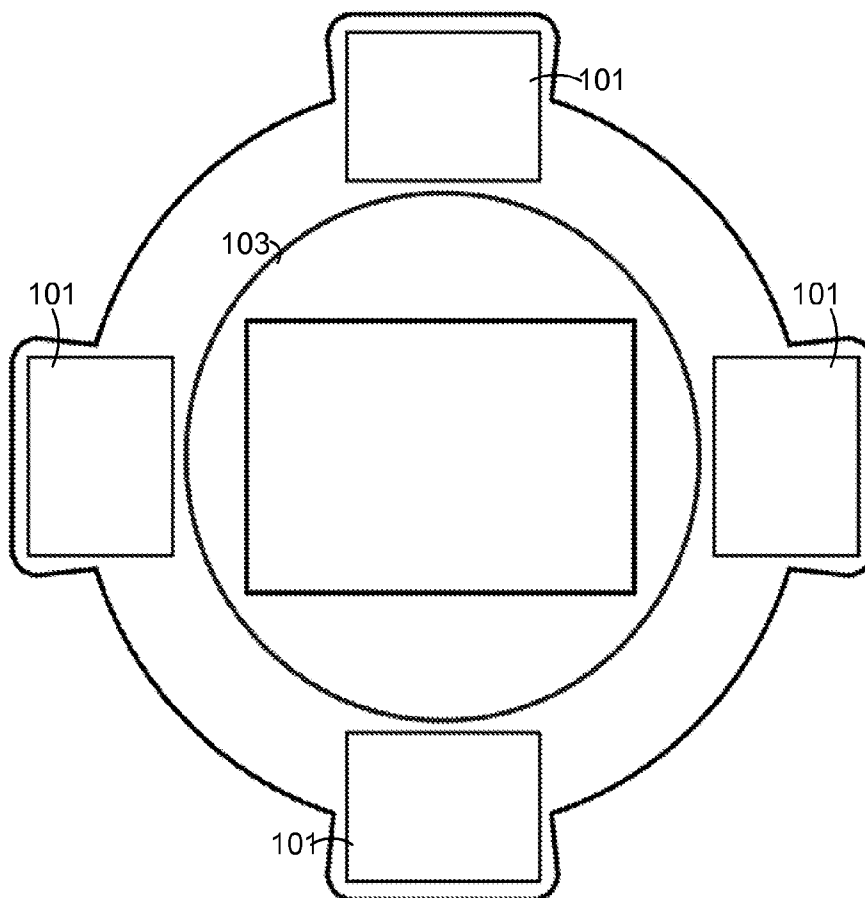


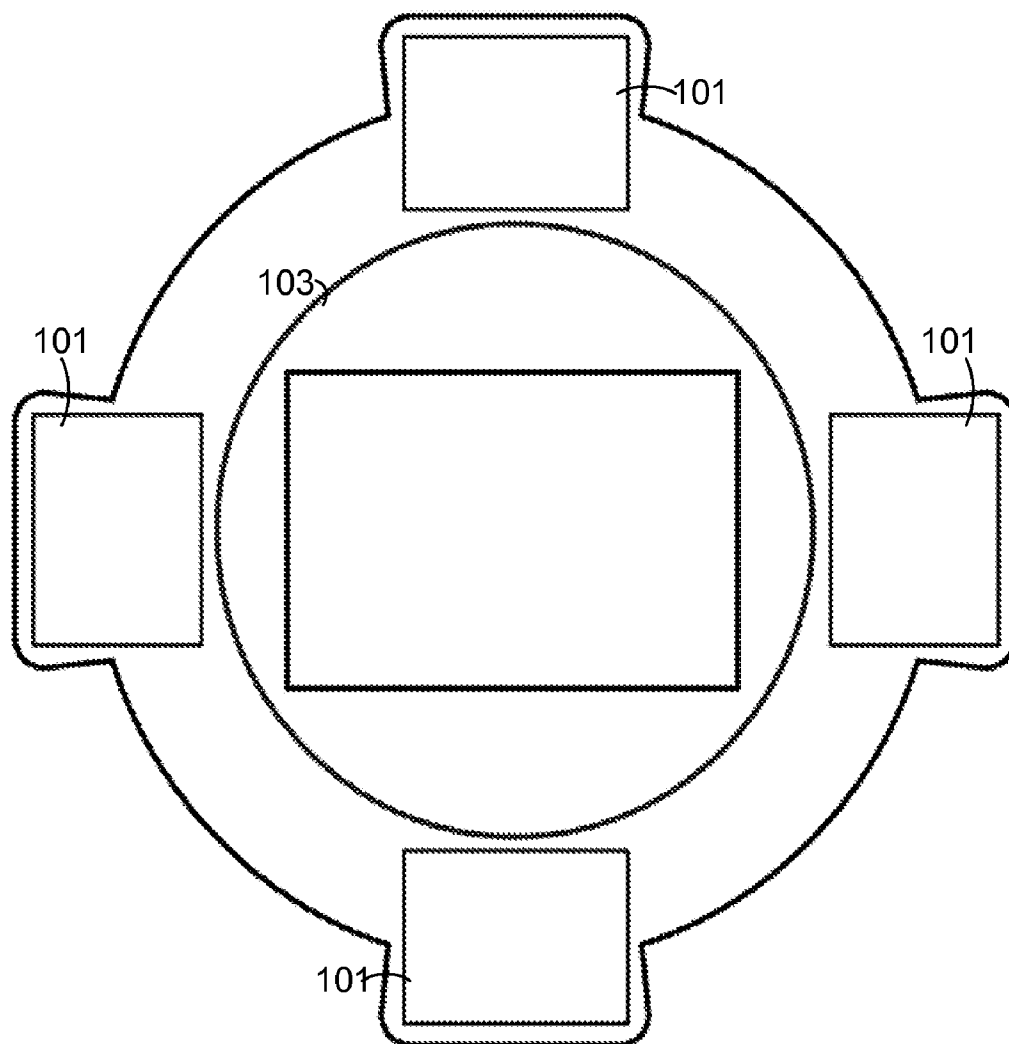


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**BOUGIE et al.**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2010/0144427 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 10, 2010**(54) **MULTI-ROUND GAME HAVING A  
PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 61/120,941, filed on Dec.  
9, 2008.(75) Inventors: **Dany BOUGIE**, Pointe-Calumet  
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(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **463/27; 463/37**  
(57) **ABSTRACT**Correspondence Address:  
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A gaming system and method for operating a multi-round game having a progressive jackpot that is incremented by those of the credits that were earned either individually or collectively by the players without being cashed in before the end of the game. The system comprises a terminal for players to enter their game-related decisions away from the eyes of competing players by operating a keyboard having a random layout. A game controller selects a game outcome and an outcome analyzer determines whether credits were earned individually or collectively. An earned credit controller updates credits earned individually, and a pool credit controller, credits earned collectively. A player can cash in earned credits by retiring, but earned credits that are not cashed in before the end of the game are incremented to a jackpot by a progressive jackpot controller.

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MONTREAL (CA)(21) Appl. No.: **12/633,954**(22) Filed: **Dec. 9, 2009**

