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Methods and Systems for Awarding a Jackpot

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ABSTRACT

5 Described herein is a gaming machine and a method of providing a game played on a computational gaming apparatus having a display and a user interface, the game being a spinning reel game in which at least one symbol is spun up on each of a plurality of spinning reels and displayed on the display to form one or more outcomes and if a particular outcome occurs the gaming apparatus awards an award, each reel having an associated set of symbols, the gaming machine comprising: a display that displays a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier; and a game controller in communication with the display and arranged to: (a) receive an input choosing one of the displayed game options; and (b) sequentially play each of the number of free games according to the chosen game option, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the chosen game option.

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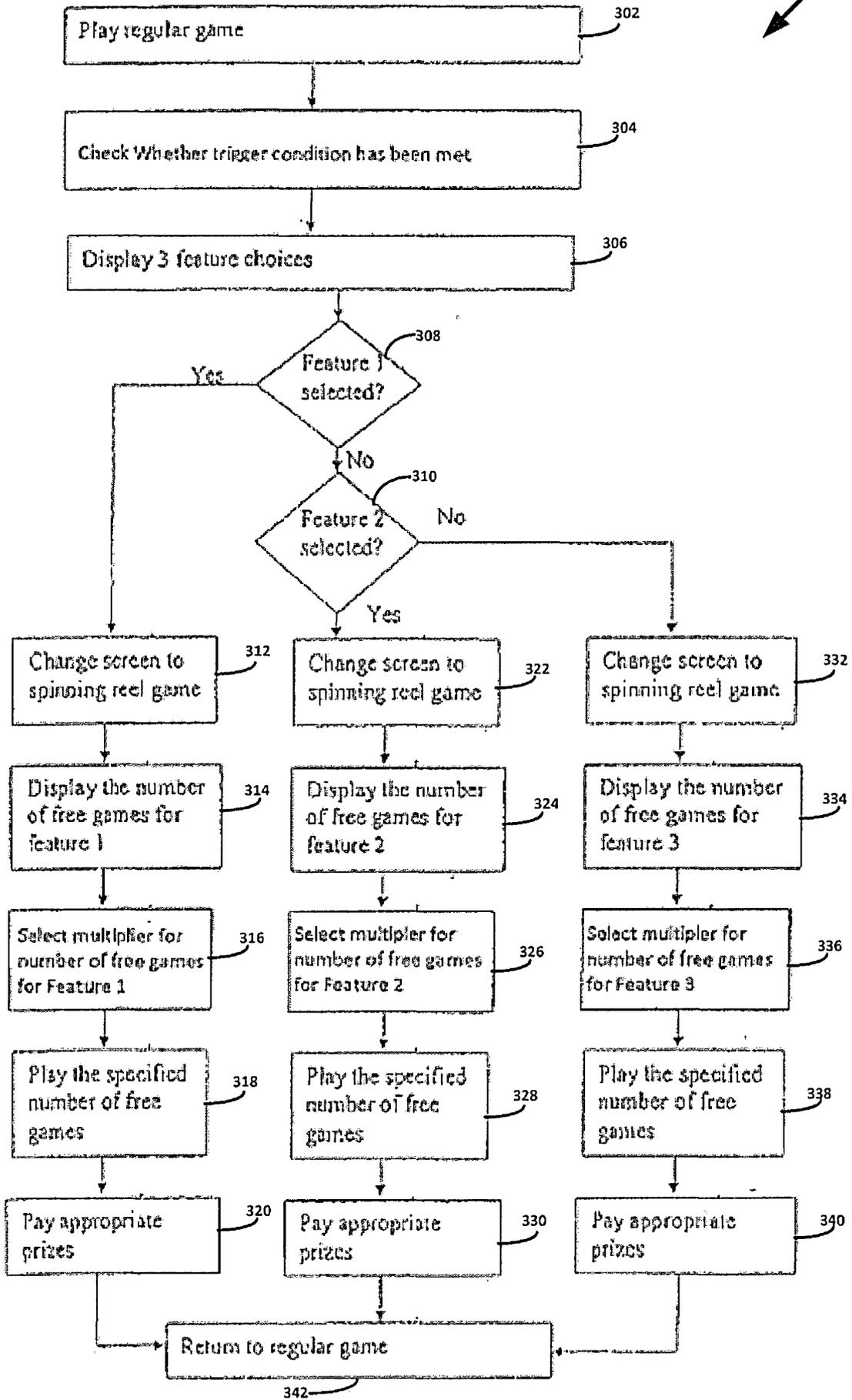


FIGURE 5

TITLE**METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR AWARDING A JACKPOT****RELATED APPLICATION**

5 This application is a divisional application of Australian patent application number 2017251772, which in turn is a divisional application of Australian patent application number 2015227546, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to gaming apparatuses and methods of gaming. In a particular embodiment, the present invention relates to a gaming apparatus and method for implementing a game having a feature game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 With the increase of gambling at gaming venues has come increased competition between gaming venues to obtain a larger share of the total gambling spend. Gaming venue operators have therefore continuously looked for new variations and types of games in order to attract both new and return customers to their venues.

