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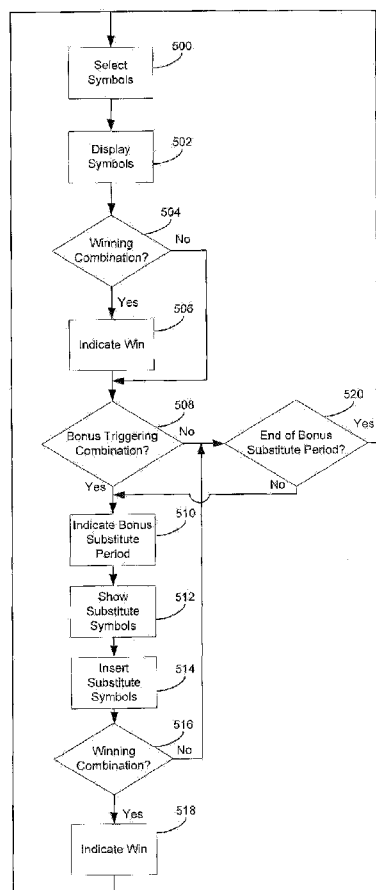
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(54) Title: GAMING APPARATUS WITH BONUS AWARD



(57) Abstract: Gaming apparatus (100) including (a) a symbol display area (224), which displays a plurality of symbols; (b) a symbol selection component (300), which selects symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and arranges for them to be displayed on the symbol display area; (c) a win-indicating component (302), which indicates a win when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules; (d) a bonus-indicating component (304), which indicates a bonus substitute period when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules; (e) a substitute symbol insertion component (306), which arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area when a bonus substitute period is indicated; wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.

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## GAMING APPARATUS WITH BONUS AWARD

## Field of the Invention

This invention relates to gaming apparatus. It relates particularly to  
5 gaming apparatus which displays a random arrangement of symbols and  
awards a win based on a pattern of symbols which complies with a  
predetermined set of rules.

## Background to the Invention

10 One of the most common types of gaming apparatus is a slot machine,  
also known as a poker machine or a fruit machine. Classically, a slot machine is  
a coin-operated machine with three or more reels that rotate when a lever on  
the side of the machine is pulled. The machine typically pays off based on  
patterns of matching symbols visible on the front of the machine when it stops.  
15 More contemporary slot machines use a video display in place of rotating reels  
to display symbols, although the images shown on the video display are usually  
designed to imitate the appearance of rotating reels.

A "spin" typically involves inserting money into a slot, or in more  
contemporary machines providing a payment such as an electronic payment  
20 and selecting a stake amount, and then pulling a handle, pressing a button or in  
some other way activating the machine, which then causes the reels to rotate  
(or the simulated reels to simulate rotation) or some other movement of symbols  
(for example dropping something into a bucket or a spinning action on each  
symbol as opposed to the spinning of the reels) before coming to rest and  
25 displaying a pattern of symbols.

It will be appreciated that the use of a slot machine can become quite  
repetitive, so variations in the manner of play are sometimes introduced in order  
to improve the entertainment provided. A common type of variation is a "free  
spin", in which the player is awarded one or more free spins after playing a  
30 predetermined number of losing spins, or when a predetermined triggering  
event occurs. In another example, a free spin occurs after having achieved a  
display pattern of symbols which does not qualify for a "win" according to the  
predetermined rules of the game, but which does qualify for a free

spin. However, the use of free spins is disadvantageous from the machine owner's point of view because it results in reduced revenue. From the player's point of view, the degree of excitement generated by a free spin is relatively small because a free spin has no lasting value, and the free spin is typically identical to a paid spin apart from the insertion of money or wagering of a new stake.

A reference herein to a document or other matter which is described as prior art is not to be taken as an admission that that document or matter was known or that the information it contains was part of the common general knowledge as at the priority date of any of the claims herein.

#### Summary of the Invention

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided gaming apparatus including:

- (a) a symbol display area, which displays a plurality of symbols;
- (b) a symbol selection component, which selects symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and arranges for them to be displayed on the symbol display area;
- (c) a win-indicating component, which indicates a win when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;
- (d) a bonus-indicating component, which indicates a bonus substitute period when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules;
- (e) a substitute symbol insertion component, which arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area when a bonus substitute period is indicated;

wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.

Optionally, the gaming apparatus may include a stake selection component which enables a player to select different amounts to wager as a stake on different games. This enables the player to set a higher stake when a bonus substitute period is indicated, which is desirable from the player's point of

view because the probability of winning is higher during a bonus substitute period.