**FIG. 1**

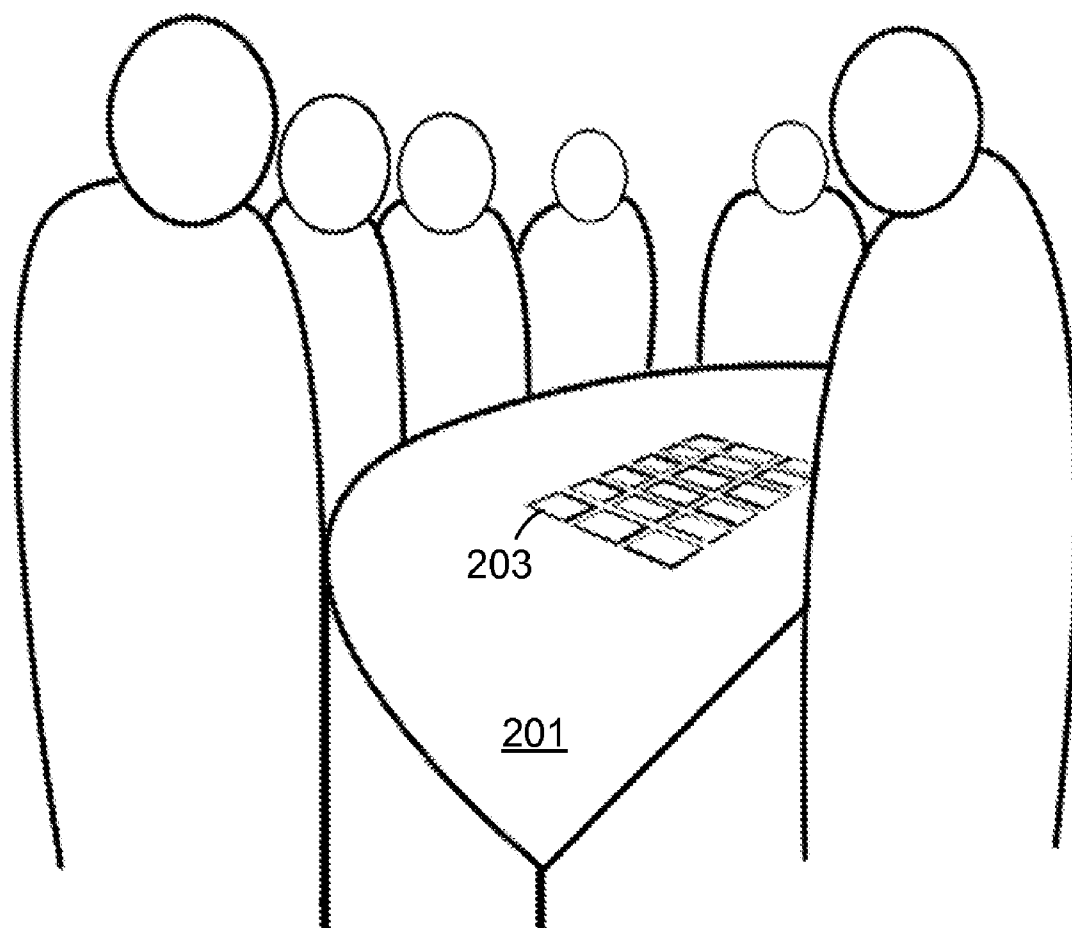


FIG. 2

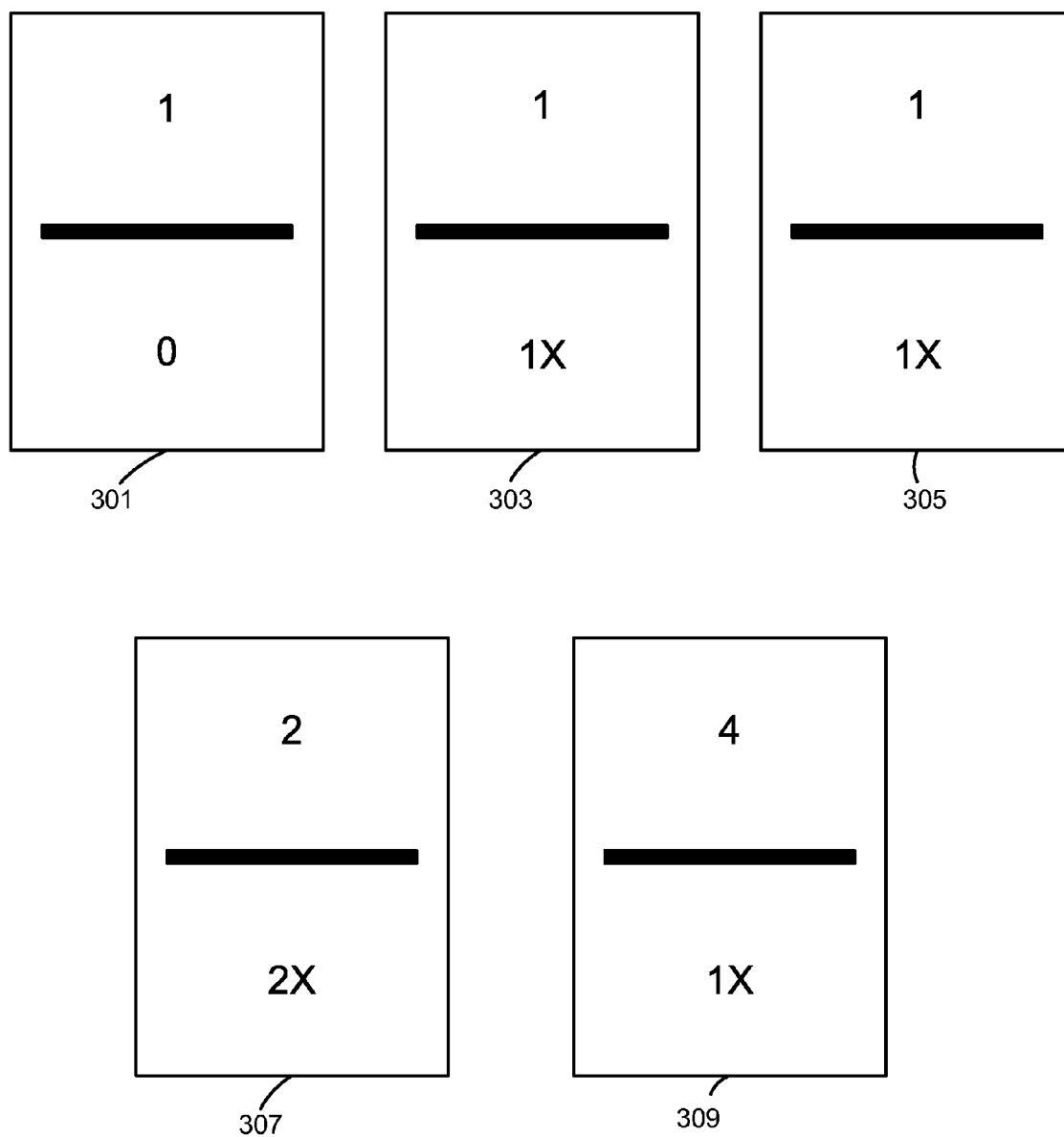


FIG. 3

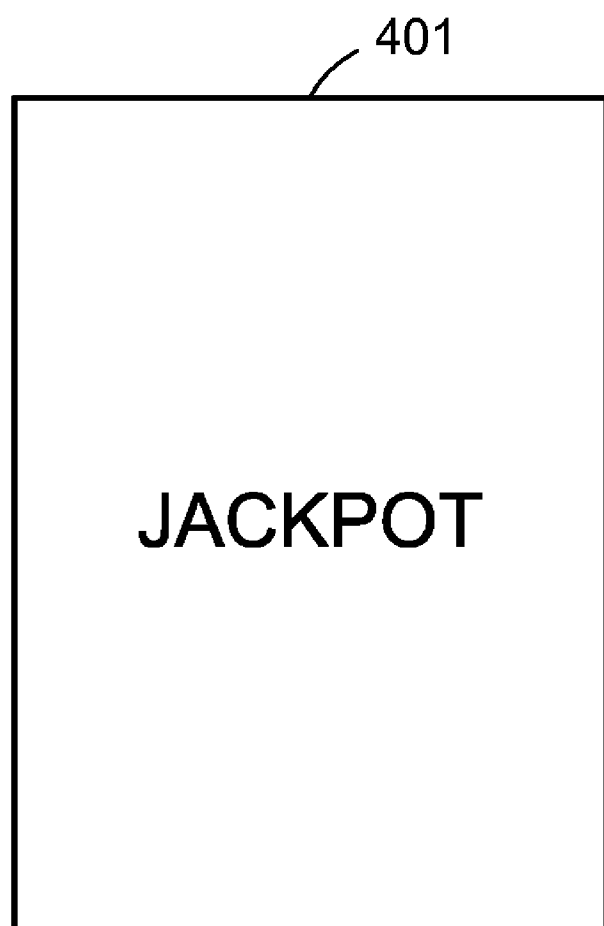
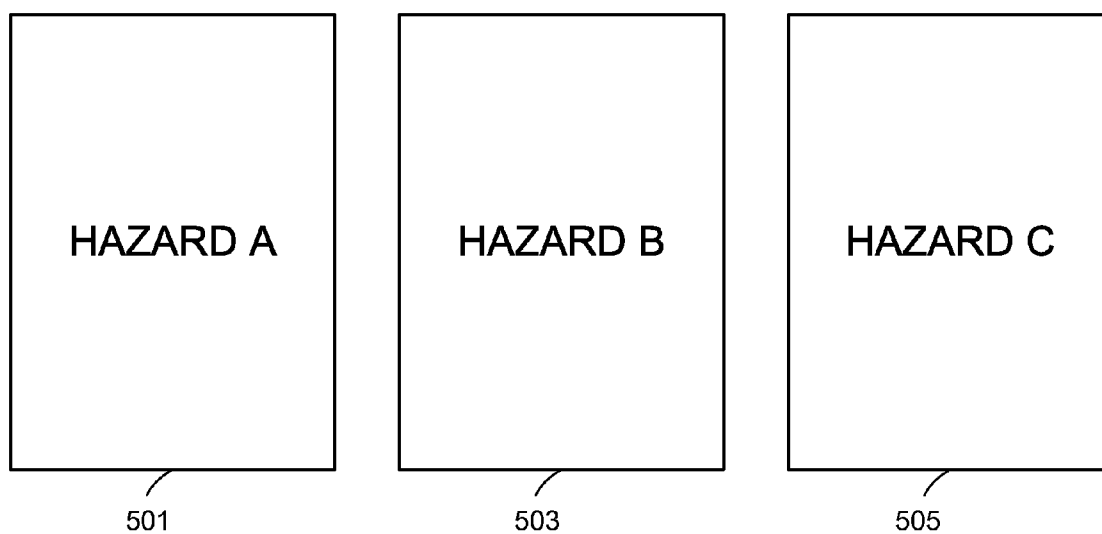


