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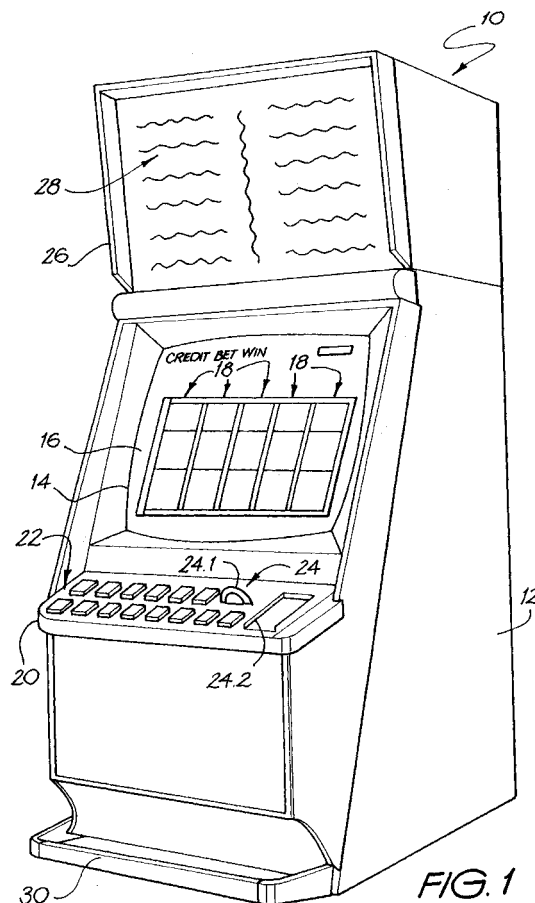
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(54) **Gaming machine with bonus games**

(57) A gaming machine 10 has a display 14 and a game controller arranged to control images of symbols displayed on the display 14. The game controller is arranged to play a game 16 in which at least one random event is caused to be displayed on the display 14. If a predefined winning event occurs, the machine 10 awards a prize. When a trigger condition occurs in a base game of the game 16, a bonus feature is awarded. The bonus feature comprises a series of feature games. In order for a player to play each feature game, the player must make a wager on that feature game. Any wins arising during the playing of each feature game are multiplied by a multiplier greater than one.



## Description

**[0001]** This invention relates to a gaming machine. More particularly, the invention relates to a gaming machine, to an improvement to a game played on such a gaming machine and to a system including a plurality of linked gaming machines.

**[0002]** Players who regularly play gaming machines quickly tire of particular games and therefore it is necessary for manufacturers of these machines to develop innovative game features which add interest to the games. In so doing, it is hoped to keep players amused and therefore willing to continue playing the game as well as to attract new players.

**[0003]** Also, with the growth that has occurred in the gaming machine market, there is intense competition between manufacturers to supply various existing and new venues. When selecting a supplier of gaming machines, the operator of a venue will often pay close attention to the popularity of various games with their patrons. Therefore, gaming machine manufacturers are keen to devise games and/or game features which are popular with the players as a mechanism for improving sales, retaining customers and attracting new customers.

**[0004]** Still further, certain jurisdictions set a limit or cap on the maximum prize that can be paid to a player from a total win arising from a bought game. In other words, very possible win from a bought game, including free games arising from the bought game, must fall below the maximum win limit. This constrains game designs and limits the amounts which can be awarded as large award prizes to ensure that the jurisdictional requirements are met.

**[0005]** According to the invention, there is provided a gaming machine having a display means and a game control means arranged to control images of symbols displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game in which at least one random event is caused to be displayed on the display means and, if a predefined winning event occurs, the machine awards a prize, wherein, when a trigger condition occurs in a base game, a bonus feature is awarded, the bonus feature comprising a series of feature games and, in order for a player to play each feature game, the player must make a wager on that feature game, any wins arising during the playing of each feature game being multiplied by a multiplier greater than one.

**[0006]** The multiplier that is applicable during the feature game is in addition to the multiplication of any win that occurs as a result of the player having bet more than one credit per line in the underlying base game which triggered the bonus feature.

**[0007]** Typically the multiplier is an integer multiplier. For example, all wins occurring during any feature game may be multiplied by a multiplier of three.

