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(54) **METHOD OF GAMING, A GAMING SYSTEM AND A GAME CONTROLLER**

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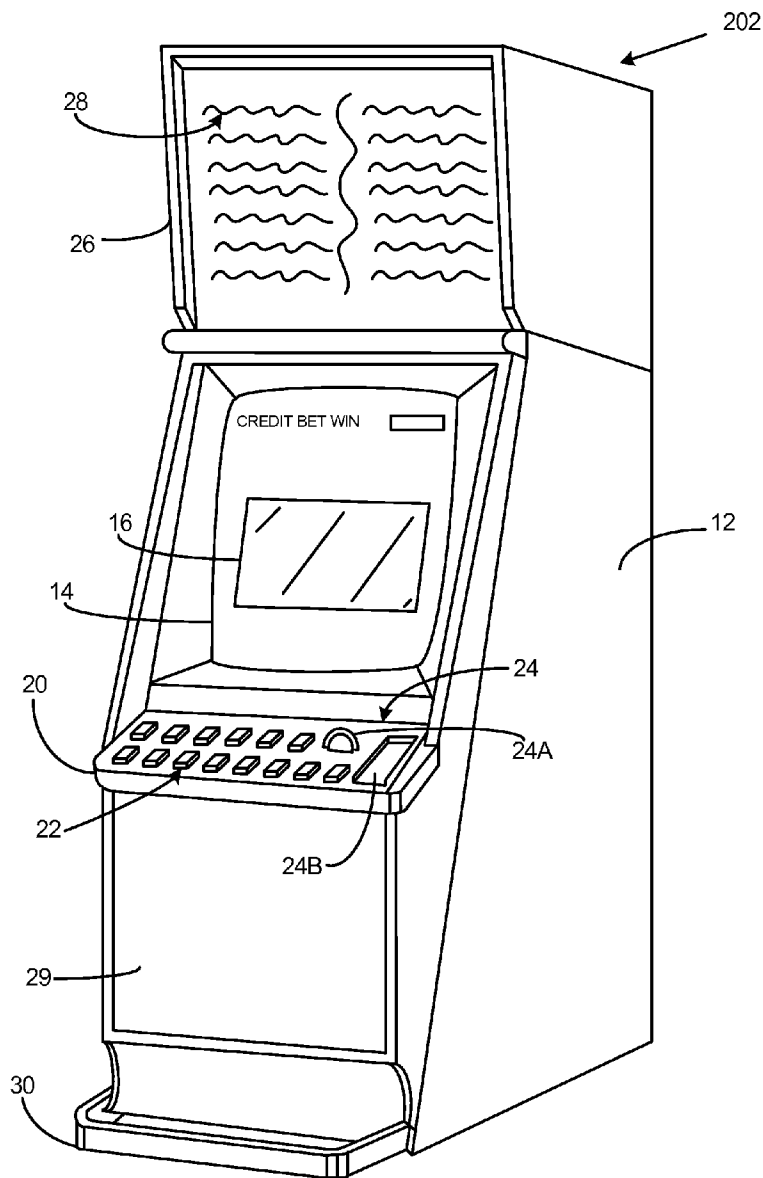
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of gaming comprising: providing at least one modifier, each modifier adapted to modify a prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome in a manner known in advance by the player; offering the player an option to select a modifier; and applying any selected modifier to modify the prize for the game outcome.

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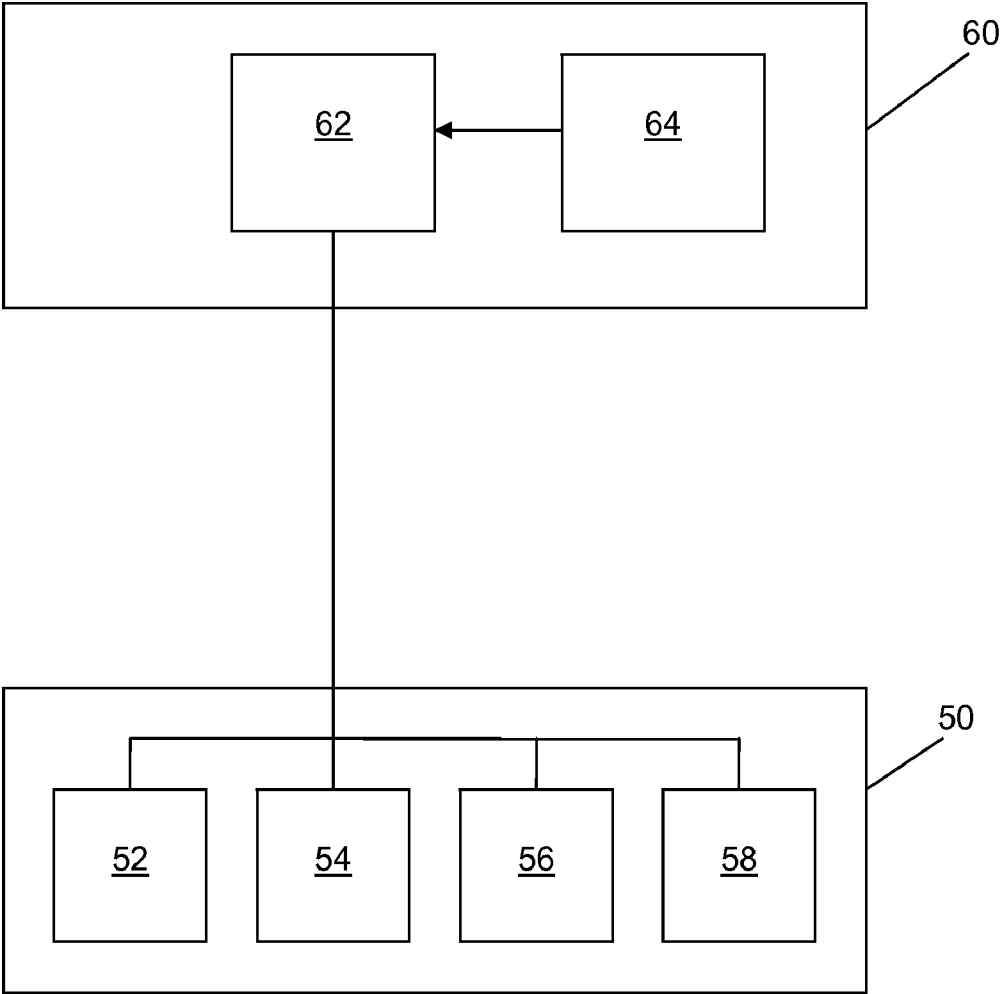