FIG. 4



**FIG. 5**

FIG. 6

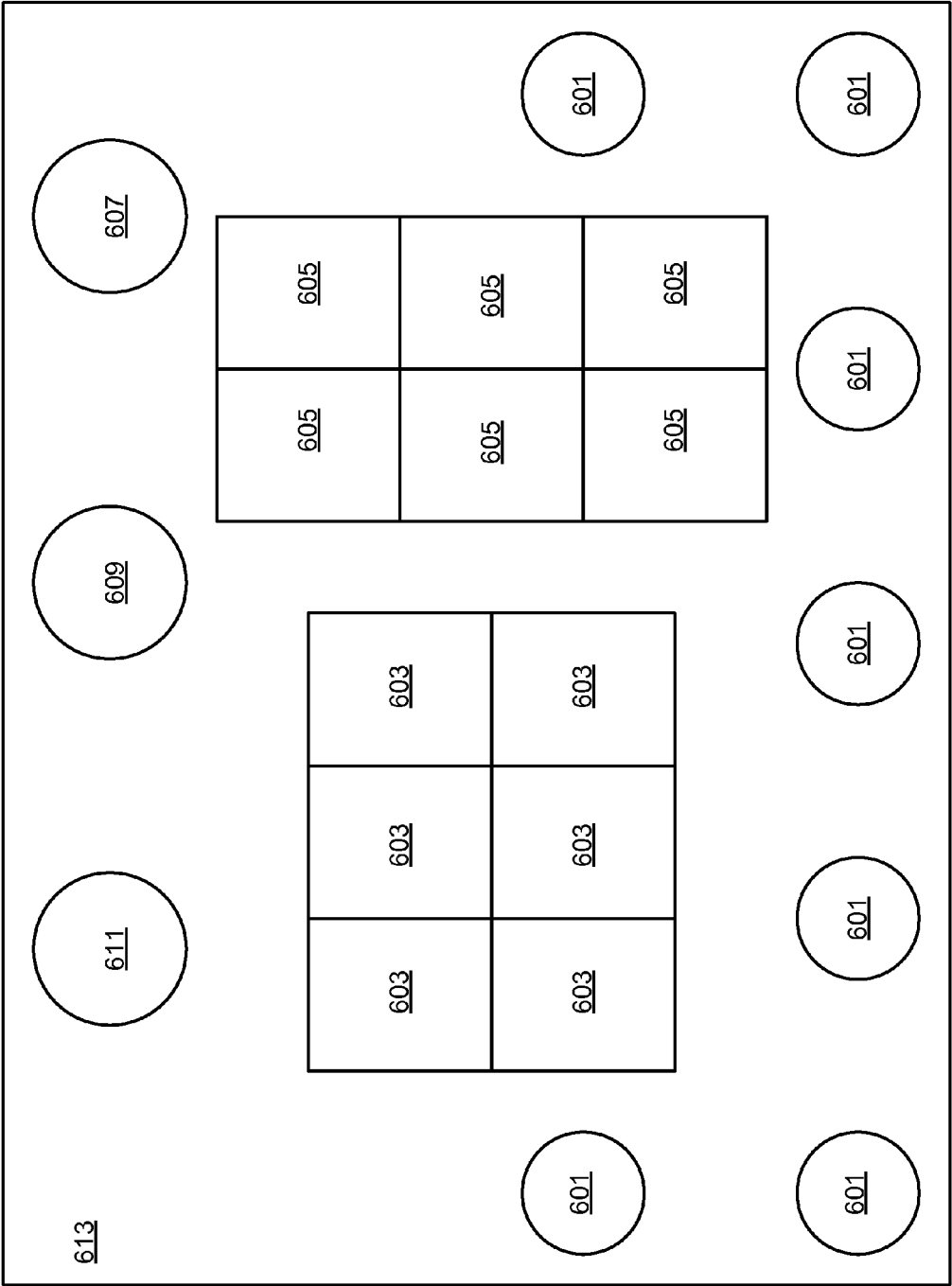
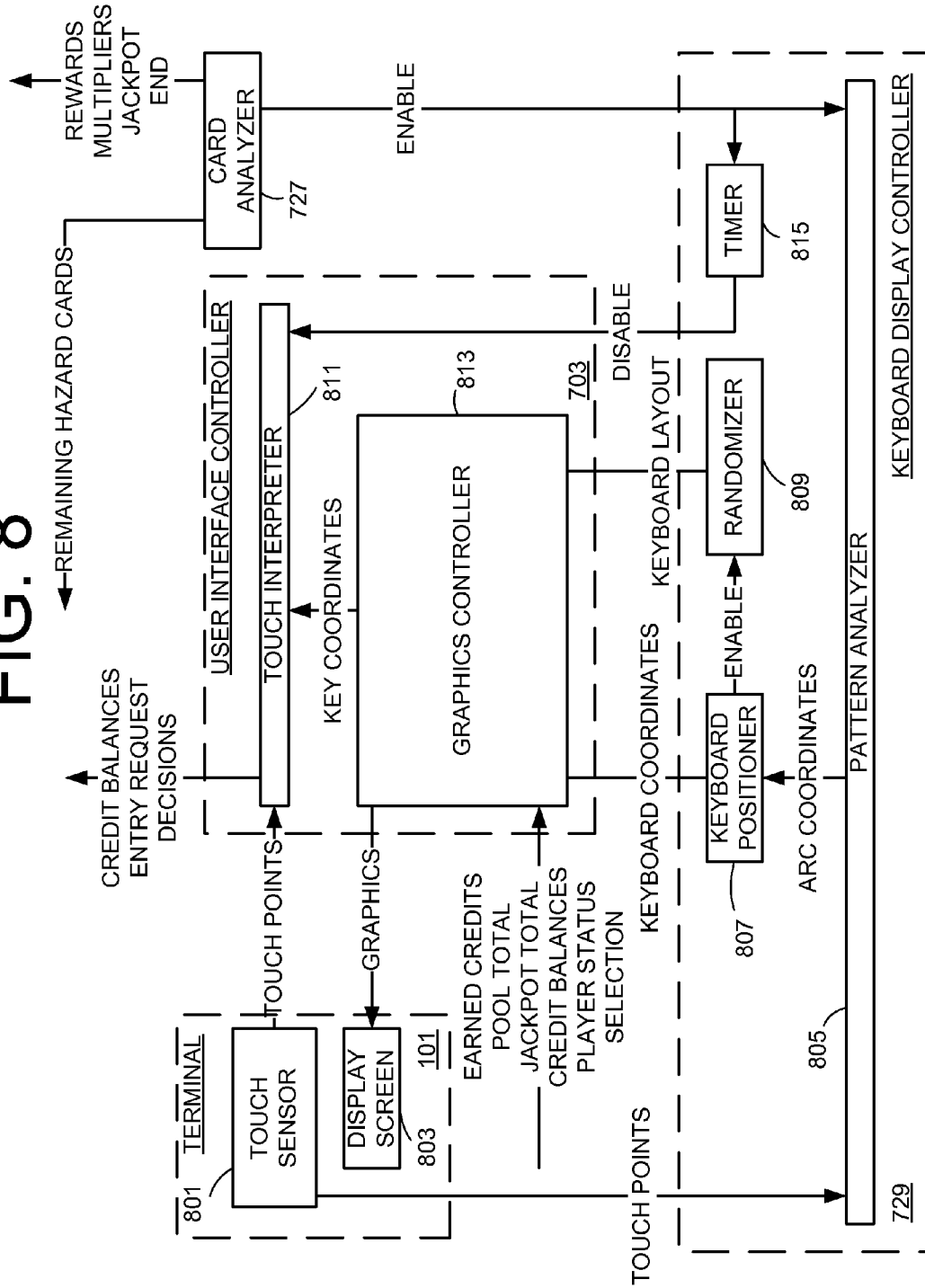




FIG. 8



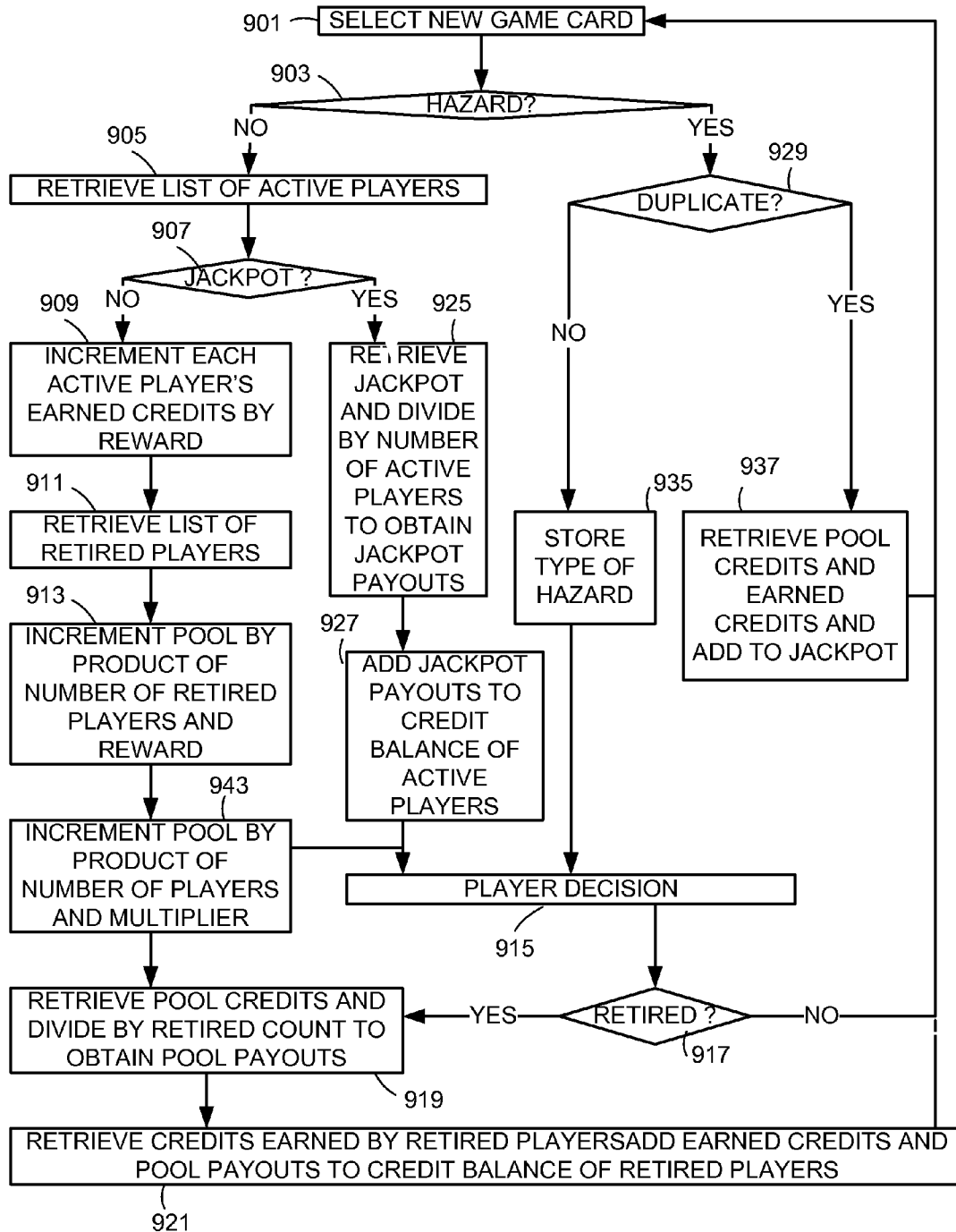


FIG. 9

FIG. 10

## MULTI-ROUND GAME HAVING A PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

**[0001]** The present invention relates to devices and methods for playing a game of chance. More specifically, it relates to devices and methods for playing a multi-round game having a progressive jackpot.

### BACKGROUND

**[0002]** Gambling has historically been a favourite pastime for many and has, over the years, enjoyed very rapid growth. However, it has recently become apparent that some of the most successful games, such as Roulette, have been recently slipping in popularity. As a result, there is a need for incentives that improve the overall gambling experience of casino patrons.

**[0003]** One such incentive that is known to have been effective is the inclusion of progressive jackpots, namely ones that gradually increase by a percentage of each bet made until they are won. This concept has not significantly evolved since it was first introduced to casino patrons and its appeal, in its original version, will likely decrease over time.

