



US 20080194312A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Nelson et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2008/0194312 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Aug. 14, 2008**

(54) **GAME AND METHOD HAVING A
GUARANTEED PROGRESSIVE AWARD
FEATURE**

(21) Appl. No.: 11/673,477

(22) Filed: Feb. 9, 2007

(75) Inventors: **Loren T. Nelson**, Reno, NV (US);
Mick Delaney, Reno, NV (US)

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63F 9/24 (2006.01)

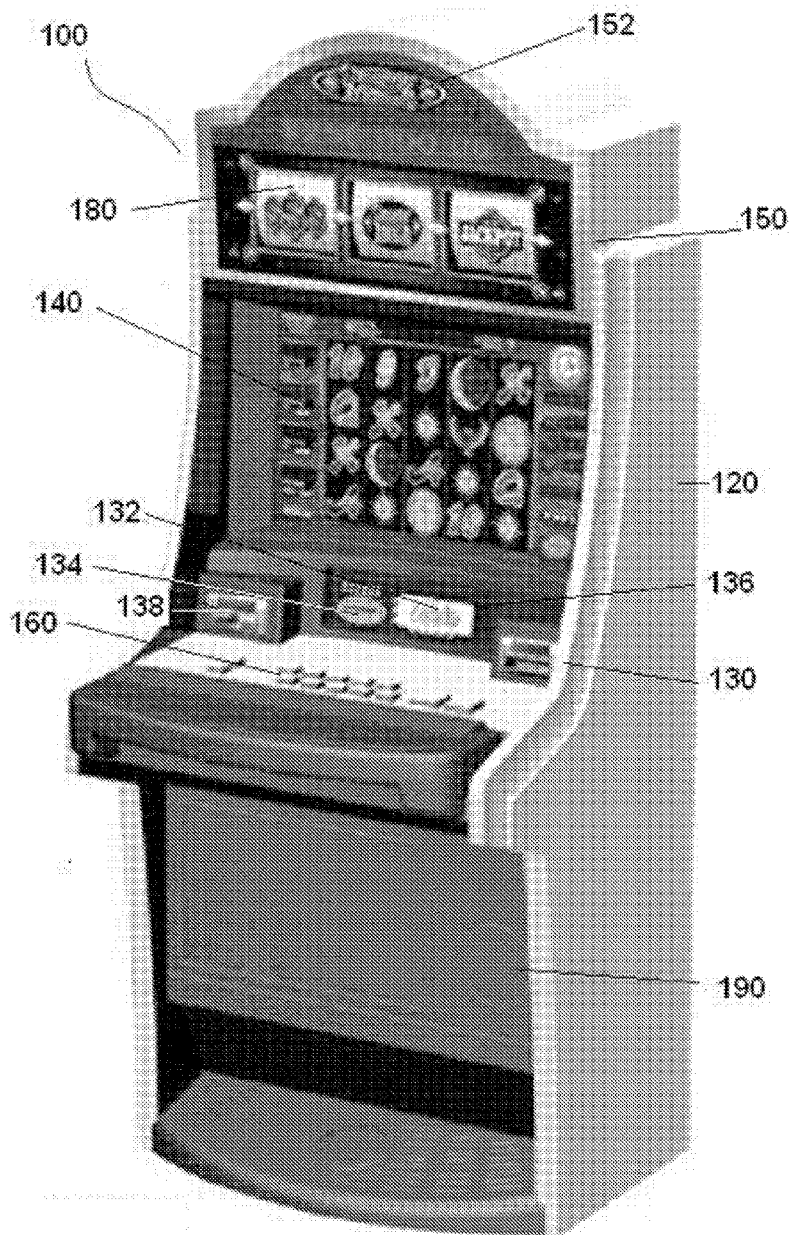
(52) **U.S. Cl.** 463/20; 463/42

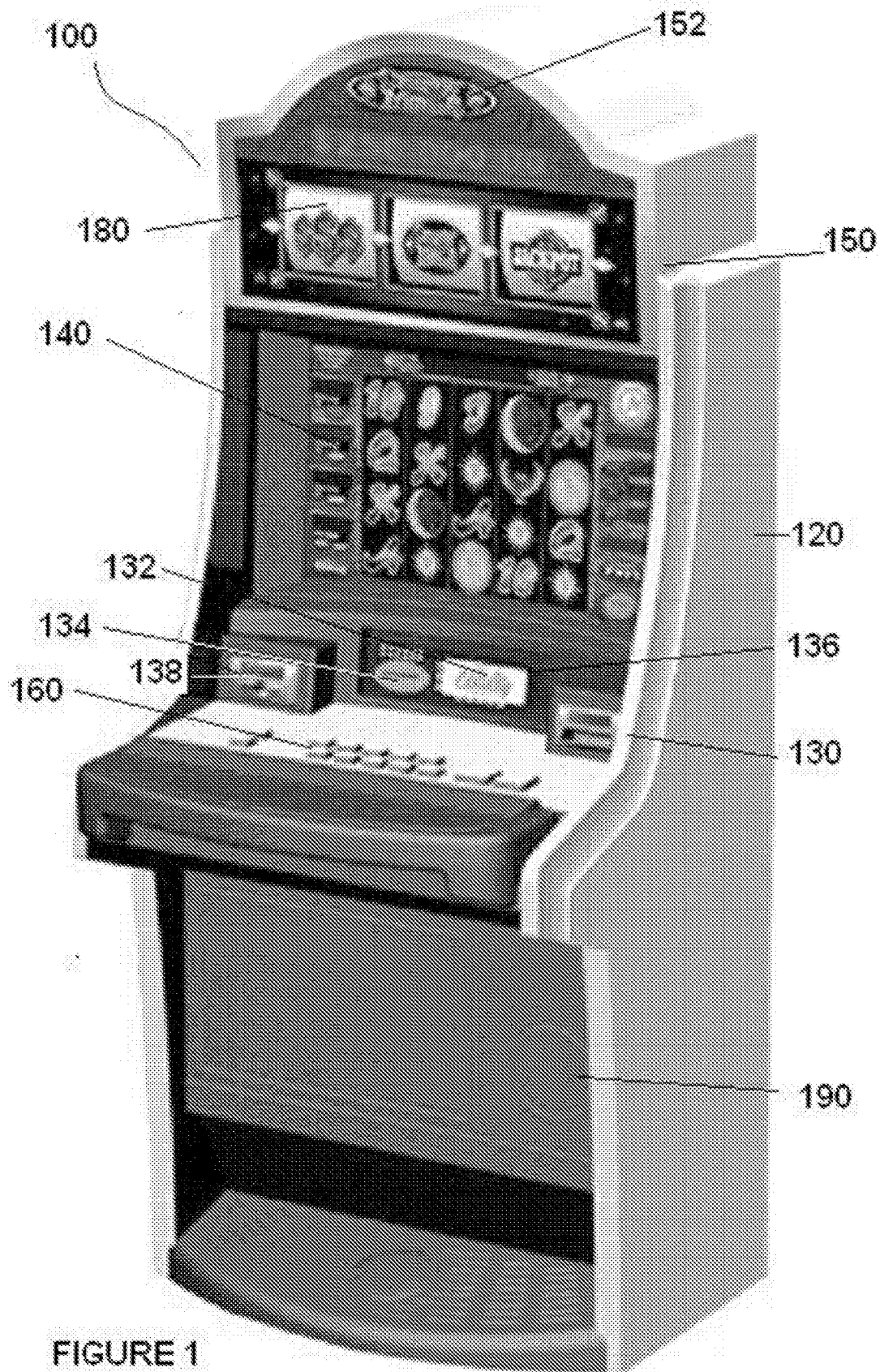
Correspondence Address:
BALLY GAMING INC.
6601 S. BERMUDA ROAD
LAS VEGAS, NV 89119

