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(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PLAYING AN ELECTRONIC GAME

(57) Abstract: A game system is for playing an electronic game. The game system comprises a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager and a game controller coupled to the player game device. The game controller is for playing the electronic game and establishing an outcome of the electronic game. The outcome of the electronic game includes a payout according to a first payable. The game controller is also for displaying a plurality of values on the player game device which are associated with the payout from the first payable. A result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PLAYING AN ELECTRONIC GAME

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/801,919, filed on May 19, 2006, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to electronic games, and more particularly, to an electronic game whose results are presented as simulated reels on a slot machine.

2. Description of the Related Art

[0003] In some jurisdictions, wagering is permitted on certain types of games, e.g., bingo, lotteries, pull-tabs, etc. The types of games may be electronic.

[0004] In one scenario, an electronic game, such as bingo, is provided in which players compete with and against each other. A minimum of two players are needed. Each player uses a player terminal which is inter-linked, e.g., via an Ethernet network, to a central server. To initiate the play of the game, a player inserts credits or coins, or currency into the player terminal. The coins or currency may be converted into credits. The number of credits are added to a credit meter and displayed on a display screen.

[0005] If the game being played is bingo, the player selects the level of play by pressing a “bet” button to set the wager amount for a bingo card. The player may then initiate the bingo game by pressing a “play” button.

[0006] The server, after determining that enough players have entered the game, randomly determines a string of numbers and transmits the numbers to the player terminals. These are daubed, automatically or by the player, onto their card(s).

[0007] Each game has a defined game ending pattern. As soon, as the string of numbers results in the game ending pattern for one of the players on one of the cards, the bingo game is over and no additional numbers are transmitted. The player with the game ending or winning pattern is awarded a payout, in terms of credits, according to a payable which may be traded in for cash.

[0008] However, in such jurisdictions, wagers on other types of gaming machines, such as slot machines, may not be permitted. Those persons desiring to wager on slot machines may not be interested in playing bingo.

[0009] The present invention is aimed at one or more of the problems identified above

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND ADVANTAGES

[0010] In a first aspect, the present invention provides a game system for playing an electronic game. The game system comprises a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager and a game controller coupled to the player game device. The game controller is for playing the electronic game and establishing an outcome of the electronic game. The outcome of the electronic game includes a payout according to a first payable. The game controller is also for displaying a

plurality of values on the player game device where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

[0011] In a second aspect, the present invention provides a method for playing an electronic game. The method comprises the steps of allowing a player to place a wager playing the electronic game and establishing an outcome of the electronic game. The outcome of the electronic game includes a payout according to a first payable. A plurality of values are displayed, where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

[0012] In a third aspect, the present invention provides a game system for playing an electronic bingo game. The game system comprises a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager and purchase an electronic bingo card. The electronic bingo card has a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern. A game controller is coupled to the player game device for establishing a set of randomly chosen numbers, comparing the set of randomly chosen numbers with the associated winning pattern and establishing an outcome of the electronic bingo game. The outcome of the electronic bingo game includes a payout according to a first payable if the winning pattern has been achieved. The game controller is also for simulating reels of a slot machine on the player game device, with a value displayed on each of the reels where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

[0013] In a fourth aspect, the present invention provides a method for playing an electronic bingo game. The method includes allowing a player to place a wager and purchase an electronic bingo card where the electronic bingo card has a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern. A set of randomly chosen numbers are established. The set of randomly chosen numbers are

compared with the associated winning pattern. An outcome of the electronic bingo game is established, the outcome of the electronic bingo game including a payout according to a first payable if the winning pattern has been achieved. Reels of a slot machine are simulated. A plurality of values are displayed with a value displayed on each of the reels where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated, as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

[0015] Figure 1 is a block diagram of a game system for simulating the outcome of an electronic bingo game as a slot machine with a plurality of reels;

[0016] Figure 2 is a block diagram of the game system for simulating the outcome of the electronic bingo game as the slot machine with the plurality of reels;

[0017] Figure 3 is an illustrative screenshot of a gaming machine including an alternative display and a secondary display of a payout of the electronic bingo game;

[0018] Figure 4A is a first illustrative screenshot for use in a game system for simulating the outcome of the electronic bingo game as an alternative display as a slot machine having a plurality of reels; and