A bonus-triggering combination may be any suitable combination of symbols. In preferred arrangements, a bonus-triggering combination consists of  
5 one or more trigger symbols. The length of the bonus substitute period and/or the number of substitute symbols available during a bonus substitute period can be determined by one or more of the following:

- (a) the number of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
- (b) the arrangement of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
- 10 (c) a trigger symbol and a multiplier symbol in the symbol display area
- (d) the amount of a stake wagered in respect of a win.

In one arrangement of the invention, the symbols appearing in the symbol display area are arranged in rows and columns, and when substitute  
15 symbols are inserted, they fill one or more complete columns.

In one arrangement of the invention, the one or more substitute symbols are shown outside the symbol display area during a bonus substitute period and appear to fly into the symbol display area when a pattern of symbols is displayed.

20 In one arrangement of the invention, the substitute symbols are added as an extra column to the columns displayed in the symbol display area.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of processing win outcomes for a player on gaming apparatus which includes a symbol display area, the method including the steps of:

- 25 (a) the gaming apparatus selecting symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and displaying them on the symbol display area;
- (b) the gaming apparatus indicating a win if the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination
- 30 according to preselected rules;
- (c) the gaming apparatus indicating a bonus substitute period if the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules; and

(d) when a bonus substitute period is indicated, the gaming apparatus arranging for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area; wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.

5 According to a third aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming apparatus including:

- (a) a symbol display area, which displays a plurality of symbols;
- (b) a symbol selection component, which selects symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and arranges for them to be  
10 displayed on the symbol display area;
- (c) a win-indicating component, which indicates a win when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;
- (d) a symbol-purchasing component, which indicates that one or more  
15 substitute symbols may be purchased;
- (e) a substitute symbol insertion component, which arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area when a substitute symbol has been purchased;

wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area  
20 improves the probability of a win.

According to a fourth aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of processing win outcomes for a player on gaming apparatus which includes a symbol display area, the method including the steps of:

- (a) the gaming apparatus selecting symbols from amongst a  
25 predefined set of symbols, and displaying them on the symbol display area;
- (b) the gaming apparatus indicating a win if the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;
- (c) the gaming apparatus indicating the possibility to purchase a  
30 substitute symbol; and
- (d) when a substitute symbol purchasing opportunity is indicated, and the player elects to purchase substitute symbols, the gaming

apparatus arranging for insertion of one or more purchased substitute symbols into the symbol display area;

wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.

5

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will hereinafter be described in greater detail by reference to the attached drawings which show example forms of the invention. It is to be understood that the particularity of those drawings does not supersede the  
10 generality of the preceding description of the invention.

Figure 1 is a perspective diagram of a gaming apparatus.

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of various elements of the gaming apparatus of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of various control components used to  
15 control operation of the gaming apparatus of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a schematic representation of a display area of gaming apparatus according to an embodiment of the invention.

Figure 5 is a flow chart showing steps involved in the operation of a first embodiment of the gaming apparatus of Figure 1.

20 Figure 6 shows the display area of Figure 4 with the Free Substitute Bonus indication activated.

Figure 7 shows the display area of Figure 6 with available substitute symbols shown during a bonus substitute period.

25 Figure 8 shows the display area of Figure 6 with substitute symbols applied.

Figure 9 shows the display area of Figure 8 with two winning combinations highlighted.

Figure 10 shows the display area of Figure 7 with the substitute symbols applied as an extra column or "bonus reel".

30 Figure 11 is a flow chart showing steps involved in the operation of a second embodiment of the gaming apparatus of Figure 1.

#### Detailed Description

Referring now to Figures 1 and 2, there is shown generally a gaming apparatus 100 including various standard components, such as a controller 200 for controlling the operation of the gaming apparatus 100 and the games run on it, a coin/token/card input 202 for receiving bets, a coin/token/card output 204 for paying out winnings, a display 206 for displaying game screens, and user inputs 208 for allowing user interaction, which may include e.g. buttons 210 and which may e.g. be provided as part of the display 206 in a touch-screen type manner.

The gaming apparatus 100 may be a stand-alone machine. It may also be networked with other gaming apparatuses and/or a control centre via a suitable communications network 212, such as a LAN and/or WAN, in order to play networked (e.g. intranet or Internet) games, such as a linked jackpot.