Figure 1

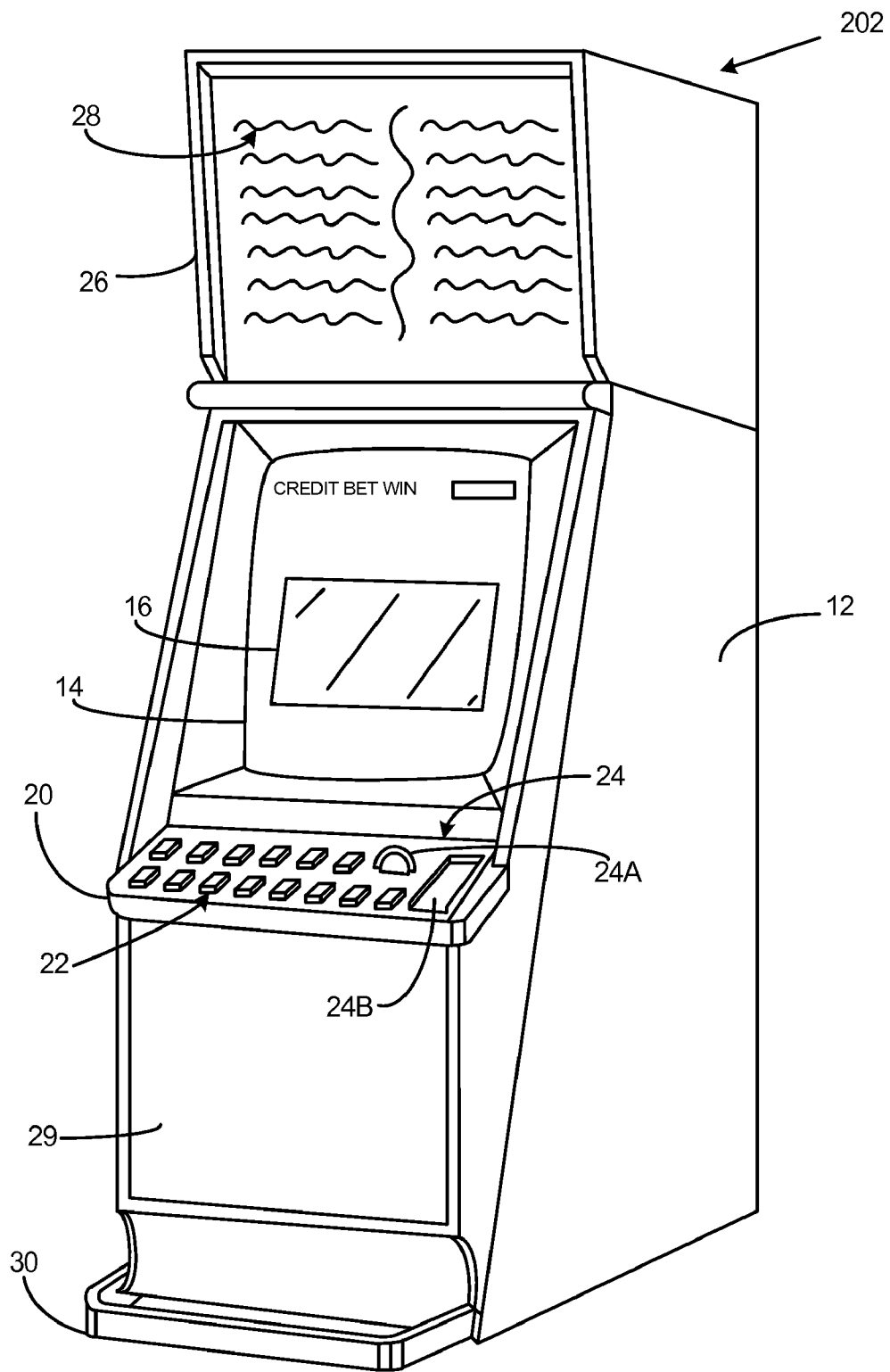


Figure 2

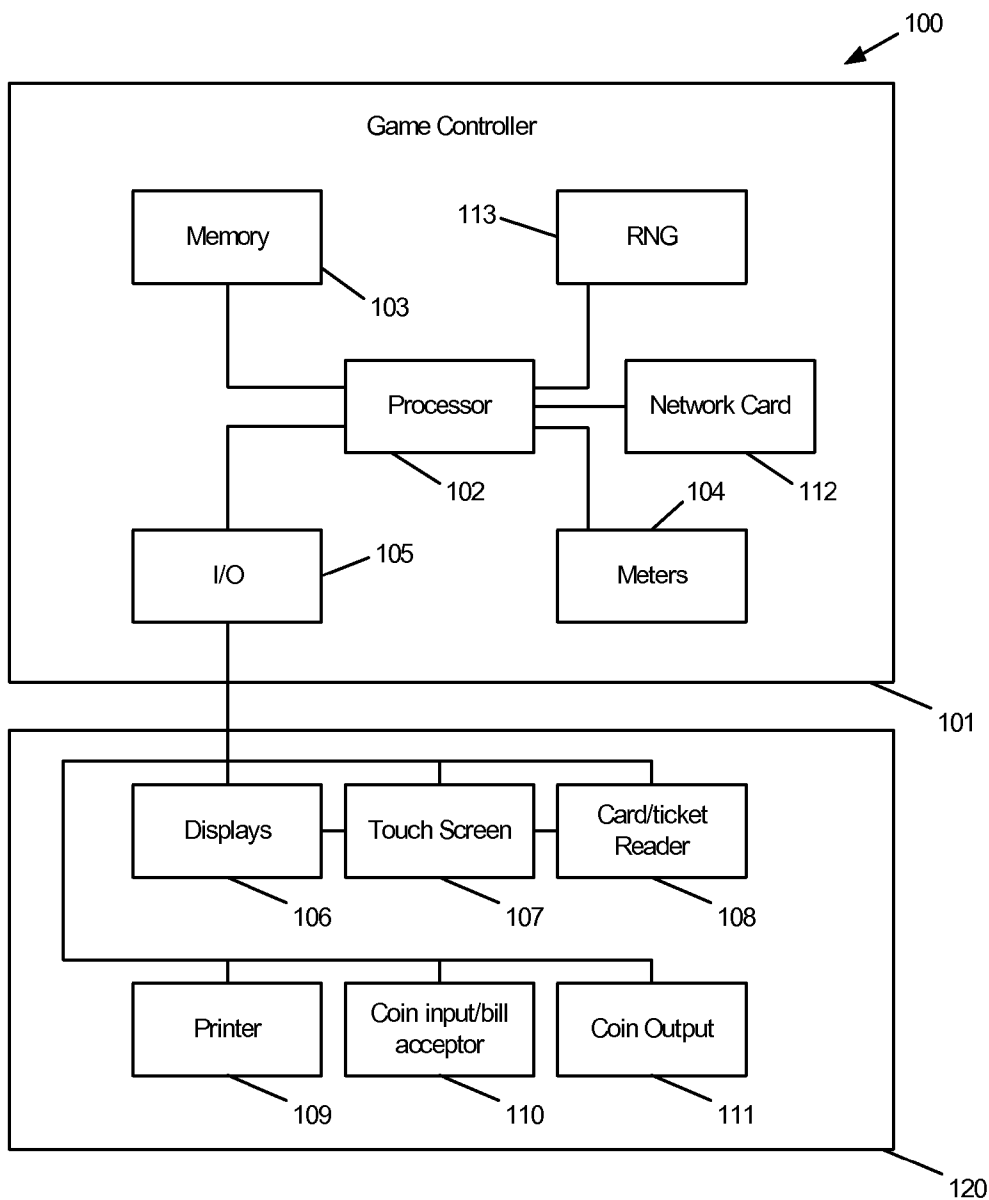


Figure 3