### SUMMARY

**[0004]** It is an object of the present invention to provide an additional incentive in the form of a progressive jackpot for players of a multi-round game to stay the course instead of retiring in the early rounds.

**[0005]** It is an object of the present invention to provide an incentive in the form of a progressive jackpot for players to place bets with credits earned in a preceding play of a game instead of credits available in their credit balance.

**[0006]** It is a further object of the present invention to provide a player-activated terminal for entry of game-related decisions in privacy.

**[0007]** In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds, an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot provided by a progressive jackpot controller, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, for providing the player's earned credits to a progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the progressive jackpot controller, the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller; and the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**[0008]** In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the method comprising accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, if the player earns the reward, incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, if the player earns the jackpot, incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot before resetting the jackpot, if the sequence ends, incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits before resetting the earned credits, accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds; and if the player retires, incrementing the player's credit balance by the player's earned credits upon the retirement.

**[0009]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds, an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome ends the sequence, earns the player a reward, or earns the player the jackpot in accordance with rules of the game, an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, for providing the player's earned credits to a progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the progressive jackpot controller, the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for incrementing the player's credit balance by the earned jackpot provided by the progressive jackpot controller, and the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**[0010]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the method comprising accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, if the player earns the reward, incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, if the player earns the jackpot, incrementing the player's credit balance by the earned jackpot before resetting the jackpot, if the sequence ends, incrementing the jackpot by the player's earned credits before resetting the earned credits, accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds, and if the player retires, incrementing the player's credit balance by at least some of the player's earned credits.

**[0011]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, a player-activated terminal for the entry of game-related decisions, the terminal comprising a keyboard of at least one

key, a game controller for enabling a keyboard display controller upon determining that a game-related decision is required from a player in accordance with rules of the game, the keyboard display controller for randomly selecting one of at least two distinct keyboard layouts, each of the layouts assigning a label defining a distinct game-related option to each of the at least one key, the label assigned by the layouts to at least one of the at least one key does not define a same one of the game-related options, a display screen for displaying the selected layout, a sensor for detecting an activation of a labeled one of the at least one key, and an interpreter for identifying the game-related option defined by the label of the activated key and for providing the identified option to the game controller for processing in accordance with the rules of the game.

**[0012]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for entry of game-related decisions on a player-activated terminal, the process comprising determining that a game-related decision is required from a player in accordance with rules of the game, randomly selecting one of at least two distinct keyboard layouts, each of the layouts assigning a label defining a distinct game-related option to each of at least one key, the labels assigned by the layouts to at least one of the at least one key define distinct ones of the game-related options, displaying the selected layout, detecting an activation of a labeled one of the at least one key, identifying the game-related option defined by the label of the activated key, and providing the identified option for processing in accordance with the rules of the game.

**[0013]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds, an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot provided by a progressive jackpot controller, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the retired player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, and for resetting the player's earned credits upon the end of the sequence, the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller, and the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller, for incrementing the jackpot by the reward if the player is retired, and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**[0014]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the method comprising accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of

the game, if the player earns the reward, incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, if the player would have earned the reward had the player not retired, incrementing the jackpot by the reward, if the player earns the jackpot, incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot before resetting the jackpot, if the sequence ends, incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits before resetting the earned credits, accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds, and if the player retires, incrementing the player's credit balance by the player's earned credits upon the retirement.

**[0015]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided A gaming system for operating a pool of a multi-round, multi-player game, the system comprising terminals for accepting players' compulsory bets before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the players' retirement at the end of any of the rounds, an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the players a reward or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, an earned credits controller for incrementing each of the players' earned credits by the earned reward, for providing each of the retired players' earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement, for resetting each of the retired players' earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, and for resetting the unretired players' earned credits upon the end of the sequence, a pool credit controller for incrementing a pool by the reward for each of the retired players, for providing at least some of the pool to the account controller upon the retirement, for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the account controller, and the account controller for incrementing the players' earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for incrementing the credit balance of each of the players upon the retirement by an equal share of the pool provided by the pool credit controller.

**[0016]** In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of operating a pool of a multi-round multi-player game, the method comprising accepting players' compulsory bets before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds, determining whether the selected outcome earns the players a reward or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game, if the players earn the reward, incrementing earned credits of each unretired one of the players by the earned reward, and incrementing the pool by the reward for every retired one of the players, if the sequence ends, resetting the active players' earned credits, accepting the active players' retirement at the end of any of the rounds, and if at least one players retires, incrementing the retired player's credit balance by the retired player's earned credits and by an equal share of at least some of the pool upon the retirement.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

**[0017]** The invention as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of an illustrative embodiment when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

**[0018]** FIG. 1 is top plan view of an apparatus for playing a multi-round game having a progressive jackpot according to one embodiment, the apparatus comprising a central panel for

displaying drawn cards, earned credits, pool credits, and progressive jackpot credits, the apparatus further comprising four individual terminals, each of which accepts compulsory bets and game-related decisions;

[0019] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an environment for playing the game according to one embodiment, the environment comprising a semicircular table at the center of which a dealer stands and on the perimeter of which players stand;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a top plan view of five money cards included in a deck of cards designed for the purposes of playing the game according to a preferred embodiment;

[0021] FIG. 4 is a top plan view of one treasure card included in the deck of cards;

[0022] FIG. 5 is a top plan view of three types of disaster cards, each of which is associated to a particular hazard and available in triplicates in the deck of cards;

[0023] FIG. 6 illustrates a table cover for organizing the manner in which game elements are spatially laid out on the table over the course of play according to one embodiment;

[0024] FIG. 7 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a system for playing a game in which a progressive jackpot is incremented by those of the credits that were earned either individually or collectively by the players without being cashed in before the end of the game according to a preferred embodiment;

[0025] FIG. 8 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a terminal, a component of the system that enables a player to enter game-related decisions away from the eyes of competing players according to a preferred embodiment;

[0026] FIG. 9 is a flowchart illustrating a method of playing the game in which a progressive jackpot is incremented by those of the credits that were earned either individually or collectively by the players without being cashed in before the end of the game according to a preferred embodiment; and

[0027] FIG. 10 is a flowchart illustrating a method of accepting game-related decisions entered by a player away from the eyes of competing players according to a preferred embodiment.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] The progressive jackpot, the terminal, and their inventive features are described herein below. For exemplary purposes and in order to clearly demonstrate the synergy between the features, a specific game that benefits therefrom is presented. However, it should be apparent to a person skilled in the art that the features may be applied to other games without departing from the spirit of the invention.

[0029] FIG. 1 is top plan view of an apparatus for playing a multi-round game having a progressive jackpot according to one embodiment, the apparatus comprising a center display 103 for displaying drawn cards, earned credits, pool credits, and progressive jackpot credits. The apparatus also comprises four individual terminals 101, each of which accepts compulsory bets and game-related decisions.

[0030] The terminals 101, also known in the field of gaming as consoles or stations, are detachably mounted on a same platform and positioned in a substantially circular configuration with respect to the display 103, also known in the field of gaming as a communal or central panel. Each of the terminals 101 comprises a touch screen, a set of speakers, a currency acceptor, a prepaid casino card reader, a dedicated ticket-in ticket-out printer, as well as a system that enables the inter-

action of these various components with a player, with each other, and with components of the display 103 for the purposes of the game.

[0031] As for the display 103, it comprises a screen, a set of speakers, as well as a system that enables the interaction of these various components with each other and with components of the terminals. Furthermore, the screens of the terminals 101 and display 103 are mounted in a substantially horizontal manner and those of the terminals 103 are positioned in proximity of that of the display 103 such that a player standing in front of any of the terminals 101 may easily shift his attention between the screen of the terminals 101 and that of the display 103. The number of the terminals 101 mounted on the platform may be readily modified as a function of parameters such as spatial constraints and operation costs.

[0032] Although the terminals 101 have been described as detachably mounted on the platform, they may be fixedly mounted thereon in order, for instance, to reduce costs associated with the manufacture of such an apparatus. Furthermore, although the terminals 101 have been described as positioned in a substantially circular configuration with respect to the display 103, they may be positioned otherwise such as in a substantially semicircular configuration with respect to the display 103, wherein the display 103 is vertically mounted to provide all players with an unobstructed view. Moreover, although each of the terminals 101 has been described as comprising a touch screen, it may alternatively comprise an elaborate set of buttons or a screen coupled with a set of buttons. Also, although the display 103 has been described as comprising a screen, it may alternatively comprise a display surface upon which images are projected. Finally, although the screens of the terminals 101 and display 103 have been described as mounted in a substantially horizontal manner, they may be mounted otherwise such as in a substantially vertical manner to comply with spatial constraints. Alternatively, and as illustrated in FIG. 2, the game may be played in an environment comprising a semicircular table 201 at the center of which a dealer stands and on the perimeter of which players stand, the table preferably comprising a table top 203 designed specifically for the game, such as the one illustrated in FIG. 6.

[0033] For the purposes of the specification, and describing the game within the context of the apparatus illustrated in FIG. 1, a graphical element is said to be displayed on the terminal 101 or display 103 if the element is displayed on the screen of the terminals 101 or display 103. Finally, a player is said to select a graphical element if the player applies pressure on a portion of the touch screen of one of the terminals 101 within which the element is displayed.

[0034] Referring now to FIG. 3, there is illustrated a top plan view of five money cards included in a deck of fifteen cards designed for the purposes of the game. The top digit represents the reward earned by each unretired player when the corresponding card is revealed, which reward is added to the unretired player's earned credits. Earned credits are considered volatile as they may be lost over the course of the game. More specifically, they are lost when the player does not retire before the end of the game. The reward that unretired players would have earned had they not previously retired is added to a pool. Unretired players are also referred to as active players, and earned credits, as volatile credits, and the act of retiring, as the act of pulling out.

[0035] As for the bottom digit, it represents a multiplier to be applied to the number of active and retired players to obtain

a pool reward that is added to a pool. If only one player retires within a round, the pool and the retired player's earned credits are added to the retired player's credit balance. However, if several players retire within a same round, each retired player's earned credits as well as an equal share of the pool after rake deduction are added to the player's credit balance. In both cases, the earned credits of the retired players and the pool are reset to zero.

