than the player's credit balance can be paid to the player at a future date. For example, payout later option 56 indicates that the player can receive 360 credits if they wait 6 months to collect their credit balance. For payout later option 56, a cashless cashout using a cashless device may be used. Voucher and card reader 25 can print a voucher or record data on a card that indicates the 360 credits to be paid and the date after which the 360 credits can be collected. The voucher imprinted with the 360 credits can be issued to the player. If the player selects payout later option 56, gaming device 10 can issue a voucher or other media that are essentially a promissory note or IOU for payment at a future date.

[55] Various types of media may be used to award the payout later option 56 such as vouchers, coupons,

tickets, stubs, certificates, memory storage devices, and cards. A cashless device is meant to be anything that can be assigned or communicate a particular value. For example, one cashless device may be a voucher. The voucher can be issued with a specific value. The value associated with the voucher can be updated by recording (e.g., by printing) a new value on the voucher when a player chooses to cash out from a particular gaming device.

[56] Another cashless device is a player card that can be linked to a cash or credit account, such that a player's winnings or losses can be credited to or debited from the account. Preferably, the gaming device has a reader that gathers account identifying information in the card, queries a central computer or accesses a computer network, and receives information about the player's cash or credit account.

[57] Cashless devices are capable of having a variable value. One way this can be achieved is by imprinting a unique code or identifier on the cashless device. This code could be, for example, a bar code or could be encoded on a magnetic strip, such as those used on credit cards. The identifier is associated with a database that stores information about the cashless device and a player account. The information stored can include many different things, but includes player information and a credit and/or cash account balance. Preferably, the balance stored in the database can be modified. For example, the balance may be updated when a player wins or loses credits, pays additional currency to be converted to credits, or decides to cash out all or part of the value of the cashless device.

[58] Cashless devices can also contain, or be linked to, a player tracking system. Player tracking systems are often used by gaming proprietors to track a player's wagering habits, and to award "comps" such as room upgrades, free meals, show tickets, etc. The information recorded might include the kind of games the player has played, how often the player visits the establishment, the amount won or lost by the player, the amount of time spent playing games of chance, etc.

[59] Other methods of dispensing the credits associated with payout later option 56 may also be used. For example, the casino may issue and mail a check to the game player for 360 credits in 6 months. If the game player provides bank account information, the value of 360 credits may be transferred electronically to the

player's bank account in 6 months.

[60] Other embodiments may encourage or require the player to return to the casino in 6 months in order to collect the larger payout amount. When the player returns to the casino, they are more likely to play games and generate revenue for the casino.

[61] Turning now to figure 2, gaming device 10 comprises a controller 82 that is adapted to control the operation of the game apparatus 20. Controller 82 may be one or more micro-computers or processor boards. A random number generator 83 may be in communication with controller 82. Random number generator 83 is capable of randomly generating a random number and providing the random number to controller 82.

[62] It is recognized that controller 82 and random number generator 83 may be a single processor or processor board. Controller 82 may be in communication with a computer network server 60 through an electrical cable 62 such as an Ethernet cable.

[63] Server 60 and controller 82 can collect wagers, determine any prizes awarded by gaming device 10, keep separate accounts and paytables for payout now and payout later options, update and display credit balances, and display the types of cashout options presented on display 50.

[64] One or more sensors 84-86 may be provided for determining the position of reels 22-24. Sensors 84-86 may sense the positions of reels 22-24. Controller 82 is adapted to detect when a player desires to collect their winnings or credit balance through the depression of cashout button 40 that is in communication with controller 82.

[65] Controller 82 can also detect when coins or currency have been inserted into coin slot 21 or a voucher or card is inserted into voucher and card reader 25. Controller 82 can also detect when an error has occurred, and when a sensor detects tampering.

[66] Controller 82 can keep 2 credit balance accounts. One account is for the payout now option and the one is for the payout later option. Controller 82 can update credit meters 110 and 111 with the current balances after each game. Displaying both credit balances allows the game player to see how many credits are in each payout option.

[67] When controller 82 detects that cashout button 40 has been depressed, it may begin a cashout or payout sequence by activating display 50. Display 50 may comprise many different kinds of display devices, such as video screens, lights, light emitting diodes, etc.

[68] Display 50 may display to a player various cashout options such as payout now option 54 (figure 1) and payout later option 56 (figure 1) and prompt the player to perform an action. In an embodiment, the player is prompted to select one of the options by pressing either player input device 38 or 39. Player input devices 38 and 39 each may be a simple button, a keyboard, or a touch screen display. Player input devices 38 and 39 may be in communication with controller 82.

[69] When controller 82 detects one of player input devices 38 or 39 being selected, controller 82 performs a routine to pay out the credit balance using the selected payout option. If player input device 39 is selected for payout now option 54, controller 82 may issue a voucher using voucher and card reader 25 for the present value of the credit balance shown on payout now credit meter 110. Controller 82 may also issue the present credit balance by updating a player card or issuing currency using coin dispenser 27.

[70] If player input device 38 is selected for payout later option 56, controller 82 may issue a voucher using voucher and card reader 25 for the future value of the credit balance shown on payout later credit meter 111 and in payout later option 56. Controller 82 may also issue the future credit balance by updating a player card using voucher and card reader 25.

[71] Controller 82 may determine the future value of payout later option 56 and the amount shown on payout later credit meter 111 by using a formula that reflects the time value of money. The formula may be a future value formula that uses variables of present value, time, interest rate and compounding period. One such formula is given by the equation:

[72]
$$FV = PV (1 + r)^n$$

[73] Where:

[74] FV = Future Value of payout later option

[75] PV = Present Value of payout

[76] r = interest rate

[77] n = number of compounding periods

[78] Another formula may be given by the equation $P = X + YT$ where P is the prize awarded, X is a fixed amount, Y is a fixed per day amount and T is the number of days until the prize is to be awarded. In this embodiment, a player may be able to specify the date the player wants to receive the payout. Voucher and card reader 25 would generate a voucher with the payout date selected by the player and the amount to be paid on that date.

[79] This embodiment allows the gaming device player flexibility to determine or select the date that the payout later amount will be awarded. Other formulas may also be used to calculate payout later option 56.

[80] The gaming device owner or casino benefits from being able to hold the player's money for a longer period of time. As such, the interest rate may be set such that it approximates the interest rate that a casino would pay to borrow money.

[81] The longer the casino can wait before paying the player, the greater the benefit to the casino. However, the casino may also benefit by having the player return at an earlier time in order to resume playing various games. When a player returns to the casino to collect the payout later amount, a larger percentage of players may be inclined to play additional casino games or make purchases resulting in additional gaming revenue for the casino operator.