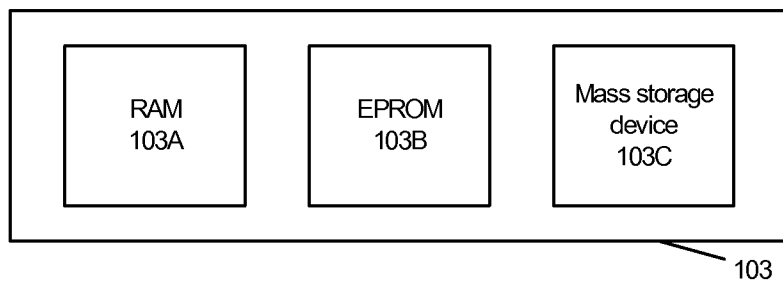


Figure 4

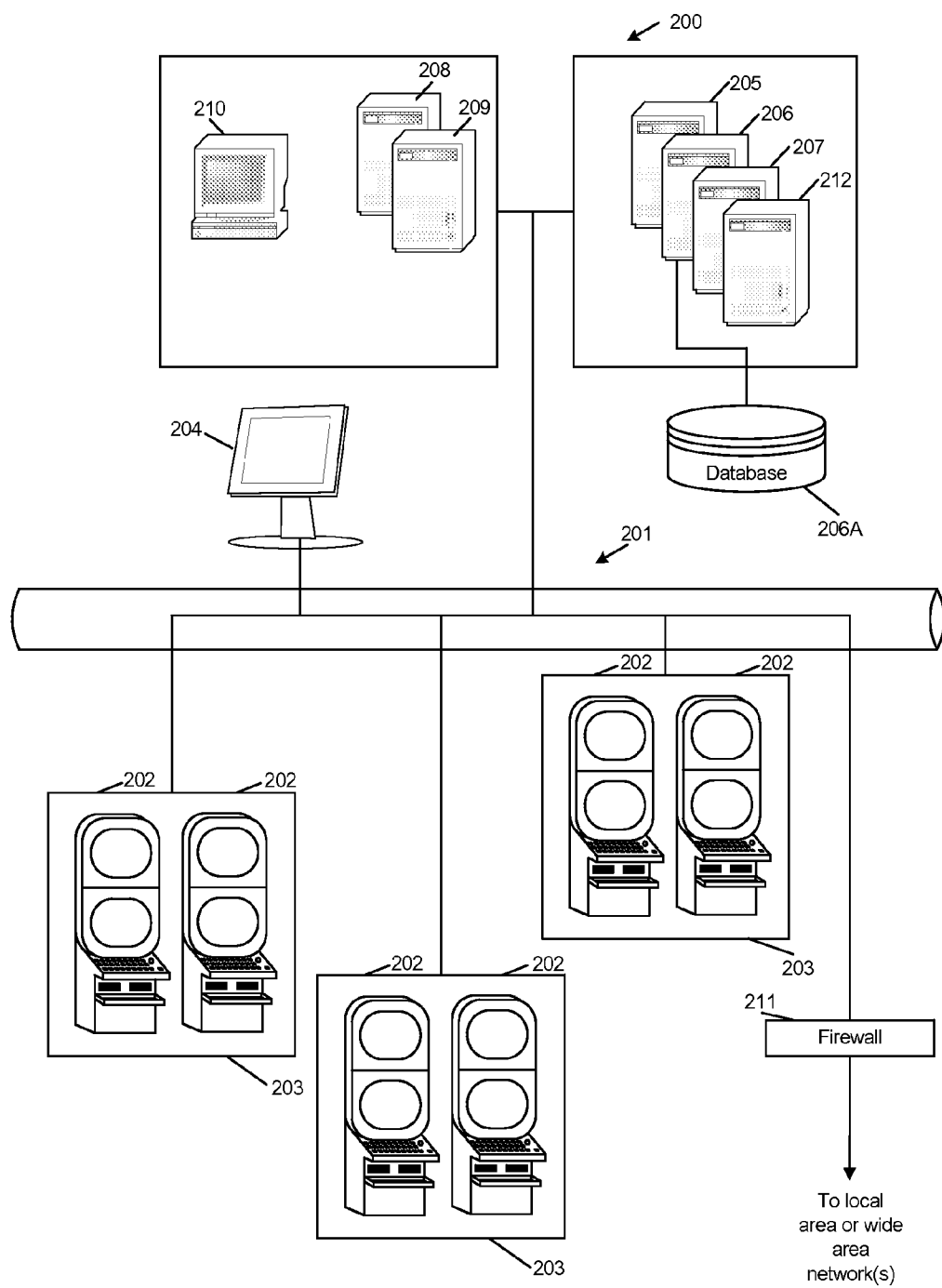
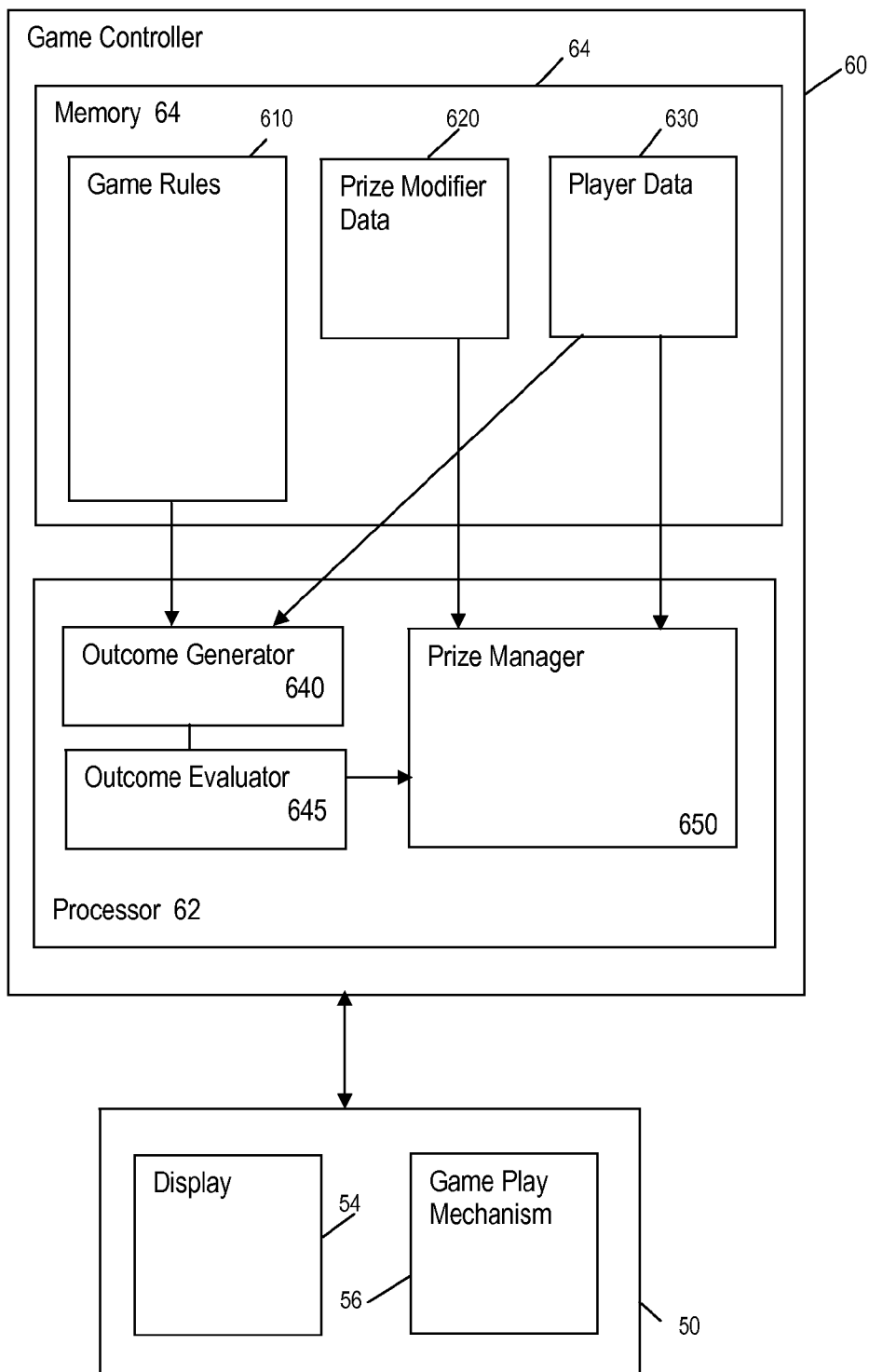