[0019] Figure 4B is a second alternative screenshot for use in the game system for simulating the outcome of the electronic bingo game as an alternative display as a slot machine having a plurality of reels.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0020] The present invention is a game system 10 for playing an electronic game. The game system 10 is shown generally at 10 in Figure 1. The game system 10 includes a player game device 12 and a game controller 14. The player game device 12 allows a player to place a wager. The game controller 14 is coupled to the player game device 12 and allows play of the electronic game and establishes an outcome of the electronic game. The outcome of the electronic game, which includes a payout according to a first payable, is displayed as an alternative display 16 on the player game device 12.

Player Game Device

[0021] Generally, there are a plurality of the player game devices 12 where the player game devices 12 and the game controller 14 are at least partially implemented in a client-server configuration. Each of the player game devices 12 are connected to, and in communication with, a server 18. As such, the server 18 may provide data and instructions to the player game device 12 and/or the game controller 14 and vice versa. With specific reference to Figure 2, the player game device 12 may be a stand-alone device, console, or upright machine which is connected to the server 18 via, for example, an Ethernet link 20.

[0022] The player game device 12 allows a plurality of players to compete with and against each other in the electronic game. The player game device

12 includes a bill validator 22 and/or coin acceptor, a user interface device 24, a ticket printer 26 all coupled to and controlled by a device controller 28.

[0023] The user interface device 24 allows interaction between the player game device 12, the game controller 14, and the player. The user interface device 24 includes a display screen 30, such as a touch-screen display, and plurality of buttons 32. Input to the user interface device 24 is accomplished via the touch-screen display, mechanical switches, buttons 32, player input sensing device (not shown), etc. The bill validator 22 is for accepting currency and responsively providing a number of credits which may be played by the respective player. The number of credits or currency input by the player are added to a credit meter 34 and displayed on the display screen 30. The ticket printer 26 prints a redeemable ticket for any remaining credits on the player game device 12.

[0024] The user interface device 24 also provides a menu button 36. The player may access additional functions via the menu button 36. For example, the menu button 36 provides the player with an opportunity, through a menu item, to cash out. In one embodiment, in response to the player choosing to cash out, a ticket representing the remaining credits on the credit meter 34 is printed by the ticket printer 26. The printed ticket may be redeemed for cash at a kiosk or cashier station.

[0025] To initiate the play of the game, a player inserts credits or coins, or currency into the player game device 12. Coins may be inserted into the coin acceptor (not shown) if provided. Currency may be inserted into the bill validator 22. The coins or currency may be converted into credits. Alternatively or in addition, the player may insert a ticket or card having a number of credits represented thereon or may insert a player tracking card to access credits in a player account. The bill validator 22, the user interface device 24, and the ticket printer 26 are coupled to

and controlled by the device controller 28. The device controller 28 also manages communications to and between the server 18.

Electronic Game

[0026] Types of electronic games may include, but are not limited to, bingo or similar games, keno games, slot machines 48, casino games, card games, dog or horse racing, lotteries, and all other forms of gaming. For purposes of illustration only, the present invention is described below in terms of bingo, as shown in Figures 3, 4A, and 4B, but the present invention is not limited to such.

[0027] The player game device 12 allows a player to place a wager and purchase one or more electronic bingo cards 38. The player game device 12 allows the player to purchase additional electronic bingo cards 38 during the predetermined time period by placing an additional wager. In one embodiment, the electronic bingo card 38 is a 5 x 5 grid with the columns labeled B, I, N, G, and O, respectively. The center cell may be a “free” cell. Therefore, the electronic bingo card 38 has a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern. It should be appreciated, however, that the grid is not limited to containing numbers as symbols, letters, or any other character may be used. Each bingo game has at least one winning pattern where the winning pattern is a game ending pattern which signifies the end of the game.

[0028] Referring again to Figures 3, 4A, and 4B, the electronic bingo card 38 is represented on the touchscreen display screen 30. In one embodiment, prior to the commencement of the electronic game, the cells on the game card are shown in a neutral color, e.g., white. As a set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are selected, the numbers may be displayed in a bingo number display area 42. If the

chosen number appears on the player's bingo card 38, then that number is highlighted, shown in another color, such as red or pink. The electronic bingo card 38 may also highlight any winning pattern, e.g., by showing the numbers in the cells of the interim winning pattern in another color.