[82] Therefore, the casino may benefit more by having players return earlier rather than later and the payout later formula may be arranged so that the player does not receive a substantial benefit for waiting longer to receive their payout. In some situations, the casino may choose to lose money on the payout later option in order to make more money from returning players. The payout later algorithm may also be designed to encourage the player to return within a pre-determined period of time by reducing the payout later amount after the pre-determined period of time has elapsed.

[83] The casino may also choose to penalize players who do not return to collect their payouts in a timely

manner. For example, if a game player selects payout later option 56 (figure 1), the player may collect 360 credits from 6 to 7 months after the payout voucher has been issued. If the player has not collected their payout after 7 months, the payout amount may be reduced to the original payout now amount of 327 credits. Limiting the time that the extra credits can be collected can serve as an incentive for players to return to the casino.

[84] In another embodiment, controller 82 is not configured to track play under two pay tables and to update two accounts. Rather, the gaming device records all relevant game playing activities and it updates one of the accounts such as the payout now account. If the player selects the payout later option at the end of game play, the gaming device calculates the payout later balance from the recorded game playing activities.

[85] One of the advantages of using game apparatus 20 is that the player can view the credit balance in both the payout now and payout later accounts on credit meters 110 and 111. Under some circumstances a player may deplete the payout now account while there are credits remaining in the payout later account. In these circumstances the player can continue to play with the payout later account, thereby foregoing the payout now option.

[86] **Game Play Method**

[87] Referring now to figure 3, a flowchart of a method of game play 200 using gaming device 10 is shown. At step 202, a player may initiate game play method 200 by placing a wager on gaming device 10 (figure 1). The wager may be in the form of cash or credit from actual domestic or foreign currency, vouchers, coupons, tickets, electronic cards, and other sources or forms of wagers known in the art. Once the player initiates game play method 200, the player may play a game on the game apparatus at step 204.

[88] At decision 206, the controller may detect if cashout button 40 has been depressed, indicating that a player desires to collect their credit balance on the game apparatus. If the controller does not detect activation of cashout button 40, method 200 proceeds to step 208 where the player may be notified of the game outcome from the game. This may include adding or subtracting credits from both the payout now account and the payout later account of the player's credit balance, depending upon the game outcome, and displaying the new credit balances. Method 200 then returns to step 202 where the player may then place a wager again and play

gaming device 10.

[89] If the controller detects activation of cashout button 40, the controller can start a cashout routine. At step 210, the controller can determine a payout later amount. The payout later amount may be determined by a formula, may be a fixed amount, or may be linked to a game outcome by a paytable. Next at step 212, the payout now and payout later amounts can be shown to the player on display 50 (figure 1). The player is allowed to select either the payout now option or the payout later option.

[90] At decision 214, the controller can check to see if one of player input devices 38 or 39 (figure 1) have been activated. If neither of player input devices 38 or 39 has been activated, method 200 returns to step 212 and waits for player input. After a period of time has elapsed without one of the player input devices being activated, the controller may automatically choose one of the payout options. If one of the player input devices has been selected, method 200 may proceed to step 216 where a payout is made to the player according to the payout type selected by the player.

[91] For example, if the player selected the payout later option 56 as shown in figure 1, a voucher for 360 credits would be issued to the player that can be paid or collected 6 months or longer in the future.

[92] The steps shown in the flowchart do not necessarily imply that the steps have to take place in a particular order. The order of steps may be varied; some steps may be eliminated; and, some steps may be replaced with other steps. Such variations still fall within the scope of the invention.

[93] First Alternative Embodiment

[94] Referring to figure 4, an alternative embodiment of a gaming device 300 is shown. Gaming device 300 may be similar to gaming device 10, except that display 50 can show additional different payout options and allow a game player to choose a payout option prior to starting a game.

[95] Display 50 may be shown to a game player after a wager has been placed but before the start of a game. As seen in figure 4, display 50 is shown displaying an instruction set 302 after a wager has been placed but before the game has begun. Instruction set 302 can inform a game player of a selection or choice for the player to make. In figure 4, instruction set 302 asks the player to select a payout time period. Display 50 can also

show several payout options that can be selected. Display 50 may present the game player with several options as to how and when to collect their credit balance.

[96] Display 50 may show a payout now option 310 and a payout later option 315. Payout now option 310 would pay the game player's credit balance at the end of a game when the player has selected to cashout. If the player selects payout now option 310, all games on gaming device 300 will be played with a paytable that has an average overall payback percentage of 89%.

[97] Payout later option 315 would pay the game player's credit balance at a later time, or a pre-determined period of time after the game has ended and the player has elected to cashout. If the player selects payout later option 315, all games on gaming device 300 will be played with a paytable that has an average overall payback percentage of 92%.

[98] Controller 82 (figure 2) and random number generator 83 (figure 2) will apply the selected paytable. Payout later option 315 would pay the game player's credit balance at a future time or date. The date of payout of the accumulated credit balance may be randomly chosen by the controller, or may be chosen by the controller to coincide with slow periods in the casino, or the player may be allowed to select the time period. If the player is allowed to select the time period for the later payout, controller 82 may adjust the payback percentage.

[99] In return for allowing the casino or game operator to retain the player's money for a period of time, the credits to be paid back to the player at a future date are increased.

[100] Payout now option 310 indicates that the game player can collect their credit balance at the end of the game. If the player depresses player input device 39, controller 82 applies a paytable with an average overall payout percentage of 89%.

[101] Payout later option 315 indicates that the game player can collect their credit balance at a future time or date. If the player depresses player input device 38, controller 82 applies a paytable with an average overall payout percentage of 92%.

[102] Gaming device 300 can allow a game player to select a paytable. The later the payout time after the game has ended, the larger the payback percentage awarded by the controller.

[103] Payouts from gaming device 300 may be made in the same manner as previously described for gaming device 10 such as using vouchers or player cards.

[104] Turning now to figure 5, several possible paytables for use with gaming device 300 are shown. In an embodiment, the outcome of each game is randomly selected. Random number generator 83 generates a random number and supplies the random number to controller 82. Controller 82 compares the random number to one of the pay tables shown in figure 5.

[105] Figure 5 can include a game outcome column 322, a payout column 324, a payout now probability column 326 and a payout later probability column 328. The average payback per credit wagered is indicated in row 330. Random numbers (not shown) can be assigned to each row of figure 5 for both payout now and payout later options.