In use, the gaming apparatus 100 will display an initial gaming screen on the display 206. A player will insert coins, tokens and/or a payment card into the input 202, and will press a button 210 to initiate play. How matters then proceed will depend on the type of game being played. For example, in a slot machine-type game, the gaming apparatus will display virtual reels of symbols, and will spin and stop these reels in various win and lose symbol combinations on a payline in accordance with a stored gaming algorithm and random number generator. The player may interact with the machine via the buttons 210, so as e.g. to spin or hold reels, or to obtain and throw away cards. Whatever game is played, a common element will be win events, e.g. particular symbol or card combinations, that pay out a prize or jackpot.

The controller 200 includes a processor 214, a main memory 216 for storing a series of computer program instructions to cause the processor 212 to carry out a desired sequence of operations, a secondary memory 218 for storing data generated during operation of the gaming apparatus 100, an input/output module 220 to enable command and data signals to be communicated between the controller 200 and the other elements shown in Figure 2, and a communications bus 222 to enable communication between the processor 214, main memory 216, secondary memory 218 and input/output module 220.

As shown in Figure 3, the series of computer program instructions stored in the main memory 216 may includes a number of components, such as a

symbol selection component 300, a win indicating component 302, a bonus indicating component 304, a substitute symbol insertion component 306, a stake selection component 308 and a symbol purchasing component 310.

Figure 4 is a schematic representation of a display area of gaming apparatus according to an embodiment of the invention. The display area includes a symbol display area, which displays a plurality of symbols – in this case, a matrix of 3 rows by 5 columns, representing 5 reels each displaying 3 symbols.

As seen in Figure 5, when a player initiates a “spin” on the gaming apparatus by pulling a lever, pressing a button, touching a screen, or some other suitable means, the symbol selection component 300 selects symbols at step 500 from amongst a predefined set of symbols and arranges for them to be displayed on the symbol display area 224 at step 502. In operation, each column illustrated in Figure 4 simulates the appearance of a rotating reel with a number of different symbols on the outside of the reel, and the reel eventually comes to a stop at a random position in its rotation, displaying three symbols.

In this particular game, a “win” occurs when four or five adjacent symbols in a row on the symbol display area are identical. When such an event is detected at step 504 an event, the win-indicating component 302, which may include visual and aural signals, indicates at step 506 that a win has occurred. It will be appreciated that there are numerous different possible rules for determining whether a pattern of symbols includes a “winning combination”; for example, wins might occur if a given number of adjacent symbols have matching colours or are in numeric sequence, or if a given number of the same symbol appear regardless of location on the symbol display area.

The bonus-indicating component 304, indicates a bonus substitute period when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules. In the present example, the three “T” symbols appearing in Figure 4 (highlighted in boxes with a thick border) in this instance represent triggers which trigger a “bonus substitute period” which last for a predetermined number of “spins”, such as ten “spins”.

When a bonus triggering combination is detected at step 508, the bonus-indicating component 304 may indicate a bonus period at step 510 in any suitable manner, which may include visual and aural signals. In the embodiment shown in Figure 6, the bonus-indicating component is a shaded box labelled  
5 "Free Substitute Bonus". In the embodiment shown in Figure 7, the bonus-indicating component also shows the substitute symbols which will be used at step 512, thereby enhancing the immediacy of the substitute experience. The symbols shown at the right hand side can be made to "fly in" to their substituted positions, thus making the gaming experience more immediate.

10 The substitute symbol insertion component 306, arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area at step 514 when a bonus substitute period is indicated. In the example given in Figures 6 and 8, three substitute symbols (each designated by the letter "S") are inserted to replace the second column in the matrix of Figure 2, creating the matrix pattern  
15 of Figure 8.

The insertion of the substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win. In the case illustrated in Figure 8, each of the "S" symbols functions as a wildcard, so that, as indicated by the boxes with thick outlines in Figure 9, this results in two "winning" patterns, namely the top  
20 row which includes "A S A A", and the bottom row which includes "K S K K K". As the symbol "S" functions as a wildcard, these patterns are equivalent to "A A A A" and "K K K K K". Four or five identical adjacent symbols in a row on the symbol display area constitute a winning pattern, according to the rules predefined for the game. If a winning combination is detected at step 516, the  
25 win indicating component 302 indicates at step 518 that a win has occurred.

An alternative to the use of substitute symbols as replacements of existing symbols, as illustrated in Figures 8 and 9, is the use of substitute symbols as an extra reel, forming an extra column in the matrix as shown in Figure 10. In this case, the extra column of "S" symbols results in a pattern of "K  
30 K K S" appearing in the bottom row, which is equivalent to a winning pattern of four adjacent "K"s.

Although the examples show three substitute symbols inserted in a single row, it will be appreciated that the invention can work with any suitable

number of substitute symbols, and the symbols need not fill an entire row or column. The substitute symbols can have any suitable value; they do not have to be "wildcard" symbols.