[0029] The winning pattern is a sub-set of cells of the grid which trigger an award or payout. The outcome of the electronic bingo game may be a "loss" if no game ending pattern, i.e., winning pattern, is achieved after all numbers have been selected or if another player achieves the game winning pattern.

[0030] The game controller 14 establishes the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 over a predetermined time period and establishes the randomly chosen numbers 40 on the player game device 12. In one embodiment, the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are chosen randomly using a random number generator (not shown). However, the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 may be established in any way known to those skilled in the art. In one embodiment, there are a predetermined number of numbers in the randomly chosen numbers 40, e.g., seventy-five. In another embodiment, the predetermined number of numbers in the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are established within a predetermined period of time, e.g., approximately 10 seconds. As the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are established, the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are compared number by number against the associated winning pattern.

[0031] The amount of the award or payout may be dependent upon the wager made by the player and a predetermined payable (not shown). This means that the more that a player bets, the larger the payout for an associated winning pattern according to the payable. In one embodiment, the game ending pattern may include all of the cells of the electronic bingo card 38. In another embodiment, there is more

than one game ending pattern on the paytable where each game ending pattern provides a different award or payout. The payout associated with the game ending pattern is paid to the first player who achieves the game ending pattern. This means that as the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are established over the predetermined time period, and the associated winning pattern is achieved, the game ends. The game controller 14 awards a payout under the first paytable only to the first player whose electronic bingo card 38 attains the game ending pattern. In one embodiment, the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 includes a predetermined number of numbers. In this embodiment, if the predetermined number of numbers 40 does not result in a game ending pattern, then the player loses and does not win anything. Alternatively, the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are chosen indefinitely until the game ending pattern is achieved.

[0032] In another aspect of the present invention, the player game device 12 allows the player to purchase additional electronic bingo cards 38, prior to any player achieving the game ending pattern or the last number in the set of chosen numbers having been chosen.

[0033] In one embodiment, there is at least one interim pattern. The interim pattern is a pattern on the grid that results in a payout according to a second paytable when the pattern is achieved. The interim winning patterns may provide a payout, without ending the game. The payout of the interim winning pattern is a function of the player's wager and the second paytable. The interim winning patterns may have other conditions associated therewith. For example, in order for a payout to occur, the interim winning pattern must be achieved within a predetermined number of the numbers.

Alternative Display of the Payout

[0034] Although the player may determine their payout by comparing their game ending pattern or the interim pattern with the respective paytable, to add excitement for the player, the payout is displayed on the alternative display 16 on the player game device 12. The payout is translated into a plurality of values 44 which are displayed on the player game device 12. The values 44 may correspond to a currency value, a credit value, points or other type of value, etc. In one embodiment, the game controller 14 displays the plurality of values 44 on the player game device 12 by simulating reels 46 on a slot machine 48. The slot machine 48 includes a plurality of the reels 46 and at least one payline 50 extending across the reels 46. At least one of values 44 are displayed on each of the reels 46. However, a plurality of values 44 may be visible on each of the reels 46 when the reels 46 stop and a plurality of paylines 50 may extend across the reels 46, e.g., diagonally, horizontally, zigzagged, etc., as known to those skilled in the art. Therefore, after the reels 46 spin and stop, the values 44 are displayed on the reels 46 with the values 44 aligned across the payline 50.

[0035] The result of the mathematical function applied to those values 44 aligned across the payline 50 is equal to the payout of the first paytable. The mathematical function includes at least one mathematical operation which is applied to the values 44, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. In one embodiment, the values 44 are added together by the player where the sum of the values 44 is equal to the amount of the payout from the paytable, as shown in Figure 4A. In this embodiment, the three values 44 are 5, 50, and 20. After applying the mathematical operation of addition, the payout is $5+50+20$ or 75. Additionally, a multiplier 52 may be included on one or more of the reels 46. If there is a multiplier

52, then the sum of the values 44 which are added together by the player is then multiplied by the multiplier 52 to provide the amount of the payout from the payable, as shown in Figure 4B. In this embodiment, the two values 44 are 10 and 50 and the multiplier 52 is 8x. After applying the mathematical operations of addition and multiplication, the payout is achieved by $10+50$ or 60 which is then multiplied by 8 for a payout of 480. Likewise, if the multiplier 52 is zero, then the payout would also equal zero, corresponding to a loss to the player. Alternatively, in another embodiment where the payout is a loss to the player, the game controller 14 spins the reels 46 on the slot machine 48 to display values 44 which do not align across the payline 50 communicating with the player that the amount of the payout from the payable is equal to zero.