[106] For example, assume that the random number generator produced a random number indicating that cherry/cherry/any was the game outcome. If the game player has selected the payout now option 310 (figure 4), the probability of hitting the cherry/cherry/any combination is .10 or 10%. If the game player has selected the payout later option 315 (figure 4), the probability of hitting the cherry/cherry/any combination is .103 or 10.3%. Random numbers can be assigned to each game outcome to achieve the desired payback percentage as is known in the art.

[107] Once controller 82 (figure 2) randomly determines the game outcome, controller 82 credits or debits the players account or credit balance according to the game outcome and updates credit meter 110 with the current credit balance.

[108] In other embodiments, a minimum wager amount may be removed or lowered if a payout later option is selected by the player. For example, if a player chooses to wait 3 months to collect their payout or credit balance, the minimum wager amount on a game may be lowered from \$1.00 to 50 cents.

[109] In another embodiment, a list of payout time periods may be presented to the player to choose from before the game begins. Each time period may be associated with a different payable. For example, the list of payout time periods may include 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 3 months and 6 months. The player's credit

balance would be paid after the time period selected by the player ends.

[110] First Alternative Game Play Method

[111] Referring now to figure 6, a flowchart of an alternative method of game play 400 using gaming device 300 is shown. At step 402, a player may initiate game play method 400 by placing a wager on gaming device 300 (figure 4). The wager may be in the form of cash or credit from actual domestic or foreign currency, vouchers, coupons, tickets, electronic cards, and other sources or forms of wagers known in the art.

[112] At step 404, a payout now option 310 (figure 4) and a payout later option 315 (figure 4) can be presented to the player on display 50 (figure 4). The player may be requested to select one of the paytables to be used during game play using player input devices 38 and 39 (figure 4). Along with the selected payable, the game player will also be selecting when they will receive their account balance. If the payout now option is selected, the credit balance will be paid at the end of the game. If the payout later option is selected, the credit balance will be paid out at a future time or date. The payout later payable may have either larger prizes or a larger payback percentage.

[113] At decision 406, the controller checks to see if one of player input devices 38 or 39 have been activated. If neither of player input devices 38 or 39 has been activated, method 400 returns to step 404 and waits for player input. After a period of time has elapsed without one of the player input devices being activated, the controller may automatically choose one of the payout options. If one of the player input devices has been selected, method 400 may proceed to step 408 where the player may play a game on gaming device 300 using the selected payable. Gaming device 300 would use the selected payable to add and subtract credits from the player's credit balance. The credit balance may be shown on credit meter 110 (figure 4).

[114] At step 410, the player is notified of the outcome of the game and any credits won or lost may be added to or subtracted from the player's credit balance depending upon the game outcome.

[115] Method 400 then proceeds to decision 412 where method 400 checks to see if any credits are remaining in the player's account. If no credits remain in the account or if the amount of credits in the account is below a minimum wager value, method 400 returns to step 402 and waits for additional wagers to be added.

[116] If sufficient credits remain in the player's account balance, method 400 proceeds to decision 414. At decision 414, the controller detects if cashout button 40 (figure 4) has been depressed indicating that a player desires to collect the credit balance on the gaming device 300. If the controller does not detect activation of cashout button 40, method 400 returns to step 408 where the player may play gaming device 300 again.

[117] If the controller detects activation of cashout button 40, method 400 proceeds to step 416. At step 416, a payout is made to the player according to the payout type selected by the player at decision 406.

[118] For example, if the player selected the payout later payable 315 (figure 4), a voucher would be issued to the player for the amount of credits shown on credit meter 110 (figure 4) that can be paid or collected at a future date.

[119] The steps shown in the flowchart do not necessarily imply that the steps have to take place in a particular order. The order of steps may be varied; some steps may be eliminated; and, some steps may be replaced with other steps. Such variations still fall within the scope of the invention.

[120] Second Alternative Embodiment

[121] Referring to figure 7, an alternative embodiment of a gaming device 500 is shown. Gaming device 500 may be similar to gaming device 300, except that display 50 can show additional different payout options and allow a game player to choose a payout option prior to starting a game.

[122] Display 50 may be shown to a game player after a wager has been placed but before the start of a game. As seen in figure 7, display 50 is shown displaying an instruction set 502 after a wager has been placed but before the game has begun. Instruction set 502 can inform a game player of a selection or choice for the player to make. In figure 7, instruction set 502 asks the player to select a payout time. Display 50 can also show several payout options that can be selected. Display 50 may present the game player with several options as to how and when to collect their credit balance.

[123] Display 50 may show a payout now payable option 510 and a payout later payable option 515. Payout now payable option 510 would pay the game player's credit balance at the end of a game when the player has selected to cashout. If the player selects payout now payable option 510, all games on gaming device 500 will

be played using payable 520.

[124] Payout later payable option 515 would pay the game player's credit balance at a later time, or a pre-determined period of time after the game has ended and the player has elected to cashout. If the player selects payout later payable option 515, all games on gaming apparatus 500 will be played with payable 522.

[125] Controller 82 (figure 2) and random number generator 83 (figure 2) will apply the selected payable. Payout later payable option 515 would pay the game player's credit balance at a future time or date. The date of payout of the accumulated credit balance may be randomly chosen by the controller or may be chosen by the controller to coincide with slow periods in the casino, or the player may be allowed to select the time period. If the player is allowed to select the time period for the later payout, controller 82 may adjust the payable.

[126] In return for allowing the casino or game operator to retain the player's money for a period of time, the payable award amounts are increased.

[127] Payout now payable option 510 indicates that the game player can collect their credit balance at the end of the game. If the player depresses player input device 39, controller 82 applies payable 520.

[128] Payout later payable option 515 indicates that the game player can collect their credit balance at a future time or date. If the player depresses payout later button 38, controller 82 applies payable 522. Gaming device 500 can allow a game player to select a payable. The later the payout time after the game has ended, the larger the awards may be.

[129] Payouts from gaming device 500 may be made in the same manner as previously described for gaming device 10 such as using vouchers or player cards.

[130] Turning now to figure 8, several possible paytables for use with gaming device 500 are shown. In an embodiment, the outcome of each game is randomly selected. Random number generator 83 generates a random number and supplies the random number to controller 82. Controller 82 compares the random number to one of the paytables shown in figure 8.

[131] Figure 8 can include a game outcome column 550, payout now payable 520 and payout later payable 522. Random numbers (not shown) can be assigned to each row of figure 8 for both payout now and payout

later options.

[132] For example, assume that the random number generator produced a random number indicating that cherry/cherry/any was the game outcome. If the game player has selected the payout now payable 520, the game outcome is indicated as winning 5 credits. If the game player has selected the payout later payable 522, the game outcome is indicated as winning 6 credits. Random numbers can be assigned to each game outcome to achieve the desired payback percentage as is known in the art.