**[0008]** If the trigger condition occurs in one of the fea-

ture games during the playing of the bonus feature, a further bonus feature may be awarded. The further bonus feature may, once again, comprise a series of feature games where, in order for the player to play each feature game of the further bonus feature, the player must make a wager on that feature game and any wins arising during the playing of each feature game of the further bonus feature are, once again, multiplied by a multiplier greater than one. As in the case of the initial bonus feature, the multiplier that applies is in addition to the multiplication of any win that occurs as a result of the player having bet more than one credit per line in the underlying base game.

**[0009]** The further feature games may be added to any feature games remaining in the bonus feature in which the trigger condition again occurred.

**[0010]** The base game and each feature game may be spinning reel games and the trigger condition may be the occurrence of a predetermined number of scatter symbols.

**[0011]** To play any one of the feature games, the player may wager the same bet as the player wagered in the base game which triggered the bonus feature. Instead, the player may be able to lower his or her bet but not increase it for each of the feature games.

**[0012]** The invention is now described by way of example with reference to the 25 accompanying diagrammatic drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a gaming machine, in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a control circuit of the gaming machine; Figure 3 shows a schematic screen display of a base game of a game played on 30 the gaming machine of Figure 1;

Figure 4 shows a schematic screen display of an initial feature game of a bonus feature following the base game shown in Figure 3;

Figure 5 shows a schematic screen display of a second feature game of the bonus feature;

Figure 6 shows a schematic screen display of a final feature game of a subsequent bonus feature triggered as a result of the feature game shown in Figure 5; and

Figure 7 shows a flowchart of the game played on the gaming machine of Figure 1.

**[0013]** In Figure 1, reference numeral 10 generally designates a gaming machine, including a game, in accordance with the invention. The machine 10 includes a console 12 having a video display unit 14 on which a game 16 is played, in use. The game 16 is a spinning reel game which simulates the rotation of a number of spinning reels 18. A midtrim 20 of the machine 10 houses a bank 22 of buttons for enabling a player to play the game 16. The midtrim 20 also houses a credit input mechanism 24 including a coin input chute 24.1 and a bill collector 24.2.

The machine 10 includes a top box 26 on which artwork 28 is carried. The artwork 28 includes paytables, details of bonus awards, etc.

**[0014]** A coin tray 30 is mounted beneath the console 12 for cash payouts from the machine 10.

**[0015]** Referring now to Figure 2 of the drawings, a control means or control circuit 32 is illustrated. A program which implements the game and user interface is run on a processor 34 of the control circuit 32. The processor 34 forms part of a controller 36 which drives the screen of the video display unit 14 and which receives input signals from sensors 38. The sensors 38 include sensors associated with the bank 22 of buttons and touch sensors mounted in the screen of the video display unit 14. The controller 36 also receives input pulses from the mechanism 24 to determine whether or not a player has provided sufficient credit to commence playing. The mechanism 24 may, instead of the coin input chute 24.1 or the bill collector 24.2, or in addition thereto, be a credit card reader (not shown) or any other type of validation device.

Finally, the controller 36 drives a payout mechanism 40 which, for example, maybe a coin hopper for feeding coins to the coin tray 30 to make a pay out to a player when the player wishes to redeem his or her credit.

**[0016]** As indicated above, the game 16 is a spinning reel game comprising a plurality of reels 18. In the description which follows, it is assumed that there are 9 paylines applicable that wins pay from left to right and that the player is betting 1 credit per line.

A screen display 50 of a base game of the game 16 is shown in Figure 3 of the drawings. It is assumed that the PYRAMID symbol is a scatter symbol 52. For the occurrence of 3 X PYRAMID symbols 52 a bonus feature is awarded. The bonus feature is a sequence of 15 bonus games where all wins are multiplied by a multiplier greater than one. In this example, the multiplier has a value of 3.

**[0017]** In addition to acting as a trigger condition for the bonus feature, the occurrence of 3 X PYRAMID symbols 52 results in a prize of 135 credits which is credited to a win meter 54 of the gaming machine. It is to be noted that a bet meter 56 of the gaming machines shows that the player had bet 1 credit per line on the 9 paylines.