[0036] Additionally, the game controller 14 may display the plurality of secondary values 44 on the player game device 12 in a secondary location 54 to the reels 46. Here, the values 44 are fixedly displayed at the secondary location 54. The values 44 which correspond to the payout of the payable are displayed by highlighting, illuminating, displaying, etc., and are designated as 56 in Figure 3. The result of a mathematical function applied to the highlighted values 44 is also equal to the amount of the payout from the payable. After applying the mathematical operation of addition, the payout is $5+50+20$ or 75. The multiplier 52 may also be used in conjunction with the values 44 displayed at the secondary location 54. If the multiplier is active, then it is also highlighted, illuminated, displayed, etc.

[0037] The invention has been described in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology which has been used is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation. Obviously, many modifications

and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings, and the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A game system for playing an electronic game, said game system comprising:

a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager; and

a game controller coupled to said player game device for playing the electronic game and establishing an outcome of the electronic game, the outcome of the electronic game including a payout according to a first payable, said game controller further for displaying a plurality of values on said player game device, where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

2. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of said player game devices and said game controller being implemented in a server with each of said player game devices being connected to said server.

3. A game system, as set forth in claim 2, wherein said plurality of player game devices allowing a plurality of players to compete with and against each other in the electronic game.

4. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said player game device includes a bill validator for accepting currency and responsively providing a number of credits which may be played by the player.

5. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said player game device includes a user interface device for allowing interaction between said player game device and said game controller and the player.

6. A game system, as set forth in claim 5, wherein said user interface device includes a touch-screen display.

7. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said player game device includes a ticket printer for printing a redeemable ticket for any remaining credits on said player game device.

8. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said player game device includes a bill validator, a user interface device, a ticket printer all coupled to and controller by a device controller.

9. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said game controller displays the plurality of values on said player game device by simulating reels on a slot machine with one of the values displayed on each of the reels.

10. A game system, as set forth in claim 9, wherein said game controller displays the plurality of values on said player game device by spinning the reels on the slot machine such that the reels stop with one of the values displayed on each of the reels.

11. A game system, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the values on the reels of the slot machine align along a payline of the slot machine where the result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

12. A game system, as set forth in claim 9, wherein if the outcome of the electronic game is a loss to the player, then said game controller spins the reels on the slot machine to display values where the result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout of zero.

13. A game system, as set forth in claim 12, wherein at least one of the mathematical functions are addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

14. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein said game controller displays the plurality of values on said player game device by highlighting the values on said player game device where the result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to a payout.

15. A game system, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the electronic game is further defined as an electronic bingo game.

16. A game system, as set forth in claim 15, wherein said player game device is further defined as a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager and purchase an electronic bingo card, the electronic bingo card have a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern.

17. A game system, as set forth in claim 16, wherein said game controller is further defined as a game controller coupled to said player game device for establishing a set of randomly chosen numbers, comparing the set of randomly chosen numbers with the associated winning pattern and establishing an outcome of the electronic bingo game, the outcome of the electronic bingo game including a payout according to a first paytable if the winning pattern has been achieved, said game controller further for displaying a plurality of values on said player game device, where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

18. A game system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the associated winning pattern is a game ending pattern, the game controller awarding a payout

under the first payable only to the first player whose electronic bingo card has the game ending pattern.

19. A game system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the set of randomly chosen numbers includes a predetermined number of numbers.

20. A game system, as set forth in claim 17, including at least one interim pattern, the at least one interim pattern resulting in a payout according to a second payable.

21. A game system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein said player game device allows the player to purchase more than one electronic bingo card.