[133] Once controller 82 (figure 2) randomly determines the game outcome, controller 82 credits or debits the player's account or credit balance according to the game outcome and updates credit meter 110 with the current credit balance.

[134] Other Embodiments

[135] In other embodiments, a minimum wager amount may be removed or lowered if a payout later option is selected by the player. For example, if a player chooses to wait 3 months to collect their payout or credit balance, the minimum wager amount on a game may be lowered from \$1.00 to 50 cents.

[136] In another embodiment, a list of payout time periods may be presented to the player to choose from before the game begins. Each time period may be associated with a different payable. For example, the list of payout time periods may include 2 weeks, 1 month, 2 months, 3 months and 6 months. The player's credit balance would be paid after the time period selected by the player ends.

[137] In another embodiment, payable 522 may be arranged such that at least one game outcome occurs more frequently than the game outcome in payable 520. This can be accomplished by increasing the range of random numbers assigned to that game outcome.

[138] In another embodiment, the game apparatus 20 may use only one payable and the player is awarded a predetermined fixed amount such as \$10.00 or merchandise at a shop or restaurant if the player selects the payout later option.

[139] The magnitude of the difference in the game outcomes between the payout now payable and the payout later payable may depend upon the length of time the player must wait before receiving the later payout. For

example, the longer the player must wait to receive the payout, the larger the prizes and/or the greater the frequency.

[140] In one embodiment, the player may select different payout later dates. For example, the player may receive the payout one week later or two weeks later. In this embodiment, controller 82 may generate and keep track of three paytables. One of the paytables is for the payout now option, one is for a payout later option in one week and one the other is for a payout later option in two weeks.

[141] The paytables may also be arranged to take advantage of certain habits of players. For example, players may play longer or place larger wagers during certain times. The payout later option may require the player to return to the casino during those times to receive or collect the payout later payout. Alternatively, the player may be required to return during off-peak (less busy) times in order to collect the payout later payout.

[142] In an embodiment, game apparatus 20 is not configured to track play under two paytables, but awards the player a predetermined fixed amount, goods, and/or service if the player selects the payout later option. Alternatively, a formula, similar to an interest formula, could be used to calculate the payout later amount based on the payout now prize amount (principal) and a predetermined interest rate. In this embodiment, the player could continue to earn interest until the date the player returns to the casino to receive the payout.

[143] The present invention may also be utilized in connection with server-based downloadable games. This would allow the gaming device to download a paytable and/or game (including theme) from server 60 (figure 2) or another device (not shown) over a computer network (not shown). Therefore, the player may play a different game or select from a set of different games depending on the option selected by the player.

[144] In another embodiment involving vouchers, the player is not required to select the payout now or payout later options while the player is at the gaming device. Rather, the voucher is printed with the payout now amount, the payout later amount, and a payout later date. If the player elects to redeem the voucher before the payout later date, the player will receive the payout now amount, and if the player elects to redeem the voucher on or after the payout later date, the player will receive the payout later amount.

[145] In an embodiment, if the player chooses to receive a payout later amount before the specified payout

later date, the player can do so, but the player will receive a smaller amount, such as the payout now amount or the payout later amount with a proportional time related penalty.

[146] In another embodiment, only certain game apparatuses in a casino are enabled to award the payout later option and the player must request payment at one of the payout later option-enabled game apparatuses. The credit balance would be deposited in the game apparatus and the player could play the game apparatus with the credits or could elect to cash out the credits.

[147] Because the owner of the game apparatus may not want to discourage a player from playing further, the player may be able use the payout later amount before the payout later date. However, the player may only use the amount at certain gaming devices, such as payout later option enabled devices.

[148] Although the description above contains many specifications, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention but as merely providing illustrations of some of the embodiments of this invention. Thus, the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents rather than by the examples given.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming apparatus comprising:
 - (A) a gaming device for allowing a player to play a game;
 - (B) a display coupled with the gaming device;
 - (C) a controller in communication with the gaming device and the display, the controller being configured to:
 - (a) receive a wager;
 - (b) determine a game outcome;
 - (c) determine a credit balance based on the game outcome;
 - (d) receive a request to cash out the credit balance;
 - (e) determine a first and second payout, the first payout being paid at the present time and the second payout being paid at a future time;
 - (f) display the first and second payouts;
 - (g) allow the player to choose one of the payouts; and
 - (h) award the payout chosen by the player.
2. The gaming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second payout has a higher percentage payback than the first payout.
3. The gaming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first payout is associated with a first payable and the second payout is associated with a second payable.
4. The gaming apparatus of claim 3, wherein the second payable provides larger prize amounts.
5. The gaming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second payout is reduced after a pre-determined period of time.

6. The gaming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the future time is a non-peak time.
7. A method of gaming comprising:
 - (A) receiving a wager;
 - (B) allowing a player to chose a time period when an account balance will be paid, the time period at least including a first time period at the end of a game and a second time period after the game has ended;
 - (C) allowing the player to play the game;
 - (D) determining a payout amount based on the time period that was selected;
 - (E) receiving a cashout request; and
 - (F) paying the payout amount.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising displaying the payout amount during the game.
9. The method of claim 7, further comprising displaying a first and second payout amount during the game.
10. The method of claim 7, wherein the first time period is associated with a first payable and the second time period is associated with a second payable.
11. The method of claim 10, wherein the second payable has a higher percentage payback than the first payable.
12. The method of claim 10, wherein the second payable has larger prizes.
13. The method of claim 10, wherein the second payable awards prizes more frequently.
14. The method of claim 7, wherein a minimum wager is reduced when the second time period is selected.
15. The method of claim 7, wherein the player is allowed to select a time period from a list of time periods.
16. The method of claim 7, wherein a formula is used to determine the payout amount.
17. The method of claim 7, wherein the payout is reduced, if the payout is not collected during the time period selected by the player.
18. A method of gaming comprising:

- (A) receiving a wager and establishing a balance;
 - (B) determining a game outcome;
 - (C) playing a game;
 - (D) displaying the game outcome;
 - (E) incrementing the balance by the game outcome;
 - (F) displaying a first and a second payout of the balance, the first payout being paid at the end of a game and the second payout being paid a period of time after the game has ended;
 - (G) allowing a player to select the first or second payout; and
 - (H) paying the payout selected by player.
19. The method of claim 18, wherein the first payout is associated with a first payable and the second payout is associated with a second payable.
20. The method of claim 19, wherein the second payable has a higher percentage payback than the first payable.
21. The method of claim 19, wherein the second payable has larger prize amounts.
22. The method of claim 19, wherein the second payable awards prizes more frequently.
23. The method of claim 18, wherein a minimum wager is reduced when the second payout is selected.
24. The method of claim 18, wherein the player is allowed to select the payout from a plurality of payouts.
25. The method of claim 18, wherein a formula is used to determine the payouts.