[0036] Referring now to FIG. 4, there is illustrated a top plan view of the only treasure card included in the deck of cards. When this card is revealed, an equal share of half of the progressive jackpot is added to each active player's credit balance. According to another embodiment, an equal share of half of the jackpot is added to each active player's earned credits. Alternatively, an equal share of a greater or smaller portion of the progressive jackpot may be added to the player's earned credits or credit balance. For instance, according to other embodiments, an equal share of the entire jackpot may be incremented the active player's earned credits or credit balance.

[0037] Referring now to FIG. 5, there is illustrated a top plan view of three types of hazard cards, also referred to as disaster cards, each of which is associated to a particular hazard and available in triplicates in the deck of cards. When two cards of the same hazard are revealed, the game ends without providing the active players an opportunity to retire. The earned credits of all active players as well as the pool are added to the progressive jackpot, which is made available in a subsequent play of the game. The earned credits of the active players and the pool are reset to zero.

[0038] Referring now to FIG. 6, there is illustrated a table top 613, also referred to as table cover, designed for the purposes of organizing the manner in which game elements are spatially laid out on the physical table 201 or on a table displayed on the display 103. An area 607 receives the card shoe, an area 609 corresponds to the bank's chip tray, an area 611, namely the treasure field, receives the pool, and an area 613 receives the progressive jackpot. Each of areas 603 receives a player's earned credits, each of six areas 603 receives one of the five money cards and the treasure card, and each of six areas 605 receives one of the six hazard cards. Preferably, cards associated to different hazards would not be laid within laterally adjacent ones of the areas 605.

[0039] FIG. 7 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a system for playing the game in which the progressive jackpot is incremented by the active players' earned credits and the pool upon the end of the game, according to a preferred embodiment.

[0040] The system comprises a terminal 101 which, as mentioned above and according to a preferred embodiment, comprises a touch screen, a set of speakers, a currency acceptor, a prepaid casino card reader, a dedicated ticket-in ticket-out printer, as well as a system that enables the interaction of these various components with a player, with each other, and with components of the display 103 for the purposes of the game. The terminal 101 accepts player credits through its currency acceptor, compulsory bets through its touch screen, and game-related decisions through its touch screen, before providing the player input to a user interface controller 703. In the case of information accepted through the touch screen, the player input consists in touch points, namely the coordinates of areas of the screen upon which pressure was applied by the player, to the user interface 7. In the case of information accepted through the currency acceptor or the prepaid card

reader, the information consists in amounts of credits. The terminal 101 also displays player parameters such as earned credits, placed bets, credit balance, and status, all of which complement the game-related information displayed on the display 103. The player's status indicates whether a player is active or retired. The graphics to be displayed on the terminal 101 and conveying the player parameters are provided by the user interface controller 703.

[0041] The user interface controller 703 compares the coordinates of the touch points with those of the keys displayed on the terminal 101 and determines whether the player activated buttons for recording a credit balance, for placing the compulsory bet, or for entering a game related decision. If the player activated buttons for recording a credit balance, the user interface controller 703 provides the corresponding credit balance to a main credit controller 705. If the player activated buttons for placing the compulsory bet, the user interface controller provides an entry request to a main controller. Finally, if the player activated buttons to enter a game-related decision, the user interface controller 703 provides the decision to the main credit controller 705. Also, the user interface controller 703 retrieves and assembles graphics that convey the earned credits, pool, jackpot, credit balance, and player status provided by the main credit controller 705, as well as a selection provided by a card selector 723, which is also referred to as an outcome selector, before providing the assembled graphics to the terminal 101 for display. The selection corresponds to a last card drawn by the card selector 723. Furthermore, the user interface controller 703 provides the touch points to a keyboard display controller 729, is provided with keyboard layout and coordinates by the keyboard display controller 729, retrieves and assembles graphics illustrating a keyboard as a function of the provided layout and coordinates, and provides the retrieved and assembled graphics to the terminal 101 for display.

[0042] The card selector 723 is a random number generator or any other component capable of random selection. It retrieves all the cards of the deck from a store of game cards 725, and selects one of the remaining cards, namely one of the cards that has not been selected in previous rounds of a same play of the game. It provides the selected card to the user interface controller 703 and the card analyzer 727 before recording a tag or label within the store of game cards 725, the tag indicating that the selected card is unavailable for subsequent rounds of a same play of the game. The card selector 723 is also provided with an end signal by a card analyzer 727, also referred to as an outcome analyzer, in response to which signal the card selector 723 interrupts the card selection process and resets the tags recorded in the store of game cards 725.

[0043] The card analyzer 727 interprets the selections of the card selector 723 in accordance with the rules of the game. If a hazard card is selected, the card analyzer 727 retrieves the hazard cards selected in previous rounds of a same play of the game from the store of game cards 725 and determines whether any of the retrieved cards are associated to a same hazard, in which case the card analyzer 727 provides an end signal to the card selector 723 and the main credit controller 705. If a money card is selected, the card analyzer 727 extracts the top and bottom digits and provides them to the main credit controller 705 as the reward and multiplier. If the treasure card is selected, the card analyzer 727 provides a jackpot control signal to the main credit controller 705. Finally, if the

selected outcome does not end play of the game, the card analyzer enables the keyboard display controller 729.

[0044] The keyboard display controller 729 is a graphics processor dedicated to the display of a keyboard for entry of game-related decisions. It is enabled by the card analyzer 727 when a game-related decision is required, namely when the last selected card does not end the game. Once enabled, the keyboard display controller 729 performs a pattern analysis to determine whether the touch points provided by the user interface controller 703 define an arc, in which case it aligns the coordinates of the keyboard with those of the defined arc in order for the keyboard to be displayed as hidden behind the player's cupped hand. Furthermore, the keyboard display controller randomly selects a keyboard layout assigning the relative positions of the keys within the keyboard. The keyboard coordinates and layout are provided to the user interface controller 703.

[0045] The main credit controller 705 dispatches the credit balance and entry request provided by the user interface controller 703 to the account controller 719, and dispatches the updated credit balance provided by the account controller 719 to the user interface controller 703. When the entry request is accepted, the main credit controller 703 sets the status of the player to active within a store of player status 731. When the decision provided by the user interface controller 703 indicates that the player wishes to retire, the main credit controller 705 sets the status of the player to retired within the store of player status 731.

[0046] Also, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the rewards and multipliers provided by the card analyzer 727 to a pool credit controller 715 along with a count of the number of active and retired players retrieved from the store of player status 731, and dispatches the pool total, namely the number of credits in the pool, also referred to as the pool, to the account controller 719, and the pool payouts, namely the number of credits that are added to each player's credit balance upon retirement, to the user interface controller 703, both of which are provided by the pool credit controller 715.

[0047] Upon being provided an end signal from the card analyzer 727, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the earned credits provided by an earned credits controller 707 to a progressive jackpot controller 711 along with the pool total provided by the pool credit controller 715. Upon being provided the jackpot signal, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the number of active players retrieved from the store of player status 731 to the progressive jackpot controller 711, and the jackpot payout, namely a share of the jackpot to be incremented to the credit balance of active players, provided by the progressive jackpot controller 711 to the account controller 719.

[0048] The main credit controller 705 dispatches the reward provided by the card analyzer 727 to an earned credits controller 707 and dispatches the earned credits provided by the earned credits controller 707 to the user interface controller 703 for display. Upon receiving the end signal from the card analyzer 727, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the active players' earned credits provided by the earned credits controller 707 to the progressive jackpot controller 711. Upon receiving the retirement of a player from the user interface terminal 703, the main credit controller 705 provides the retired player's earned credits to the account controller 719 in the form of a payout.

[0049] The account controller 710 records the credit balances and payouts provided by the main credit controller 705

in a store of player credits 721 and decrements a player's credit balance by compulsory bet credits upon being provided the player's entry request by the main credit controller 705. The account controller 719 also provides updated credit balances to the main credit controller 705.

[0050] The pool credit controller 715 applies the multiplier to the number of participating players, multiplies the reward by the number of retired players, adds both products to obtain the pool reward, increments the pool stored in a store of pool credits 717 by the obtained pool reward, retrieves the updated pool from the store of pool credits 717, and provides the updated pool to the main credit controller 705. The pool credit controller 715 also divides the pool by the number of newly retired players to obtain the pool payouts and provides the pool payouts to the main credit controller 705. Finally, the pool credit controller 715 resets the pool to zero after providing the pool upon the end of the game and after providing the pool payouts.

[0051] The progressive jackpot controller 711 increments the jackpot stored in a store of jackpot credits 713 by the earned credits and the pool provided by the main credit controller 705. Upon being provided the number of active players, the progressive jackpot controller 711 deducts a rake from the jackpot, divides the remaining credits by the number of active players to obtain equal shares, also referred to as jackpot payouts, and provides the obtained jackpot payouts to the main credit controller 705. After providing the jackpot payouts to the main credit controller 705, the progressive jackpot controller 711 resets the jackpot to zero.

[0052] The earned credits controller 707 increments each active player's earned credits by the reward provided by the main credit controller 705, records the updated earned credits in a store of earned credits 709, and provides the updated earned credits to the main credit controller 705. After providing an active player's earned credits upon the player's retirement or upon the end of a play of the game, the earned credits controller 707 resets the player's earned credits to zero.

[0053] According to one embodiment, upon being provided an end signal from the card analyzer 727, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the jackpot payouts provided by the progressive jackpot controller 711 to the earned credit controller 707, in response to which the earned credit controller increments the active players' earned credits by the jackpot payouts and records the active players' updated earned credits in the store of earned credits 709.

[0054] According to one embodiment, the pool credit controller 715 deducts a rake from the pool and divides the remaining credits by the number of active players to obtain the pool payout.

[0055] According to one embodiment, upon being provided at least one retirement request from the user interface controller 703, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the pool payouts provided by the pool credit controller 715 to the account controller 719.

[0056] According to one embodiment, the terminal 101 is a personal computer, the remaining components of the system are stored on a server, and the terminal 101 communicates with the user interface controller 703 through a network such as the Internet. Preferably, the communication protocol applied by the terminal 101 and the server is highly reliable and provides for enhanced confidentiality of the player's information.