**[0018]** Prior to commencement of a first feature game of the bonus feature, the wins on the win meter 54 are transferred to a credit meter 58 of the gaming machine.

**[0019]** In order to play the bonus feature, the player must wager the same amount as was wagered in the base game which triggered the bonus feature. Thus, should the player wish to avail himself or herself of the feature games, the player must wager, in this case, 9 credits to play each bonus game.

**[0020]** When the trigger condition occurs, a first message 60 occurs on the screen display 50 advising the player that the bonus feature has been triggered and that 15 bonus games have been won. A second mes-

sage 62 indicates to the player that, to commence the feature, the player must press the "Play X Lines" button where "X" is the number of paylines of the base game that the player had been playing at the time the bonus feature was triggered.

**[0021]** In Figure 4 of the drawings a screen display 60 of a result of the first feature game is shown. It is to be noted that the 135 credits on the win meter 54 at the end of the base game had been transferred to the credit meter 58 but the credit meter had subsequently been decremented by 9 credits due to the player paying for the first bonus game. There are, therefore, 226 credits on the credit meter 58.

**[0022]** For the occurrence of 2 X Symbol A 64 occurring on payline 4 (not shown), a win of 2 credits, multiplied by the multiplier of 3, for a total of 6 credits is awarded and the win meter 54 is incremented by 6 credits.

**[0023]** In the second feature game, a screen display of which is shown at 70 in Figure 5 of the drawings, 3 X PYRAMID symbols 52 again occur. This results in a further bonus feature of 15 bonus games being awarded. A message to this effect is shown at 72 on the screen display 70. The 15 bonus games won as a result of the subsequent bonus feature are added to any feature games remaining from the initial bonus feature. Two bonus games had been played from the initial bonus feature so that 13 bonus games were remaining. The triggering of the subsequent bonus feature results in a total of 28 bonus games remaining and this is shown by means of a message 74 on the screen display 70.

For the occurrence of the 3 X PYRAMID symbols 52, a prize of 405 credits, being 135 credits multiplied by the multiplier of 3, is awarded to the player and is displayed on the win meter 54. To continue playing the feature games remaining, the player must wager 9 credits, on each feature game.

A screen display 80 of a final feature game is shown in Figure 6 of the drawings. For the occurrence of 3 X Symbol A on payline 1, a prize of 10 credits, multiplied by the multiplier of 3, for a total of 30 credits is awarded and is added to the win meter 54. After all wins have been awarded, a message 82 of "X credits per line" is displayed on the screen display 80 together with a message 84 indicating that the feature has been completed. The message 82 indicates that, for the following game, the gaming machine will pay according to its standard scorecard, ie without the prizes being multiplied by the multiplier. In other words, for any subsequent games played the standard scorecard applies. It is an advantage of the invention that a game sequence is provided which enables players to enjoy the awarding of feature games in jurisdictions where there is a cap on winnings which can be paid to players from any game and all its features. In effect, each feature game of the invention is an independent, bought game. Thus, retriggering of the bonus feature is possible without breaching the cap or limit applicable to the games and the gaming

machine 10 as set by regulatory authorities of that jurisdiction.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