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(73) Assignee: **Bally Gaming, Inc.**, Las Vegas, NV
(US)

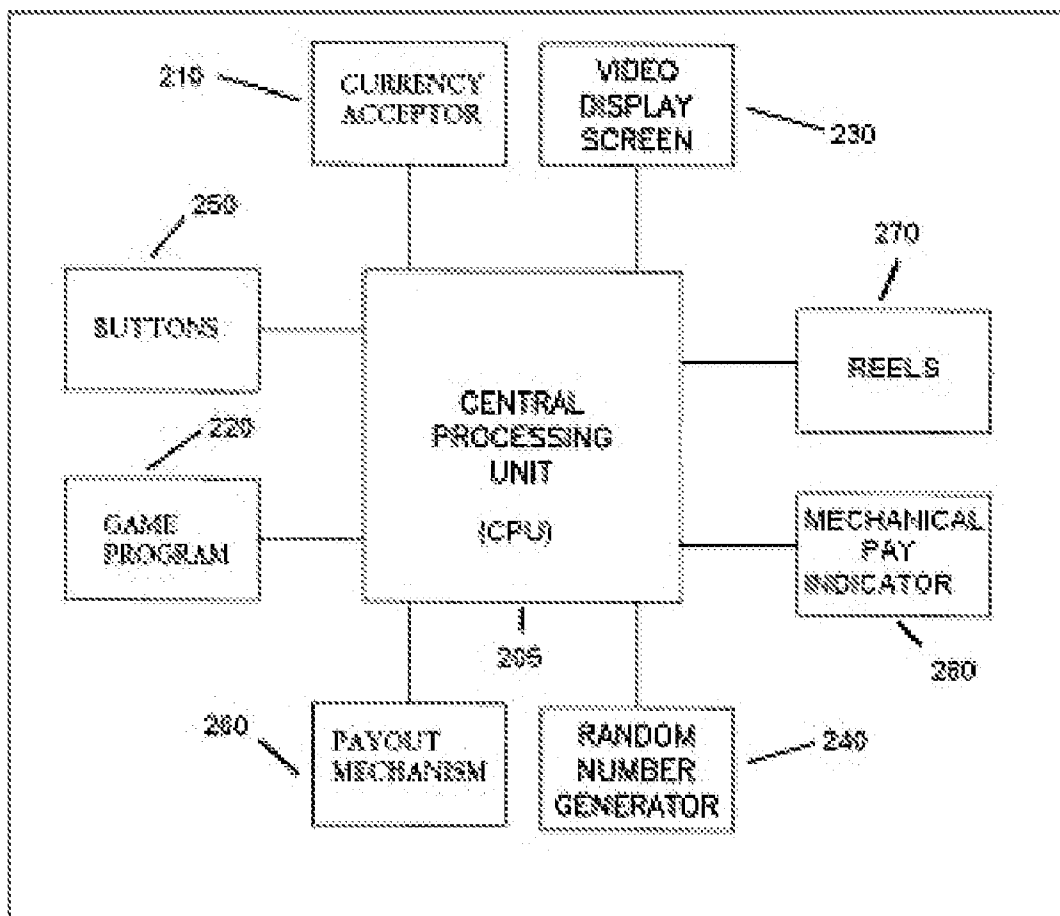
Disclosed are example games, machines, systems and methods for providing a game including a feature that terminates only after a player wins at least one progressive award.





