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(54) SEQUENCING OF VARIABLE PRIMARY FLOW CHILLER SYSTEM

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(57) ABSTRACT

To provide chilled water, a variable-primary-flow system includes two variable speed pumps that pump water through a first chiller and a second chiller. A control energizes the second chiller in response to a cooling demand exceeding that what can be met by the first chiller operating alone, and de-energizes the second chiller upon the cooling demand decreasing to a level below the first chiller's maximum capacity. When both chillers are operating, the capacities of the chillers are modulated in unison to meet the cooling demand. Likewise, when both pumps are running, their speed is modulated in unison to provide a desired pressure.

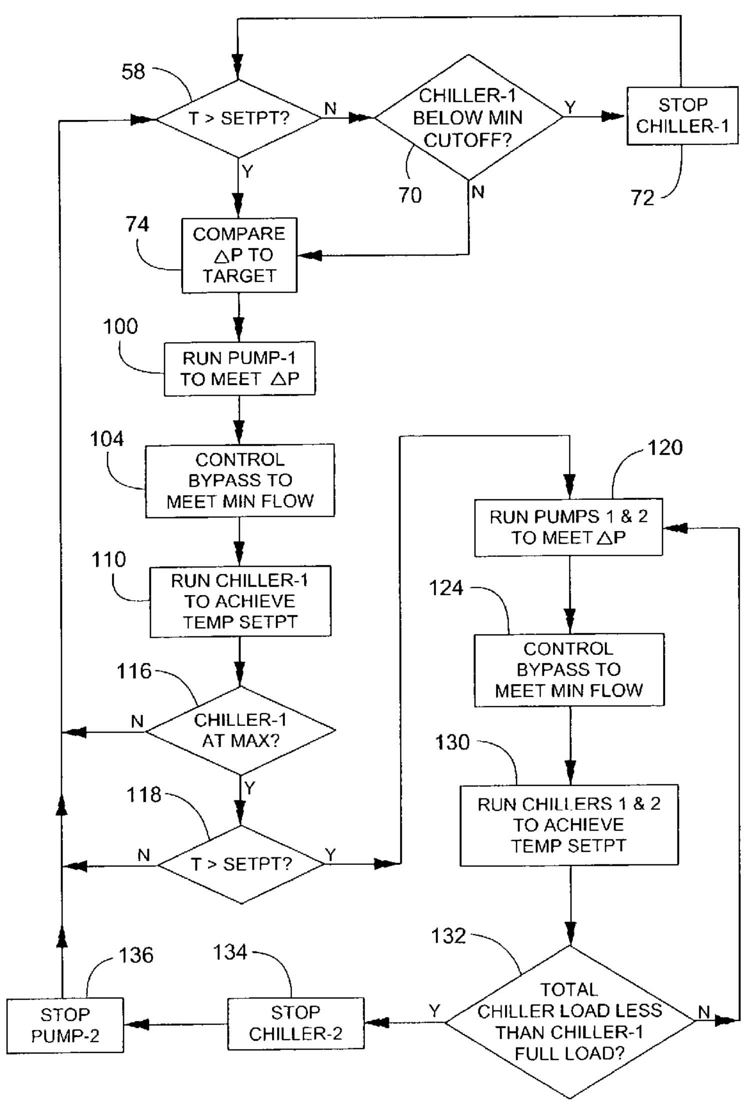

FIG. 1

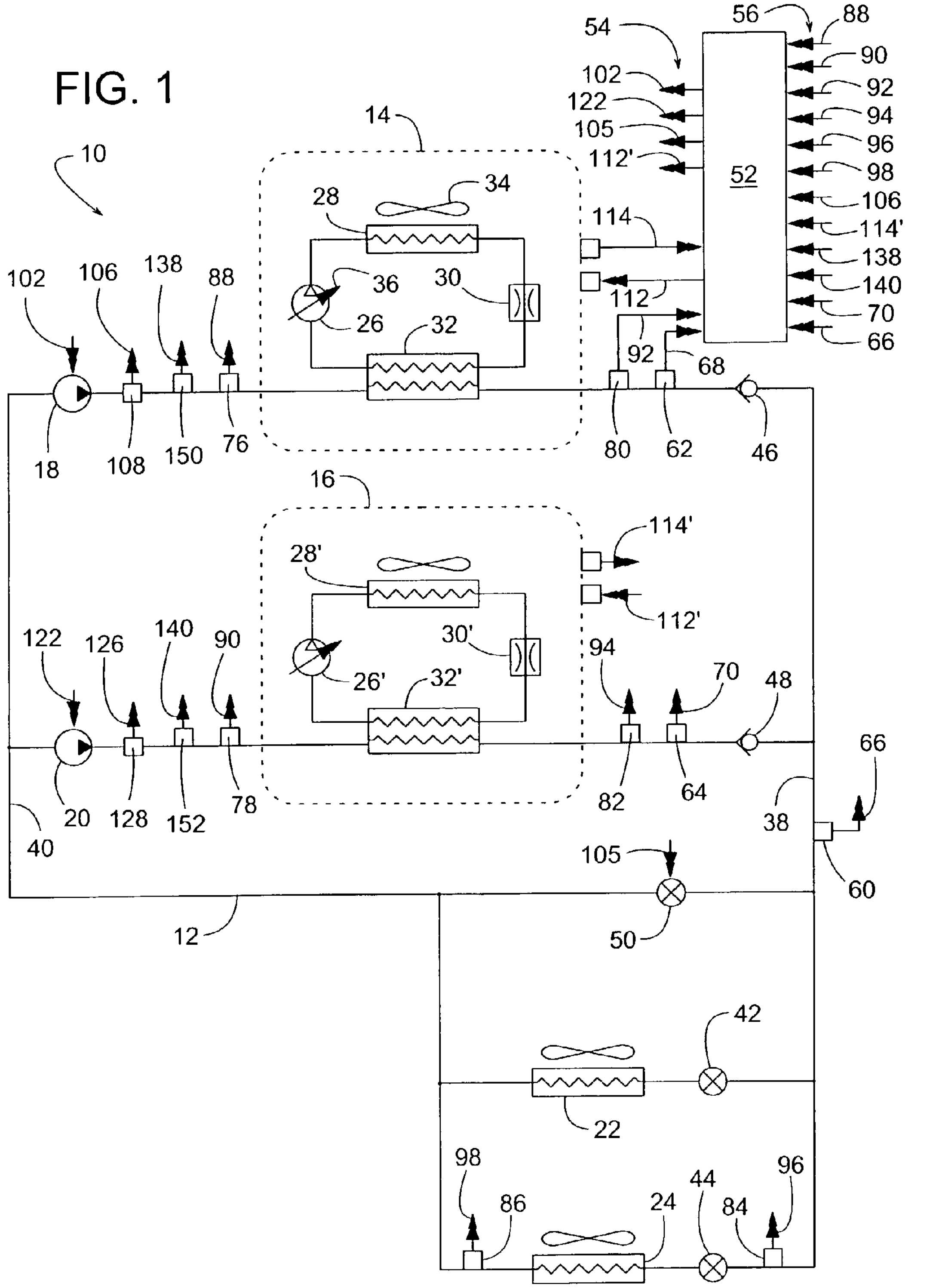
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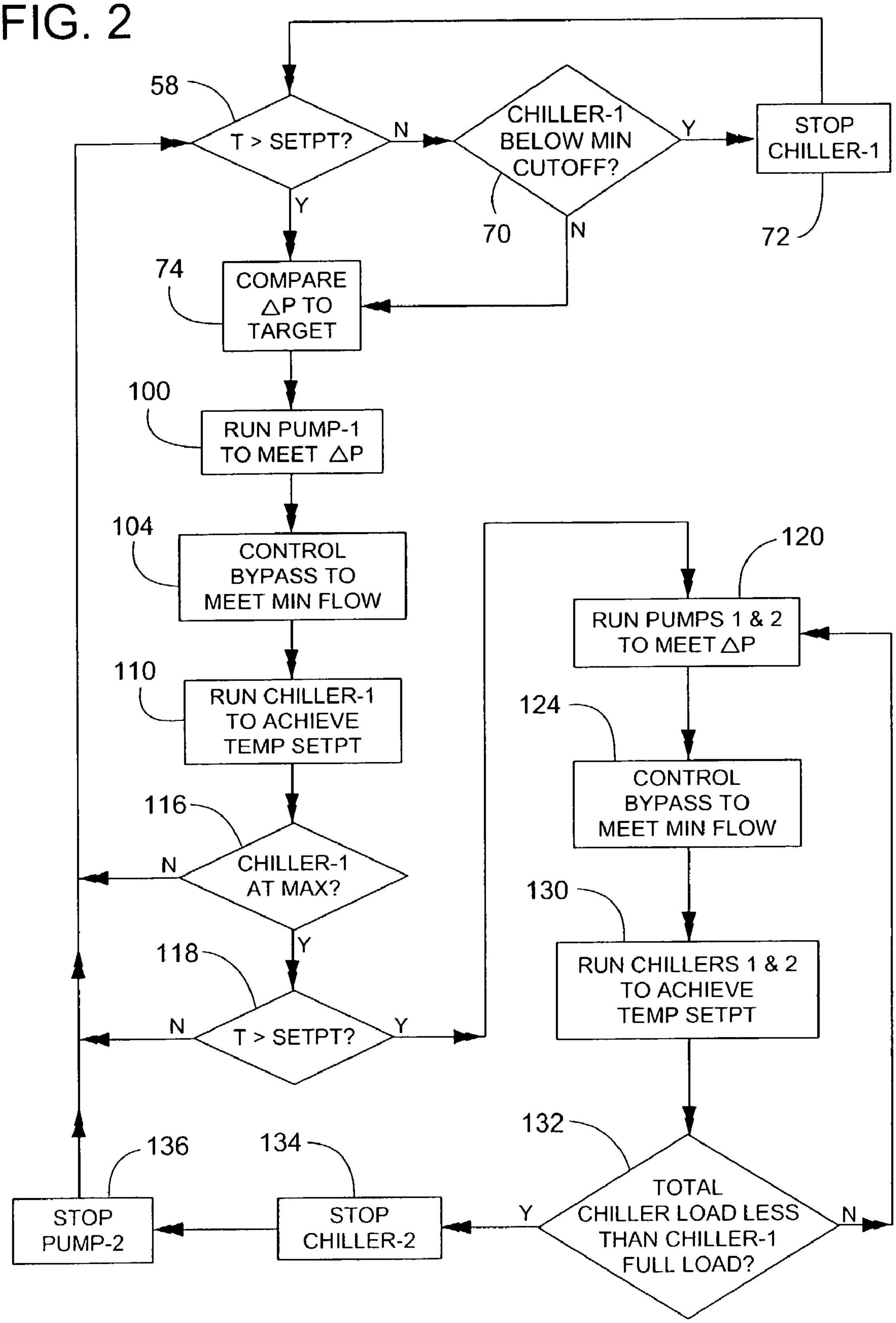
FIG. 2