20 In response to this need, suppliers of gaming devices and systems have attempted to provide the sought-after variety, while still developing games that comply with the relevant regulations in the jurisdiction of the gaming venue operator. Suppliers of gaming devices therefore are faced with restrictions on the types of games and gaming apparatus that are allowable, both in terms of the prevailing regulations and in terms of providing a return on investment to the gaming venue operators.

25 Existing gaming machines and other gaming apparatus may offer the player feature games. Feature games normally offer an increased return to player and the gaming apparatus must therefore provide enhanced play characteristics in the feature game to provide the required increased return to player. For example, a game may have a return to player of approximately 70% with a hit rate (i.e. the frequency of getting a prize) of about 1 in every 6 games. A feature game of the game may require a return
30 to player of approximately 200% and a hit rate of 1 in 2.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to an embodiment of the invention there is provided a method of providing a game played on a computational gaming apparatus having a display and a user interface, the game being a spinning reel game in which at least one symbol is spun up on each of a plurality of spinning reels and displayed on the display to form one or more outcomes and if a particular outcome occurs the gaming apparatus awards an award, each reel having an associated set of symbols, the method comprising:

displaying a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier;

receiving a selection of one of the displayed game options; and

sequentially playing each of the number of free games according to the received selection, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the selected option.

In one embodiment, the number of free games and the designated multiplier are associated based on an inverse relationship. Preferably, the game comprises a bonus factor, wherein the number of free games and the designated multiplier are associated based at least in part on the bonus factor.

In one embodiment, the set of symbols includes at least one scatter symbol, wherein the plurality of game options are displayed in response to a trigger event including the at least one scatter symbol occurring during play of the game. The bonus factor is preferably dynamically associated with the at least one scatter symbol when the scatter symbol is selected for display.

In one embodiment, the bonus factor is dynamically associated with the at least one scatter symbol before the scatter symbol is selected for display. Alternatively, the bonus factor is dynamically associated with the at least one scatter symbol after the scatter symbol is selected for display.

In one embodiment the bonus factor is determined randomly. In this or other embodiments, the bonus factor may also be predetermined.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a gaming apparatus providing a game in which a plurality of spinning reels is displayed, each reel displaying at least one symbol from an associated set of symbols to form one or more outcomes and if a particular outcome occurs the gaming apparatus awards an award, the gaming apparatus comprising:

a display that displays a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier; and a game controller in communication with the display and arranged to:

(a) receive an input choosing one of the displayed game options; and

(b) sequentially play each of the number of free games according to the chosen game option, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the chosen game option.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a computer program comprising machine-readable program code for controlling the operation of a data processing apparatus on which the program code executes to perform a method of providing a game in which a plurality of spinning reels is displayed, each reel displaying at least one symbol from an associated set of symbols and if a particular outcome occurs an award is awarded, the method comprising:

displaying a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier;

receiving a selection of one of the displayed game options; and sequentially playing each of the number of free games according to the received selection, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the selected option.

Further aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following description, given by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying

drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows schematically a view of a gaming machine suitable for implementing the present invention.

5 Figure 2 shows a block diagram of gaming apparatus suitable for implementing the present invention.

Figure 3 shows a block diagram of components of the memory of the gaming apparatus represented in Figure 2.

10 Figure 4 shows schematically a network gaming system suitable for implementing the present invention.

Figure 5 shows a flow diagram of a game process to be implemented by a gaming apparatus or a gaming system and having a game feature.

Figure 6 shows schematically a screen shot of a configuration in which the feature game is triggered in the method of Figure 5.

15 Figure 7 shows a screen display enabling a user to select options in the feature game.

Figure 8 shows an example of a game result in the feature game.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

20 In Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings, one example of a gaming machine embodying the present invention is generally referenced by arrow 10.

25 The gaming machine 10 includes a console 12 having a display 14 on which is displayed representations of a game 16 that can be played by a player. A mid-trim 20 of the gaming machine 10 houses a bank of buttons 22 for enabling a player to play the game 16. The mid-trim 20 also houses a credit input mechanism 24 including a coin input chute 24A and a bill collector 24B. A top box 26 may carry artwork 28, including for example, pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. Further artwork and/or information may be provided on the front panel 29 of the console 12. A coin tray 30 is mounted beneath the console 12 for cash

payouts from the gaming machine 10.