200

FIGURE 2



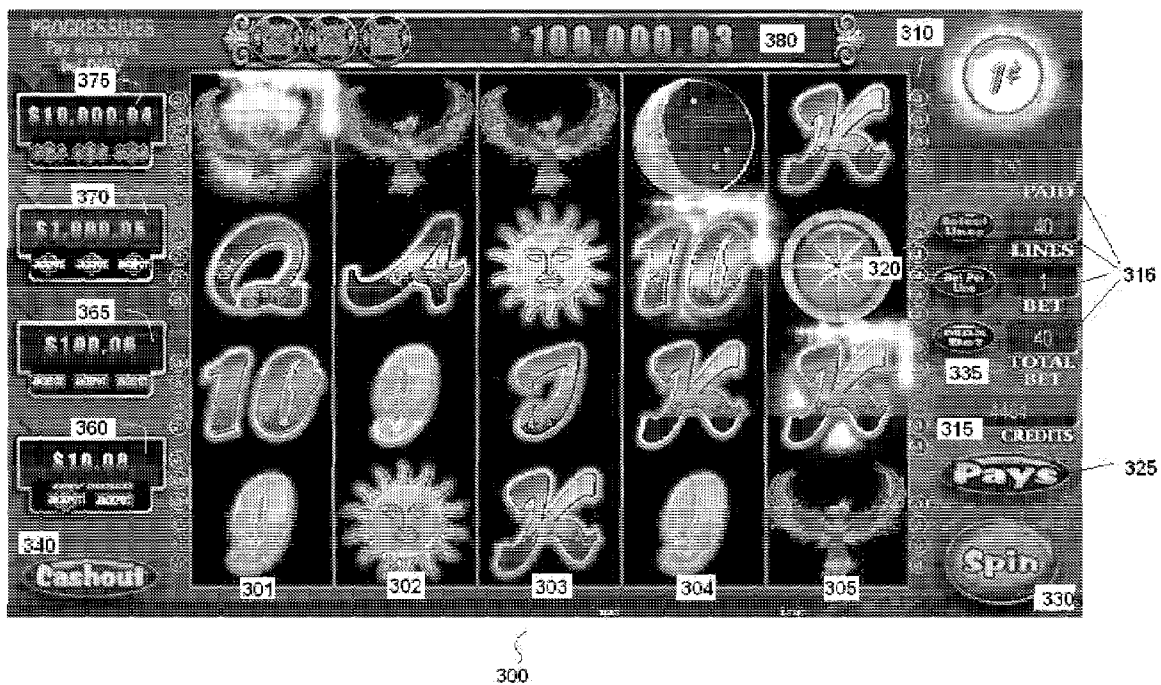


FIGURE 3

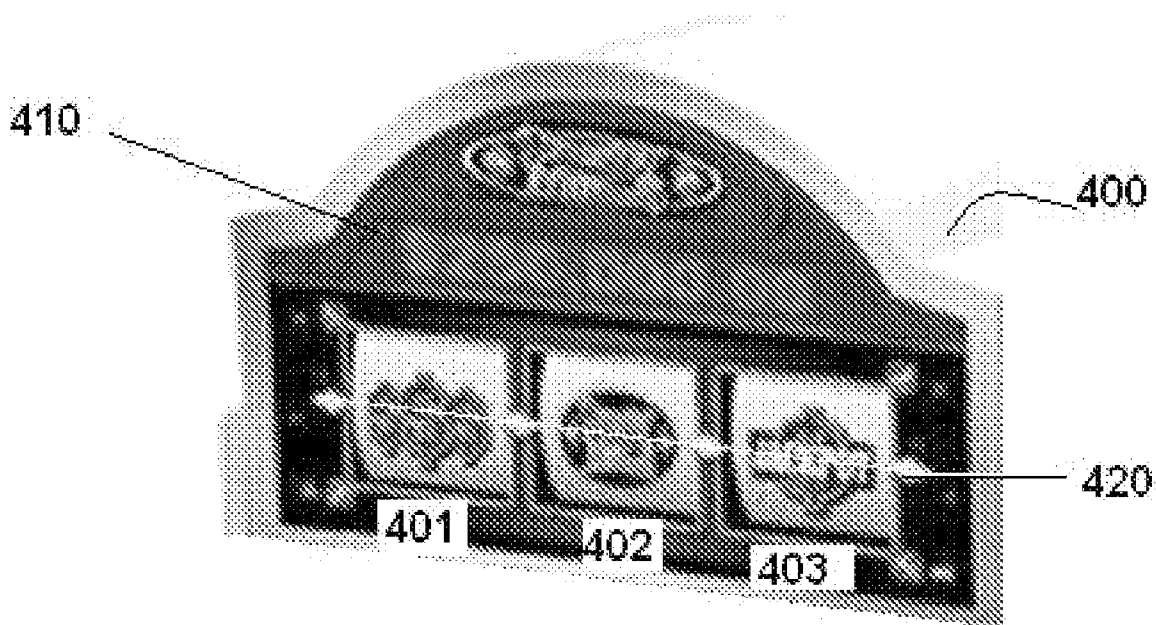


FIGURE 4

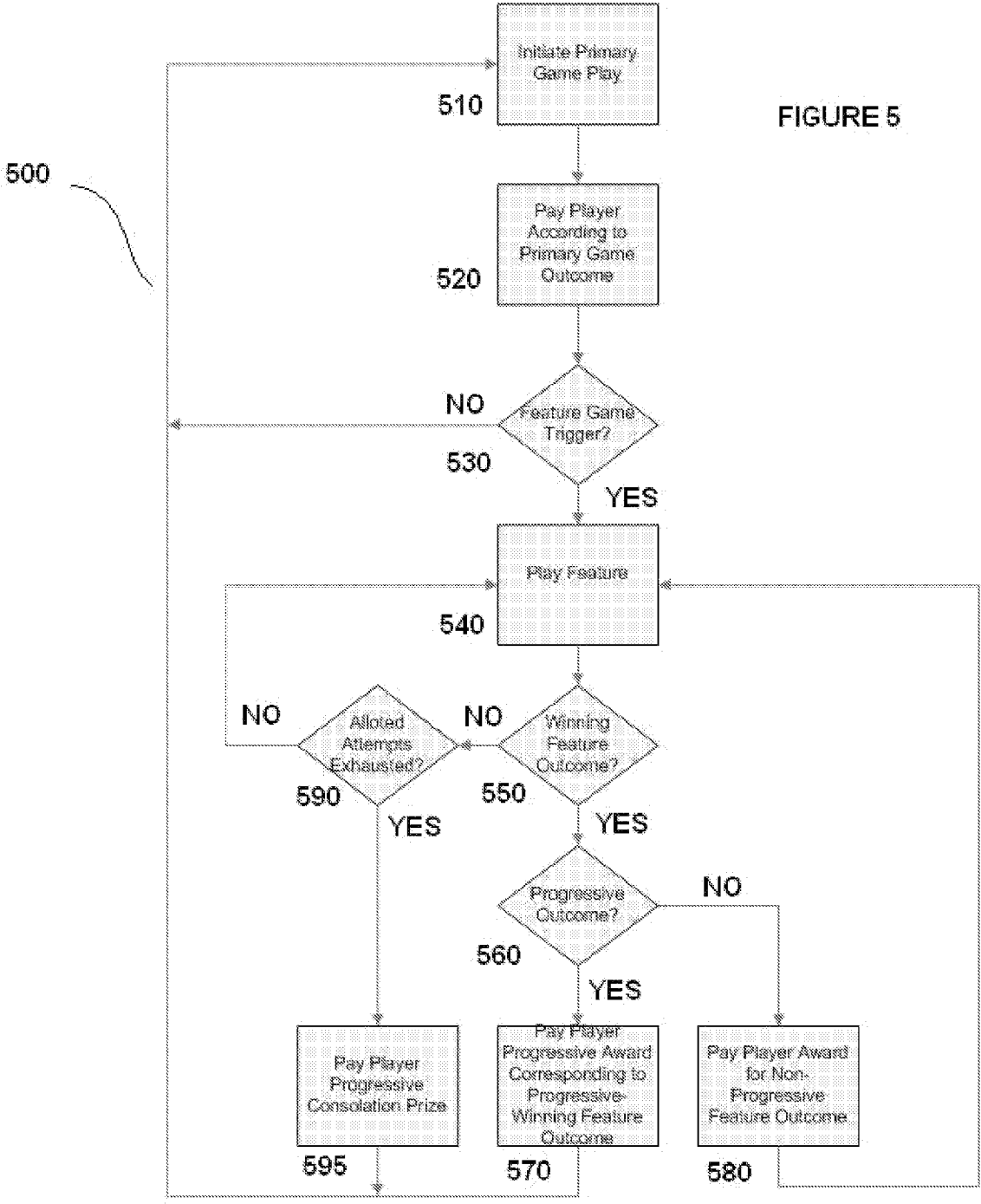
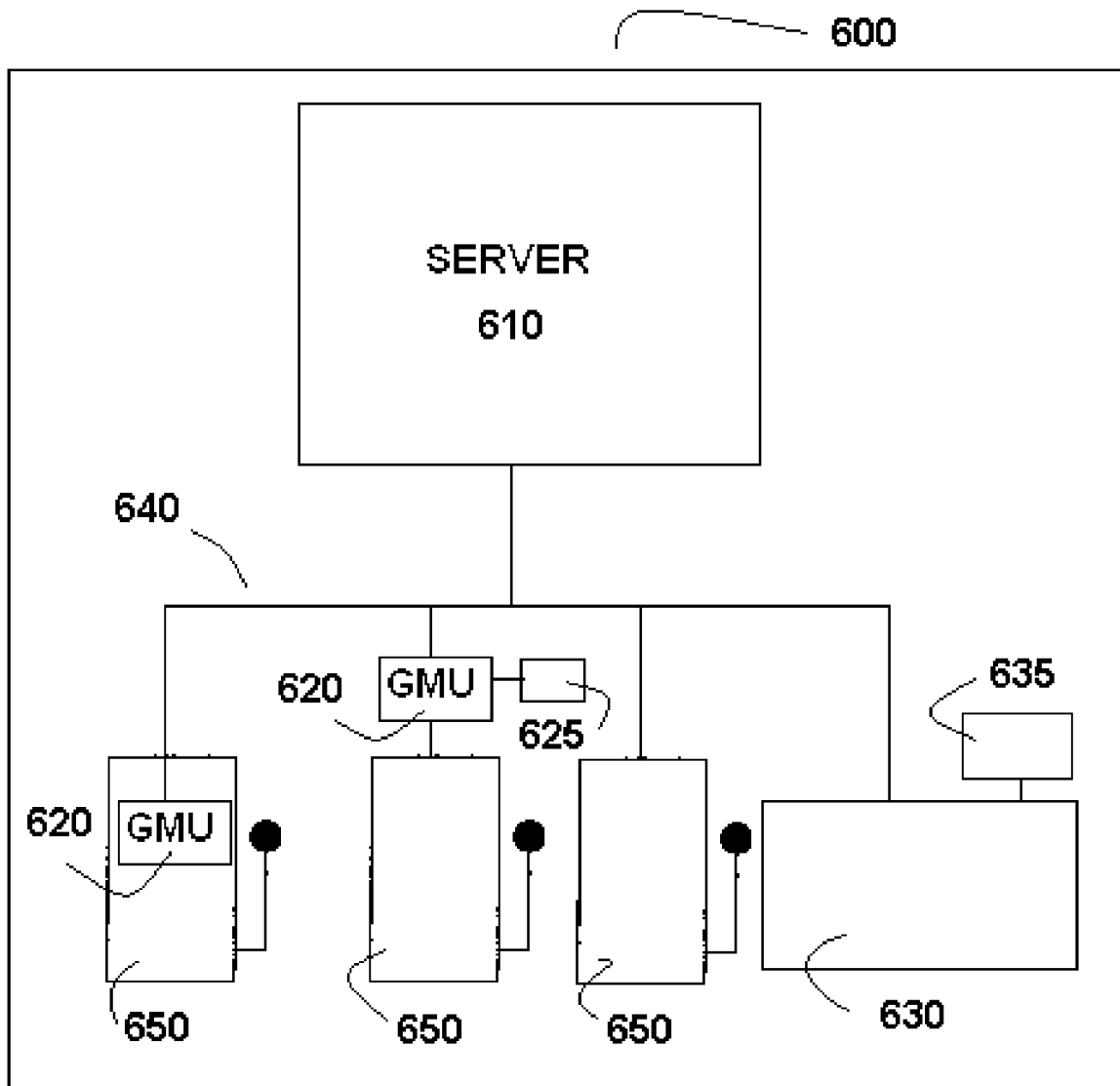