58
T > SETPT?
N
Y
CHILLER-1 BELOW MIN CUTOFF?
70
Y
N
STOP CHILLER-1
72
74
COMPARE ΔP TO TARGET
100
RUN PUMP-1 TO MEET ΔP
104
CONTROL BYPASS TO MEET MIN FLOW
110
RUN CHILLER-1 TO ACHIEVE TEMP SETPT
116
CHILLER-1 AT MAX?
N
Y
118
T > SETPT?
N
Y
120
RUN PUMPS 1 & 2 TO MEET ΔP
124
CONTROL BYPASS TO MEET MIN FLOW
130
RUN CHILLERS 1 & 2 TO ACHIEVE TEMP SETPT
132
TOTAL CHILLER LOAD LESS THAN CHILLER-1 FULL LOAD?
Y
N
134
STOP CHILLER-2
136
STOP PUMP-2

SEQUENCING OF VARIABLE PRIMARY FLOW CHILLER SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to chilled water systems that include variable flow pumps for circulating the chilled water through multiple chillers. More specifically, the present invention relates to a method of controlling such a system.

[0003] 2. Description of Related Art

[0004] A chiller is an assembly of refrigerant components arranged in a circuit for cooling water. The chilled water is typically pumped to a number of remote heat exchangers or system coils for cooling various rooms or areas within a building.

[0005] In some cases, the water may be cooled by a chiller system comprising two or more chillers. When the cooling demand is low, only one chiller of the system may need to operate, and the operating chiller's capacity may be controlled to match the demand. The cooling demand is often determined by sensing the temperature of the chilled water discharged from the chiller system and comparing the sensed temperature to a predetermined target temperature. If the cooling demand is beyond a single chiller's maximum capacity, one or more additional chillers may need to be energized. Then, the operating chillers are controlled so the system's total capacity (sum of the chillers' individual capacities) meets the cooling demand.

[0006] Meanwhile, the chilled water is pumped at a flow rate that is adequate for each individual chiller and is delivered at a pressure sufficient to meet the needs of the system coils. This can be accomplished by pumping the chilled water with variable speed pumps and/or controlling a bypass valve to convey a portion of the discharged chilled water back to the suction side of the pumps.

[0007] Overall, controlling a chiller system can become quite involved. This is due to the difficulty of coordinating the control of several diverse chiller components, such as multiple chillers of varying capacity, multiple variable speed pumps, and a bypass valve. Moreover, the system components must operate to satisfy various needs, such as meeting the cooling demand, providing sufficient water pressure for the system coils, and providing adequate water flow through the chillers. A need to minimize the power consumption of the chillers and the chilled water pumps further complicates the controls of chiller systems. Although controls of such systems do exist, their actual control schemes may limit their use or effectiveness in certain applications, and their complexity may make them difficult to understand, install and service. Since many chiller installations have unique system requirements, there is a need for a more adaptable, straightforward control scheme for controlling chiller systems with variable speed chilled water pumps.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an object of the present invention to coordinate the operation of multiple chillers, multiple variable speed pumps, and a bypass valve to meet a cooling demand.

[0009] Another object of some embodiments of the invention is to energize a second chiller in response to a cooling demand exceeding that what can be met by a first chiller, and de-energizing the second chiller upon the cooling demand decreasing to a level below the first chiller's maximum capacity.

[0010] Another object of some embodiments is to operate two chillers in unison, whereby the chillers operate at the same capacity with respect to a percentage of their maximum capacity.

[0011] Another object of some embodiments is to operate two pumps at the same speed, but vary their speed to achieve a certain discharge pressure or pressure differential.