Figure 5



600 ↗

Figure 6

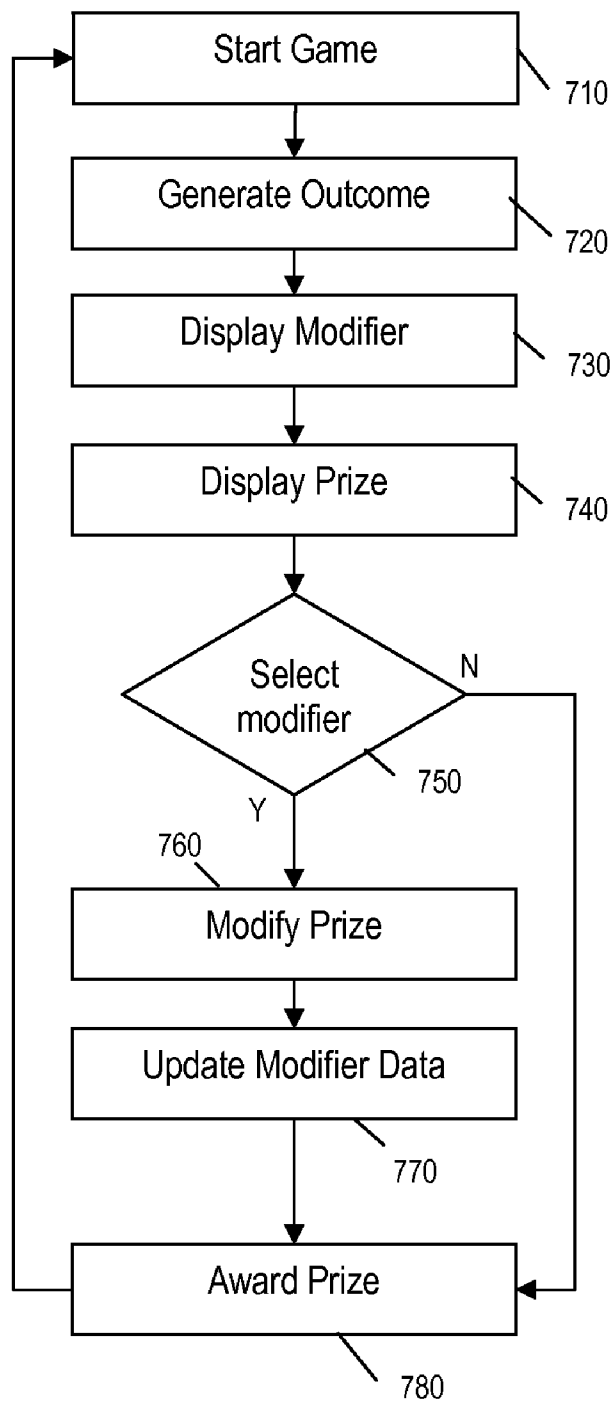


Figure 7

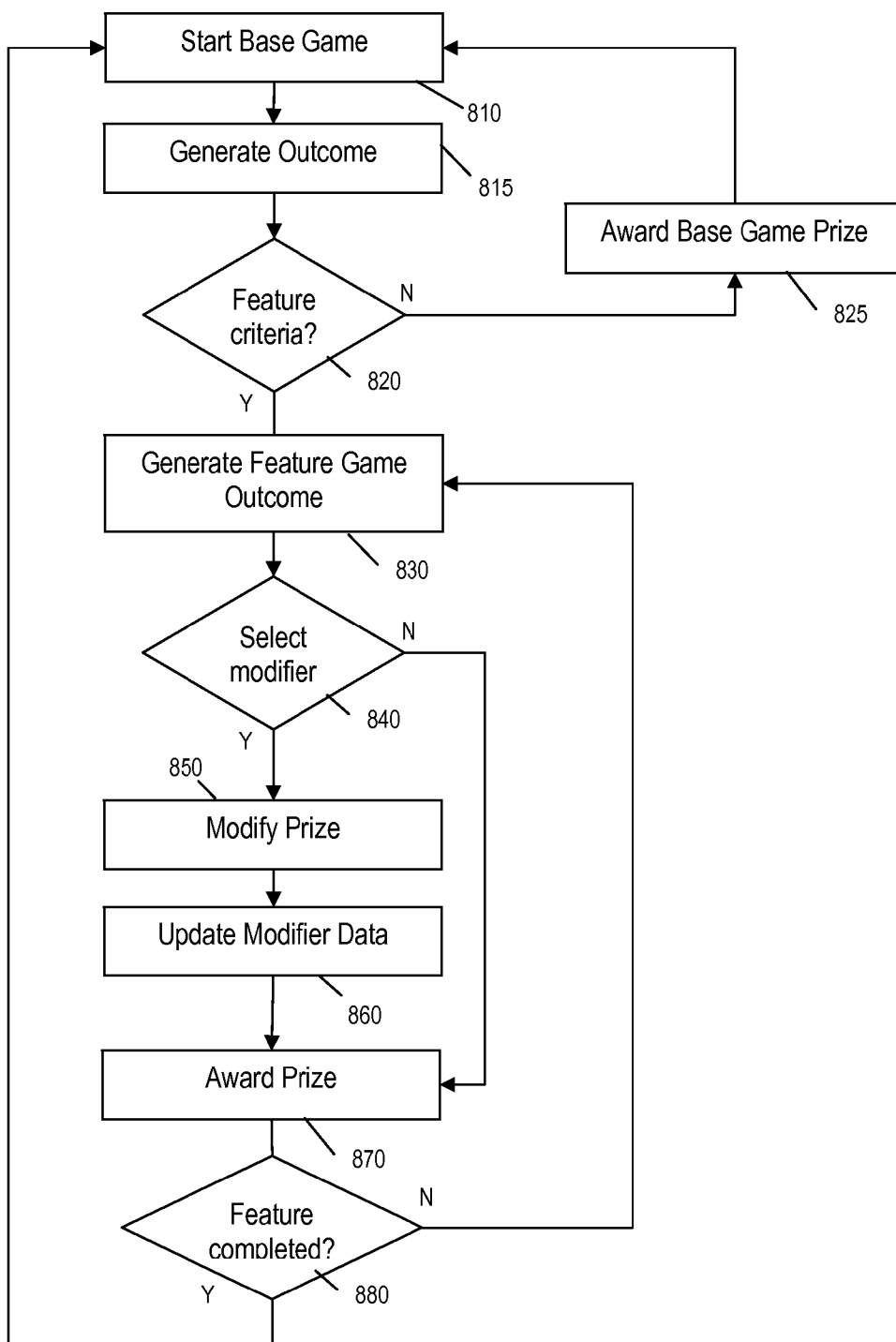


Figure 8

CREDIT BET WIN *10 *2 *5
 100 3 0
 Free games remaining = 6

Q	K	A	J	10
J	9	8	7	A
Dog	10	K	9	Q

Figure 9a

CREDIT BET WIN *10 *2 *5
 100 3 10
 Free games remaining = 5

DOG	DOG	DOG	Q	A
K	9	J	10	7
8	10	Q	K	10

Figure 9b

CREDIT BET WIN *10 *2 *5
 200 3 0
 Free games remaining = 4

A	10	9	8	7
7	7	CAT	9	K
Q	CAT	J	10	J

Figure 9c

CREDIT BET WIN *10 *2 *5
 200 3 100
 Free games remaining = 3

A	A	A	A	A
9	8	K	Q	J
7	DOG	8	K	7

Figure 9d

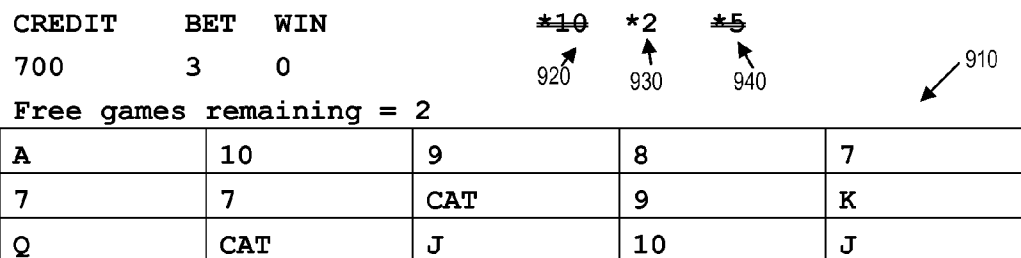


Figure 9e

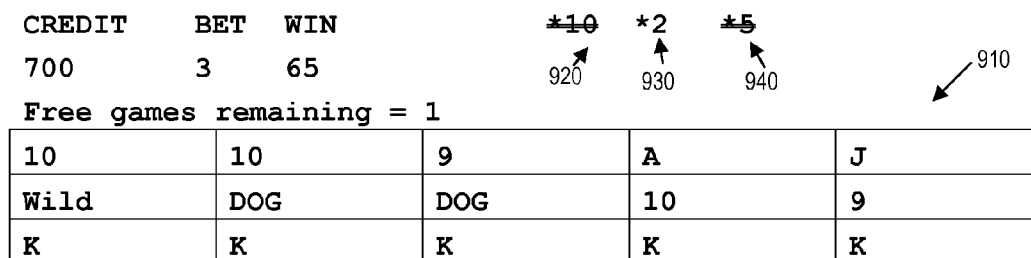


Figure 9f

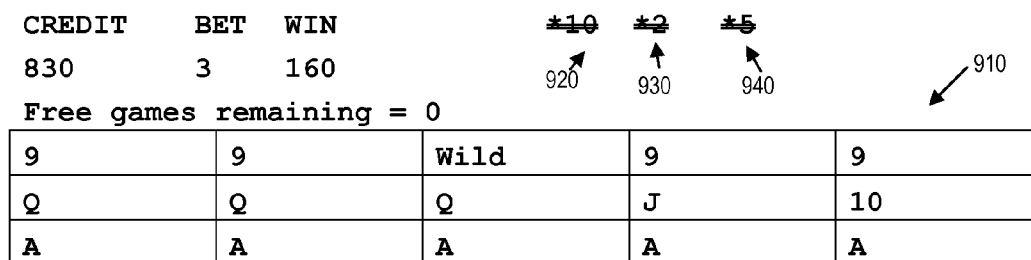


Figure 9g

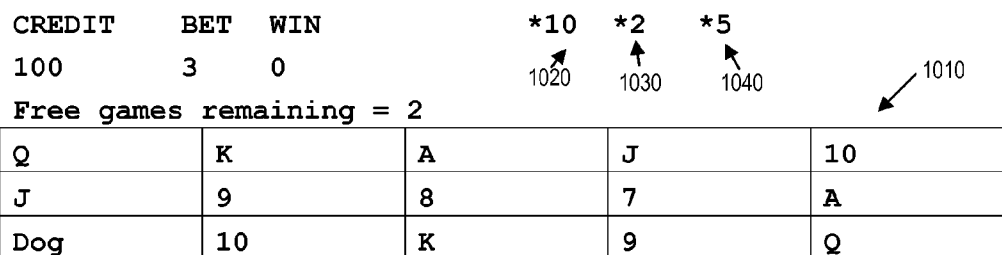


Figure 10a

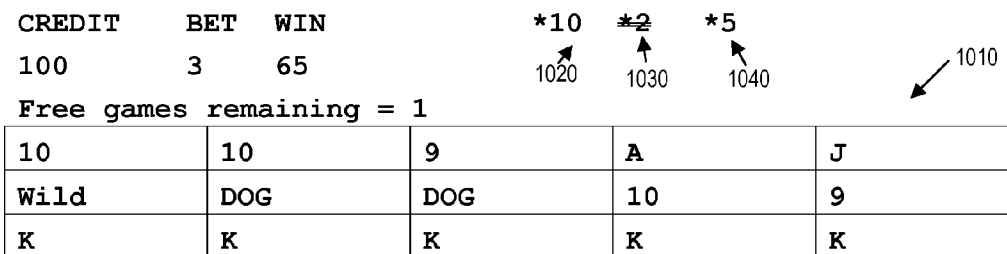


Figure 10b

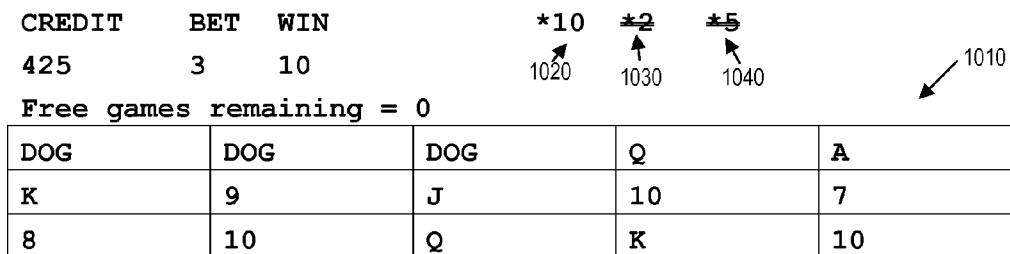


Figure 10c

CREDIT BET WIN
 100 3 0
 Free games remaining = 2

Q	K	A	J	10
J	DICE-6	8	7	A
Dog	10	K	9	Q

1120 Figure 11a

CREDIT BET WIN
 100 3 65
 Free games remaining = 1

10	10	9	DICE-3	J
Wild	DOG	DOG	10	9
K	K	K	K	K

Figure 11b

CREDIT BET WIN
 100 3 65
 Free games remaining = 1

10	10	9	DICE-5	J
Wild	DOG	DOG	10	9
K	K	K	K	K

Figure 11c

CREDIT BET WIN
 425 3 10
 Free games remaining = 0

DOG	DOG	DOG	Q	A
K	9	J	10	7
8	DICE-2	Q	K	10

1140 Figure 11d

CREDIT BET WIN
425 3 10

Free games remaining = 0

1110

DOG	DOG	DOG	Q	A
K	9	J	10	7
8	DICE-1	Q	K	10

1145

Figure 11e

METHOD OF GAMING, A GAMING SYSTEM AND A GAME CONTROLLER

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to Australian Application No. 2008901339 having a filing date of Mar. 18, 2008 and Australian Application No. 2008901793 having a filing date of Apr. 11, 2008, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] [Not Applicable]

MICROFICHE/COPYRIGHT REFERENCE

[0003] [Not Applicable]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] It is known to provide a gaming system including a gaming controller arranged to generate a random result and apply game rules to the result to determine a game outcome for which a player may be awarded a prize if a predetermined winning outcome occurs. A player can place a wager to play the game and typically the wagered amount will represent a number of credits or a monetary value. A prize awarded to a player based on a winning outcome can be based on the amount wagered to play the game.

[0005] There is a need for an alternative game in order to maintain or increase player interest and enjoyment.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] According to one aspect there is provided a method of gaming comprising:

[0007] providing at least one modifier, each modifier adapted to modify a prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome in a manner known in advance by the player;

[0008] offering the player an option to select a modifier; and

[0009] applying any selected modifier to modify the prize for the game outcome.

[0010] In some embodiments a modifier can be applied to a given number of game outcomes of a plurality of game outcomes. The given number can be less than a total of the plurality of game outcomes.

[0011] In an embodiment a set of a given number of modifiers are provided and each modifier can be applied for one game outcome only.

[0012] In an embodiment each modifier has a different value.

[0013] In an embodiment a plurality of game outcomes are generated and the method comprises the steps for each game outcome of:

[0014] generating a game outcome;

[0015] offering the player an option to select a modifier to apply for the game outcome; and

[0016] applying any selected modifier to any prize for the outcome before generating a next game outcome.

[0017] An embodiment of the method further comprises the step of notifying the player of a prize to be awarded before selecting a modifier to apply for the game outcome.

[0018] The modifier can be provided for feature game outcomes. Access to the feature game outcomes may be provided

on fulfillment of eligibility criteria. For example, the eligibility criteria can be based on a game outcome or player activity.

[0019] Outcomes for the feature game can be generated until an end condition is met.

[0020] Each modifier can be a multiplier.

[0021] The modifiers can be predetermined, determined during game play based on predetermined game rules, determined based on player action or determined during game play based on a random modifier selection process.

[0022] An embodiment can further comprise the steps of: selecting a new modifier when the player selects not to apply the modifier; and applying the new modifier to modify the prize for the game outcome. The new modifier can be randomly selected from a set of modifiers.

[0023] According to another aspect there is provided a game controller comprising:

[0024] a game outcome generator adapted to generate a game outcome for a player based on a random result;

[0025] a game outcome evaluator adapted to determine a prize to be awarded to the player when predetermined winning criteria occur in the game outcome; and

[0026] a prize manager adapted to apply a player selected modifier to modify, in a manner known in advance by the player, the prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome.

[0027] According to another aspect there is provided a game system comprising:

[0028] a player interface for entering game play instructions by a player and providing game outcome and prize information to the player;

[0029] a game outcome generator adapted to generate a game outcome for a player based on a random result;

[0030] a game outcome evaluator adapted to determine a prize to be awarded to the player when predetermined winning criteria occur in the game outcome; and

[0031] a prize manager adapted to apply a player selected modifier to modify, in a manner known in advance by the player, the prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome.

[0032] The game system may be implemented across a network or as a stand alone gaming system.

