



(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:
21.06.2006 Bulletin 2006/25

(51) Int Cl.:
A63F 5/00 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **05257676.6**

(22) Date of filing: **14.12.2005**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
**AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR
 HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC NL PL PT RO SE SI
 SK TR**
 Designated Extension States:
AL BA HR MK YU

(72) Inventor: **O'Halloran, Terry
 Paddington NSW 2021 (AU)**

(74) Representative: **Findlay, Alice Rosemary
 Lloyd Wise
 Commonwealth House,
 1-19 New Oxford Street
 London WC1A 1LW (GB)**

(30) Priority: **16.12.2004 AU 2004907163**

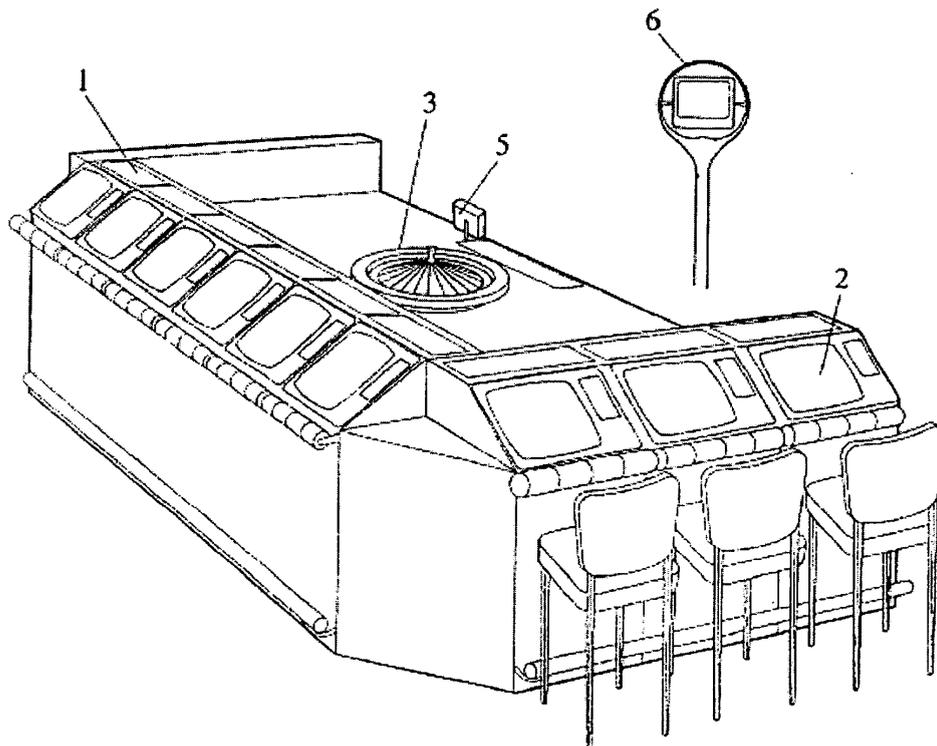
(71) Applicant: **Stargames Corporation Pty. Ltd.
 Milperra,
 NSW 2214 (AU)**

(54) **Enhanced roulette**

(57) A method of operating a roulette game is provided. The roulette game has betting means to allow players to select and place wagers on potential game outcomes. The method comprises the step of determining,

after all the wagers have been made and before the outcome of the roulette game is known, whether a bonus trigger event has occurred. If a bonus trigger event is determined to have occurred, a bonus feature is provided.

Fig. 1



Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an improved roulette game.

[0002] The game of roulette is a well established casino game, which is enjoyed around the world and has achieved long term popularity. It is popular both as a live manual casino game, a simulated casino game, an automated casino game, and in various electronic and on-line forms.

[0003] Players place wagers on the outcome of the ball coming to rest, within a wheel having a number of possible rest positions for the ball. Players may either bet on the occurrence of a particular number, or various configurations based on the betting layout, for example adjacent numbers in the layout, rows and straights, or even money bets such as red and black, and odds and evens. Common implementations are the single zero wheel, which has numbers one to thirty six and a zero, and the double zero wheel, which has an additional double zero over the single zero wheel. The straight number wagers have win ratios which are in favour of the house largely because of the addition of the zero and double zero numbers.

[0004] It is desirable with gaming machines to provide new features to enhance the interest of players. The simplicity of the game and the lack of room for player strategy make additional features of the game difficult to develop.

[0005] Although roulette is popular, one of its limitations is the lack of added incentives for players. These incentives are popular in other casino games, particularly slot and poker machines. It is an object of the present invention to provide a roulette game that offers additional player features.

[0006] In a broad form, the invention provides a method of operating a roulette game with betting means to allow players to select and place wagers on potential game outcomes, said method comprising the step of determining, after all the wagers have been made and before the outcome of the roulette game is known, whether a bonus trigger event has occurred; wherein, if a bonus trigger event is determined to have occurred, providing a bonus feature.