5 The stake selection component 308 which enables a player to set a stake for each game. As the chances of winning a game during a bonus substitute period are higher than for a normal game, this permits a player to select a higher stake when a bonus substitute period is indicated.

10 In the example illustrated in Figure 4, a symbol display showing three trigger symbols ("T"s) constitutes a bonus-triggering pattern. However, it will be appreciated that any suitable pattern may be defined as a bonus-triggering pattern. For example, there may be no special bonus-triggering symbols; instead particular combinations of other symbols (not being combinations which constitute "wins") may constitute a bonus-triggering pattern. Further, a bonus period may be extended if a further bonus-triggering pattern occurs during the  
15 bonus period.

The length of the bonus substitute period may be a period of time, but more preferably it is a number of "spins", and it can be determined by one or more of the following:

- 20 (a) the number of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
- (b) the arrangement of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
- (c) a trigger symbol and a multiplier symbol in the symbol display area
- (d) the amount of a stake wagered in respect of a win.

25 As seen in Figure 5, the substitute symbol insertion component 306 may be adapted to check at step 520 whether the bonus substitute period has expired before allowing the insertion of substitute symbols.

30 Just as the length of the bonus substitute period may be variable, so the number of substitute symbols available for use in the substitute period may be variable. The number of substitute symbols available during a bonus substitute period may be determined by one or more of the following:

- (a) the number of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
- (b) the arrangement of trigger symbols in the symbol display area

(c) a trigger symbol and a multiplier symbol in the symbol display area

(d) the amount of a stake wagered in respect of a win.

Figure 11 shows a series of steps carried out by the gaming apparatus 5 100 in an alternative embodiment to that shown on Figure 5. In Figure 11, steps 1110 to 1106 are identical to steps 500 to 506 in Figure 5.

The symbol-purchasing component 310 may be provided, either in addition to the bonus-indicating component 304 or as a replacement thereof. In any event, the symbol-purchasing component 310 enables a player to purchase 10 one or more substitute symbols at step 1108. Having purchased one or more substitute symbols (and optionally having those symbols displayed at step 1110), the player may then insert the substitute symbols into the symbol display at step 1112. If a winning combination is detected at step 1114, the win indicating component 302 indicates that a win has occurred at step 1116.

15 Clearly, there will be a cost associated with the purchase of symbols if a player elects this particular option. The cost of purchasing one or more symbols will most likely be decided by the designers and manufacturers of the gaming apparatus and the cost could be as little as one cent or any amount greater and may even exceed the total stake for the particular game.

20 The step of inserting substitute symbols into the symbol display may be done automatically by the gaming apparatus 100 at random, in a random column, or in a manner designed to optimise the player's chances of winning the game. In the example illustrated in Figure 8, the row of substitute symbols has been inserted in the position which best optimises the wins.

25 As an alternative, the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area may be done manually by the player, and it may be up to the player to choose the optimum place for insertion. Depending on the rules selected for playing the game, the substitute symbols may be inserted as a column or as separate entries.

30 It will be appreciated that various alterations, additions and/or modifications may be made to the parts previously described without departing from the spirit and ambit of the invention.