[0033] According to another aspect there is provided computer program code which when executed causes a computer to implement a computer controlled gaming method as described above.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0034] The preferred embodiment of the invention will now be described in relation to the following drawings in which:

[0035] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of the core components of a gaming system;

[0036] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a gaming machine;

[0037] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming machine;

[0038] FIG. 4 is a block diagram representing the structure of a memory;

[0039] FIG. 5 is a diagram schematic of a networked gaming system;

[0040] FIG. 6 is a further block diagram of a gaming system;

[0041] FIG. 7 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a game process;

[0042] FIG. 8 is a flowchart of an alternative embodiment of a game process.

[0043] FIGS. 9a to 9g illustrate reel spin outcomes for Example 1.

[0044] FIGS. 10a to 10c illustrate reel spin outcomes for Example 2.

[0045] FIGS. 11a and 11e illustrate reel spin outcomes for Example 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0046] Embodiments of a gaming method and gaming controller as described enable a player to select whether to modify the prize to be awarded for a game outcome in a manner known in advance by the player using a selected modifier. Embodiments may be applied to any type of game, such as a spinning reel game, poker, keno, bingo, pinball, dice etc.

[0047] In a first form, a stand alone gaming machine is provided wherein all or most components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine.

[0048] In a second form, a distributed architecture is provided wherein some of the components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming device and some of the components required for implementing the game are located remotely relative to the gaming device. For example, a “thick client” architecture may be used wherein part of the game is executed on a player operable gaming device, such as an interactive player terminal, and part of the game is executed remotely, such as by a gaming server; or a “thin client” architecture may be used wherein most of the game is executed remotely such as by a gaming server and a player operable gaming device or player terminal is used only to display audible and/or visible gaming information to the player and receive gaming inputs from the player.

[0049] However, it will be understood that other arrangements are envisaged. For example, an architecture may be provided wherein a gaming device is networked to a gaming server and the respective functions of the gaming device and the gaming server are selectively modifiable. For example, the gaming system may operate in stand alone gaming machine mode, “thick client” mode or “thin client” mode depending on the game being played, operating conditions, and so on. Other variations will be apparent to persons skilled in the art.

[0050] Irrespective of the form, the gaming system comprises several core components. At the broadest level, the core components are a player interface 50 and a game controller 60 as illustrated in FIG. 1. The player interface is arranged to enable manual interaction between a player and the gaming system and for this purpose includes the input/output components required for the player to enter instructions and play the game.

[0051] Components of the player interface may vary from embodiment to embodiment but will typically include a credit mechanism 52 to enable a player to input credits and receive payouts, one or more displays 54 and a game play mechanism 56 that enables a player to input game play instructions (e.g. to place a wager), and one or more speakers 58.

[0052] The game controller 60 is in data communication with the player interface and typically includes a processor 62 that processes the game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and outputs game play outcomes to the display. Typically, the game play instructions are stored as program code in a memory 64 but can also be hardwired. Herein

the term “processor” is used to refer generically to any device that can process game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and may include: a microprocessor, micro-controller, programmable logic device or other computational device, a general purpose computer (e.g. a PC) or a server.

[0053] A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine 202 is illustrated in FIG. 2. The gaming machine 202 includes a console 12 having a display 14 on which is displayed representations of a game 16 that can be played by a player. A mid-trim 20 of the gaming machine 202 houses a bank of buttons 22 for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during gameplay. The mid-trim 20 also houses a credit input mechanism 24 which in this example includes a coin input chute 24A and a bill collector 24B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. Other gaming machines may configure for ticket in such that they have a ticket reader for reading tickets having a value and crediting the player based on the face value of the ticket. A player marketing module (not shown) having a reading device may also be provided for the purpose of reading a player tracking device, for example as part of a loyalty program. The player tracking device may be in the form of a card, flash drive or any other portable storage medium capable of being read by the reading device. In some embodiments, the player marketing module may provide an additional credit mechanism, either by transferring credits to the gaming machine from credits stored on the player tracking device or by transferring credits from a player account in data communication with the player marketing module.

[0054] A top box 26 may carry artwork 28, including for example pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. Further artwork and/or information may be provided on a front panel 29 of the console 12. A coin tray 30 is mounted beneath the front panel 29 for dispensing cash payouts from the gaming machine 202.