[0007] In one aspect, the invention provides a method of operating a game of roulette comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving players' selections and wagers on potential game outcomes until a betting time is closed;
- b) closing the betting time;
- c) determining if a bonus trigger event has occurred;
- d) playing the game to determine the outcome of the game; and
- e) if a bonus trigger event has occurred, providing a bonus feature.

[0008] The bonus trigger event may be a particular game outcome from a previous game, a random event or a predetermined non-game related event. Preferably,

it is a random event.

[0009] The bonus feature may be of any suitable type. It may be a free game (for example to the same wager value as the game which triggered the bonus), a winning wager multiplier, other special game play feature, or non-game related prize.

[0010] In another aspect, the present invention provides a gaming machine adapted to carry out the methods.

[0011] In another aspect, the present invention provides a software product for programming a gaming system to carry out the methods.

[0012] The present invention accordingly provides a mechanism for allowing the chance of a bonus to be awarded in a game of roulette. This provides a significant added interest in the game of roulette for the players.

[0013] A preferred embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which:

Fig. 1 illustrates an example of a Roulette gaming system on which the present invention may be implemented.

[0014] The present invention may be implemented in a variety of ways, for standard roulette games, dealer determined result roulette wheels, electronically simulated roulette, or other implementations of the game such as online roulette or gaming machines. The preferred method is to use the system that drives electronic terminals so that the occurrence of the bonus feature can happen randomly. It would be difficult to implement the present invention in a standard manual betting casino game, and accordingly it is preferred that the implementation use electronic betting means, for example as provided for the applicant's Rapid Roulette game. This is available commercially, for example as described at the applicant's website <http://www.stargames.com.au>. A further description appears in US Patent No. 6659866.

[0015] A game of this type is illustrated in figure 1. A gaming table 1 includes a set of player terminals 2. The terminals allow each player to make bets and receive payouts, and optionally may provide other features such as history for the table. The dealer in this implementation may accept payments and then credit terminals. The dealer manually spins the wheel, to determine the game outcome, which is input via terminal 5. A display 6 shows the result of the game. Of course, it will be understood that the present invention could be implemented with fully automated wheels, fully electronic betting, or the like.

[0016] In one embodiment, for each game, players have an opportunity to place bets on their terminals. Betting time is regulated by a countdown. When this countdown reaches zero, no bets can be made, changed or deleted. At this time, the game outcome result may be determined in the conventional way. It is at this time - between when the system captures all bets (countdown reaches zero) and before the result is determined - that

the system randomly determines if the bonus feature is to be provided for that game.

[0017] If the result is positive, that is the bonus feature will be provided, the system will display to all winners that any wins occurring during that game will be multiplied by a random amount (that is, in this embodiment, the bonus feature is a winnings multiplier). As all bets are locked in the system, no changes can be made. Any wins players achieve during that nominated game would be multiplied by a pre-designated number.

[0018] Another embodiment uses a specific result from a previous game to trigger a bonus feature in the current game. For example, a double zero roulette wheel has numbers 1 to 36, a 0 and a 00. Conventionally operated, the 00 is a win for the house on all bets, unless specifically on 00. The bonus feature may be triggered for games immediate following a game in which 00 was the result.

[0019] In other embodiments, if the bonus feature is provided, each player has the opportunity to select one card from 5 displayed on their screen. Behind one of the cards is a symbol, which awards the player 5 times their previous game bet. So, for example, if the player had bet \$10 across various wagers, then he would be awarded \$50 if he selected the winning symbol. As all players are dependant upon a central result, and play is delayed, time for selection is limited to some specific period, after which one is randomly selected for the player.

[0020] Accordingly, it will be apparent that the bonus feature may be to commence play of a bonus game, with only some players ultimately benefiting.

[0021] The embodiments illustrated are only illustrative constructions, and many alternative bonus features may be employed.

[0022] The bonus feature may of any suitable type including a free game (i.e. that some/all wagers are returned but the bets stand), that the winnings for the game is multiplied by a nominated factor, other special game play feature or a non-game related prize such as a free drink. The present invention is not limited to any specific bonus type.

closed;

b) closing the betting time;

c) determining if a bonus trigger event has occurred;

d) playing the game to determine the outcome of the game; and

e) if a bonus trigger event has occurred, providing a bonus feature.

5
10 **3.** The method according to claim 2, wherein before step d), if the occurrence of a bonus trigger event is determined, providing an indication to the players that a bonus feature will be provided.

15 **4.** The method of any preceding claim, wherein the bonus trigger event is a particular game outcome from a previous game, a random event, or a predetermined non-game related event.

20 **5.** The method of any preceding claim, wherein the bonus feature is one or more features selected from the set comprising: a free game for participating players, multiplying any player winnings by a predetermined or random amount, providing other special game play feature, or awarding participating players with a non-game related prize.

25
30 **6.** The method of any preceding claim, wherein, for each participating player, the nature of the bonus feature provided is related to the amount of the player's wager.

7. A gaming machine adapted to carry out the method of any preceding claim.

35
40 **8.** A software product operatively adapted to program a gaming system to carry out the method of any one of claims 1 to 6.