FIGURE 5

FIGURE 6



**GAME AND METHOD HAVING A
GUARANTEED PROGRESSIVE AWARD
FEATURE**

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention is directed to games and methods and, more particularly, to games and methods that have a guaranteed progressive award feature.

[0004] 2. Description of Related Art

[0005] In the prior art, various types of gaming machines have been developed with different features to captivate and maintain player interest. In general, a gaming machine allows a player to play a game in exchange for a wager. Depending on the outcome of the game, the player may be entitled to an award which is paid to the player by the gaming machine, normally in the form of currency or game credits. Gaming machines may include flashing displays, lighted displays, or sound effects to capture a player's interest in a gaming device.

[0006] Another method of maintaining player interest in a gaming machine includes providing the player with many opportunities to win awards, such as cash or prizes. For example, in some slot machines, the display windows show more than one adjacent symbol on each reel, thereby allowing for multiple-line betting. Some gaming machines offer a player the opportunity to win millions of dollars by providing progressive jackpots. An example of a progressive jackpot system is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,249,800, entitled "Progressive Gaming Control and Communication System," which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0007] Additionally, feature games of various types have been employed to reward players above the amounts normally awarded on a standard game pay schedule. Generally, such feature games are triggered by predetermined events such as one or more appearances of certain combinations of indicia in a primary game. In order to stimulate interest, feature games are typically set to occur at a gaming machine on a statistical cycle based upon the number of primary game plays.

[0008] While gaming machines including progressive and feature games have been very successful, there remains a need for games that provide a player with enhanced excitement and increased opportunities of winning.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a game includes an interface activatable by a player and a primary game having a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after activation of the interface by the player. The game may further include a feature game played after determination of the primary game outcome, the feature game concluding upon the player winning at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the feature game.

[0010] In accordance with a second embodiment of the invention, a game includes an interface activatable by a player and a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after activation of the interface by the player. In an example aspect, the game concludes only upon the player winning at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the set of outcomes.

[0011] In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, a method of operating a game includes the steps determining at least one of a set of outcomes for a primary game and, upon the occurrence of a predefined primary game outcome, determining at least one of a set of outcomes for a feature game. In an example aspect, the method may further include the step of continuing to determine at least one of a set of outcomes for the feature game until the player has won at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the set of feature game outcomes.

[0012] In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, a method of operating a game includes the steps of determining at least one of a set of outcomes for the game and continuing play of the game until the player has won at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the set of outcomes.

[0013] Other features, aspects, and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate by way of example, features and aspects of various embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a gaming machine in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of physical and logical components of the gaming machine of FIG. 1.

[0016] FIG. 3 is a display image associated with a game in accordance with one aspect of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 4 is a depiction of a feature game in accordance with one aspect of the invention.

[0018] FIG. 5 is a functional block diagram depicting the steps associated with carrying out a method in accordance of one or more embodiments of the invention.

[0019] FIG. 6 is a schematic block diagram showing the hardware elements of a networked gaming system in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0020] Various example embodiments of the invention are directed to games, gaming machines, gaming systems, and methods, wherein at least one player is provided with a guaranteed progressive award feature, that is, a feature game which only concludes when the player has won at least one of a plurality of progressive awards. In accordance with example aspects, a progressive award may be associated with a changing award amount associated with a single stand-alone gaming machine, a bank of gaming machines competing for the same award, a plurality of gaming machines within a casino competing for a casino-wide award or a plurality of gaming machines in geographically different locations competing for a wide-area progressive award. A personal progressive award may also be associated with a particular player by way of a system that receives information identifying the particular

player and changes one or more award amounts associated with that player over time. In each of the example aspects, the progressive awards may be funded from a portion of wagers placed on selected gaming machines, may be funded by an operator, such as with marketing dollars, or may be funded by other vehicles. Embodiments of the game and method are illustrated and described herein, by way of example only, and not by way of limitation. Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIGS. 1-6, there are shown illustrative examples of a game and a method for playing a game in accordance with various aspects of the invention.

[0021] In accordance with one embodiment, FIG. 1 illustrates a gaming machine 100 including cabinet housing 120, primary game display 140, player-activated buttons 160, player tracking panel 136, bill/voucher acceptor 130 and one or more speakers 190. Cabinet housing 120 is a self-standing unit that is generally rectangular in shape and may be manufactured with reinforced steel or other rigid materials which are resistant to tampering and vandalism. Cabinet housing 120 houses a processor, circuitry, and software (not shown) for receiving signals from the player-activated buttons 160, operating the games, and transmitting signals to the respective displays and speakers. Any shaped cabinet may be implemented with any embodiment of gaming machine 100 so long as it provides access to a player for playing a game. For example, cabinet 120 may comprise a slant-top, bar-top, or table-top style cabinet. The operation of gaming machine 100 is described more fully below.

[0022] The plurality of player-activated buttons 160 may be used for various functions such as, but not limited to, selecting a wager denomination, selecting a game to be played, selecting a wager amount per game, initiating a game, or cashing out money from gaming machine 100. Buttons 160 function as input mechanisms and may include mechanical buttons, electromechanical buttons or touch screen buttons. Optionally, a handle (not shown) may be rotated by a player to initiate a game.

[0023] In other embodiments, buttons 160 may be replaced with various other input mechanisms known in the art such as, but not limited to, a touch screen system, touch pad, track ball, mouse, switches, toggle switches, or other input means used to accept player input. For example, one input means is a universal button module as disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/106,212, entitled "Universal Button Module," filed on Apr. 14, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference. Generally, the universal button module provides a dynamic button system adaptable for use with various games and capable of adjusting to gaming systems having frequent game changes. More particularly, the universal button module may be used in connection with playing a game on a gaming machine and may be used for such functions as selecting the number of credits to bet per hand.