[0057] FIG. 9 is a flowchart illustrating a method of playing the game in which the progressive jackpot is incremented by

those of the credits that were earned either individually or collectively by the players without being cashed in before the end of the game according to a preferred embodiment. The steps of the method are explained below with reference to FIG. 7 in order to clarify the correspondence between the steps and the components of the system.

**[0058]** In a step 901, one of the available cards of the deck is randomly selected. A game card is available if it was not selected in any of the previous rounds of a same play of the game. Previously selected cards are distinguished from the others by a tag or label assigned to them upon their selection. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step 901 is performed by the card selector 723 using random number generation or other random selection techniques.

**[0059]** Once the card is selected, it is analyzed in a step 903 in order to determine whether it is a hazard card. Each card of the deck is comprised of a set of data, the number of which varies between the categories of cards. The hazard cards are comprised of three data, the first of which defines the card's type, the second, the card ID, and the third, the hazard to which the card is associated. The step 903 consists in extracting the first datum, namely the type of the selected card in order to determine whether the selected card is a hazard card. Referring back to FIG. 7, the analysis is performed by the card analyzer 727.

**[0060]** If the selected card is not a hazard card, the list of active players is retrieved in a step 905. Before the beginning of the game, and as mentioned previously, all patrons who wish to participate must place a compulsory bet, following which they achieve an active status. However, the recorded status may change over the course of play of the game as players are allowed to retire at the end of any round. Therefore a list of active and retired players is maintained throughout the course of play. Referring to FIG. 7, the step 905 is performed by the main credit controller 705, which retrieves the list of active players from the store of player status 731.

**[0061]** Once the list of active players is retrieved, and in a step 907, the selected card is analyzed to determine whether it is a jackpot card. The jackpot card is comprised of one datum defining the card's type. The step 903 consists in extracting the datum to determine whether the selected card is a jackpot card. Referring back to FIG. 7, the analysis is performed by the card analyzer 727.

**[0062]** If the selected card is not a jackpot card, it is necessarily a money card. Money cards are comprised of three data, the first of which defines the type of the card, the second, a reward in the form of a number of credits, and the third, a multiplier. In a step 909, the reward is extracted and added to the earned credits of each player on the retrieved list of active players. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step 909 is performed by the collaboration of several components of the system. More specifically, the card analyzer 727 extracts the reward and provides it to the main credit controller 705, which dispatches the list of active players and the reward to the earned credit controller 707. The latter retrieves the earned credits of each active player from the store of earned credits 709, increments each them by the reward, and stores the updated earned credits in the store of earned credits 709.

**[0063]** Once the earned credits are incremented, and in a step 911, the list of retired players is retrieved. In most games, the number of retired players neither harms nor enhances the number of credits that other players earn. However, in the context of this particular game, and in accordance with the preferred embodiment, any credit that would have been

earned by a player had the player not retired is added to the pool for the benefit of the active players. This provides players with a further incentive to stay the course in the later rounds of the game. Referring to FIG. 7, the step 911 is performed by the main credit controller 705, which retrieves the list of retired players from the store of player status 731.

**[0064]** Subsequently, and in a step 913, the number of players on the list of retired players is multiplied by the reward that was retrieved in the step 909, and the product is added to the pool. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step 913 is performed by the collaboration of several components of the system. More specifically, the main credit controller 705 dispatches the reward provided by the card analyzer 727 and the retrieved list of retired players to the pool credit controller 715, which in turn multiplies the number of players on the list of retired players by the reward, retrieves the pool from the store of pool credits 717, adds the product to the retrieved pool, and records the updated pool in the store of pool credits 717.

**[0065]** As mentioned previously, money cards are comprised of three data, the third of which defines a multiplier. In a step 943 following the step 913, the multiplier is extracted, multiplied by the number of active and retired players, and the product is added to the pool. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step 909 is performed by the collaboration of several components of the system. More specifically, the card analyzer 727 extracts the multiplier and provides it to the main credit controller 705, which dispatches the list of active and retired players and the multiplier to the pool credit controller 715. The latter applies the retrieved multiplier to the number of active and retired players, retrieves the pool from the store of pool credits 717, increments the pool by the calculated product, and stores the updated pool in the store of pool credits 717.

**[0066]** Once the pool credits are updated, and in a step 917 the player is provided with an opportunity to enter a game-related decision, namely whether the player wishes to stay the course for an additional round of the game or retire, the decision is accepted and analyzed in accordance with the rules of the game. Referring to FIG. 7, and as mentioned previously, the step 909 is performed by the collaboration of several components of the system. More specifically, the keyboard display controller 729 is a graphics processor dedicated to the display of a keyboard for entry of game-related decisions. It is enabled by the card analyzer 727 when a game-related decision is required, namely when the last selected card does not end the game. Once enabled, the keyboard display controller 729 performs a pattern analysis to determine whether the touch points provided by the user interface controller 703 define an arc, in which case it aligns the coordinates of the keyboard with those of the defined arc in order for the keyboard to be displayed as hidden behind the player's cupped hand. Furthermore, the keyboard display controller randomly selects a keyboard layout assigning the relative positions of the keys within the keyboard. The keyboard coordinates and layout are provided to the user interface controller 703 for display on the terminal 101, and the latter provides the player's input to the user interface controller 703.

**[0067]** Following entry of the player's game-related decision, and in a step 917, the system determines whether the decision corresponds to a request to retire. Referring to FIG. 7, the step 917 is performed by the user interface controller 703, which compares the coordinates of the touch points provided by the terminal 101 with those of the keys displayed

on the terminal **101** and determines whether the player activated keys for entering a game related decision. If the player activated buttons to enter a game-related decision, the user interface controller **703** provides the decision to the main credit controller **705**.

[0068] If according to a step **917**, the player decided to retire, and in a step **919**, the pool is retrieved and divided by the number of newly retired players to obtain the pool payouts, each of which corresponds to an equal share of the pool to be provided to each of the newly retired players. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **917** is performed by the pool credit controller **715**, which retrieves the pool from the store of pool credits **717**, divides the pool by the number of players on the provided list of retired players to obtain the pool payout payouts. In accordance with one embodiment, the pool credit controller **715** deducts a rake from the pool and divides the remaining credits by the number of players on the list of retired players to obtain the pool payout.

[0069] Once the pool payout is calculated, and in a step **921**, the number of credits earned by each of the retiring players is retrieved, added to the pool payout, the credit balance of each of the retiring players is retrieved, and the calculated sum is added to each of the retrieved credit balances. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **921** involves several components of the system. More specifically, the main credit controller **705** provides the list of retiring players to the earned credit controller **707**, which retrieves the credits earned by each of the players on the list from the store of earned credits **709**, and provides the retrieved earned credits to the main credit controller **705**, which in turn dispatches the provided earned credits to the account controller **719**. Also, the pool credit controller **715** provides the calculated pool payout to the main credit controller **705**, which in turn dispatches the calculated payout to the account controller **719**. Finally the account controller **719** retrieves the credit balance of each player on the list of retiring players from the store of player credits **721**, increments the retrieved credit balances by the provided payout and earned credits, and records the updates credit balances in the store of player credits **721**.

[0070] Once the retrieved credit balances are updated, a new game card is selected in the step **901**. Conversely, if in accordance with the step **917**, it is determined that no player has decided to retire, there is no need to update credit balances, and therefore, the steps **919** and **921** are not performed. As a result, and following the step **917**, the step **901** is performed, which step consists in selecting a new game card.

[0071] If according to the step **907**, the card selected in the step **901** is a treasure card, the jackpot is retrieved and divided by the number of players on the list of active players, which list was retrieved in the step **905**, to obtain the jackpot payout in a step **925**. However, and according to one embodiment, a rake is deducted from the jackpot and the remaining credits are divided by the number of players on the list of active players to obtain the jackpot payout. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **925** involves several components of the system. More specifically, the main credit controller **705**, which provides the list of active players to the progressive jackpot controller **711**, which in turn retrieves the jackpot from the store of jackpot credits **713**, counts the number of players on the list of active players, and divides the retrieved jackpot by the counted number of active players to obtain the jackpot payout.

[0072] Once the jackpot payout is calculated, and in a step **927**, the credit balance of each of the active players is

retrieved and incremented by the calculated jackpot payout. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **925** involves several components of the system. More specifically, the step **927** is performed by the main credit controller **705** which dispatches the retrieved list of active players to the account controller **719**, which in turn retrieves the credit balance of each player on the list from the store of player credits **721**, adds the calculated jackpot to the retrieved credit balances, and records the updated credit balances in the store of player credits **721**. Once the credit balances of active players are updated, the step **915**, which consists in accepting game-related decisions, is performed.

[0073] If in accordance with the step **903**, it was determined that the game card selected in the step **901** is a hazard card, the second datum of the selected card, namely the one indicating the hazard to which the selected card is associated, is extracted. Furthermore, those of the game cards that were selected in previous rounds of a same play of the game are retrieved, and their first datum, namely the one indicating their type, is extracted in order to identify those of the previously selected cards that are hazard cards. Finally, for each of the identified hazard cards, the second datum is extracted, namely the one identifying the hazard to which the card is associated, and compared with the second datum of the last selected card. It is then determined whether the last selected card and any one of the previously selected cards are associated to a same hazard. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **929** is performed by the card analyzer **727**, which retrieves the second datum of the last selected card, retrieves the previously selected cards from the store of game cards **725**, extracts the first datum of the retrieved cards to identify those of the hazard type, extracts the second datum of the previously selected hazard cards, and compares the hazard of the last selected card with those of the previously selected cards in search of duplicates.

[0074] If no duplicates were identified in the step **933**, the last selected card is tagged as unavailable for subsequent rounds of a same play of the game. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **933** is performed by the card analyzer **727**, which records the label in the store of game cards **725** in association with the last selected card. Once the card is tagged, the step **915** is performed, which step consists in accepting player decisions.