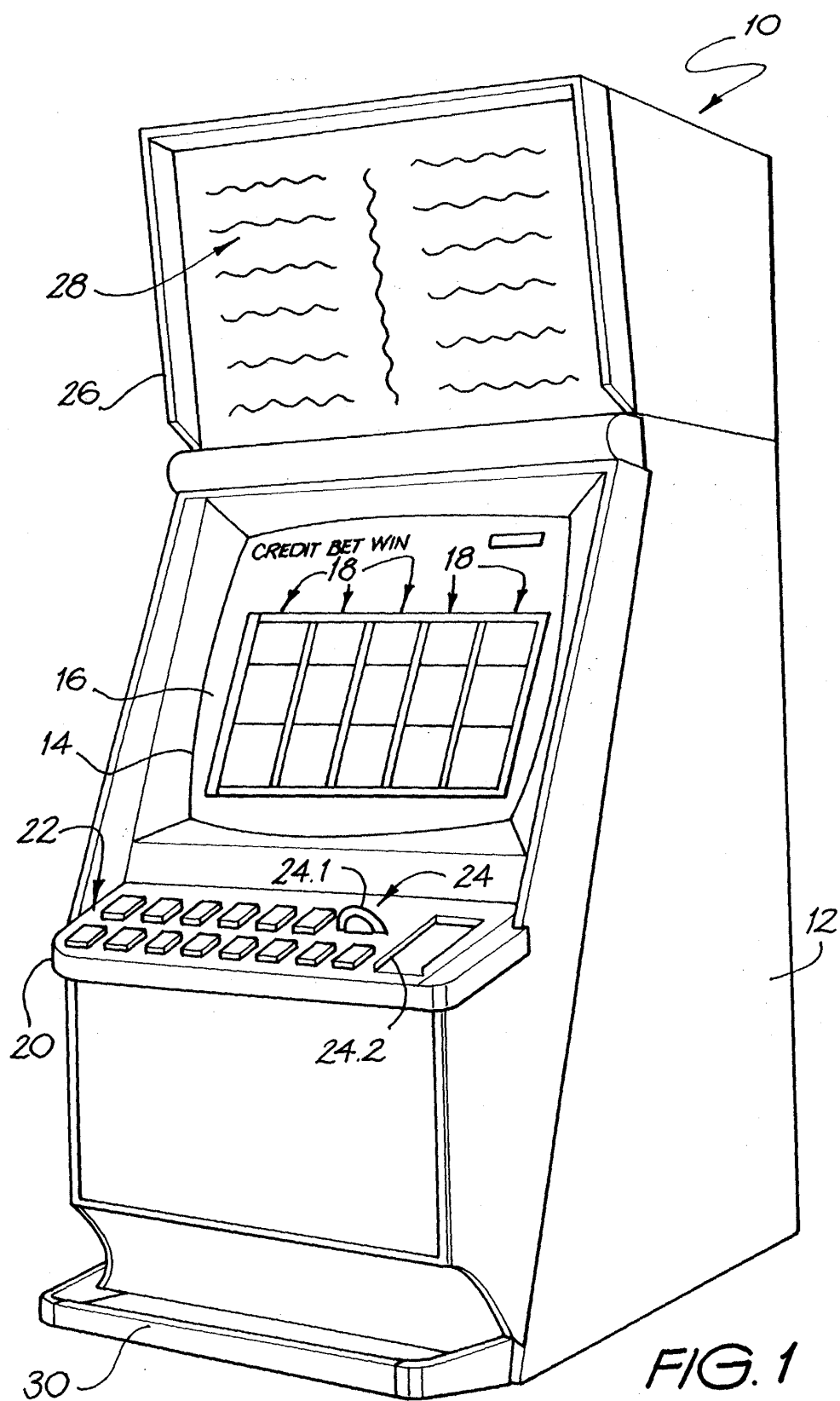
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## Claims

1. A gaming machine having a display means and a game control means arranged to control images of symbols displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game in which at least one random event is caused to be displayed on the display means and, if a predefined winning event occurs, the machine awards a prize, wherein, when a trigger condition occurs in a base game, a bonus feature is awarded, the bonus feature comprising a series of feature games and, in order for a player to play each feature game, the player must make a wager on that feature game, any wins arising during the playing of each feature game being multiplied by a multiplier greater than one. 15 20 25
2. The gaming machine of claim 1 in which, if the trigger condition occurs in one of the feature games during the playing of the bonus feature, a further bonus feature is awarded, the further bonus feature, once again, comprising a series of feature games where, in order for the player to play each feature game of the further bonus feature, the player must make a wager on that feature game and any wins arising during the playing of each feature game of the further bonus feature are, once again, multiplied by a multiplier greater than one. 30 35 40
3. The gaming machine of claim 2 in which the further feature games are added to any feature games remaining in the bonus feature in which the trigger condition again occurred. 45
4. The gaming machine of any one of the preceding claims in which the base game and each feature game are spinning reel games and the trigger condition is the occurrence of a predetermined number of scatter symbols. 50
5. The gaming machine of any one of the preceding claims in which, to play any one of the feature games, the player wagers the same bet as the player wagered in the base game which triggered the bonus feature. 55

6. The gaming machine of any one of claims 1 to 4 in which the player is able to lower his or her bet but not increase it for each of the feature games.