[0055] The display 14 shown in FIG. 2 is in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display 14 may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit, or the visible portion of an electromechanical device. The top box 26 may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display 14, or of a different type.

[0056] FIG. 3 shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine of FIG. 2.

[0057] The gaming machine 100 includes a game controller 101 having a processor 102. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor 102 are stored in a memory 103, which is in data communication with the processor 102. Typically, the gaming machine 100 will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory 103.

[0058] The gaming machine has hardware meters 104 for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface 105 for communicating with peripheral devices of the gaming machine 100. The input/output interface 105 and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for storing associated instructions and data for use with the input/output interface or the peripheral devices. A

random number generator module **113** generates random numbers for use by the processor **102**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the reference to random numbers includes pseudo-random numbers.

[0059] In the example shown in FIG. 3, a player interface **120** includes peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller **101** and may comprise one or more displays **106**, a touch screen and buttons **107**, a card and/or ticket reader **108**, a printer **109**, a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism **110** and a coin output mechanism **111**. Additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming machine **100**, or hardware may be omitted as required for the specific implementation. For example, while buttons or touch screens are typically used in gaming machines to allow a player to place a wager and initiate a play of a game any input device that enables the player to input game play instructions may be used.

[0060] In addition, the gaming machine **100** may include a communications interface, for example a network card **112**. The network card may, for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a central controller, server or database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database. In embodiments employing a player marketing module, communications over a network may be via player marketing module—i.e. the player marketing module may be in data communication with one or more of the above devices and communicate with it on behalf of the gaming machine.

[0061] FIG. 4 shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory **103**. The memory **103** includes RAM **103A**, EPROM **103B** and a mass storage device **103C**. The RAM **103A** typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor **102** and related data. The EPROM **103B** may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device **103C** is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor **102** using protected code from the EPROM **103B** or elsewhere.

[0062] It is also possible for the operative components of the gaming machine **100** to be distributed, for example input/output devices **106,107,108,109,110,111** to be provided remotely from the game controller **101**.

[0063] FIG. 5 shows a gaming system **200** in accordance with an alternative embodiment. The gaming system **200** includes a network **201**, which for example may be an Ethernet network. Gaming devices **202**, shown arranged in three banks **203** of two gaming devices **202** in FIG. 5, are connected to the network **201**. The gaming devices **202** provide a player operable interface and may be the same as the gaming machines **202**, **100** shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, or may have simplified functionality depending on the requirements for implementing game play. While banks **203** of two gaming devices are illustrated in FIG. 5, banks of one, three or more gaming devices are also envisaged.

[0064] One or more displays **204** may also be connected to the network **201**. The displays **204** may, for example, be associated with one or more banks **203** of gaming devices. The displays **204** may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming devices **202**, and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

[0065] In a thick client embodiment, game server **205** implements part of the game played by a player using a

gaming device **202** and the gaming device **202** implements part of the game. With this embodiment, as both the game server and the gaming device implement part of the game, they collectively provide a game controller. A database management server **206** may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices **202** in a database **206A**. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server **207** will be provided to monitor and carry out the Jackpot game. Additional servers **212** may be provided to implement other functions depending on the embodiment implemented for the gaming venue.

[0066] In a thin client embodiment, game server **205** implements most or all of the game played by a player using a gaming device **202** and the gaming device **202** essentially provides only the player interface. With this embodiment, the game server **205** provides the game controller. The gaming machine will receive player instructions, pass these to the game server which will process them and return game play outcomes to the gaming device for display. In a thin client embodiment, the gaming devices could be computer terminals, e.g. PCs running software that provides a player interface operable using standard computer input and output components. Other client/server configurations are possible, and further details of a client/server architecture can be found in WO 2006/052213 and PCT/SE2006/000559, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

[0067] Servers are also typically provided to assist in the administration of the gaming network **200**, including for example a gaming floor management server **208**, and a licensing server **209** to monitor the use of licenses relating to particular games. An administrator terminal **210** is provided to allow an administrator to run the network **201** and the devices connected to the network.

[0068] The gaming network **200** may communicate with other gaming systems, other local networks, for example a corporate network, and/or a wide area network such as the Internet, for example through a firewall **211**.

[0069] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in accordance with known techniques, functionality at the server side of the network may be distributed over a plurality of different computers. For example, elements may be run as a single “engine” on one server or a separate server may be provided. For example, the game server **205** could run a random generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided. Further, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a plurality of games servers could be provided to run different games or a single game server may run a plurality of different games as required by the terminals.

[0070] Embodiments of the present invention relate to gaming systems that allow a player to select for a game outcome whether or not to apply a modifier to modify a prize to be awarded for the game outcome in a manner known in advance by the player. Embodiments may be applied for any type of game, for example spinning reel, poker, keno, bingo, pin and ball, dice games etc Embodiments may be used in game systems which use mechanical random result generation processes or electronic random number generators to generate game outcomes.

[0071] Embodiments of the gaming method provide at least one modifier adapted to modify in a manner known in advance by the player any prize to be awarded for a game outcome. The modifier is optionally selected by the player. In

an embodiment the player knows both the prize to be awarded for a game outcome and the modifier before selecting to apply the modifier for the game outcome to modify the prize.

[0072] An embodiment of a game system 600 for providing a game including the prize modifier is illustrated in FIG. 6. The system 600 comprises a player interface 50 and a game controller 60.

[0073] The player interface 50 includes the components required for a player to enter game play instructions which can include wagers to play the game. For example in the illustrated embodiment the player interface includes a display 54 for displaying game data including outcome data and prize data, and a game play mechanism 56 enabling a player to input game play instructions. The player interface may be a player interface portion of a gaming device such as a stand alone gaming machine or a player terminal in a client-server type embodiment.

[0074] The game controller 60 includes a processor 62 and a memory 64. In this embodiment memory 64 stores game rules 610 for the game being played, prize modifier data 620 and player data 630. In this embodiment a game outcome generator 640, a game outcome evaluator 645 and a prize manager 650 are implemented as functions in the processor 62. Alternatively, the game controller 60 may be implemented using hardware circuits designed to perform some or all of the functions of the game outcome generator 640, game outcome evaluator 645 and prize manager. For example, hardwired circuits, application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) or programmable hardware such as field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs) may be used to implement the game controller functions. Embodiments of the game controller implemented using any combination of hardware, firmware and software executed using a processor are envisaged.

[0075] The game outcome generator 640 can include all the functions required for generating a random result, applying game rules to the random result to generate a game outcome and displaying the game outcome. The game outcome evaluator 645 determines whether a prize is to be awarded to the player for the game outcome based on game rules 610. Alternatively the game outcome evaluator 645 may receive game outcome data generated using another module or a mechanical random result generation process and simply be adapted to apply game rules 610 to the generated game outcome data to evaluate the game outcome and determine whether a prize winning event has occurred. The outcome evaluator may also be adapted to determine the prize to be awarded for a winning event, for example based on a wager and the winning outcome. Alternatively determining the prize to be awarded may be determined by the prize manager 650 based on a game outcome and optionally player data such as the wagered amount for a game. Player data is optional in determining prizes for game outcomes as prizes may be awarded for “free play” games which do not require a wager to be placed.

[0076] The prize manager 650 is adapted to apply a modifier to modify a prize to be awarded to the player for a game outcome if the player selects to apply the modifier. A player may select to apply a modifier to a game outcome before or after the game outcome is known. Whether the modifier is selected before or after a game outcome is evaluated is based on game rules. Whether a player selects the modifier for a game outcome can be stored in memory 64 as player data 630 along with other game play instructions, including any wager data and prize tally data.

[0077] The number of modifiers or number of game outcomes to which the modifier can be applied may be defined as a fixed number or based on game outcomes in accordance with game rules 610. Alternatively a modifier may be randomly selected for a player from a plurality of modifiers stored as modifier data 620 in memory 64. Prize modifier data 620 stored in memory 64 can include the values and types of modifiers available and any tracking data for modifier application by a player. In an embodiment the modifier is a multiplier, used to multiply the prize value if selected. However, other modifiers may be provided, such as a value added to the prize value. Alternatively a modifier may reduce the prize amount for example by subtracting a value or reducing the amount by a percentage value. In an embodiment where more than one modifier is provided, each modifier may have a different value or mathematical function, and some modifiers may reduce a prize value.

[0078] Credit units or “credits” representing a monetary value are often used for wagers and prizes, the credits can be redeemed as cash or other prizes of equivalent value when a player chooses to stop playing. For example, each credit unit may represent a monetary value of 5 cents, so a player winning 10000 credits may redeem the monetary value of \$500 for the 10000 credits from the gaming venue when they have finished playing.