[0075] If duplicates were identified in the step **933**, the game ends. As a result, and in accordance with a step **937**, the remaining earned credits and pool are retrieved and added to the jackpot. Referring back to FIG. 7, the step **933** involves several components of the system. More specifically, the card analyzer **727** provides an end signal to the main credit controller **705**, which retrieves the list of active players from the store of player status **731**, and dispatches the list of active players to the earned credit controller **707** in response to which the latter retrieves the credits earned by the active players from the store of earned credits **709**, provides the retrieved earned credits to the main credit controller **705**, and resets the earned credits of each active player. Also, the main credit controller **705** provides an end signal to the pool credit controller **715**, in response to which the latter retrieves the pool from the store of pool credits **717**, provides the retrieved pool to the main credit controller **705**, and resets the pool within the store of pool credits **717**. Finally, the main credit controller **705** dispatches the provided earned credits and pool to the progressive jackpot controller **711**, which in turn retrieves the jackpot from the store of jackpot credit **713**,

increments the jackpot by the dispatched earned credits and pool, and records the updated jackpot in the store of jackpot credits **713**. In accordance with one embodiment, and in response to the end signal, the pool credit controller **715** deducts a rake from the pool and provides the remaining credits to the main credit controller **705**. In accordance with one embodiment, in response to an end signal, the earned credits controller **707** deducts a rake from the retrieved earned credits and provides the remaining credits to the main credit controller **705**.

**[0076]** As can be ascertained from the description, in order for the game to be both functional and entertaining, players should not be able to view decisions made by others before a corresponding decision phase elapses. However, if the terminals **101** are not physically far apart, each player can easily determine decisions made by others by observing the movements of their arms, hands, and fingers.

**[0077]** FIG. **8** is a schematic block diagram illustrating a terminal, a component of the system that enables a player to enter game-related decisions away from the eyes of competing players according to a preferred embodiment.

**[0078]** The terminal **101** comprises a multi-touch screen, which consists in a touch screen capable of detecting more than one user input at a time. More specifically, the multi-touch screen consists in a display screen **803** and a touch sensor **801**, which, in conjunction with other related components within the system, enables players to submit game requests of all sorts by applying localized pressure within specific areas of the display screen **803**. The detected touch points, also referred to as pressure points, are continuously provided to the user interface controller **703**, and more specifically, a touch interpreter **811**, in order for them to be translated into the corresponding instructions, which are subsequently provided to the appropriate system component, and more specifically, to the main credit controller **705**, in order for them to be carried out.

**[0079]** Of all the requests that a player may submit, the most important ones within the context of the game described herein above consist in requesting to stay the course or retire from play of the game. Such decisions are to be made and submitted during the decision phase, which shortly follows the selection of a game card by the card selector **723**. Indeed, once the card selector **723** selects a card, it provides the card to the user interface controller **703**, and more specifically, to a graphics controller **813**, which in turn provides graphics conveying the card selection for display on the display screen **803**. Subsequently, if the card analyzer **727** determines that the card selection does not end play of the game in accordance with the rules of the game, the card analyzer **727** enables the keyboard display controller **729** and sets a timer **815**.

**[0080]** Upon being enabled, the keyboard display controller, and more specifically, the pattern analyzer **805** analyzes batches of touch points provided by the touch sensor **801** to determine whether the active player has indeed placed a hand on the display screen **803** in a cupped position to hide an area thereof. The analysis is performed by determining whether the coordinates of the touch points in a single batch define an arc that is likely to result from the edge of a cupped hand placed on the display screen **803**. According to one embodiment, the pattern analyzer **805** determines whether the touch points define any of a series of predetermined patterns that may serve as a cue for the display of the keyboard.

**[0081]** If the pattern analyzer **805** determines that an arc is defined by the touch points, the pattern analyzer **805** provides

the defined arc's coordinates to a keyboard positioner **807**. Upon being provided the arc's coordinates, the keyboard positioned **807** calculates the display coordinates of the keyboard as a function of the arc's coordinates in order for the keyboard to be displayed as hidden from the eyes of competing players within the arc. The keyboard positioner **807** provides the calculated keyboard coordinates to the graphics controller **813** and enables a randomizer **809**.

**[0082]** The randomizer **809** is a random number generator or any other random selection mechanism that randomly selects one of two keyboard layouts and provides the selected layout to the graphics controller **813** for display on the display screen **803**. The keyboard is comprised of two keys, a first of which enables the player to retire from play of the game, and the second, of which enables the player to stay the course. In the first of the two layouts, the first key is positioned above the second key, whereas in the second layout, the second key is positioned under the second. The randomizer provides the selected keyboard layout to the graphics controller **813** for the keyboard to be displayed accordingly on the display screen **803**.

**[0083]** While the keyboard has been described as comprising two keys, it may very well comprise a greater number of keys in the context of a game where more than two options are presented to the player. Furthermore, while in the context of a game presenting two options, the keyboard has been described as comprising two keys, it may very well comprise one key, wherein the two layouts assign a distinct option to the key, and if the player wishes to request an option for which no key is displayed, the player is required to wait until the end of the decision phase, at which point the option for which no key is displayed is automatically selected for the player. Finally, while in the described system, two layouts are available to the randomizer **809**, a greater number of layouts may be available according to another embodiment.

**[0084]** Upon being provided the keyboard layout and coordinates, the graphics controller **813** retrieves and assembles graphics illustrating the keyboard according to the layout and coordinates, and provides the retrieved and assembled graphics to the display screen **803** for display. As long as the player defines an arc with the edge of a hand cupped over the display screen **803**, the touch sensor **801** will provide the keyboard display controller **729** with touch points defining an arc, and the keyboard display controller **729** will provide the keyboard coordinates to the graphics controller **813** for display of the keyboard on the display screen **803**. However, if the player removes the hand, or places the hand in a configuration that is not recognized by the pattern analyzer **805**, the flow of keyboard coordinates, and therefore, the display of the keyboard on the display screen **803** is interrupted, and as a result, the keyboard ceases to be displayed.

**[0085]** The graphics controller **813** calculates the display coordinates of each key of the keyboard as a function of the keyboard coordinates and layout, and provides the calculated coordinates to the touch interpreter **811**. Upon being provided with touch points from the touch sensor **801**, the touch interpreter **811** compares their coordinates with those of the keys in order to determine whether one of the keys is selected, and if so, the option associated with the selected key. The touch interpreter **811** provides the selected option as the player's game-related decision to the main credit controller for further processing in accordance with the rules of the game.

**[0086]** If the timer **815** elapses before the player selects one of the presented options, the timer sends a default signal to the

touch interpreter **811**, in response to which the touch interpreter provides a predetermined, default one of the options to the main credit controller **705** as the undecided player's decision.

[0087] As a result, in a gaming platform benefitting from the system illustrated in FIG. **8**, a player may arguably detect the time at which another applies pressure within the area hidden behind the cupped hand, but may not know with certainty which key has been pressed as the keys are displayed in accordance with a random layout, also referred to as a random configuration, within a hidden area of the display screen **803** and removed from the display screen **803** as soon as the hidden area is uncovered.

[0088] FIG. **10** is a flowchart illustrating a method of accepting game-related decisions entered by a player away from the eyes of competing players according to a preferred embodiment. The steps of the method are explained below with reference to FIG. **7** and FIG. **8** in order to clarify the correspondence between the steps and the components of the system.

[0089] In a step **1001**, one of the available cards of the deck is randomly selected. A game card is available if it was not selected in any of the previous rounds of a same play of the game. Previously selected cards are distinguished from the others by a tag or label assigned to them upon their selection. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1001** is performed by the card selector **723** using random number generation or other random selection techniques.

[0090] Once the card is selected, it is analyzed in a step **1003** in order to determine whether its selection ends play of the game. First, it is determined whether the selected card is a hazard card. Each card of the deck is comprised of a set of data, the number of which varies between the categories of cards. The hazard cards are comprised of three data, the first of which defines the card's type, the second, the card ID, and the third, the hazard to which the card is associated. In order to determine whether the selected card is a hazard card, the first datum is extracted. If it is indeed a hazard card, the second datum of the selected card is extracted. Furthermore, those of the game cards that were selected in previous rounds of a same play of the game are retrieved, and their first datum, namely the one indicating their type, is extracted in order to identify those of the previously selected cards that are hazard cards. Finally, for each of the identified hazard cards, the second datum is extracted, and compared with the second datum of the last selected card. It is then determined whether the last selected card and any one of the previously selected cards are associated to a same hazard, in which case the selection of the last card ends play of the game. Referring back to FIG. **7**, the step **1003** is performed by the card analyzer **727**, which extracts the first datum of the last selected card to determine whether it is a hazard card, retrieves the second datum of the last selected card if it turns out to be a hazard card, retrieves the previously selected cards from the store of game cards **725**, extracts the first datum of the retrieved cards to identify the hazard cards, extracts the second datum of the previously selected hazard cards, and compares the hazard of the last selected card with those of the previously selected cards in search of duplicates.

[0091] If no duplicate is identified, the last selected card does not end play of the game and active players are required to enter their game related decision during a decision phase. Thus, and in accordance with a step **1005**, a timer is set to signal the end of the decision phase. Referring back to FIG. **8**,

the step **1005** involves two components of the system, namely the card analyzer **727** and the pattern analyzer and a timer **815**. More specifically, since it failed to identify a duplicate in accordance with the step **1003**, the card analyzer **727** sets the timer **815** to signal the end of the decision phase after a predetermined amount of time.

[0092] Once the timer is set, and in accordance with a step **1009**, batches of pressure points are accepted before being analyzed in a step **1011** in order to determine whether at least some of them define a predetermined pattern, namely an arc that would be defined by the edge of a cupped hand. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1009** is performed by the touch sensor **801**, which detects pressure applied on the display screen **803**, and provides the coordinates of the detected touch points to the pattern analyzer **805**. The latter, in accordance with the step **811**, applies pattern recognition mechanisms to the provided touch points in order to determine whether at least some of the touch points define an arc that is likely to result from a cupped hand placed over the display screen **803**. In accordance to one embodiment, the pattern analyzer searches for any one of a plurality of predetermined patterns such as a straight line of a minimum length and depth.