[0012] Another object, for a chiller system having two variable speed water pumps, is to maintain sufficient water flow through two chillers by opening a bypass valve that is in parallel flow relationship with the chillers.

[0013] Another object of some embodiments is to vary the speed of two pumps in response to sensing a pressure differential across a remote heat exchanger coil.

[0014] One or more of these objects are provided by a chiller system that includes two variable speed pumps that pump water through a first chiller and a second chiller for cooling the water. A control energizes the second chiller in response to a cooling demand exceeding that what can be met by the first chiller operating alone, and de-energizes the second chiller upon the cooling demand decreasing to a level below the first chiller's maximum capacity.

[0015] The present invention provides a method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller through which water can be pumped to meet a cooling demand. The method comprises: pumping the water through the first chiller at a first flow rate to meet the cooling demand; increasing the cooling demand; in response to increasing the cooling demand, pumping the water through the first chiller at a second flow rate that is less than the first flow rate; and in response to increasing the cooling demand, pumping the water through the second chiller at a third flow rate, wherein the first flow rate is substantially equal to a sum of the second flow rate plus the third flow rate. The present invention also provides, with respect to the water, piping the first chiller and the second chiller in parallel flow relationship with a heat exchanger that is spaced apart from the first chiller and the second chiller, whereby the water is conveyed to the heat exchanger via a supply line and is conveyed from the heat exchanger via a return line; sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line; and controlling the first flow rate, the second flow rate and the third flow rate in response to sensing the water pressure differential.

[0016] The present invention further provides a method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads. The chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger. The chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water. The method comprises increasing the demand for chilled water; in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, changing the operation of the first chiller from operating at the first full load to operating within the first range of partial loads; in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, reducing the first rate at which the first pump forces chilled water through the first chiller; and in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, energizing the second chiller to begin operating the second chiller in the second range of partial loads. The present invention yet further provides, via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger; via a return line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water from the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger; sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line; and varying the first flow rate and the second flow rate in response to sensing the water pressure differential.

[0017] The present invention still further provides a method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water. The first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads. The chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger. The chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water. The method comprises establishing a chilled water temperature target; establishing a chilled water pressure target; selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target; in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while selectively operating the first chiller in the full load and the first range of partial loads to meet the chilled water temperature target; in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; in the high demand mode, operating the first chiller at a first partial load while operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and in the high demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target.

[0018] The present invention additionally provides a method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water. The first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a percent of the first full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a percent of the second full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent. The chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger. The chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water. The method comprises establishing a chilled water temperature target; establishing a chilled water pressure target; selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target; in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while operating the first chiller to meet the chilled water temperature target; in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; in the low demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; in the high demand mode, modulating the first chiller at a percentage of the first full load; and in the high demand mode, modulating the second chiller at a percentage of the second full load and in unison with the first chiller, whereby the percentage of the first full load is substantially equal to the percentage of the second full load.

[0019] The present invention moreover provides a chiller system. The system comprises a first chiller wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads; and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water wherein the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads. The system also comprises a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary; a bypass valve; a first heat exchanger; a second heat exchanger; and a chilled water circuit. The chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water; control circuitry or logic establishing a chilled water temperature target; control circuitry or logic establishing a chilled water pressure target; control circuitry or logic selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target. The system further comprises, in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while selectively operating the first chiller in the full load and the first range of partial loads to meet the chilled water temperature target; control circuitry or logic, in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; control circuitry or logic, in the high demand mode, operating the first chiller at a first partial load while operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and control circuitry or logic, in the high demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target.

[0020] The present invention still further provides a chiller system. The system includes a first chiller where the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a percent of the first full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent; a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water where the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a percent of the second full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent; a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary; and a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary. The system also includes a bypass valve; a first heat exchanger; a second heat exchanger; and a chilled water circuit wherein the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water. The system also includes a controller establishing a chilled water temperature target and a chilled water pressure target, the controller selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target. In the low demand mode, the controller leaves the second chiller inactive while operating the first chiller to meet the chilled water temperature target; in the low demand mode, the controller leaves the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; in the low demand mode, the controller modulates the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target; in the high demand mode, the controller modulates the first chiller at a percentage of the first full load; and in the high demand mode, the controller modulates the second chiller at a percentage of the second full load and in unison with the first chiller. The percentage of the first full load is substantially equal to the percentage of the second full load.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

[0021] **FIG. 1** is a schematic diagram of a chiller system according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0022] **FIG. 2** is a flow chart illustrating a control scheme for the chiller system of **FIG. 1**.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0023] A chiller system **10**, shown in **FIG. 1**, includes multiple chillers for generating chilled water. The term, "chiller" refers to any apparatus having a refrigerant cycle for creating a cooling effect. Multiple pumps force the water through the chillers, and a chilled water circuit **12** distributes the chilled water to various system coils or heat exchangers for cooling rooms or other areas within a building. Although system **10** may include any number of chillers and pumps, for illustration, system **10** will be described as having two chillers **14** and **16**, two pumps **18** and **20**, and two coils **22** and **24**.