## Claims:

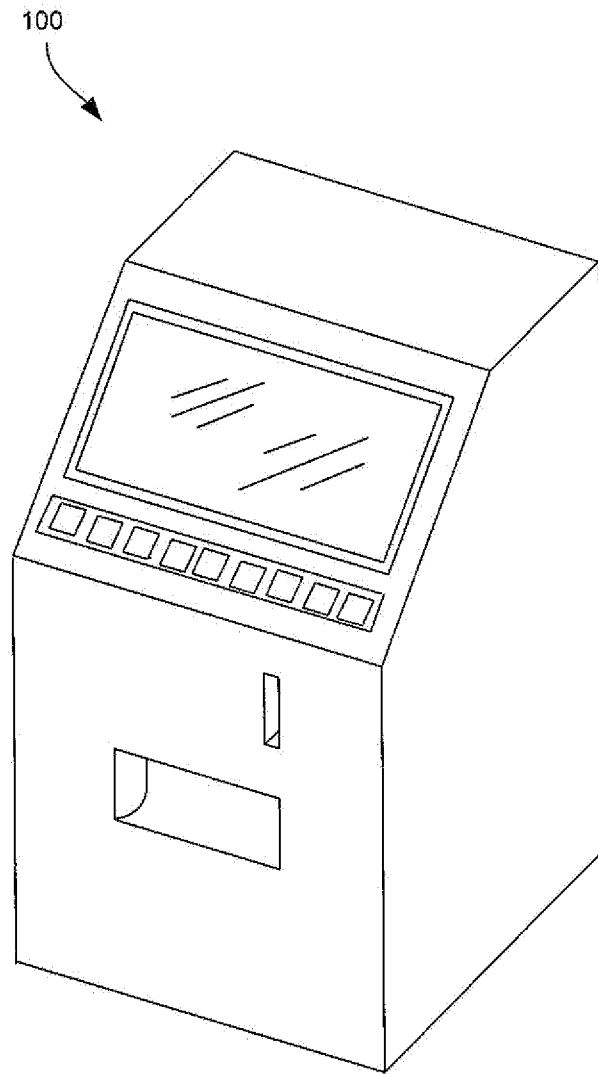
1. Gaming apparatus including:
  - (a) a symbol display area, which displays a plurality of symbols;
  - 5 (b) a symbol selection component, which selects symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and arranges for them to be displayed on the symbol display area;
  - (c) a win-indicating component, which indicates a win when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;
  - 10 (d) a bonus-indicating component, which indicates a bonus substitute period when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules;
  - (e) a substitute symbol insertion component, which arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area
  - 15 when a bonus substitute period is indicated;wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.
- 20 2. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 further including a stake selection component thus providing the option for a player to set a higher stake when a bonus substitute period is indicated.
3. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 wherein a bonus-triggering combination consists of one or more trigger symbols, and the length of the bonus substitute period is determined by one or more of the following:
  - (a) the number of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
  - (b) the arrangement of trigger symbols in the symbol display area
  - (c) a trigger symbol and a multiplier symbol in the symbol display
  - 30 area
  - (d) the amount of a stake wagered in respect of a win.

4. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 wherein a bonus-triggering combination consists of one or more trigger symbols, and the number of substitute symbols available during a bonus substitute period is determined by one or more of the following:
- 5 (a) the number of trigger symbols in the symbol display area  
(b) the arrangement of trigger symbols in the symbol display area  
(c) a trigger symbol and a multiplier symbol in the symbol display area  
(d) the amount of a stake wagered in respect of a win.
- 10 5. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the symbols appearing in the symbol display area are arranged in rows and columns, and when substitute symbols are inserted, they fill one or more symbol locations.
- 15 6. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the one or more substitute symbols are shown outside the symbol display area during a bonus substitute period and appear to fly into the symbol display area when a pattern of symbols is displayed.
- 20 7. Gaming apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the substitute symbols are added as an extra column to the columns displayed in the symbol display area.
8. A method of processing win outcomes for a player on gaming apparatus  
25 which includes a symbol display area, the method including the steps of:  
(a) the gaming apparatus selecting symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and displaying them on the symbol display area;  
(b) the gaming apparatus indicating a win if the symbol display area  
30 displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;