22. A game system, as set forth in claim 17, wherein said game controller establishes the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 over a predetermined time period.

23. A game system, as set forth in claim 22, wherein said player game device allows the player to purchase additional electronic bingo cards during the predetermined time period by placing an additional wager.

24. A method for playing an electronic game, said method comprising the steps of:

allowing a player to place a wager

playing the electronic game and establishing an outcome of the electronic game, the outcome of the electronic game including a payout according to a first payable; and

displaying a plurality of values, where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

25. A method, as set forth in claim 24, including the step of allowing a plurality of players to compete with and against each other in the electronic game.

26. A method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein if the outcome of the electronic game is a loss to the player, then said step of displaying values includes the step of displaying values where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout of zero when calculated together.

27. A method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising the step of simulating reels on a slot machine with one of the values displayed on each of the reels.

28. A method, as set forth in claim 27, further comprising the step of spinning the reels on the slot machine to display the values.

29. A method, as set forth in claim 27, wherein said step of simulating the reels on a slot machine is further defined as the step of aligning the values displayed on the reels across a payline, where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values across the payline is equal to the payout when calculated together.

30. A method, as set forth in claim 24, further comprising said step of allowing a player to place a wager further comprises the step of allowing a player to purchase an electronic bingo card, the electronic bingo card have a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern.

31. A method, as set forth in claim 30, further comprising the steps of establishing a set of randomly chosen numbers and said step of playing the electronic game is further defined as the step of comparing the set of randomly chosen numbers

with the associated winning pattern and establishing an outcome of the electronic bingo game, the outcome of the electronic bingo game including a payout according to a first payable if the winning pattern has been achieved.

32. A method, as set forth in claim 31, wherein the associated winning pattern is a game ending pattern, the payout under the first payable being awarded only to the first player whose electronic bingo card has the game ending pattern.

33. A method, as set forth in claim 31, wherein the set of randomly chosen numbers includes a predetermined number of numbers.

34. A method, as set forth in claim 31, including at least one interim pattern, the at least one interim pattern resulting in a payout according to a second payable.

35. A method, as set forth in claim 31, further comprising the step of allowing the player to purchase more than one electronic bingo card by placing additional wagers.

36. A method, as set forth in claim 31, wherein the set of randomly chosen numbers 40 are established over a predetermined time period.

37. A method, as set forth in claim 31, further comprising the step of allowing the player to purchase additional electronic bingo cards by placing additional wagers during the predetermined time period.

38. A method, as set forth in claim 24, wherein at least one of the mathematical functions are addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

39. A game system for playing an electronic bingo game, said game system comprising:

a player game device for allowing a player to place a wager and purchase an electronic bingo card, the electronic bingo card have a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern; and

a game controller coupled to said player game device for establishing a set of randomly chosen numbers, comparing the set of randomly chosen numbers with the associated winning pattern and establishing an outcome of the electronic bingo game, the outcome of the electronic bingo game including a payout according to a first payable if the winning pattern has been achieved, said game controller further for simulating reels of a slot machine on said player game device, with a value displayed on each of the reels where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

40. A method for playing an electronic bingo game, said method comprising the steps of:

allowing a player to place a wager and purchase an electronic bingo card, the electronic bingo card have a grid containing a set of numbers and an associated winning pattern;

establishing a set of randomly chosen numbers;

comparing the set of randomly chosen numbers with the associated winning pattern and establishing an outcome of the electronic bingo game, the outcome of the electronic bingo game including a payout according to a first payable if the winning pattern has been achieved;

simulating reels of a slot machine; and

displaying a plurality of values with a value displayed on each of said reels where a result of a mathematical function applied to the values is equal to the payout.