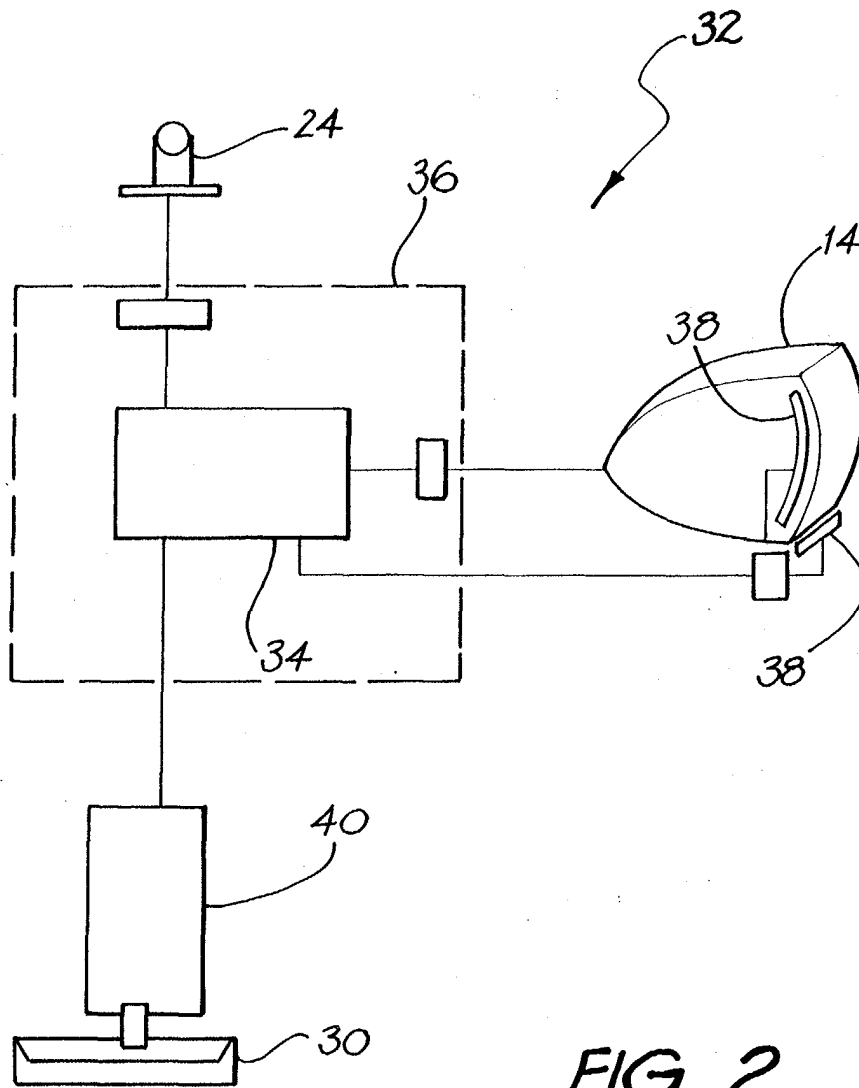


FIG. 2

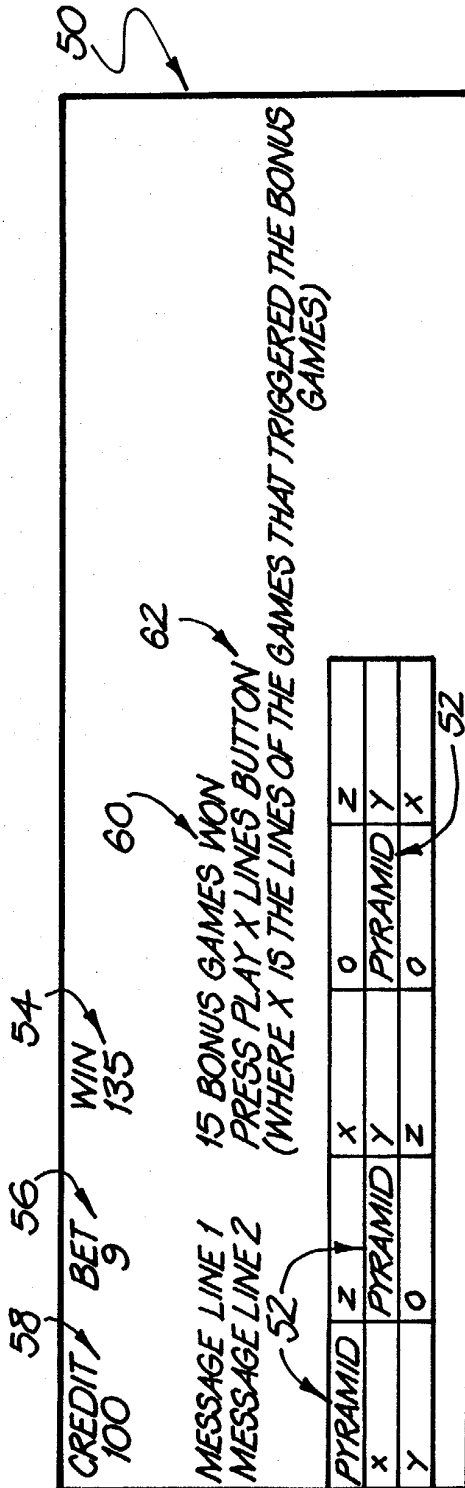


FIG. 3

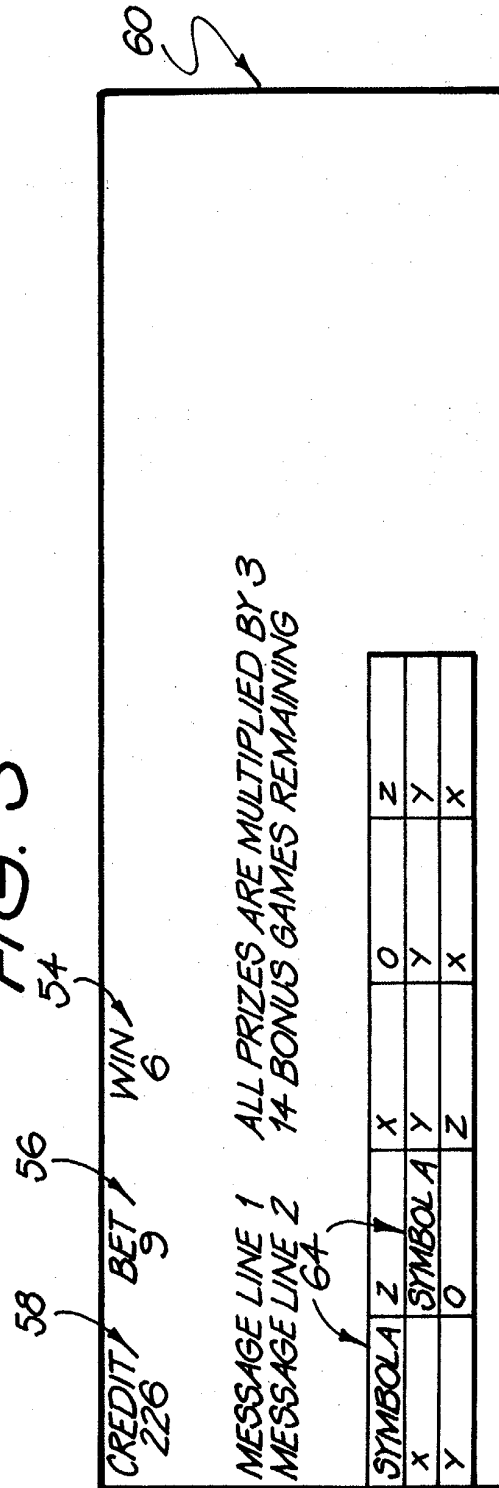


FIG. 4

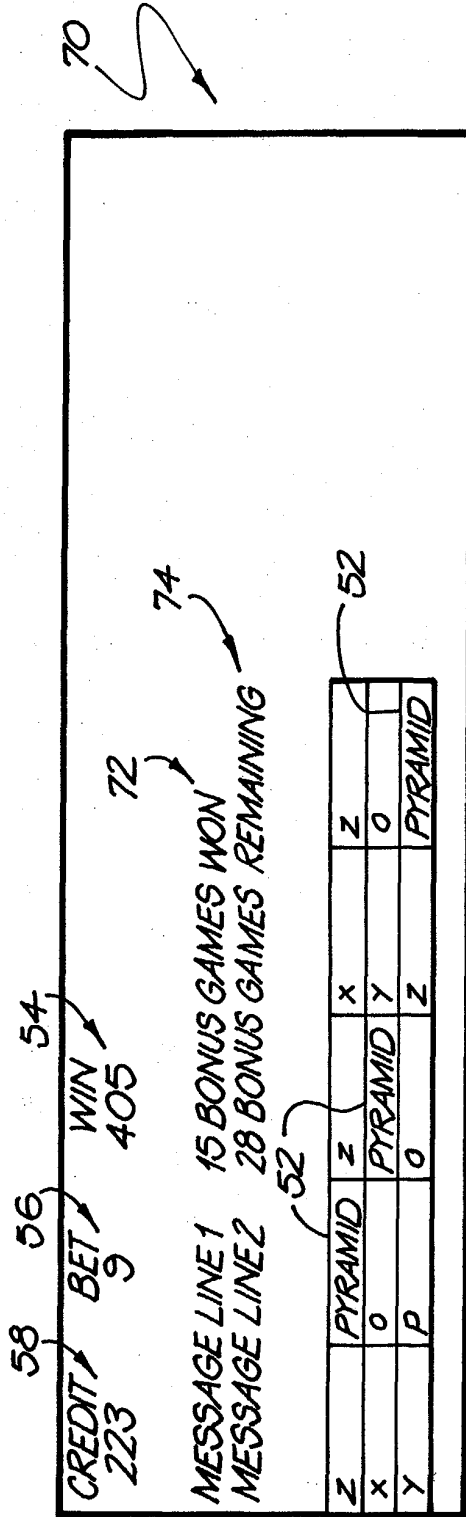