[0079] An embodiment of a game play process is illustrated in FIG. 7 for this example wagers and prizes are given as credits and the modifier is a multiplier adapted to multiply the number of prize credits by five, and the game rules allow the player to apply the modifier in only one game outcome out of three. The game play is started 710 by placing a wager. The first game outcome is generated 720 and displayed to the player along with the available multiplier 730, any prize for the game outcome is displayed 740. The player then selects 750 whether or not to apply the modifier for the game outcome. If a prize has been awarded, for example twenty credits, the player may select to apply the modifier to modify the prize 760 by multiplying the number of credits by five to give one hundred credits. The modifier data 770 is then updated to indicate that the modifier has been used and cannot be applied again for the remainder of the three games. The modified prize value of one hundred credits is awarded to the player. If there is no prize or a prize of only a few credits the player may choose not to apply the modifier, in this case any prize is awarded 780 and the second game play is started 710 and the modifier remains available to be used for the next game outcome. Once the set of three games is completed, the modifier may be enabled for use in the next set of games.

[0080] The gaming system of one embodiment provides “base game” outcomes and “feature game” outcomes wherein the prize modifier is provided. For example the feature becomes available once eligibility criteria are met. The eligibility for a feature game outcome may be based on an outcome of a base game, for example the appearance of a special symbol or combination of symbols in a game outcome of a base game. The player may pay an additional bet, known as an “ante bet”, for a chance for feature game outcomes. Alternatively payment of an ante bet alone may fulfill the eligibility criteria for feature game outcomes providing the modifier. The amount wagered for an ante bet may determine the value and/or the number of modifiers made available to the player in the feature game outcomes.

[0081] In one variation during the feature game outcomes, a series of game outcomes are generated which one or more

modifiers may be applied to. Feature game outcomes may be generated until an end condition is met. For example, an end condition may be that a specified number of feature game outcomes have been generated or a feature game outcome including an end condition such as a specified symbol has occurred.

[0082] An example of a game play process where the modifier is provided in feature game play is illustrated in FIG. 8. The player places a bet to start the play of a base game **810** and an outcome is generated for the base game **815**. If the eligibility criteria **820** for feature game play are not met then any prize for the base game will be awarded **825** and the game process readies for the play of the next base game. If the game outcome fulfils the eligibility criteria **820** for feature game play, then the game play process continues on to generate one or more feature game outcomes for one or more feature game rounds where the player has the option to apply a modifier to modify the prize to be awarded for the feature game outcome. The number of feature game rounds may be preset or based on an outcome of the base game. The available modifiers may also be preset or based on base game outcomes.

[0083] A feature game outcome is generated **830** and displayed to the player. The player then selects **840** whether to apply a modifier. Where more than one modifier is available the player may select which modifier to apply to the feature game outcome. If the player selects a modifier, the prize is modified **850** using the selected modifier, the modifier data updated **860** and the modified prize awarded **870**. If the player selects not to apply a modifier any prize for the feature game outcome is awarded **870** unmodified.

[0084] The end criteria for the feature game play are checked **880** to determine whether the feature game rounds are completed, for example if a predetermined number of feature game outcomes have been generated, an end symbol occurred in the feature game outcome, all available modifiers have been applied or the like. If the feature game rounds are not completed then the game play process continues to generate further feature game outcomes **830** and enable modifier selection **840** etc until the end criteria are met. Once the end criteria are met the feature game play is completed and the game play process returns to the base game **810**.

[0085] Modifications to the exemplary game process are envisaged within the scope of various embodiments. For example, a feature game outcome may award generation of further feature game outcomes or a plurality of base games may be played before feature game play is started. A player may elect to terminate the feature game play, reserving any remaining modifiers for future feature game outcomes or base game outcomes. The feature game play may use a different game from a base game play, for example a base game may be a spinning reel game and the feature game a dice game. These and any other modifications are contemplated within the scope of the present invention. Feature game rounds may be "free play" rounds or have a different betting structure to base game rounds. Feature game outcomes may be similar to base game outcomes but introduce different features such as additional symbols or prize patterns. Alternatively prize values for feature game outcomes may differ from those of a base game.

[0086] An outcome of one or more base games, as well as fulfilling eligibility criteria for feature game play may also be used to determine one or more modifiers available to use in feature game rounds. For example, a series of base game rounds may be played before a feature game round can be played. For each of these base game rounds, if a specified

outcome occurs this causes a modifier to be made available to a player for use during a feature game round. For example, each time a combination of three dogs appears in a game outcome the number of times a predetermined modifier, say a five times multiplier, can be applied by a player is increased by a known increment, such as one or two times, the size of the multiplier value or the increment may be fixed values defined in game rules or based on the amount of an ante bet.

[0087] In an alternative example, for a spinning reel game, each time a combination of three cats appears in a win line of the game a two times multiplier may be added to the player's set of available modifiers. Each time a combination of four cats appears on a win line a five times multiplier is added to the available modifiers for the player, and each time five cats appears in a win line a ten times multiplier is added. These multipliers may be selectively applied during the play of one or more feature game rounds. If the multipliers are not all applied for a sequence of feature game outcomes, any unused multipliers may be lost or carried over for use in subsequent feature game rounds, dependent on the game rules of the particular game. Alternatively, a player may "win" multipliers in feature game rounds which can then be applied to modify prizes awarded for outcomes in the base game.

[0088] The player selects a modifier to be applied from a set of known modifiers. This has the advantage of allowing the player to feel in control of the modification of the prize. This introduces an element of strategy regarding modifier selection into the game which can enhance player enjoyment and engagement with the game.

[0089] In some embodiments the player knows the prize to be awarded for the game before selecting which modifier to apply. In alternative embodiments the player may be forced to select a modifier to apply before discovering the prize for the game outcome.

[0090] In an embodiment a player is provided with a number of modifiers equal to a number of game rounds in which they are to be applied, and the player must apply a modifier to the game outcome generated for each round. Not all the modifiers may alter the prize in a manner favorable to the player. For example, a modifier may reduce the value of a prize by a given amount or percentage or cause a prize to be lost.

[0091] In another embodiment if a player selects not to apply a modifier for a game outcome, a new modifier can be selected and automatically applied to the game outcome. The new modifier can be randomly selected from a set of modifiers, which may or may not be known to the player. For example, a modifier may be represented by a dice roll which provides a multiplier value of one, two, three, four five or six. Initially the dice shows two, and the player selects not to apply the modifier. The game controller can then randomly select another modifier from the set. The new modifier is automatically applied to the result, so if the result is four the prize for the game outcome is multiplied by four. An embodiment may allow more than one modifier, such as a dice symbol on a spinning reel, to appear in a reel spin outcome. In this embodiment the player can select which modifier to apply. If neither modifier is selected then new modifiers may be selected to replace each modifier and the modifier automatically applied based on game rules, for example choosing the highest or lowest modifier value or a default modifier may always be selected to apply, such as the modifier appearing on

reel two. Alternatively the player may be required to nominate which modifier's new value will be applied before the new modifier is selected.

[0092] Selecting the new modifier can be done using pseudo-random number generation performed by a game controller processor to select a new modifier from a given set. An appropriate animation may be displayed for the player's entertainment, for example a dice roll or spinning wheel animation. Alternatively a mechanical random result generation process can be used, for example a mechanical dice roll, drawing a card from a shuffled deck, flipping a coin, spinning a wheel etc.

[0093] The modifier may not be provided for every game outcome. For example, a modifier may be provided as a symbol on a spinning reel or a special card in a deck etc so that the modifier is only provided if the special symbol is included in a game outcome. In an embodiment where the modifier is represented as a symbol on a spinning reel the modifier symbol can be substituted for any another symbol on the reel and may not appear in every reel spin outcome. Alternatively the modifier may be provided as a side game during feature game play. For example the feature game may be a spinning reel game which generates the game outcome and a side game may be a wheel spin to determine the modifier for the game outcome. If the player selects not to play the modifier initially selected for a wheel spin, the wheel is spun again, the new modifier selected, and applied to the prize associated with the reel spin outcome.

[0094] Some exemplary embodiments of gaming methods, controllers and systems applying prize modifiers have been described herein. A person skilled in the art should readily appreciate that the prize modification feature may be applied in many alternative embodiments. Any modifications or alterations to the prize modifiers described herein are envisaged within the scope of the present invention.

[0095] In the preceding description, except where the context requires otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising" is used in an inclusive sense, i.e. to specify the presence of the stated features but not to preclude the presence or addition of further features in various embodiments.

[0096] It is to be understood that, if any prior art is referred to herein, such reference does not constitute an admission that the publication forms a part of the common general knowledge in the art, in any country.

Example 1

[0097] In the following non limiting example a player is playing a spinning reel game. The modifiers in this example are defined by the game rules as multipliers. The number and values of the multipliers are fixed for all of a series of feature game rounds. According to the game rules a player can apply each multiplier once only in the series of feature game rounds.

[0098] A player triggers a series of 7 feature game rounds from a base game. During the feature game rounds the play of the game is free and prizes can be multiplied by the player selecting a multiplier shown on the screen. Once the multiplier is used, it is removed from the selection process.