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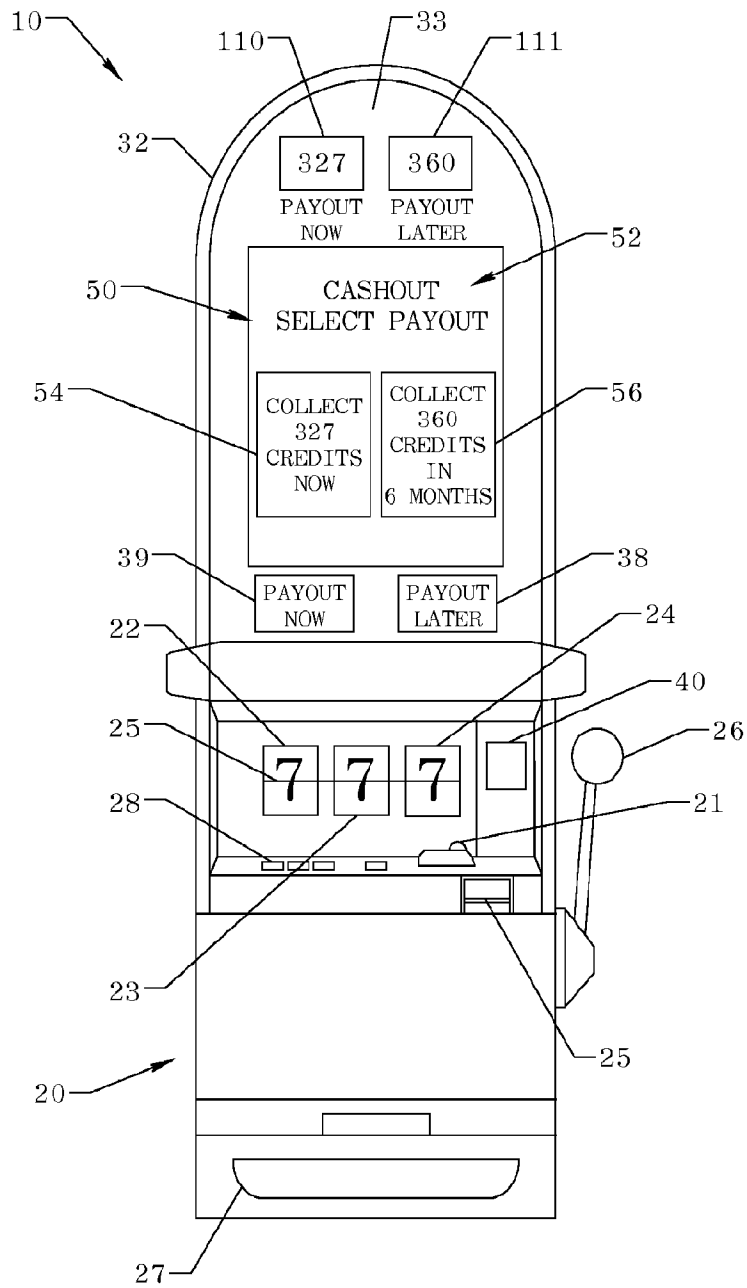