[0024] Chillers **14** and **16** are schematically illustrated to represent all types of chillers. In one embodiment of the invention, chiller **14** includes a compressor **26** that forces a refrigerant in series through a condenser **28**, an expansion device **30** (e.g., flow restrictor, orifice, capillary, expansion valve, etc.), and an evaporator **32**. With the aid of a condenser fan **34** (or some other system for promoting the transfer of heat), condenser **28** releases waste heat from relatively hot compressed refrigerant inside condenser **28**. From condenser **28**, the refrigerant expands and its temperature drops upon passing through expansion device **30**. The cooler refrigerant then passes through evaporator **32** to cool the water that pump **18** forces through evaporator **32**. After cooling the water, the refrigerant returns to the suction side of compressor **26** to perpetuate the refrigerant cycle.

[0025] Chiller **14** is preferably provided with a device that can adjust the refrigerant's flow rate for varying the chiller's capacity or cooling effect. Common examples of such a device include, but are not limited to, adjustable inlet guide vanes of a centrifugal compressor, a slide valve of a screw compressor, and a compressor driven by a variable speed motor. All of these examples and more are schematically represented by arrow **36**.

[0026] In some embodiments of the invention, chillers **14** and **16** are similar in that chiller **16** includes a compressor **26'**, a condenser **28'**, an expansion device **30'** and an evaporator **32'**. However, one chiller may have a higher maximum cooling capacity than the other.

[0027] Chillers **14** and **16** may be installed in the same general location (e.g., basement or roof of the building), and system coils **22** and **24** may be installed where they are closer to the areas they cool. To connect the chillers to the coils, chilled water circuit **12** includes a supply line **38** and a return line **40**. Supply line **38** conveys chilled water from chillers **14** and **16** to coils **22** and **24**. From supply line **38**, the chilled water passes through coils **22** and **24** to cool air that a fan forces across the coils to cool the building. Valves **42** and **44** can throttle the flow of chilled water to a coil, thereby providing a way to individually control or limit the amount of cooling for a particular area of the building. After the water passes through the coils, the return line **40** conveys the water back to the inlet side of pumps **18** and **20**.

[0028] To inhibit backflow through the chillers, circuit **12** may include two check valves **46** and **48**. When only one chiller/pump is operating, one of the check valves prevents the water from flowing backwards through the inactive chiller/pump. For example, if chiller **14** and pump **18** are operating while chiller **16** and pump **20** are inactive, check valve **48** prevents water in supply line **38** from flowing backwards in series through evaporator **32'**, pump **20** and into return line **40**. Likewise, check valve **46** prevents water from flowing backwards through evaporator **32** when pump **20** is operating and pump **18** is inactive.

[0029] In some situations, such as during periods of very low cooling demand, valves **42** and **44** may throttle the water flow to such an extent that the total flow rate is inadequate for chiller **14** or **16**. If the flow rate through an operating chiller becomes too low, the water might freeze inside the chiller. To avoid this, a bypass valve **50** may be partially or fully opened to create a shunt that can convey at least a portion of the water from supply line **38** directly to return line **40** without all the water having to first pass though valves **42** and **44**.

[0030] To provide chilled water at a proper temperature and pressure, system **10** includes a controller **52**. Controller **52** is schematically illustrated to encompass a wide variety of electrical devices (programmable or not programmable) having the ability to provide various output signals **54** in response to various input signals **56**. Examples of controller **52** include, but are not limited to, microcomputers, personal computers, dedicated electrical circuits having analog and/or digital components, programmable logic controllers, and various combinations thereof.

[**0031**] In some embodiments of the invention, controller **52** controls chiller system **10** according to the flow chart of **FIG. 2**. In decision block **58**, controller **52** compares the actual chilled water temperature to an established chilled water temperature target or set point. Controller **52** can determine the actual chilled water temperature from a temperature sensor **60** on supply line **38** and/or individual temperature sensors **62** and **64** (associated with chillers **14** and **16**, respectively). Controller **52** may receive temperature-indicating signals **66**, **68** and **70** from temperature sensors **60**, **62** and **64**, respectively. Establishing the chilled water temperature target can be performed through a conventional input device, such as a keyboard, dial, etc.

[**0032**] If block **58** determines that the actual chilled water temperature is less than or equal to the set point, control decision block **70** determines whether chiller **14** should continue operating (provided it was already operating). If chiller **14** is operating below its predetermined minimum capacity, control block **72** deactivates chiller **14**, and control returns to decision block **58**. Otherwise, control shifts to control block **74**, which compares an actual chilled water pressure to an established chilled water pressure target.