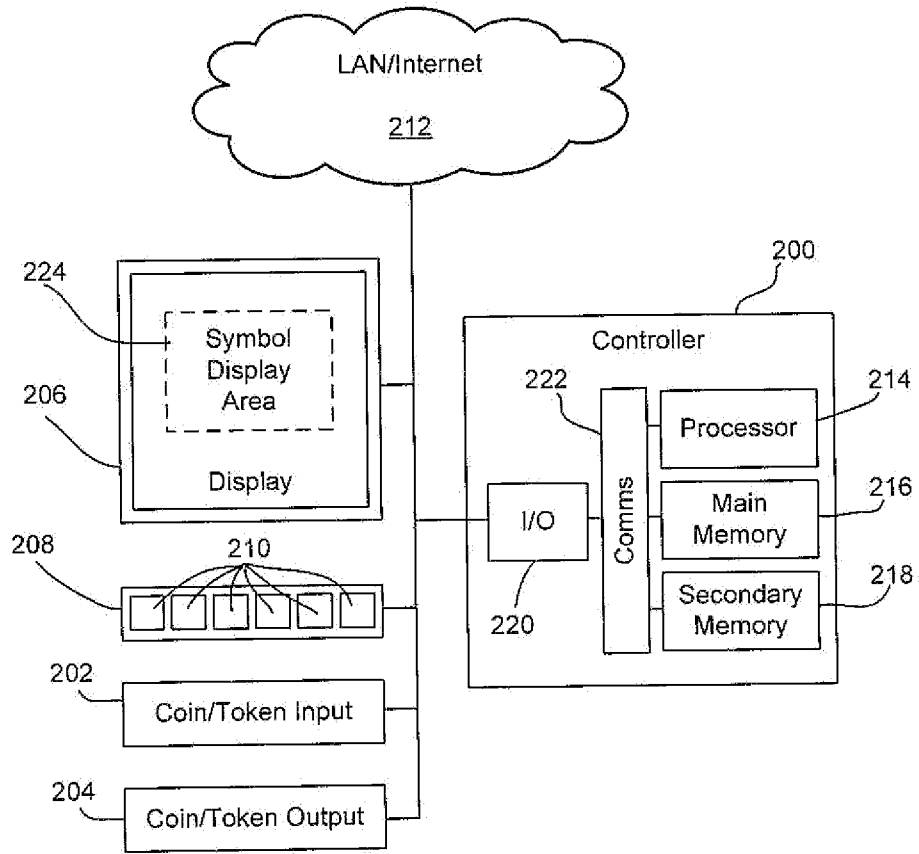
- (c) the gaming apparatus indicating a bonus substitute period if the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a bonus-triggering combination according to preselected rules; and
- (d) when a bonus substitute period is indicated, the gaming apparatus arranging for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area; wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.
- 5
9. Gaming apparatus including:
- 10
- (a) a symbol display area, which displays a plurality of symbols;
- (b) a symbol selection component, which selects symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and arranges for them to be displayed on the symbol display area;
- (c) a win-indicating component, which indicates a win when the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;
- 15
- (d) a symbol-purchasing component, which indicates that one or more substitute symbols may be purchased;
- (e) a substitute symbol insertion component, which arranges for insertion of one or more substitute symbols into the symbol display area when a substitute symbol has been purchased;
- 20
- wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.
- 25
10. A method of processing win outcomes for a player on gaming apparatus which includes a symbol display area, the method including the steps of:
- (a) the gaming apparatus selecting symbols from amongst a predefined set of symbols, and displaying them on the symbol display area;
- 30
- (b) the gaming apparatus indicating a win if the symbol display area displays a pattern of symbols which includes a winning combination according to preselected rules;

- 5
- (c) the gaming apparatus indicating the possibility to purchase a substitute symbol; and
  - (d) when a substitute symbol purchasing opportunity is indicated, and the player elects to purchase substitute symbols, the gaming apparatus arranging for insertion of one or more purchased substitute symbols into the symbol display area;

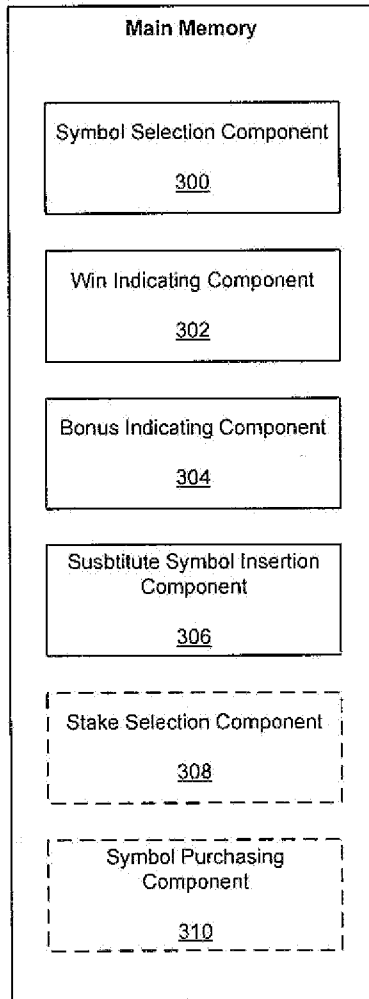
wherein the insertion of substitute symbols into the symbol display area improves the probability of a win.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**