FIG. 1

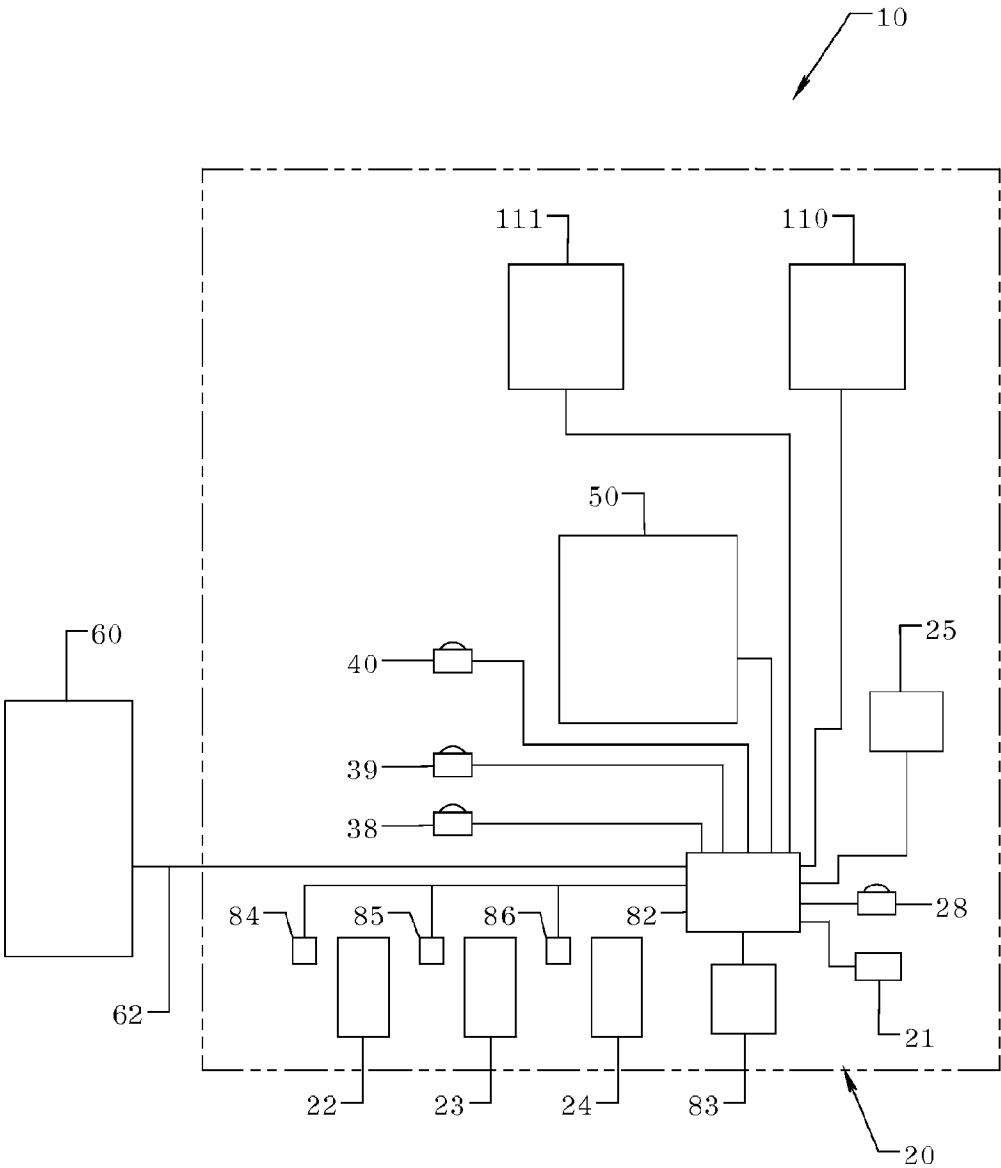


FIG. 2

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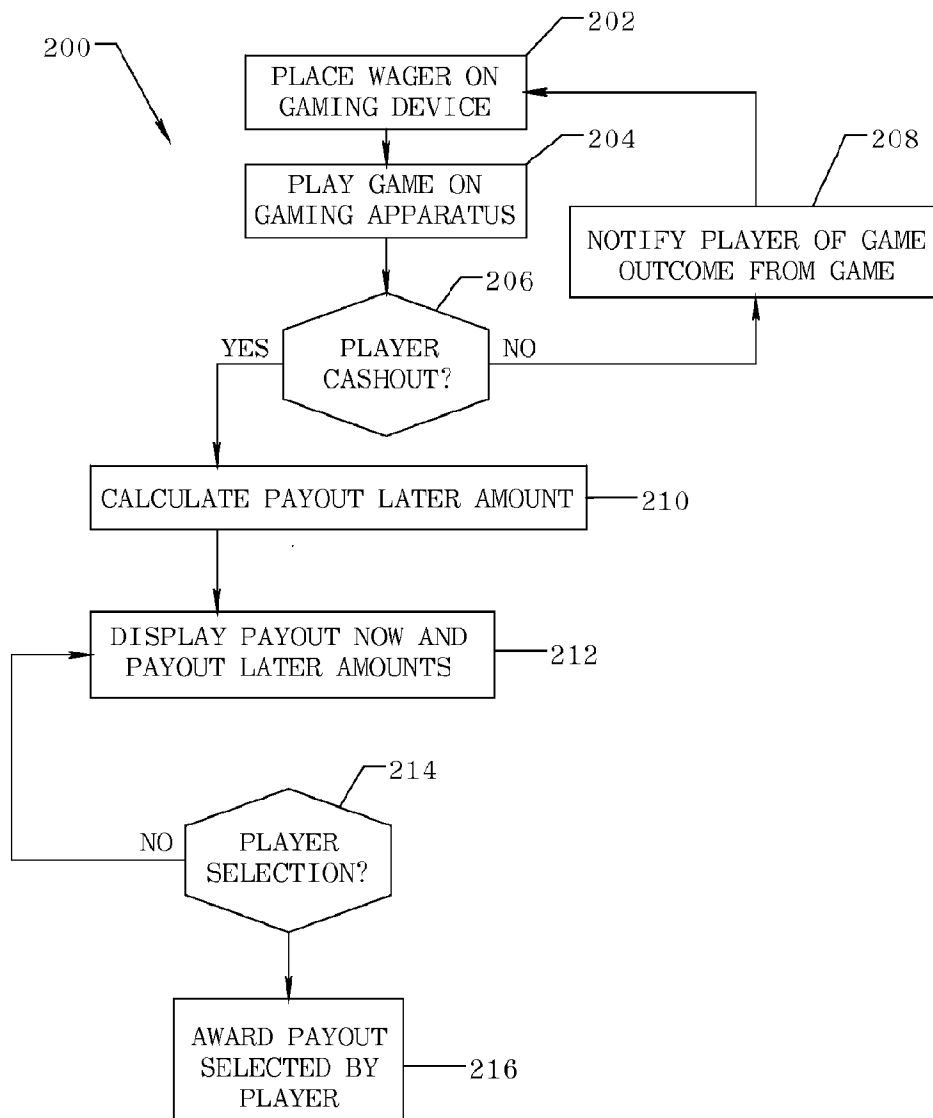