[**0033**] Establishing the chilled water pressure target can be a performed at any time before or after the installation of system **10** and may be performed through a conventional input device, such as a keyboard, dial, etc. Controller **52** can determine the actual chilled water pressure from a pressure sensor **76** (sensing pressure of water entering chiller **14**), a pressure sensor **78** (sensing pressure of water entering chiller **16**), a pressure sensor **80** (sensing the pressure of water leaving chiller **14**), a pressure sensor **82** (sensing the pressure of water leaving chiller **16**), a pressure sensor **84** (sensing the pressure of water in supply line **38**, near coil **24**), and/or a pressure sensor **86** (sensing the pressure of water in return line **40**, near coil **24**). The actual chilled water pressure value can be a single pressure reading or a pressure differential between two pressure readings. Controller **52** may receive pressure-indicating signals **88**, **90**, **92**, **94**, **96** and **98** from pressure sensors **76**, **78**, **80**, **82**, **84** and **86**, respectively.

[**0034**] In a currently preferred embodiment, block **74** compares the chilled water pressure target (e.g., a delta-P value) to a pressure differential (signal **96** minus signal **98**) across the system coil (e.g., coil **24**) that is furthest from the chillers. In response to the comparison in block **74**, block **100** directs controller **52** to provide an output signal **102** that causes pump **18** to create a pressure differential across coil **24** that meets the target value. Controlling a pump to modulate pressure is well known to those skilled in the art. For example, pump **18** can be driven by a variable speed motor whose inverter or other control circuitry is responsive to signal **102**.

[**0035**] In block **104**, control **52** varies the opening of bypass valve **50** via a signal **105** if the water flow through chiller **14** is too low. Controller **52** can determine the flow rate by receiving a flow rate input signal **106** from a flow sensor **108**. Alternatively, the flow rate can be determined by comparing known flow characteristics of evaporator **32** to the pressure drop across the evaporator (the difference between pressure signals **92** and **88**).

[**0036**] In block **110**, controller **52** provides one or more output signals **112** that vary the capacity or otherwise control chiller **14** in an attempt to meet the cooling demand with chiller **16** inactive. With only one chiller operating, system **10** is considered as operating in a low demand mode. Controller **52** generates output signal **112** in response to the chilled water temperature signal **66**, chilled water temperature signal **62**, and/or signal **114**, wherein signal **114** represents various common feedback from the operation of chiller **14**. In this example, output signal **112** represents one or more signals for varying the opening of inlet guide vanes and varying the speed of compressor **26**, thereby operating chiller **14** over a range of partial loads between zero and one hundred percent of the chiller's full load. Such control of a single chiller to meet a cooling demand can be accomplished by any of the numerous control functions well known to those skilled in the art.

[**0037**] Periodically, decision block **116** determines whether chiller **14** is operating at its rated full load. If not, control of system **10** continues as just described. However, if chiller **14** is at full load, another decision block **118** determines whether chiller **14** is able to maintain the chilled water temperature at or below its target temperature. If chiller **14** operating at full load is sufficient to meet the cooling demand, control returns to block **58** whose function has already been defined.

[**0038**] Referring back to block **118**, if chiller **14** is unable to meet the cooling demand, control shifts to block **120** to change the operation of system **10** to a high demand mode. In the high demand mode, block **120** directs controller **52** to provide an output signal **122** that activates pump **20**. Controller **52** now modulates both pumps **18** and **20** to create a pressure differential across coil **24** that meets the water pressure target. Upon switching from the low demand mode to the high demand mode, signal **102** will reduce the speed of pump **18**, since two pumps are now running instead of just one. Ideally, the flow rate through pump **18** operating alone during the low demand mode will be about equal to the combined flow rates through pumps **18** and **20** during the high demand mode. In the high demand mode, the speed modulation of both pumps can be simplified by controlling their speed in unison, whereby both pumps are controlled to run at the same speed or at the same percentage of their rated full speed.

[**0039**] In block **124**, controller **52** varies the opening of bypass valve **50** if the water flow through either chiller **14** or **16** is too low. Similar to what was done with chiller **14**, controller **52** can determine the flow rate through evaporator **32'** by receiving a flow rate input signal **126** from a flow sensor **128**. Alternatively, the flow rate through chiller **16** can be determined by comparing known flow characteristics of evaporator **32'** to the pressure drop across the evaporator (the difference between pressure signals **94** and **90**).

[**0040**] In block **130**, controller **52** provides output signals **112** and **112'** to vary the capacity or otherwise control chillers **14** and **16**, respectively. With both chillers operating, system **10** is considered as operating in the high demand mode for meeting generally higher cooling demands. Controller **52** generates output signals **112** and **112'** in response to one or more feedback signals, such as chiller water temperature signals **66**, **68** and **70** and/or signals **114** and **114'**. Signals **114** and **114'** are similar in that they both represent various common feedbacks from the operation of their respective chiller. In this example, output signal **112'** represents one or more signals for varying the opening of inlet guide vanes and varying the speed of compressor **26'**, thereby operating chiller **16** over a range of partial loads between zero and one hundred percent of the chiller's full load. In the high demand mode, the capacity of chillers **14** and **16** are preferably modulated in unison, whereby both chillers operate at the same percentage of their respective full load rating. For example, at times, both chillers operate at 50% of their full load, and other times they both chillers operate at 75% of their full load. This can be done even when one chiller has a significantly higher full load capacity than the other.