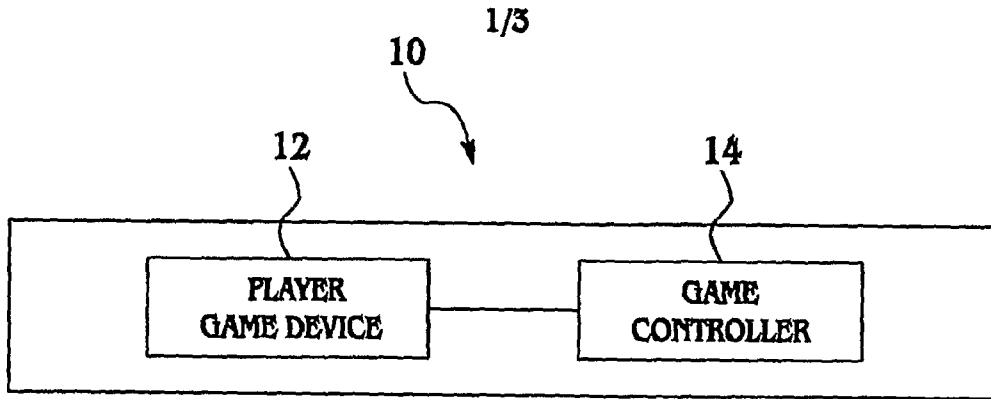


FIG. 1

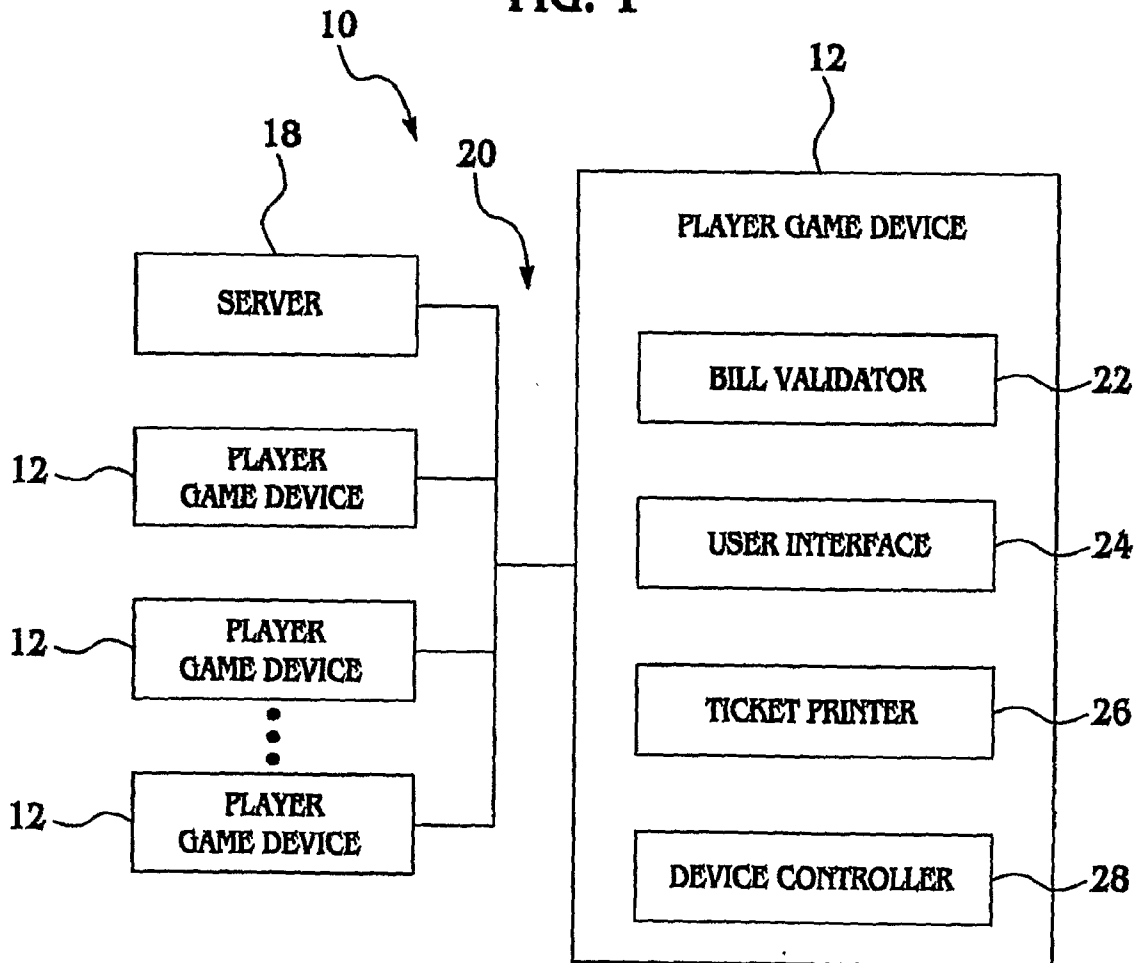