[0024] Cabinet housing 120 may optionally include top box 150 which contains "top glass" 152 comprising advertising or payout information related to the game or games available on gaming machine 100. Player tracking panel 136 includes player tracking card reader 134 and player tracking display 132. Voucher printer 138 may be integrated into player tracking panel 136 or installed elsewhere in cabinet housing 120 or top box 150.

[0025] Game display 140 presents a game of chance wherein a player receives one or more outcomes from a set of potential outcomes. For example, one such game of chance is a video slot machine game, an example of which is entitled

Firebird, further described below. In other aspects of the invention, gaming machine 100 may present a video or mechanical reel slot machine, a video keno game, a lottery game, a bingo game, a Class II bingo game, a roulette game, a craps game, a blackjack game, a mechanical or video representation of a wheel game or the like. In alternative embodiments, it may further be appreciated that games of skill or games of chance involving some player skill may be implemented with gaming machine 100.

[0026] Mechanical or video/mechanical embodiments may include game displays in cabinet housing 120 or top box 150 such as mechanical reels, wheels, or dice as required to present the game to the player. In video/mechanical or pure video embodiments, game display 140 is, typically, a CRT or a flat-panel display in the form of, but not limited to, liquid crystal, plasma, electroluminescent, vacuum fluorescent, field emission, or any other type of panel display known or developed in the art. Game display 140 may be mounted in either a "portrait" or "landscape" orientation and be of standard or "widescreen" dimensions (i.e., a ratio of one dimension to another of at least 16×9). For example, a widescreen display may be 32 inches wide by 18 inches tall. A widescreen display in a "portrait" orientation may be 32 inches tall by 18 inches wide. Additionally, game display 140 preferably includes a touch screen or touch glass system (not shown) and presents player interfaces such as, but not limited to, a credit meter (not shown), a win meter (not shown) and touch screen buttons (not shown). An example of a touch glass system is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,942,571, entitled "Gaming Device with Direction and Speed Control of Mechanical Reels Using Touch Screen," which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0027] Game display 140 may also present information such as, but not limited to, player information, advertisements and casino promotions, graphic displays, news and sports updates, or even offer an alternate game. This information may be generated through a host computer networked with gaming machine 100 on its own initiative or it may be obtained by request of the player using either one or more of the plurality of player-activated buttons 160; the game display itself, if game display 140 comprises a touch screen or similar technology; buttons (not shown) mounted about game display 140 which may permit selections such as those found on an ATM machine, where legends on the screen are associated with respective selecting buttons; or any player input device that offers the required functionality.

[0028] Cabinet housing 120 incorporates a single game display 140. However, in alternate embodiments, cabinet housing 120 or top box 150 may house one or more additional displays or components used for various purposes including additional game play screens, animated "top glass," progressive meters or mechanical or electromechanical devices such as, but not limited to, wheels, pointers or reels 180. The additional displays may or may not include a touch screen or touch glass system.

[0029] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, FIG. 2 is a block diagram showing the interconnection of physical and logical components 200 of gaming machine 100. Currency acceptor 210 is typically connected to a conventional central processing unit ("CPU") 205, such as an Intel Pentium microprocessor mounted on a gaming motherboard, by a serial connection such as RS-232 or USB. The gaming motherboard may be mounted with other conventional components, such as are found on conventional per-

sonal computer motherboards, and loaded with a gaming machine operating system (OS), such as an Alpha OS installed within a Bally S9000, M9000 or CineVision™ slot machine. CPU 205 executes game program 220 that causes video display screen 230 to display a game. In one embodiment, game program 220 is a game entitled Firebird.

[0030] When a player has inserted a form of currency such as, for example and without limitation, paper currency, coins or tokens, cashless tickets or vouchers, electronic funds transfers or the like into currency acceptor 210, a signal is sent to CPU 205 which, in turn, assigns an appropriate number of credits for play. The player may further control the operation of gaming machine 100, for example, to select the amount to wager via electromechanical or touchscreen buttons 250. The game starts in response to the player pushing one of buttons 250 or an alternate start mechanism such as a handle or touchscreen icon (not shown). Random number generator 240 responds to instructions from CPU 205 to provide a display of randomly selected indicia on video display screen 230. In some embodiments, random generator 240 may be physically separate from gaming machine 100; for example, it may be part of a central determination host system (not shown) which provides random game outcomes to CPU 205. Thereafter, the player may or may not interact with the game through electromechanical or touchscreen buttons 250 to change the displayed indicia. Finally, CPU 205 under control of game program 220 compares the final display of indicia to a pay table. The set of possible game outcomes may include a subset of outcomes related to the triggering of a feature game. In the event the displayed outcome is a member of this subset, CPU 205, under control of game program 220, may cause feature game play to be presented on at least one of video display screen 230, reels 270 and mechanical pay indicator 280. The feature game is played until a progressive award has been won by the player. In some embodiments, mechanical pay indicator 280 comprises a wheel and a pointer, at least one of which moves.

[0031] In other embodiments, the feature game is one of a set of primary games randomly selected for play. For example, one such means is disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/428,220, entitled "Multiple Primary Games Triggered by Random Number Generator," filed on Jun. 30, 2006, which is hereby incorporated by reference. A gaming machine has at least two distinct primary games. After receiving a wager, the gaming machine determines which primary game to activate. The selected primary game is activated and a game outcome is presented to the player on at least one game display. A payout may be awarded according to the game outcome. If the selected game is the game with a guaranteed progressive award, the game is played until a progressive award has been won.

[0032] Predetermined payout amounts for certain outcomes, including feature game outcomes, are stored as part of game program 220. Such payout amounts are, in response to instructions from CPU 205, provided to the player in the form of coins, credits or currency via payout mechanism 260, which may be one or more of a credit meter, a coin hopper, a voucher printer, an electronic funds transfer protocol or any other payout means known or developed in the art.

[0033] In various embodiments of gaming machine 100, game program 220 is stored in a memory device (not shown). By way of example, but not by limitation, such memory devices include external memory devices, hard drives, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and flash memory cards. In an alternative

embodiment, the game programs are stored in a remote storage device. In one embodiment, the remote storage device is housed in a remote server. The gaming machine may access the remote storage device via a network connection, including but not limited to, a local area network connection, a TCP/IP connection, a wireless connection, or any other means for operatively networking components together. Optionally, other data including graphics, sound files and other media data for use with gaming machine 100 are stored in the same or a separate memory device (not shown).

[0034] Turning now to FIG. 3, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, the Firebird primary game is implemented on video display 300 using five simulated spinning reels 301-305. Each of 20 pay line patterns (not shown) passes through one indicium on each of the five reels 301-305. The number of pay lines and their patterns are by way of example only and may vary. The player selects the number of played pay lines and the number of credits or coins wagered on each line using touch screen controls 320 or gaming device control buttons 160 (FIG. 1). The player may also collect the balance of his credits by pressing CASHOUT button 340.

[0035] Credit meter 315 display the player's current credit balance, while other meters 316 may display, for example, the number of credits or coins wagered and the last amount paid by the payout mechanism 260 (FIG. 2). Other meters 316 containing other information may be displayed. The amount wagered on each pay line may additionally be indicated in a bet tag 310 corresponding to each pay line.