[**0041**] Periodically, a decision block **132** determines whether system **10** can return to operating in the low demand mode. This is done by considering the combined partial loads of both chillers **14** and **16** and comparing that to the rated full load of chiller **14**. If the rated full load of chiller **14** is appreciably greater than the combined partial loads of both chillers, control block **134** will deactivate chiller **16**, and block **136** will stop pump **20**, thereby returning system **10** to its low demand mode of operation. Otherwise, control returns to block **120**, and system **10** continues operating in the high demand mode.

[**0042**] When a chiller is operating at less than full load, the chiller's partial load can be determined in various ways that are well known to those skilled in the art. For example, the electrical current to the motor that drives the compressor can be measured (e.g., signal **114** or **114'**), and the chiller's percent of full load can be approximated as a ratio of the motor's current draw at part load to the motor's current draw at full load. Alternatively, a chiller's load can be defined as a product of the flow rate of chilled water passing through the chiller's evaporator (e.g., signal **106** or **126**) times the chilled water's temperature drop upon passing through the evaporator. Such a temperature drop can be determined by installing temperature sensors **150** and **152**, which provide signals **138** and **140** that indicate the temperature of the water entering evaporators **32** and **32'** respectively. The temperature drop will then be the value of signal **68** minus the value of signal **138** for evaporator **32**, or the value of signal **70** minus the value of signal **140** for evaporator **32'**. Sensing the position of a compressor's inlet guide vanes, the position of a compressor's slide valve, and/or a compressor's speed are other ways of determining a chiller's operating load.

[**0043**] Although the invention is described with reference to a preferred embodiment, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other variations are well within the scope of the invention. Therefore, the scope of the invention is to be determined by reference to the claims, which follow.

We claim:

1. A method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller through which water can be pumped to meet a cooling demand, comprising:

pumping the water through the first chiller at a first flow rate to meet the cooling demand;

increasing the cooling demand;

in response to increasing the cooling demand, pumping the water through the first chiller at a second flow rate that is less than the first flow rate; and

in response to increasing the cooling demand, pumping the water through the second chiller at a third flow rate, wherein the first flow rate is substantially equal to a sum of the second flow rate plus the third flow rate.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

with respect to the water, piping the first chiller and the second chiller in parallel flow relationship with a heat exchanger that is spaced apart from the first chiller and the second chiller, whereby the water is conveyed to the heat exchanger via a supply line and is conveyed from the heat exchanger via a return line;

sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line; and

controlling the first flow rate, the second flow rate and the third flow rate in response to sensing the water pressure differential.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

with respect to the water, piping the first chiller and the second chiller in parallel flow relationship with a bypass valve;

determining whether the first flow rate, the second flow rate, and the third flow decreases to a predetermined minimum flow rate; and

opening the bypass valve in response to at least one of the first flow rate, the second flow rate, and the third flow decreasing to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising sensing a water pressure drop across at least one of the first chiller and the second chiller to determine whether the first flow rate, the second flow rate, and the third flow has decreased to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

5. A method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads, wherein the chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger, wherein the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water, the method comprising:

increasing the demand for chilled water;

in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, changing the operation of the first chiller from operating at the first full load to operating within the first range of partial loads;

in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, reducing the first rate at which the first pump forces chilled water through the first chiller; and

in response to increasing the demand for chilled water, energizing the second chiller to begin operating the second chiller in the second range of partial loads.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

via a return line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water from the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line; and

varying the first flow rate and the second flow rate in response to sensing the water pressure differential.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

with respect to chilled water flowing through the supply line, installing the second heat exchanger further downstream than the first heat exchanger; and

sensing the water pressure differential at a location that is closer to the second heat exchanger than the first heat exchanger.

8. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

determining whether at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreases to a predetermined minimum flow rate; and

opening the bypass valve in response to at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreasing to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising sensing a water pressure drop across at least one of the first chiller and the second chiller to determine whether the first flow rate and the second flow rate has decreased to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

10. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger; and

determining the demand for chilled water by sensing a temperature of the chilled water in the supply line.

11. The method of claim 5, further comprising:

operating the first chiller at a first partial load;

operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and

deactivating the second chiller when the sum of the first partial load plus the second partial load is less than the first full load.

12. The method of claim 5, further comprising: at times, running the first pump and the second pump at varying speed and in unison, whereby the speed of the first pump and the speed of the second pump are substantially equal.