FIG. 5

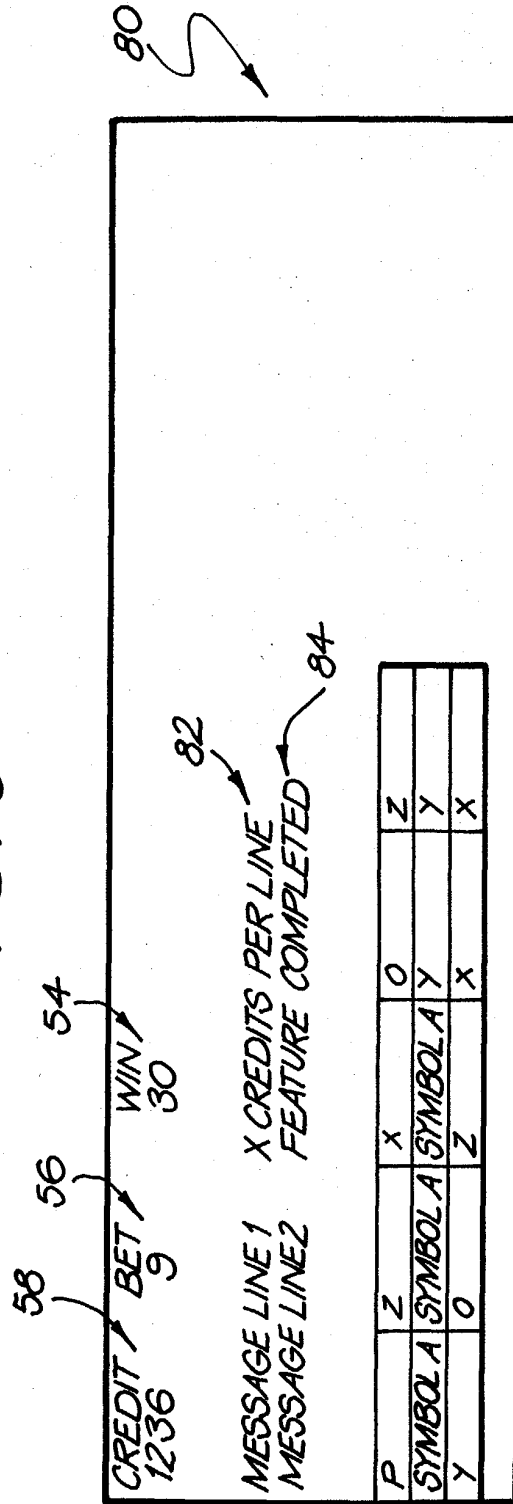


FIG. 6



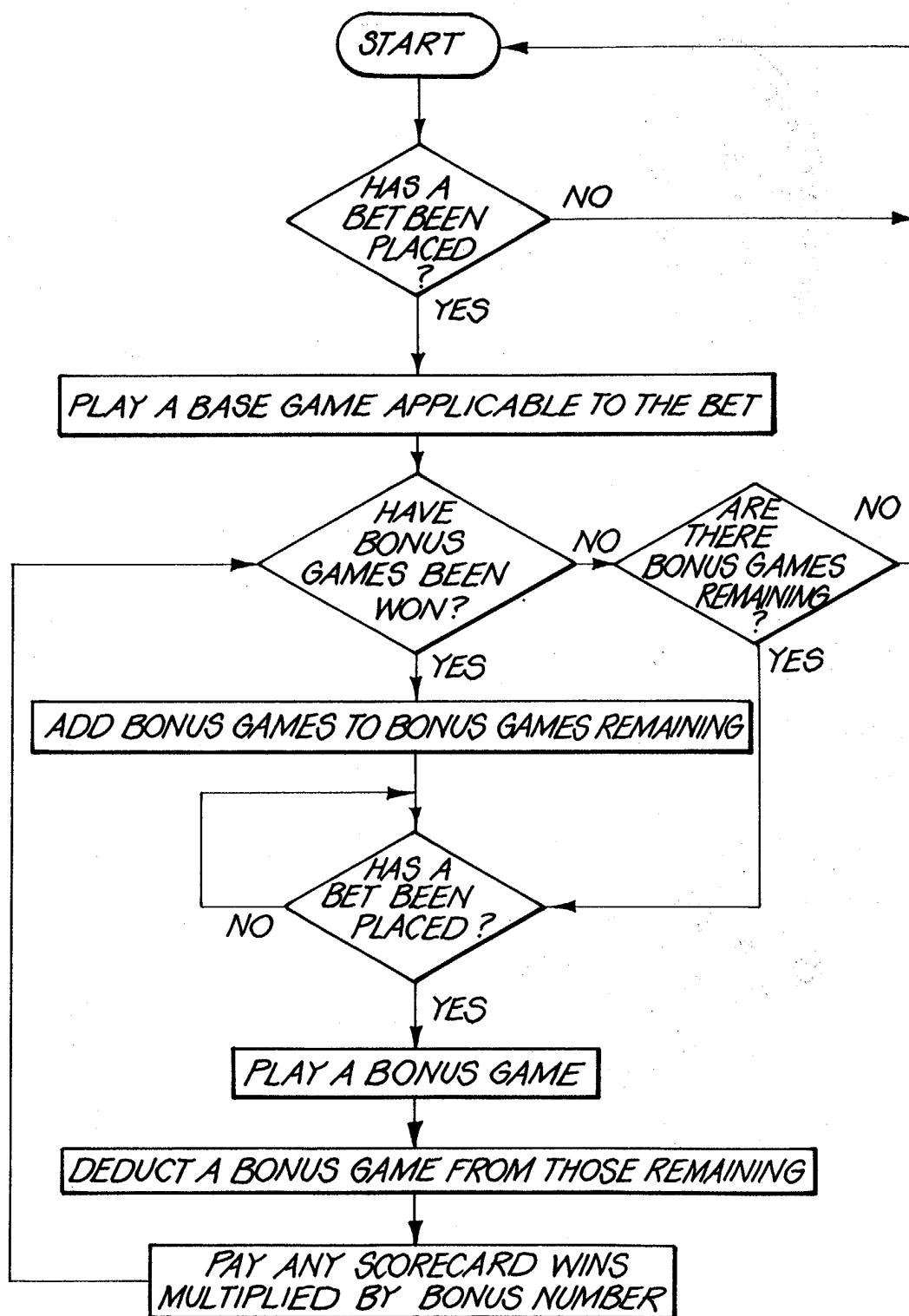


FIG. 7



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Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 15 November 2004	Examiner Kling, J
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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)



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<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ..... &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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