[0036] The player initiates game play by pressing SPIN button 330. In some embodiments, the player may simultaneously select all pay lines at the maximum number of coins or credits allowed per line by pressing a MAX BET touch screen button 335. Corresponding buttons 160 on gaming machine 100 (FIG. 1) may be used instead of the touch screen buttons to perform the actions described here without deviating from the scope of the invention. A video representation of reels 301-305 is made to spin and stop in their predetermined stop positions and then indicate whether the stop positions of the reels resulted in a winning game outcome.

[0037] Winning outcomes may be indicated on a pay table. The pay table may be accessible through a PAYS help button 325. In alternate embodiments, the pay table may be presented on a second video or printed display attached to the gaming device (i.e. "pay glass" 152, FIG. 1). A winning combination, for example, could be three or more single sun symbols adjacent to one another on an active pay line. For each winning combination, the game device awards the player the award in the pay table, adjusted as necessary based on the number of credits wagered on the pay line on which the win occurred. Some video representations of pay tables may factor in the amount of the player's wager and no additional award adjustment is required.

[0038] In various embodiments, winning combinations may be evaluated across adjacent reels from left-to-right, from right-to-left or both. Additional winning combinations may be awarded when certain indicia do not necessarily accumulate adjacently on a pay line, but rather, appear anywhere on the reels (i.e., "scatter pays"). In addition, "wild" indicia may be used to complete winning combinations. Some "wild" indicia may also cause completed winning combinations to be result in pay amounts in excess of the normal winning combination by way of multiplication or addition, for example, a wild doubler symbol may be used.

[0039] Various primary game outcomes may be utilized to trigger the play of the feature game, including, but not limited to, awarding bonus play when certain symbols appear on a pay line, when certain symbols are scattered, when no symbols of a certain type appear, when a certain winning combination occurs or, regardless of the visible symbols, at random or fixed intervals. In the Firebird embodiment, appearance of three scattered BONUS symbols on the three center reels trigger the feature game. In some embodiments, the probability of triggering the feature game is based on the size of the player's wager. The number of plays of the feature game may be restricted based on a predefined value, a random value, a fluctuating value, the amount of the player's wager, or the particular triggering event. In the event the player does not win a progressive prize associated with the feature game pay schedule prior to the exhaustion of the allocated number of feature game plays, the player may be awarded a consolation prize in the form of a separate progressive award.

[0040] In addition to the primary game awards defined by the pay table, the Firebird game provides a feature game pay table associated with the feature game. For example, progressive meters 360, 365, 370, 375 and 380 are each associated with a different feature game progressive outcome. The progressive awards may be associated with a personal, stand-alone, bank, casino-wide or wide-area progressive game. Other non-progressive awards may be associated with the feature game.

[0041] The number of plays of the feature game may be restricted by a predetermined or random number of attempts, which may result in the player winning a consolation award in place of a primary progressive award. The consolation award may also be a progressive.

[0042] In other embodiments, the feature game is one of a set of primary games randomly selected for play following initiation of play by the player. After placing a wager, the gaming machine determines which primary game to activate. The selected primary game is activated and a game outcome is presented to the player on at least one game display. A payout may be awarded according to the game outcome. If the selected game is the feature game with a guaranteed progressive award, the feature game is played until a progressive award has been won.

[0043] In accordance with one embodiment, FIG. 4 illustrates a mechanical reel mechanism 400 suitable for play of a feature game having a guaranteed progressive award. For example, the appearance of three adjacent QuarterMillion\$ indicia on each of reels 401, 402 and 403 aligned with pay line 420 during feature game play would pay the progressive amount shown on progressive meter 410. The appearance of other combinations of indicia may pay nothing, resulting in another spin of the reels, or may pay one of the other progressive awards defined by the feature game pay table and represented, for example, on progressive meters 360, 365, 370 and 375. The feature game concludes only when the player has received a progressive award.

[0044] A logical flow diagram generally depicting the steps associated with a method 500 for carrying out a game having a guaranteed progressive award feature, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, is presented in FIG. 5. The order of actions as shown in FIG. 5 and described below is only illustrative, and should not be considered limiting. For example, the order of the actions may be changed, additional steps may be added or some steps may be removed without deviating from the scope and spirit of the invention.

[0045] First, the primary game is initiated by a player at block 510, typically by selecting a wager amount and pressing a start button, pulling a handle or the like. A game outcome is determined and the player is paid for any winning outcomes at block 520.

[0046] The primary game outcome and/or any other trigger conditions that might initiate feature game play are considered at decision block 530. For example, the occurrence of a three scattered BONUS symbols appearing anywhere on the three center reels may have been predetermined to be the trigger for the feature game. Any feature game trigger criteria may be used to initiate the feature game.

[0047] If the triggering event for the feature game has not occurred, the method proceeds to block 510 in an iterative fashion for play of another primary game. Otherwise, the feature game is played by, for example, spinning reels on feature device 400 (FIG. 4) at block 540. The outcome of the feature game is evaluated at decision block 550. If the outcome was not a winning outcome, the allotted number of attempts is tested at block 590. The number of plays of the feature game may be restricted based on a predefined value, a random value, a fluctuating value, the amount of the player's wager, or the particular triggering event. If the allotted number of attempts has not been exhausted, the feature game is played repeatedly at block 540 and re-evaluated at block 550. If the allotted number of attempts is exhausted, the player is paid a progressive consolation award at block 595 and primary game play resumes at block 510.

[0048] Once a winning feature game outcome has been achieved, the outcome is further evaluated at decision block 560 to determine whether the outcome corresponds to one of a plurality of progressive awards or not. If not, the player is paid for the non-progressive outcome at block 580 and feature play continues at block 540. In some embodiments, all feature game awards are progressive awards and the steps at blocks 560 and 580 are omitted.

[0049] If a progressive award has been achieved, the player is paid the progressive award corresponding to the feature game outcome at block 570 and feature game play terminates. The progressive award paid as a result of the winning outcome may be associated with a stand-alone, bank, casino-wide or wide-area progressive game. Primary game play then resumes at block 510.

[0050] Referring to FIG. 6, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, gaming system 600 includes server 610, gaming machines 650, and network 640 connecting gaming machines 650 to server 610. Additionally, gaming display computer 630 is shown connected to network 640. Server 610 may be selected from a variety of conventionally available servers. The type of server used is generally determined by the platform and software requirements of the gaming system. Examples of suitable servers are an IBM RS6000-based server, an IBMAS/400-based server or a Microsoft Windows-based server, but it should be appreciated that any suitable server may be used. It may also be appreciated that server 610 may be configured as a single "logical" server that comprises multiple physical servers. Gaming machines 650 operate similar to conventional peripheral networked terminals. Gaming machines 650 have a player interface such as a display, a card reader, and selection buttons through which gaming machines 650 interact with a player playing a wagering game having a guaranteed progressive award feature in accordance with various embodiments of the invention. The player interface is used for making choices such as the amount of a

bet or the number of lines to bet. Gaming machines **650** also provide information to server **610** concerning activity on gaming machines **650** and provide a communication portal for players with server **610**. For example, the player interface may be used for selecting different server-related menu options such as, but not limited to, transferring a specified number of credits from a player account onto the credit meter of the gaming machine, or for transferring credits from the gaming machine to a central player account.