FIG. 3

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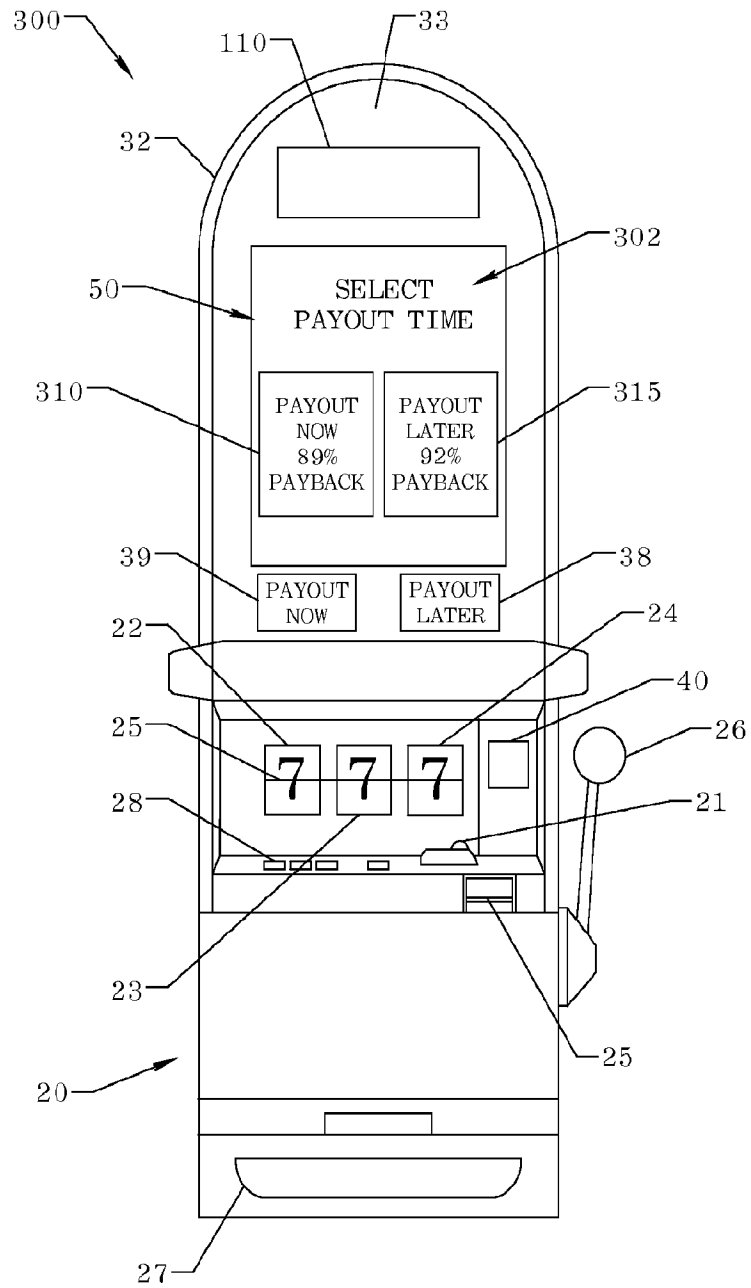
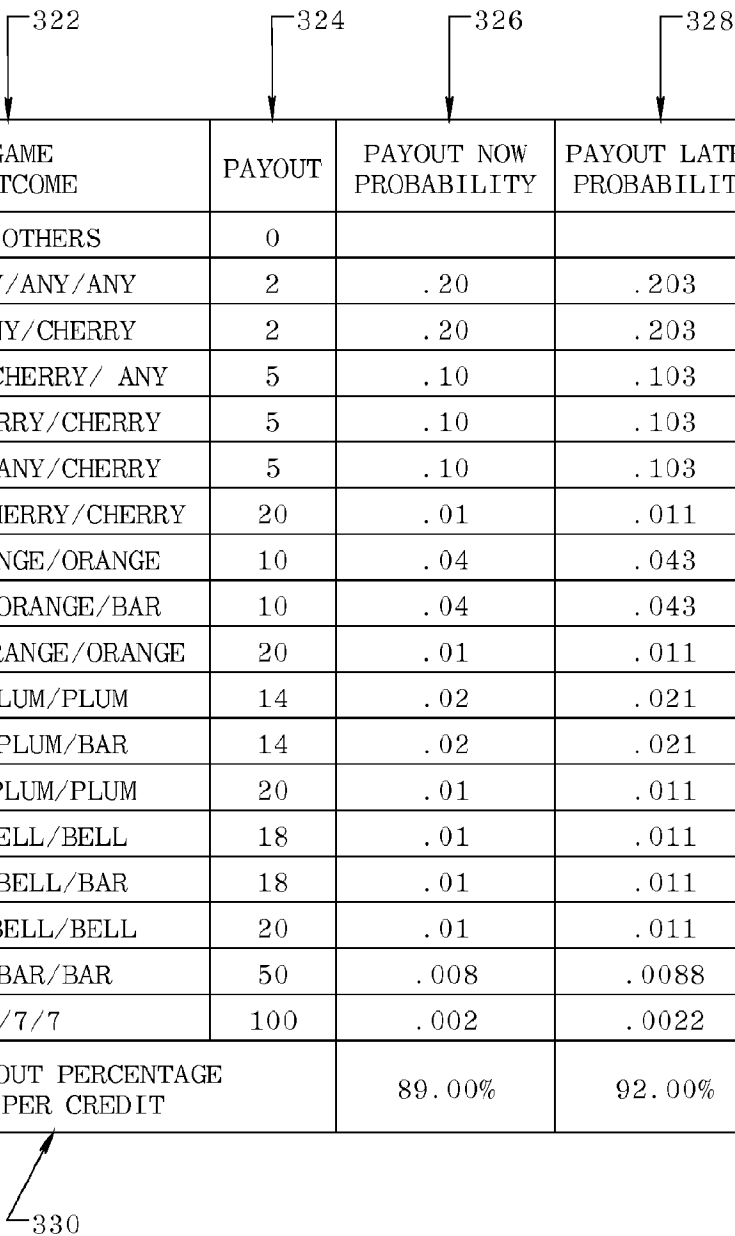


FIG. 4

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GAME OUTCOME	PAYOUT	PAYOUT NOW PROBABILITY	PAYOUT LATER PROBABILITY
ALL OTHERS	0		
CHERRY/ANY/ANY	2	. 20	. 203
ANY/ANY/CHERRY	2	. 20	. 203
CHERRY/CHERRY/ ANY	5	. 10	. 103
ANY/CHERRY/CHERRY	5	. 10	. 103
CHERRY/ANY/CHERRY	5	. 10	. 103
CHERRY/CHERRY/CHERRY	20	. 01	. 011
BAR/ORANGE/ORANGE	10	. 04	. 043
ORANGE/ORANGE/BAR	10	. 04	. 043
ORANGE/ORANGE/ORANGE	20	. 01	. 011
BAR/PLUM/PLUM	14	. 02	. 021
PLUM/PLUM/BAR	14	. 02	. 021
PLUM/PLUM/PLUM	20	. 01	. 011
BAR/BELL/BELL	18	. 01	. 011
BELL/BELL/BAR	18	. 01	. 011
BELL/BELL/BELL	20	. 01	. 011
BAR/BAR/BAR	50	. 008	. 0088
7/7/7	100	. 002	. 0022
PAYOUT PERCENTAGE PER CREDIT		89.00%	92.00%