[0093] If the arc pattern is identified, and in accordance with a step **1013**, keyboard coordinates are calculated as a function of the coordinates of the identified arc in order for the keyboard to be displayed as hidden from the eyes of competing players behind the player's cupped hand. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1013** involves two components of the system, namely the pattern analyzer **805** and the keyboard positioner **807**. The pattern analyzer **805** calculates the coordinates of the identified arc and provides them to the keyboard positioner **807**, which in turn calculates the keyboard coordinates as a function of the provided arc coordinates and provides the calculated keyboard coordinates to the graphics controller **813**.

[0094] Once the keyboard coordinates have been calculated, and in accordance with a step **1015**, one of two keyboard layouts is randomly selected, wherein the layout defines the relative position of the keys within the keyboard. A first of the two layouts positions the key for retiring from play of the game above the one for staying the course, whereas the second layout positions the key for retiring from play under the one for staying the course. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1015** involves two components of the system, namely the keyboard positioner **807** and the randomizer **809**. More specifically, upon being provided the arc coordinates, the keyboard positioner **807** enables the randomizer **809**, which randomly selects one of the two keyboard layouts, and provides the selected layout to the graphics controller **813**.

[0095] Since the keyboard layout and coordinates have been calculated, the keyboard is displayed in accordance with a step **1017**. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1017** is performed by a component of the user interface controller **703**, namely the graphics controller **813**, which retrieves and assembles graphics illustrating the keyboard as a function of the provided layout and coordinates, and provides the retrieved and assembled graphics to the display screen **803** for display.

[0096] In a step **1021**, the coordinates of the touch points are compared with those of the displayed keys in order to determine whether any one of the keys is selected. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1021** involves three components of the system, namely the graphics controller **813**, touch sensor **801**, and touch interpreter **811**. More specifically, the graphics

controller **813** calculates the display coordinates of each key of the keyboard as a function of the keyboard layout and coordinates and provides the display coordinates to the touch interpreter **811**. Also, the touch sensor **801** detects pressure applied on the display screen **803** and provides the coordinates of the corresponding touch points to the touch interpreter **811**. The touch interpreter **811** determines whether any cluster of touch points are located within an area of the display screen **803** within which one of the keys is displayed by comparing the provided coordinates.

**[0097]** If one of the keys is selected, and in accordance with a step **1023**, the option assigned to the selected key is entered as the player's decision. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1023** is performed by the touch interpreter which identifies the selected key from its coordinates, retrieves the option assigned to the selected key, and provides the retrieved option as the player's game-related decision to the main credit controller **705**. Once the decision is entered, and in accordance with the step **1001**, a new game card is selected.

**[0098]** However, if no key is selected, and according to a step **1013**, it is determined whether the decision phase has expired, in which case a predetermined, default one of the options is submitted as the player's decision. Referring back to FIG. **8**, the step **1013** involves two components, namely the timer **815** and the touch interpreter **811**. More specifically, when the timer **815** expires, it provides a default signal to the touch interpreter **811**, which in turn provides a predetermined, default one of the two options to the main credit controller **705** as the undecided player's decision. Once the decision is entered, and in accordance with the step **1001**, a new game card is selected.

**[0099]** If in accordance with the step **1013**, it is determined that the decision phase has not expired, a new batch of pressure points is accepted in accordance with the step **1007**. Finally, if in accordance with the step **1003**, the last selected card ends play of the game, a new game is initiated in a step **1027**, following which a new game card is selected in the step **1001**.

**1.** A gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising:

- a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds;
- an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds;
- an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game;
- an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot provided by a progressive jackpot controller, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, for providing the player's earned credits to a progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the progressive jackpot controller;
- the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller; and

the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**2.** The gaming system of claim **1** wherein the progressive jackpot controller deducts a rake from the player's earned credits provided by the credits controller and increments the jackpot by the remaining number of credits.

**3.** The gaming system of claim **1** wherein the outcome selector comprises a card selector for selecting an available one of a predetermined set of cards for each of the rounds and labeling the selected card as unavailable for subsequent ones of the rounds of the sequence.

**4.** The gaming system of claim **1** further comprising a pool credit controller for incrementing the pool by an earned pool reward, for providing the pool to the account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the account controller, for providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller, and wherein the outcome analyzer determines whether the selected outcome earns the player the pool reward in accordance with the rules of the game, the credit controller increments the player's credit balance by the pool provided by the pool credit controller, and the progressive jackpot controller increments the jackpot by the pool provided by the pool credit controller.

**5-11.** (canceled)

**12.** A gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising:

- a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds;
- an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds;
- an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome ends the sequence, earns the player a reward, or earns the player the jackpot in accordance with rules of the game;
- an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, for providing the player's earned credits to a progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the progressive jackpot controller;
- the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for incrementing the player's credit balance by the earned jackpot provided by the progressive jackpot controller; and
- the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**13.** The gaming system of claim **12** wherein the progressive jackpot controller deducts a rake from the player's earned credits provided by the credits controller and increments the jackpot by the remaining number of credits.

**14.** The gaming system of claim **12** wherein the outcome selector comprises a card selector for selecting an available one of a predetermined set of cards for each of the rounds and labeling the selected card as unavailable for subsequent ones of the rounds of the sequence.

**15.** The gaming system of claim **12** further comprising a pool credit controller for incrementing the pool by an earned pool reward, for providing the pool to the account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the account controller, for providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller, and wherein the outcome analyzer determines whether the selected outcome earns the player the pool reward in accordance with the rules of the game, the credit controller increments the player's credit balance by the pool provided by the pool credit controller, and the progressive jackpot controller increments the jackpot by the pool provided by the pool credit controller.

**16-22.** (canceled)

**23.** A player-activated terminal for the entry of game-related decisions, the terminal comprising:

a keyboard of at least one key;

a game controller for enabling a keyboard display controller upon determining that a game-related decision is required from a player in accordance with rules of the game;

the keyboard display controller for randomly selecting one of at least two distinct keyboard layouts, each of the layouts assigning a label defining a distinct game-related option to each of the at least one key, the label assigned by the layouts to at least one of the at least one key does not define a same one of the game-related options;

a display screen for displaying the selected layout;

a sensor for detecting an activation of a labeled one of the at least one key; and

an interpreter for identifying the game-related option defined by the label of the activated key and for providing the identified option to the game controller for processing in accordance with the rules of the game.

**24.** The terminal of claim **23** wherein each of the layouts assigns a position to each of the at least one key within the keyboard, the sensor detects touch points on the display screen, and the interpreter identifies the activated key upon which the touch points are superimposed in accordance with the positions assigned by the selected layout.

**25.** The terminal of claim **24** wherein the keyboard display controller comprises a pattern analyzer for determining whether the detected touch points define a predetermined pattern, and a randomizer for randomly selecting one of the layouts when the detected touch points define the pattern.

**26.** The terminal of claim **25** wherein the predetermined pattern corresponds to an arc defined by the placement of a cupped hand on the display screen.

**27.** The terminal of claim **26** wherein the pattern analyzer determines coordinates of the defined arc, the keyboard display controller further comprises a keyboard positioner for determining keyboard display coordinates as a function of the arc coordinates to exclude the displayed keyboard from the line of sight of competing players.

**28.** The terminal of claim **23** wherein the keyboard comprises less than two keys.

**29-36.** (canceled)

**37.** A gaming system for operating a progressive jackpot of a multi-round game, the system comprising:

a terminal for accepting a player's compulsory bet before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the player's retirement at the end of any of the rounds;

an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds;

an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the player a reward, earns the player the jackpot, or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game;

an earned credits controller for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned reward, for incrementing the player's earned credits by the earned jackpot provided by a progressive jackpot controller, for providing the player's earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the retired player's earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, and for resetting the player's earned credits upon the end of the sequence;

the account controller for incrementing the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller; and

the progressive jackpot controller for incrementing the jackpot by at least some of the player's earned credits provided by the earned credits controller, for incrementing the jackpot by the reward if the player is retired, and for resetting the jackpot after providing the earned jackpot to the earned credits controller.

**38.** The gaming system of claim **37** wherein the progressive jackpot controller deducts a rake from the player's earned credits provided by the credits controller and increments the jackpot by the remaining number of credits.

**39.** The gaming system of claim **37** wherein the outcome selector comprises a card selector for selecting an available one of a predetermined set of cards for each of the rounds and labeling the selected card as unavailable for subsequent ones of the rounds of the sequence.

**40.** The gaming system of claim **37** further comprising a pool credit controller for incrementing the pool by an earned pool reward, for providing the pool to the account controller upon the retirement of the player, for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the account controller, for providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller upon the end of the sequence, and for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the progressive jackpot controller, and wherein the outcome analyzer determines whether the selected outcome earns the player the pool reward in accordance with the rules of the game, the credit controller increments the player's credit balance by the pool provided by the pool credit controller, and the progressive jackpot controller increments the jackpot by the pool provided by the pool credit controller.

**41-47.** (canceled)

**48.** A gaming system for operating a pool of a multi-round, multi-player game, the system comprising:

terminals for accepting players' compulsory bets before the beginning of a sequence of rounds, and for accepting the players' retirement at the end of any of the rounds;

an outcome selector for selecting one of a plurality of potential outcomes for each of the rounds;

an outcome analyzer for determining whether the selected outcome earns the players a reward or ends the sequence in accordance with rules of the game;

an earned credits controller for incrementing each of the players' earned credits by the earned reward, for provid-

ing each of the retired players' earned credits to an account controller upon the retirement, for resetting each of the retired players' earned credits after providing the earned credits to the account controller, and for resetting the unretired players' earned credits upon the end of the sequence;

a pool credit controller for incrementing a pool by the reward for each of the retired players, for providing at least some of the pool to the account controller upon the retirement, for resetting the pool after providing the pool to the account controller; and

the account controller for incrementing the players' earned credits provided by the earned credits controller and for

incrementing the credit balance of each of the players upon the retirement by an equal share of the pool provided by the pool credit controller.

**49.** The gaming system of claim **48** wherein the pool credit controller deducts a rake from the pool before providing the pool to the account controller.

**50.** The gaming system of claim **48** wherein the outcome selector comprises a card selector for selecting an available one of a predetermined set of cards for each of the rounds and labeling the selected card as unavailable for subsequent ones of the rounds of the sequence.

**51-55.** (canceled)

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