[0051] In various embodiments, any of the gaming machines **650** may be a mechanical reel spinning slot machine, video slot machine, video poker machine, keno machine, video blackjack machine, or a gaming machine offering one or more of the above described primary games including a guaranteed progressive award feature. Alternatively, gaming machines **650** may provide a guaranteed progressive award feature as one of a set of multiple primary games selected for play by a random number generator. Networking components (not shown) facilitate communications across network **640** between the system server **610** and game management units **620** and/or gaming display control computers **630** that control displays for carousels of gaming machines. Game management units (GMU's) **620** connect gaming machines to networking components and may be installed in the gaming machine cabinet or external to the gaming machine. The function of the GMU is similar to the function of a network interface card connected to a desktop personal computer (PC). Some GMU's have much greater capability and can perform such tasks as presenting and playing a game having feature games with a guaranteed progressive award using a display **625** operatively connected to GMU **620**. Displays related to games offering a guaranteed progressive award feature game on gaming machines **650** or GMU displays **625** may also be presented on gaming display **635** by gaming display control computer **630**. In one embodiment, GMU **620** is a separate component located outside the gaming machine. Alternatively, in another embodiment, the GMU **620** is located within the gaming machine. Optionally, in an alternative embodiment, one or more gaming machines **650** connect directly to the network and are not connected to a GMU **620**. A gaming system of the type described above also allows a plurality of games in accordance with the various embodiments of the invention to be linked under the control of server **610** for cooperative or competitive play in a particular area, carousel, casino or between casinos located in geographically separate areas.

[0052] One will appreciate that a gaming system may also comprise other types of components, and the above illustrations are meant only as examples and not as limitations to the types of components or games having a guaranteed progressive award feature. Additionally, it may further be appreciated that each of the games could be operated on a remote host computer such that a player initiates play with the host computer over a network via the player interface and gaming machine **650** operates the respective gaming and video displays in conjunction with the game whose play is controlled by the remote computer.

[0053] The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the claimed invention. For example, the progressive award may be associated with a personal, stand-alone, bank-wide, casino-wide or wide-area progressive game. Availability of play for the guaranteed progressive may be restricted based on the nature or amount of the player's wager. For

example, a minimum wager of five credits per pay line or a total wager size of forty-five credits per game may be required in addition to the achievement of a predetermined trigger. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize various modifications and changes that may be made to the claimed invention without following the example embodiments and applications illustrated and described herein, and without departing from the true spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A game comprising:

a primary game having a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after a play; and

a feature game playable after determination of a primary game outcome associated with the feature game, the feature game concluding upon a player winning at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the feature game.

2. The game of claim 1 further comprising a wager, wherein play of the feature game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed by the player.

3. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

4. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a poker game.

5. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a keno game.

6. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a blackjack game.

7. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a bingo game.

8. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a roulette game.

9. The game of claim 1 wherein the primary game comprises a wheel game.

10. The game of claim 1 wherein the feature game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

11. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a poker game.

12. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a keno game.

13. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a blackjack game.

14. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a bingo game.

15. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a roulette game.

16. The game of claim 1 wherein the secondary game comprises a wheel game.

17. The game of claim 1, the one of a plurality of progressive awards being associated with at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive, and a personal progressive.

18. The game of claim 1 wherein the progressive award is associated with a bank-wide progressive.

19. The game of claim 1 wherein the progressive award is associated with a casino-wide progressive.

20. The game of claim 1 wherein the progressive award is associated with a wide-area progressive.

21. The game of claim 1 wherein the progressive award is associated with a personal progressive.

22. The game of claim 1 wherein the progressive award won by the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

23. The game of claim 1 wherein the probability of playing the feature game is based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

24. The game of claim 1 wherein a maximum number of feature game plays is allocated and, in the event the maximum number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a progressive award, the player is paid a consolation prize.

25. A game comprising:

a set of outcomes, at least one of the set of outcomes determined after a play;

the game concluding only upon player winning at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the set of outcomes.

26. The game of claim 25 further comprising a wager, wherein play of the game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed by the player.

27. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

28. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a poker game.

29. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a keno game.

30. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a blackjack game.

31. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a bingo game.

32. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a roulette game.

33. The game of claim 25 wherein the game comprises a wheel game.

34. The game of claim 25, the one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive, and a personal progressive.

35. The game of claim 25 wherein the progressive award is associated with a bank progressive.

36. The game of claim 25 wherein the progressive award is associated with a casino-wide progressive.

37. The game of claim 25 wherein the progressive award is associated with a wide-area progressive.

38. The game of claim 25 wherein the progressive award is associated with a personal progressive.

39. The game of claim 25 wherein the progressive award won by the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

40. A method of operating a game, the method comprising the steps of:

determining at least one of a set of outcomes for a primary game;

upon the occurrence of a predefined primary game outcome, determining at least one of a set of outcomes for a feature game; and

continuing to determine outcomes for the feature game until a feature game outcome occurs that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.

41. The method of claim 40 further comprising the steps of: accepting a wager; and restricting play of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.

42. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

43. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a poker game.

44. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a keno game.

45. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a blackjack game.

46. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a bingo game.

47. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a roulette game.

48. The method of claim 40 wherein the primary game comprises a wheel game.

49. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

50. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a poker game.

51. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a keno game.

52. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a blackjack game.

53. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a bingo game.

54. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a roulette game.

55. The method of claim 40 wherein the feature game comprises a wheel game.

56. The method of claim 40, the one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with at least one of a stand alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive, and a personal progressive.

57. The method of claim 40 wherein the progressive award is associated with a bank-wide progressive.

58. The method of claim 40 wherein the progressive award is associated with a casino-wide progressive.

59. The method of claim 40 wherein the progressive award is associated with a wide-area progressive.

60. The method of claim 40 wherein the progressive award is associated with a personal progressive.

61. The method of claim 40 wherein the progressive award won by the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

62. The method of claim 40 wherein the probability of playing the feature game is based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

63. The method of claim 40 further comprising the steps of: allocating a number of feature game plays and, in the event the number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a progressive award, paying the player a consolation prize.

64. A method of operating a game, the method comprising the steps of: determining at least one of a set of outcomes for the game; and continuing play of the game until a winning outcome occurs that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.