FIG. 2

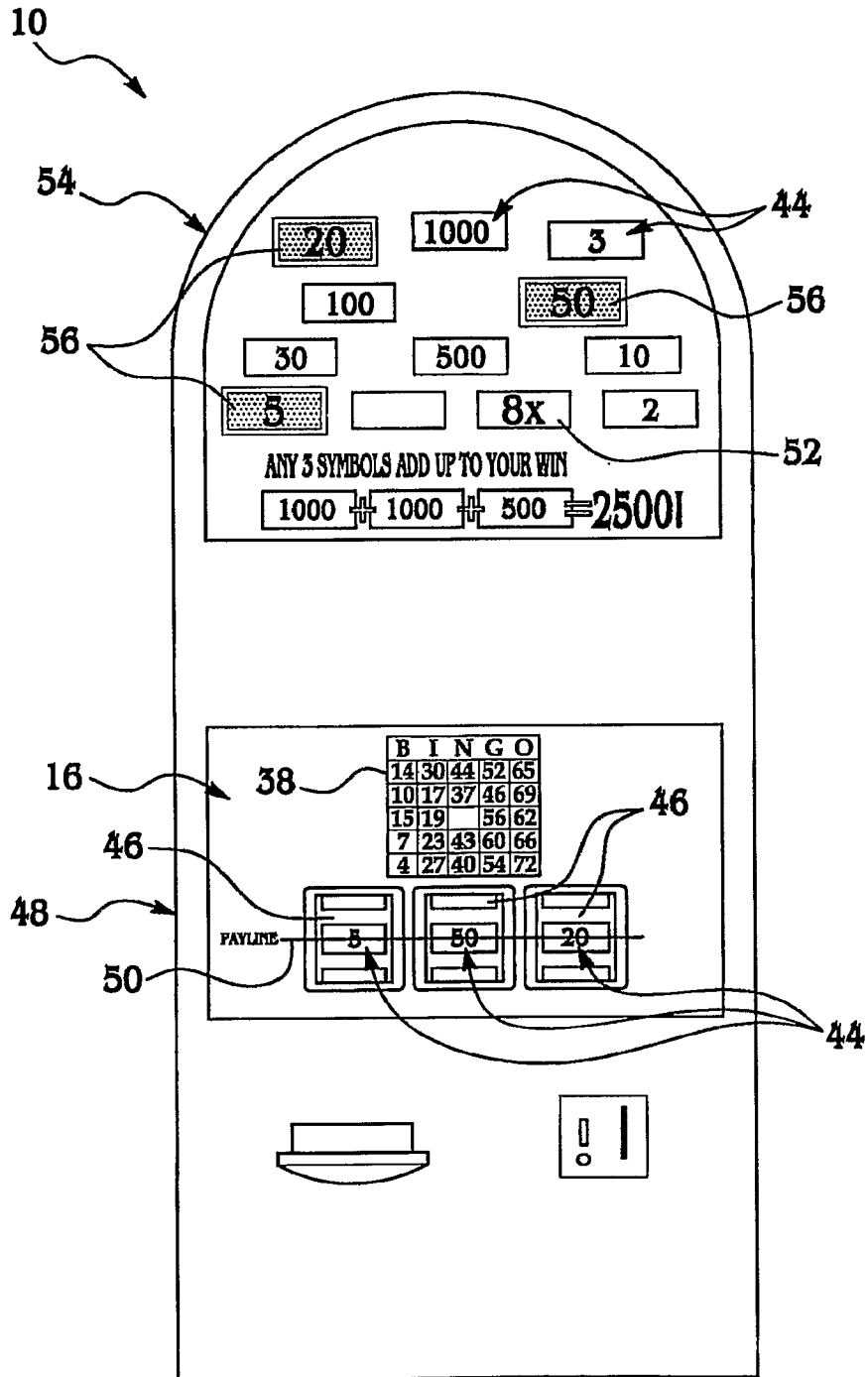


FIG. 3