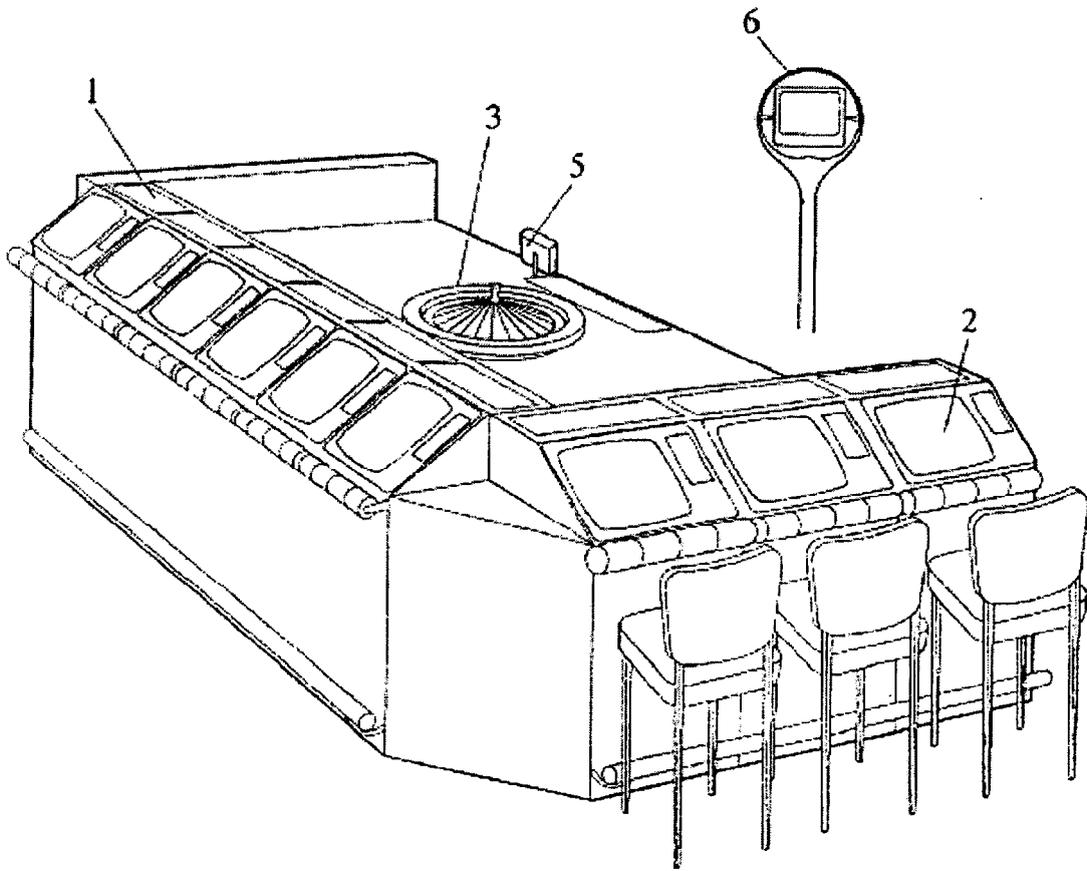
Claims

1. A method of operating a roulette game with betting means to allow players to select and place wagers on potential game outcomes, said method comprising the step of determining, after all the wagers have been made and before the outcome of the roulette game is known, whether a bonus trigger event has occurred; wherein, if a bonus trigger event is determined to have occurred, providing a bonus feature.

2. A method of operating a game of roulette comprising the steps of:

a) receiving players' selections and wagers on potential game outcomes until a betting time is

Fig. 1





European Patent
Office

DECLARATION

Application Number

which under Rule 45 of the European Patent Convention EP 05 25 7676 shall be considered, for the purposes of subsequent proceedings, as the European search report

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>The Search Division considers that the present application, does not comply with the provisions of the EPC to such an extent that it is not possible to carry out a meaningful search into the state of the art on the basis of all claims</p> <p>Reason:</p> <p>A meaningful search is not possible on the basis of all claims for the following reasons: Claims 1-6 and 8 are directed to Schemes, rules and method for playing games - Article 52 (2)(c) EPC; Claim 7 does not contain any technical features contrary to Rule 29(1) EPC. Claims 1-6 to which Claim 7 refers do not imply any technical character to Claim 7 thereby rendering this apparatus Claim 7 unclear (Article 84 EPC). See also EPC Guidelines C-III, 1, 2.1 and C-IV, 1.2.</p> <p>The applicant's attention is drawn to the fact that a search may be carried out during examination following a declaration of no search under Rule 45 EPC, should the problems which led to the declaration being issued be overcome (see EPC Guideline C-VI, 8.5).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-----</p> | | <p>CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)</p> <p>A63F5/00</p> |
| <p>Place of search</p> <p>Munich</p> | <p>Date</p> <p>16 March 2006</p> | <p>Examiner</p> <p>Shmonin, V</p> |

3

EPO FORM 1504 (P04C37)