13. A method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads, wherein the chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger, wherein the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water, the method comprising:

establishing a chilled water temperature target;

establishing a chilled water pressure target;

selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target;

in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while selectively operating the first chiller in the full load and the first range of partial loads to meet the chilled water temperature target;

in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

in the high demand mode, operating the first chiller at a first partial load while operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and

in the high demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

via a return line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water from the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line, wherein the chilled water pressure target is a predetermined value of the water pressure differential.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:

with respect to chilled water flowing through the supply line, installing the second heat exchanger further downstream than the first heat exchanger; and

sensing the water pressure differential at a location that is closer to the second heat exchanger than the first heat exchanger.

16. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

determining whether at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreases to a predetermined minimum flow rate; and

opening the bypass valve in response to at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreasing to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising sensing a water pressure drop across at least one of the first chiller and the second chiller to determine whether the first flow rate and the second flow rate has decreased to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

18. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger; and

determining the demand for chilled water by sensing a temperature of the chilled water in the supply line.

19. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

operating the first chiller at a first partial load;

operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and

deactivating the second chiller when the sum of the first partial load plus the second partial load is less than the first full load.

20. The method of claim 13, further comprising: at times, running the first pump and the second pump at varying speed and in unison, whereby the speed of the first pump and the speed of the second pump are substantially equal.

21. A method of controlling a chiller system that includes a first chiller and a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a percent of the first full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent, and the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a percent of the second full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent, wherein the chiller system further includes a chilled water circuit, a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary, a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary, a bypass valve, a first heat exchanger, and a second heat exchanger, wherein the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water, the method comprising:

establishing a chilled water temperature target;

establishing a chilled water pressure target;

selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target;

in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while operating the first chiller to meet the chilled water temperature target;

in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

in the low demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

in the high demand mode, modulating the first chiller at a percentage of the first full load; and

in the high demand mode, modulating the second chiller at a percentage of the second full load and in unison with the first chiller, whereby the percentage of the first full load is substantially equal to the percentage of the second full load.

22. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

via a return line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water from the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger;

sensing a water pressure differential between the supply line and the return line, wherein the chilled water pressure target is a predetermined value of the water pressure differential.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising:

with respect to chilled water flowing through the supply line, installing the second heat exchanger further downstream than the first heat exchanger; and

sensing the water pressure differential at a location that is closer to the second heat exchanger than the first heat exchanger.

24. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

determining whether at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreases to a predetermined minimum flow rate; and

opening the bypass valve in response to at least one of the first flow rate and the second flow rate decreasing to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising sensing a water pressure drop across at least one of the first chiller and the second chiller to determine whether the first flow rate and the second flow rate has decreased to the predetermined minimum flow rate.

26. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

via a supply line of the chilled water circuit, conveying the chilled water to the first heat exchanger and the second heat exchanger; and

determining the demand for chilled water by sensing a temperature of the chilled water in the supply line.

27. The method of claim 21, further comprising: at times, running the first pump and the second pump at varying speed and in unison, whereby the speed of the first pump and the speed of the second pump are substantially equal.

28. A chiller system comprising:

a first chiller wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a first range of partial loads;

a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a second range of partial loads;

a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary,

a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary;

a bypass valve;

a first heat exchanger;

a second heat exchanger;

a chilled water circuit, the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water;

means for establishing a chilled water temperature target;

means for establishing a chilled water pressure target;

means for selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target;

means for, in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while selectively operating the first chiller in the full load and the first range of partial loads to meet the chilled water temperature target;

means for, in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

means for, in the high demand mode, operating the first chiller at a first partial load while operating the second chiller at a second partial load; and

means for, in the high demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target.

29. A chiller system comprising:

a first chiller wherein the first chiller is selectively operable at a first full load and a percent of the first full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent;

a second chiller for meeting a demand for chilled water, wherein the second chiller is selectively operable at a second full load and a percent of the second full load ranging from zero to one hundred percent;

a first pump for forcing the chilled water through the first chiller at a first flow rate that may vary;

a second pump for forcing the chilled water through the second chiller at a second flow rate that may vary;

a bypass valve;

a first heat exchanger;

a second heat exchanger;

a chilled water circuit wherein the chilled water circuit connects the first chiller, the second chiller, the bypass valve, the first heat exchanger, and the second heat exchanger in parallel flow relationship with respect to the flow of chilled water;

means for establishing a chilled water temperature target;

means for establishing a chilled water pressure target;

means for selectively operating the chiller system in a high demand mode and a low demand mode to meet the chilled water temperature target;

means for, in the low demand mode, leaving the second chiller inactive while operating the first chiller to meet the chilled water temperature target;

means for, in the low demand mode, leaving the second pump inactive while modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

means for, in the low demand mode, modulating the pressure of the chilled water by controlling the operation of the first pump and the second pump to meet the chilled water pressure target;

means for, in the high demand mode, modulating the first chiller at a percentage of the first full load; and

means for, in the high demand mode, modulating the second chiller at a percentage of the second full load and in unison with the first chiller, whereby the percentage of the first full load is substantially equal to the percentage of the second full load.

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