FIG. 5

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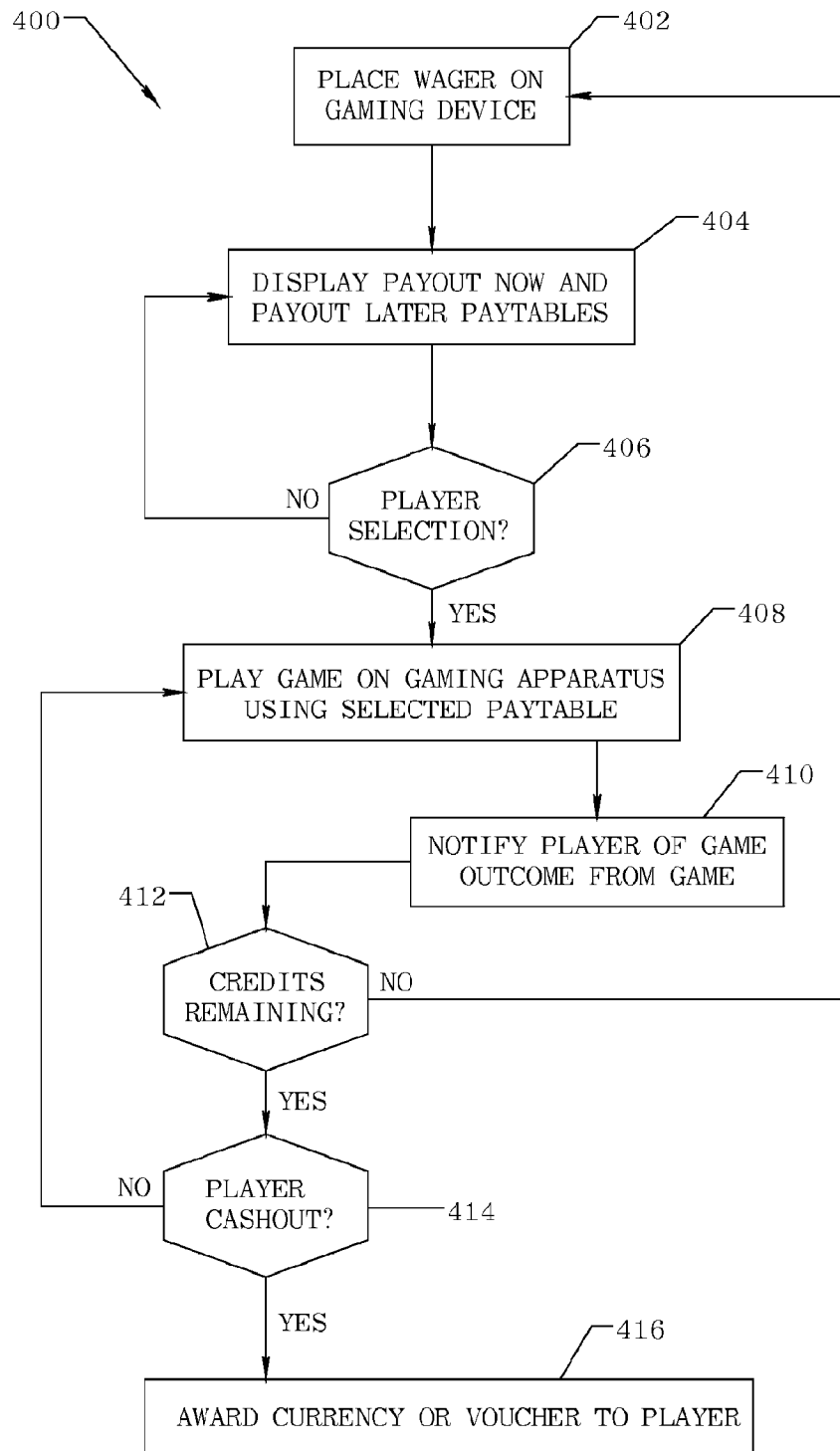


FIG. 6

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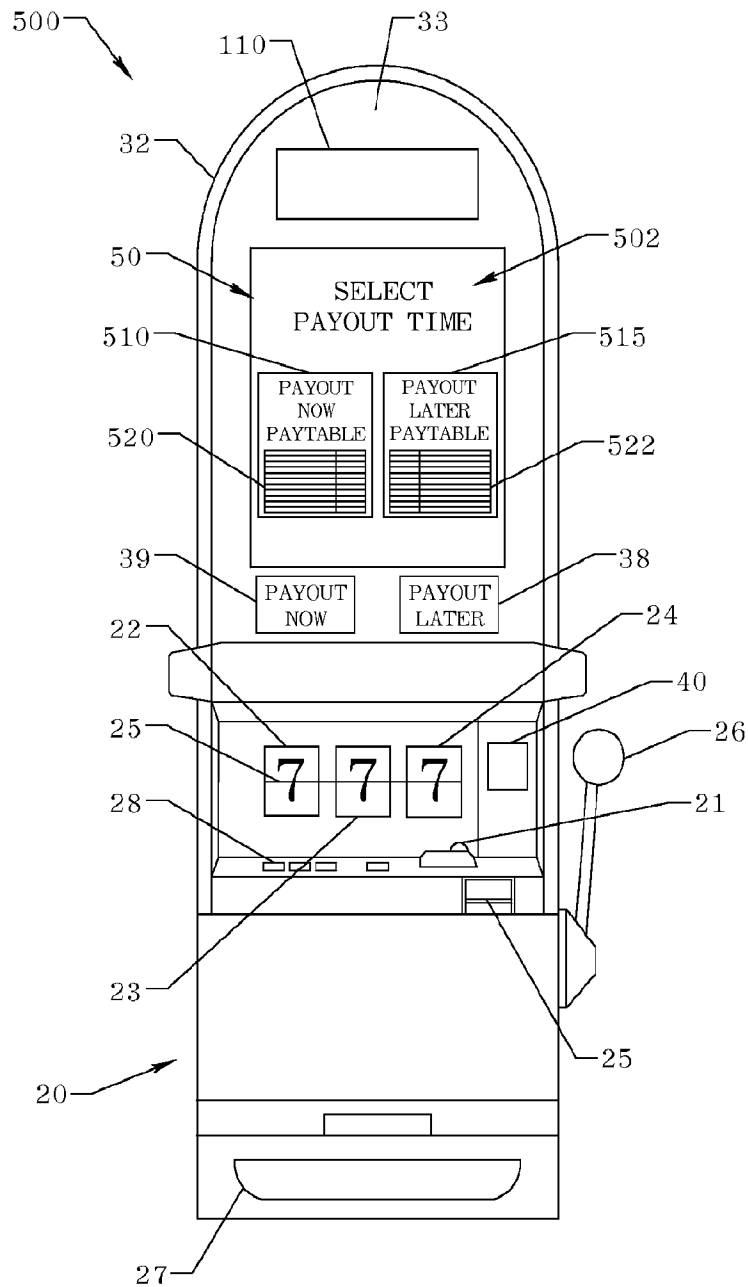
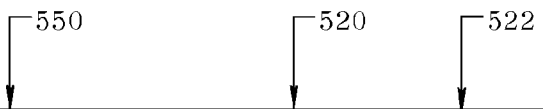


FIG. 7

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GAME OUTCOME	PAYOUT NOW PAYTABLE	PAYOUT LATER PAYTABLE
ALL OTHERS	0	0
CHERRY/ANY/ANY	2	3
ANY/ANY/CHERRY	2	3
CHERRY/CHERRY/ ANY	5	6
ANY/CHERRY/CHERRY	5	6
CHERRY/ANY/CHERRY	5	6
CHERRY/CHERRY/CHERRY	20	22
BAR/ORANGE/ORANGE	10	12
ORANGE/ORANGE/BAR	10	12
ORANGE/ORANGE/ORANGE	20	22
BAR/PLUM/PLUM	14	16
PLUM/PLUM/BAR	14	16
PLUM/PLUM/PLUM	20	22
BAR/BELL/BELL	18	20
BELL/BELL/BAR	18	20
BELL/BELL/BELL	20	22
BAR/BAR/BAR	50	100
7/7/7	100	500

FIG. 8