[0099] In this example, the player is playing 1 credit per line on 3 lines (bet=3). During free rounds, the cost of a reel spin is 0 and the number of lines played is the same as the originating game. The player has 100 credits remaining before the start of the feature game play.

[0100] A game outcome generated for the first free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. 9a. The symbols on the reels 910 do not include any winning combinations. The player chooses not to apply a modifier and play continues with the next free spin.

[0101] The outcome for the second free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. 9b. The outcome includes 3* DOG on the top line of the reels 910 which pays 10. The player can choose to multiply the win by one of the multipliers 920 930 940 on offer. The player selects the *10 multiplier 920. The win of 10 is multiplied by 10 so the prize paid to the player is 100. The *10 multiplier 920 is removed as an option.

[0102] The outcome for the third free spin is illustrated in FIG. 9c. The symbols on the reels 910 do not include any winning combinations. The player chooses not to apply a modifier and play continues with the next free spin.

[0103] The outcome for the fourth free spin is illustrated in FIG. 9d. This shows a win of 5*A on the top line of the reels 910 and the prize for this symbol combination is 100. The player can choose to multiply this win by the remaining multipliers 930 940. The player chooses *5 multiplier 940. The player is paid 5*100 credits and the 5* multiplier is removed.

[0104] The outcome for the fifth free spin is illustrated in FIG. 9e. The symbols on the reels 910 do not include any winning combinations. The player chooses not to apply a modifier and play continues with the next free spin.

[0105] The outcome for the sixth free spin is illustrated in FIG. 9f. The symbols on the reels 910 include 2*10 on the top row, prize=5, 3* dog on the middle row, prize=10, and 5*K on the bottom row, prize=50. The total prize for the outcome is 65 and the player is asked if they wish to multiply. The player chooses the last multiplier *2 930 and is paid 2*65=130. The *2 multiplier 930 is removed.

[0106] The outcome for the seventh and final free spin is illustrated in FIG. 9g. The symbols on the reels 910 include 5*9 on the top row, prize=50, 3* Q on the middle row, prize=10, and 5*A on the bottom row, prize=100. The total prize is 160 and the player can no longer multiply. The prize paid is 160.

[0107] At the end of the feature game the player has a total of 990 credits.

Example 2

[0108] In the following non limiting example a player is playing a spinning reel game. The modifiers in this example are defined by the game rules as multipliers. The number and values of the multipliers are fixed for all of a series of feature games. According to the game rules a player can apply each multiplier once only in the series of feature game outcomes.

[0109] A player triggers a series of 3 feature game outcomes from a base game. During the feature game rounds the play of the game is free and prizes for each outcome must be multiplied by the player selecting a multiplier shown on the screen. Once the multiplier is used, it is removed from the selection process.

[0110] In this example, the player is playing 1 credit per line on 3 lines (bet=3). During free game rounds, the cost of a reel spin is 0 and the number of lines played is the same as the originating game. The player has 100 credits remaining before the start of the feature game rounds.

[0111] A game outcome generated for the first free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. 10a. The symbols on the reels 1010 do not include any winning combinations. The player must

choose a modifier. The player chooses the *2 multiplier **1030**. The *2 multiplier **1030** is removed and play continues with the next free spin.

[0112] The outcome for the second free spin is illustrated in FIG. **10b**. The symbols on the reels **1010** include 2*10 on the top row, prize=5, 3* dog on the middle row, prize=10, and 5*K on the bottom row, prize=50. The total prize for the outcome is 65 and the player is asked which multiplier to apply. The player chooses the *5 multiplier **1040** and is paid $5*65=325$. The *5 multiplier **940** is removed.

[0113] The outcome for the third and final free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. **10c**. The outcome includes 3* DOG on the top line of the reels **1010** which pays 10. The remaining *10 multiplier **1020** is automatically applied. The win of 10 is multiplied by 10 so the prize paid to the player is 100.

[0114] At the end of the feature game rounds the player has a total of 525 credits.

Example 3

[0115] In the following non limiting example a player is playing a spinning reel game. The modifiers in this example are defined by the game rules as multipliers and they are selected from a set representative of the values of dice facets. According to the game rules a player can apply a multiplier only when a dice symbol appears in a reel spin outcome.

[0116] A player triggers a series of 3 feature game rounds from a base game. During the feature game rounds the play of the game is free and prizes can be multiplied by a multiplier displayed on a dice symbol appearing in a reel spin result. If the player selects not to apply the modifier for an outcome, a new modifier is selected and automatically applied to modify any prize.

[0117] In this example, the player is playing 1 credit per line on 3 lines (bet=3). During free game rounds, the cost of a reel spin is 0 and the number of lines played is the same as the originating game. The player has 100 credits remaining before the start of the feature game rounds.

[0118] A game outcome generated for the first free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. **11a**. The symbols on the reels **1110** do not include any winning combinations. The DICE modifier **1120** appears on reel two with a value of six. The player applies the modifier, which has no effect on the prize outcome of zero and play continues with the next free spin.

[0119] The outcome for the second free spin is illustrated in FIG. **11b**. The symbols on the reels **1110** include 2*10 on the top row, prize=5, 3* dog on the middle row, prize=10, and 5*K on the bottom row, prize=50. The total prize for the outcome is 65. The DICE modifier **1130** with a value of three appears on reel four. The player is asked whether to apply the modifier or not. The player chooses not to apply the DICE modifier **1130** to multiply the result by three. An animated dice roll is displayed the animated dice comes to rest showing a new modifier value of five. The outcome after the new modifier value is selected is represented in FIG. **11c**. The new DICE modifier **1135** value of five is automatically applied to the prize to be paid $5*65$ so the modified prize paid is 325 credits.

[0120] The outcome for the third and final free reel spin is illustrated in FIG. **11d**. The outcome includes 3* DOG on the top line of the reels **1110** which pays 10. The DICE modifier **1140** appears on reel two with a value of two. The player chooses not to apply the modifier and the dice is roll animation is played again while a new modifier value is selected. The outcome after the new modifier value is selected is rep-

resented in FIG. **11e**. The new DICE modifier **1145** value of one is automatically applied to the prize to be paid $1*10$ so the modified prize paid is 10 credits, whereas if the player had selected to apply the modifier originally the prize paid would have been $2*10$, 20 credits. At the end of the feature game the player has a total of 435 credits.

1. A method of gaming comprising:
 - providing at least one modifier, each modifier adapted to modify a prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome in a manner known in advance by the player; offering the player an option to select a modifier; and applying any selected modifier to modify the prize for the game outcome.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein a modifier can be applied to a given number of game outcomes of a plurality of game outcomes.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the given number is less than a total of the plurality of game outcomes.
4. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein a set of a given number of modifiers are provided and each modifier can be applied for one game outcome only.
5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein each modifier has a different value.
6. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein a plurality of game outcomes are generated and the method comprises the steps for each game outcome of:
 - generating a game outcome;
 - offering the player an option to select a modifier to apply for the game outcome; and
 - applying any selected modifier to any prize for the outcome before generating a next game outcome.
7. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the step of notifying the player of a prize to be awarded before selecting a modifier to apply for the game outcome.
8. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the modifier is provided for feature game outcomes.
9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein access to the feature game outcomes is provided on fulfillment of eligibility criteria.
10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the eligibility criteria is based on a game outcome.
11. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the eligibility criteria is based on player activity.
12. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein feature game outcomes are generated until an end condition is met.
13. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein each modifier is a multiplier.
14. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the modifiers are predetermined.
15. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the modifiers are determined during game play based on predetermined game rules.
16. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the modifiers are determined based on player action.
17. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the modifiers are determined during game play based on a random modifier selection process.
18. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
 - selecting a new modifier when the player selects not to apply the modifier; and
 - applying the new modifier to modify the prize for the game outcome.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the new modifier is randomly selected from a set of modifiers.

20. A game controller comprising:

a game outcome generator adapted to generate a game outcome for a player based on a random result;

a game outcome evaluator adapted to determine a prize to be awarded to the player when predetermined winning criteria occur in the game outcome; and

a prize manager adapted to apply a player selected modifier to modify, in a manner known in advance by the player, the prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome.

21. A game system comprising:

a player interface for entering game play instructions by a player and providing game outcome and prize information to the player;

a game outcome generator adapted to generate a game outcome for a player based on a random result;

a game outcome evaluator adapted to determine a prize to be awarded to the player when predetermined winning criteria occur in the game outcome; and

a prize manager adapted to apply a player selected modifier to modify, in a manner known in advance by the player, the prize to be awarded to a player for a game outcome.

22. A game system as claimed in claim 21 wherein the gaming system is implemented across a network.

23. A game system as claimed in claim 21 wherein the gaming system is implemented as a stand alone gaming system.

24. Computer program code which when executed causes a computer to implement a computer controlled gaming method as claimed in claim 1.

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