A	Q	Q	K	A
9	J	K	K	T
K	T	J	T	Q

**Figure 4**

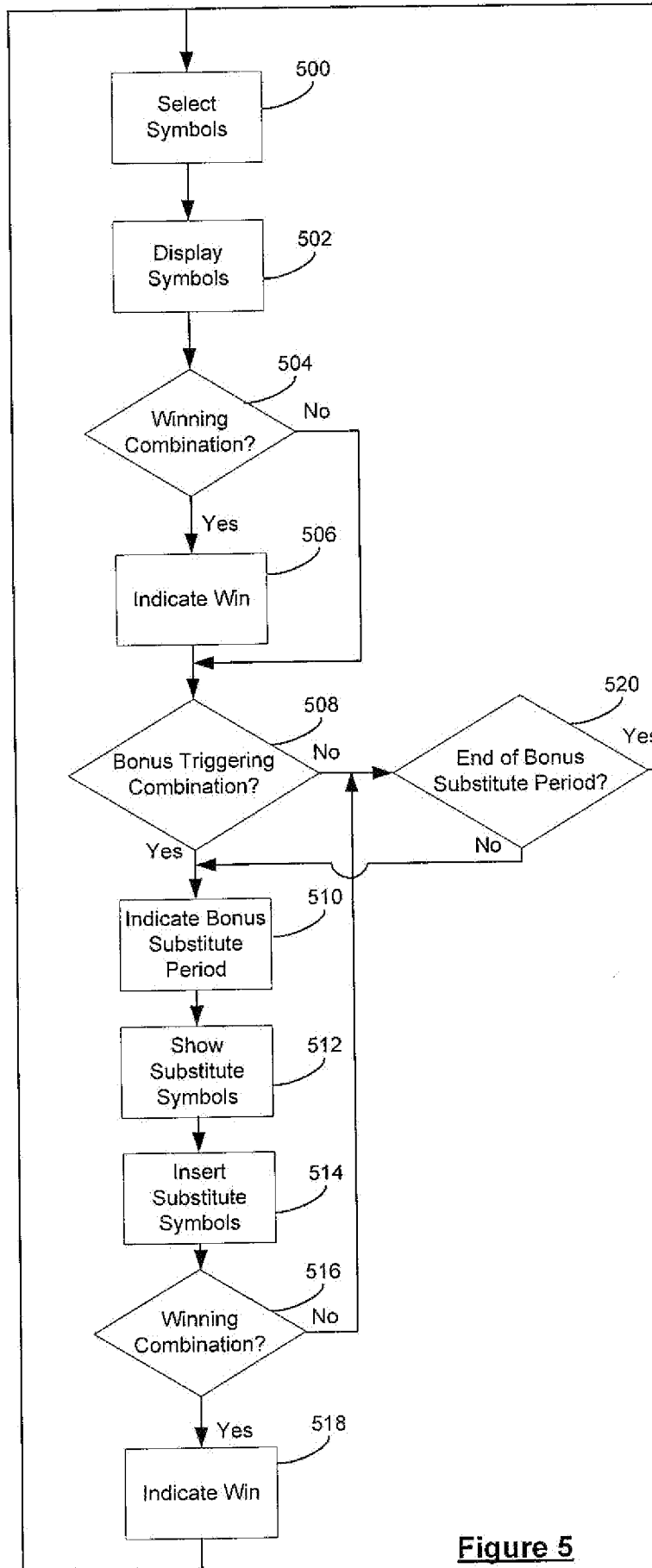


Figure 5

A	Q	A	A	9
Q	J	9	J	Q
K	A	K	K	K

Free Substitute Bonus
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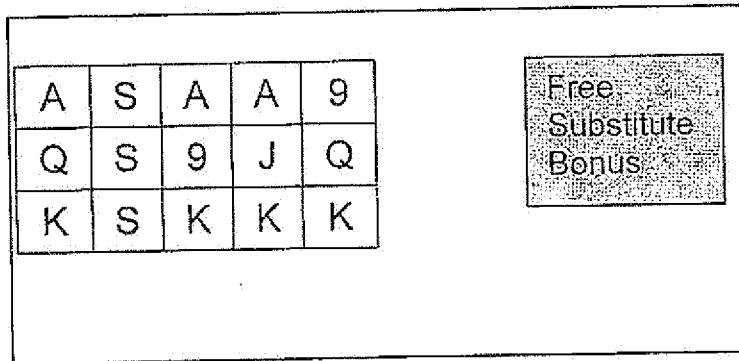
**Figure 6**

A	Q	A	A	9
Q	J	9	J	Q
K	A	K	K	K

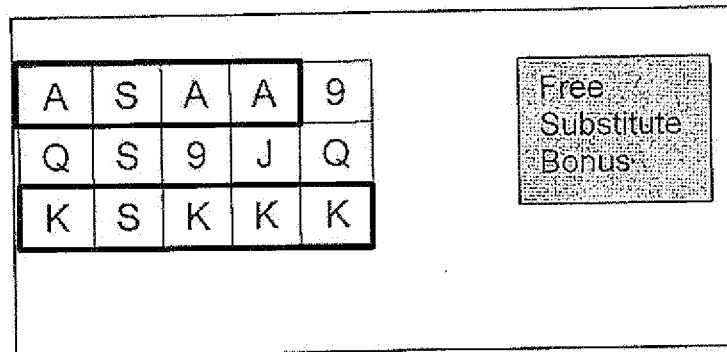
Free Substitute Bonus
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S	S	S
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**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**