- 65.** The method of claim **64** further comprising the steps of: accepting a wager; and restricting play of the game based on the amount of the wager.
- 66.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 67.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a poker game.
- 68.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a keno game.
- 69.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a blackjack game.
- 70.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a bingo game.
- 71.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a roulette game.
- 72.** The method of claim **64** wherein the game comprises a wheel game.
- 73.** The method of claim **64**, the one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive, and a personal progressive.
- 74.** The method of claim **64** wherein the progressive award is associated with a bank-wide progressive.
- 75.** The method of claim **64** wherein the progressive award is associated with a casino-wide progressive.
- 76.** The method of claim **64** wherein the progressive award is associated with a wide-area progressive.
- 77.** The method of claim **64** wherein the progressive award is associated with a personal progressive.
- 78.** The method of claim **64** wherein the progressive award won by a player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.
- 79.** A gaming machine comprising:
a processor operatively coupled to a set of controls operable by a player;
a primary game and a feature game operable by the processor in accordance with the player-operable controls; upon a triggering event, the feature game activatable over a sequence of one or more plays, the sequence of plays concluding upon an award to the player of at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the feature game.
- 80.** The gaming machine of claim **79** further comprising a wager input mechanism operable by the player, wherein play of the feature game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed by the player by way of the wager input mechanism.
- 81.** The gaming machine of claim **79**, the primary game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 82.** The gaming machine of claim **79**, the feature game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 83.** The gaming machine of claim **79**, the plurality of progressive awards comprising at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.
- 84.** The gaming machine of claim **79** wherein the amount of the progressive award awarded to the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.
- 85.** The gaming machine of claim **79** wherein the probability of the triggering event occurring is based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.
- 86.** The gaming machine of claim **79**, the feature game comprising only progressive awards.
- 87.** The gaming machine of claim **79**, the feature game comprising non-progressive awards.
- 88.** The gaming machine of claim **79** wherein, upon the triggering event, a maximum number of feature game plays is allocated and, in the event the maximum number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a primary progressive award, paying the player a consolation prize.
- 89.** A gaming machine comprising:
a processor operatively coupled to a set of controls operable by a player;
a wagering game operable by the processor in accordance with the set of controls,
upon a triggering event, the wagering game activatable for a sequence of one or more plays, said sequence of plays concluding upon an award to the player of at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the game.
- 90.** The gaming machine of claim **89**, the game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 91.** The gaming machine of claim **89**, the plurality of progressive awards comprising at least one of one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.
- 92.** The gaming machine of claim **89** wherein the value of one of the plurality of progressive awards is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.
- 93.** A method of operating a gaming machine played by a player, the method including the steps of:
determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a primary game;
upon an occurrence of a predefined primary game outcome, determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a feature game; and
continuing to determine at least one of a set of possible outcomes for the feature game until an outcome is determined that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.
- 94.** The method of claim **93** further comprising the steps of: accepting a wager from the player; and restricting play of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.
- 95.** The method of claim **93**, the primary game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 96.** The method of claim **93**, the feature game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.
- 97.** The method of claim **93**, the plurality of progressive awards comprising at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bankwide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.

98. The method of claim **93** wherein the value of one of the plurality of progressive awards is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

99. The method of claim **93** wherein the probability of a predefined primary game outcome triggering play of the feature game is based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

100. The method of claim **93** further comprising the steps of allocating a number of feature game plays and, in the event the number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a primary progressive award, paying the player a consolation prize.

101. A method of operating a gaming machine played by a player, the method comprising the steps of:

determining at least one of a set of potential outcomes for play of a game installed on the gaming machine; and continuing to determine outcomes of the game until an outcome is determined that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.

102. The method of claim **101** further comprising the steps of:

accepting a wager from the player; and restricting play of the game based on the amount of the wager.

103. The method of claim **101** wherein the game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

104. The method of claim **101**, the plurality of progressive awards comprising at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive.

105. The method of claim **101** wherein the value of one of the plurality of progressive awards is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

106. A networked gaming system including:

a plurality of gaming machines connected through a network to a host computer, at least one of the gaming machines including a game operable by a player, the game comprising a primary game and a feature game, upon a triggering event, the feature game activatable over a sequence of one or more plays, the sequence of plays concluding upon an award of at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the feature game.

107. The system of claim **106** further comprising a wager input mechanism operable by the player, wherein play of the feature game is restricted by the amount of a wager placed by the player by way of the wager input mechanism.

108. The system of claim **106** wherein the primary game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

109. The system of claim **106** wherein the feature game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

110. The system of claim **106**, the plurality of progressive awards including at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.

111. The system of claim **106** wherein the amount awarded to the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

112. The system of claim **106** wherein the probability of the triggering event occurring is based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

113. The system of claim **106** wherein, upon the triggering event, a maximum number of feature game plays is predetermined or randomly determined and, in the event the maximum number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a progressive award, the game awards a consolation prize.

114. The system of claim **106** wherein the gaming machines are connected for competitive play.

115. The system of claim **106** wherein the gaming machines are connected for cooperative play.

116. The system of claim **106** wherein a random outcome is associated with each play of the primary game.

117. The system of claim **106** wherein a random outcome is associated with each play of the feature game.

118. The system of claim **106**, the feature game comprising only progressive awards.

119. The system of claim **106**, the feature game comprising non-progressive awards.

120. A networked gaming system including:

a plurality of gaming machines connected through a network to a host computer, at least one of the gaming machines including a wagering game operable by a player, upon a triggering event, the wagering game activatable for a sequence of one or more plays, said sequence of plays concluding upon an award to the player of at least one of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the game.

121. The system of claim **120** wherein the game comprises at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

122. The system of claim **120** wherein the game includes a random outcome associated with each play of the game.

123. The system of claim **120** wherein one of the plurality of progressive awards is associated with at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive.

124. The system of claim **120** wherein the value of the award to the player is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by the player.

125. The system of claim **120** wherein the gaming machines are connected for competitive play.

126. The system of claim **120** wherein the gaming machines are connected for cooperative play.

127. A method of operating a networked gaming system, the method including the steps of:

connecting a plurality of gaming machines comprising a game; for one of the games, selecting at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a primary game;

upon an occurrence of a predefined primary game outcome, determining at least one of a set of possible outcomes for a feature game;

and continuing to determine at least one of a set of possible outcomes for the feature game until an outcome is determined that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.

128. The method of claim **127** further comprising the steps of:

accepting a wager from a player; and

restricting play of the feature game based on the amount of the wager.

129. The method of claim 127, the primary game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

130. The method of claim 127, the feature game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

131. The method of claim 127, the plurality of progressive awards including at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bank-wide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.

132. The method of claim 127 wherein the value of at least one of the plurality of progressive awards is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by a player.

133. The method of claim 127 wherein the probability of a predefined primary game outcome triggering play of the feature game is based on the amount of a wager placed by a player of the game.

134. The method of claim 127 further comprising the steps of allocating a number of feature game plays and, in the event the number of feature game plays is exhausted without the player winning a progressive award, paying the player a consolation prize.

135. A method of operating a networked gaming system, the method including the steps of:

- connecting a plurality of gaming machines comprising a game; for one of the games, determining at least one of a set of potential outcomes for play of the game; and continuing to determine outcomes of the game until an outcome is determined that is associated with at least one of a plurality of progressive awards.

136. The method of claim 135 further comprising the steps of:

- accepting a wager from a player of the game; and restricting play of the game based on the amount of the wager.

137. The method of claim 135, the game comprising at least one of a reel-based game, a video game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

138. The method of claim 135, the plurality of progressive awards including at least one of a stand-alone progressive, a bankwide progressive, a casino-wide progressive, a wide-area progressive and a personal progressive award.

139. The method of claim 135 wherein the value of one of the plurality of progressive awards is scaled based on the amount of a wager placed by a player of the game.

140. The system of claim 135 wherein the gaming machines are connected through the network for competitive play.

141. The system of claim 135 wherein the gaming machines are connected through the network for cooperative play.

142. A networked gaming system including:

- a network computer;
- one or more gaming machines;
- a network connecting the network computer to the one or more gaming machines;
- a game operable with at least one of the gaming machines and having a set of possible outcomes including a subset of progressive awards; and
- a trigger operable in conjunction with the game for causing the game to play repetitively until one of the subset of progressive awards is achieved.

143. The networked gaming system of claim 142 wherein the game is controlled by the host computer.

144. The networked gaming system of claim 142 wherein the game is controlled by the at least one of the gaming machines.

145. The networked gaming system of claim 142, the game comprising a random outcome associated with each play of the game.

146. A networked gaming system including: a game having a set of possible progressive award outcomes; and a trigger for causing the game to play until one of the set of progressive award outcomes is achieved.

147. The networked gaming system of claim 146, the game comprising a random outcome associated with each play of the game.

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