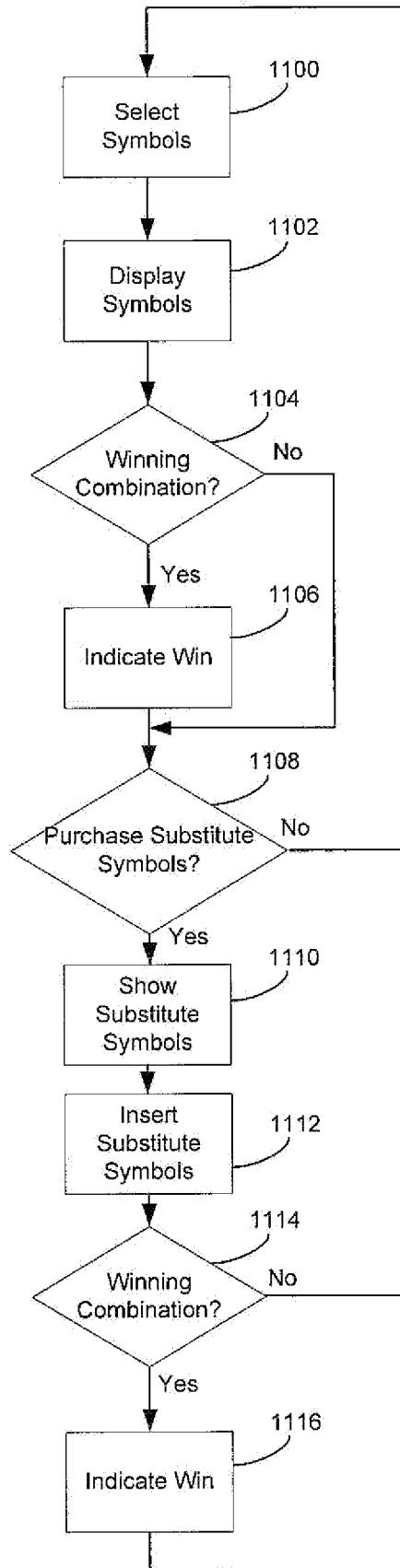


**Figure 9**

A	Q	A	A	9	S
Q	J	9	J	Q	S
K	A	K	K	K	S

Free  
Substitute  
Bonus

**Figure 10**



**Figure 11**

## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU2007/000297

## A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl.

A63F 13/10 (2006.01)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

## B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DWPI +keywords 1st invention: substitute, trigger, period; 2nd invention: substitute, purchase and similar terms

## C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2003/0069062 A1 (SHIMIZU) 10 April 2003 Abstract	1-8
X	US 6,855,054 B2 (WHITE et al) 15 February 2005 column 3 line 65 to column 4 line 1	9, 10
A	US 2005/0107154 A1 (PACEY) 19 May 2005 Abstract	
A	US 6,251,013 B1 (BENNET) 26 June 2001 Abstract	

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family	
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search  
11 May 2007

Date of mailing of the international search report

17 MAY 2007

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**Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)**

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1.  Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
  
2.  Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
  
3.  Claims Nos.:  
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a)

**Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)**

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

First invention claims 1-8

Second invention claims 9, 10

See extra sheet

1.  As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2.  As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
3.  As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
  
4.  No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

**Remark on Protest**

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

**Supplemental Box**

(To be used when the space in any of Boxes I to VIII is not sufficient)

**Continuation of Box No: III**

This International Searching Authority has found that there are different inventions as follows:

- Claims 1-8 are directed to a gaming machine wherein a bonus-triggering combination of symbols causes the insertion of substitute symbols. It is considered that the insertion of substitute symbols as a result of a bonus-triggering combination of symbols comprises a first distinguishing feature.
- Claims 9 and 10 are directed to a gaming machine which allows the player to purchase substitute symbols. It is considered that allowing a player to purchase substitute symbols comprises a second distinguishing feature.

The only feature common to all of the claims is a substitute symbol. However this common feature is generic in the art. This means that the common feature can not constitute a special technical feature within the meaning of PCT Rule 13.2, second sentence, since it makes no contribution over the prior art.

Because the common feature does not satisfy the requirement for being a special technical feature it follows that it cannot provide the necessary technical relationship between the identified inventions. Therefore the claims do not satisfy the requirement of unity of invention *a posteriori*.

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

Information on patent family members

International application No.

**PCT/AU2007/000297**

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member			
US	2003069062	US	6939228		
US	6855054	GB	2397429	US	2003092480
US	2005107154			WO	03041023
US	6251013	AU	17318/99	ZA	9901538

Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.

END OF ANNEX