The display 14 shown in Figure 1 is in the form of a video display unit such as a cathode ray tube (CRT) screen device. Alternatively, the display 14 may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit, or the visible portion of an electromechanical device. The top box 26 may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display 14, or a different type of display.

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a gaming apparatus, generally referenced by arrow 100, suitable for implementing the present invention. The gaming apparatus 100 may, for example, operate as a stand alone gaming machine of the type shown in Figure 1.

However, the gaming apparatus 100 may alternatively operate as a networked gaming machine, communicating with other network devices, such as one or more servers or 9 other gaming machines. The gaming apparatus 100 may also have distributed hardware and software components that communicate with each other directly or through a network. Accordingly, different reference numerals have been used in Figure 2 and Figure 1 for components that may be equivalent.

The gaming apparatus 100 includes a game controller 101, which in the illustrated example includes a microprocessor, microcontroller, programmable logic device or other computational device 102. Instructions and data to control operation of the computational device 102 are stored in a memory 103, which is in data communication with the computational device 102. Typically, the gaming apparatus 100 will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory 103. The instructions to cause the game controller 101 to implement the present invention are stored in the memory 103.

The gaming apparatus may include meters 104 for the purposes of regulatory compliance and may also include an input/output (I/O) interface 105 for communicating with the peripheral devices of the gaming apparatus 100. The input/output interface 105 and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for instructions and data.

The gaming apparatus includes a random number generator (RNG) 113, which

may be a software module running on the computational device 102. Alternatively, the RNG may be implemented on a separate processor, either as software running on a microprocessor or on a dedicated hardware unit such as an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC).

5 In the example shown in Figure 2, the peripheral devices that communicate with the controller 101 are one or more displays 106, user interfaces 107, a card and/or ticket reader 108, a printer 109, a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism 110 and a coin output mechanism 111. One or more of the displays 106 may include a touch screen 106A that forms part of the user interface 107. Additional devices may be
10 included as part of the gaming apparatus 100, or devices omitted as required for the specific implementation.

In addition, the gaming apparatus 100 may include a communications interface, for example a network card 112. The network card, may for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a central controller, server or
15 database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database.

As explained in more detail in relation to Figure 4, the computational device 102 may include two or more controllers or processors, which may be local or remote from each other and the displays 106.

Figure 3 shows an exemplary block diagram of the main components of the
20 memory 103. The RAM 103A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the computational device 102 and related data. The EPROM 103B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system- or game-related code. The mass storage device 103C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the computational device 102 using protected code
25 from the EPROM 103B or elsewhere.

Figure 4 shows a gaming system 200. The gaming system 200 includes a network 201, which for example may be an Ethernet network. Gaming devices 202, shown arranged in three banks 203 of two gaming devices 202 in Figure 4, are connected to the network 201. The gaming devices 202 may be gaming machines 10, as shown in Figure 1 or may form part or all of another gaming apparatus 100. Single
30 gaming devices 202 and banks 203 containing three or more gaming devices 202 may also be connected to the network 201.

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

10 Servers may also be connected to the network 201. For example, a game server 205 may generate game outcomes for games played on the gaming devices 202, a database management server 206 may manage the storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices 202 in a database 206A, and a jackpot server 207 may control one or more jackpots associated with the gaming devices 202.

15 Further servers may be provided to assist in the administration of the gaming system 200, including for example a gaming floor management server 208, and a licensing server 209 to monitor the use of licenses to particular games. An administrator terminal 210 is provided to allow an administrator to run the network 201 and the devices connected to the network.

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

20 The following description of the gaming system and the method of operating a gaming system to implement a game in accordance with the present invention is given by way of example of the most preferred embodiment as presently contemplated, as a feature game of a base game and as a spinning reel game. However, the game of the present invention may be a standalone game or a base game of one or more feature
25 games.

Triggering the feature game during play of a base game, the player is offered the opportunity to play a feature game.

30 The base game may be played, for example, on gaming machine 10, gaming apparatus 100 or gaming system 200. The opportunity to play the feature game may be triggered in many ways. For example, the feature game may be triggered randomly using a number generated by the random number generator (RNG) 113. The triggering event 12 may be a specified time, or may be associated with a specified turnover, either

of a single machine such as gaming apparatus 100 or a plurality of machines as in gaming system 200. The triggering event may be the collection of a certain number of tokens.

5 The feature game may be triggered when a specified combination of symbols occurs in the base game. The specified combination may be advertised on the gaming machine 10, for example on the front panel 24 or the top box 26. Alternatively, the feature may be triggered when a non-advertised combination occurs. Other triggers may involve the occurrence of one or more specified game states or console states.

10 External trigger events may initiate the feature game, for example a signal received from game server 205. Specified operator activities or player activities may be used to trigger the feature game, which may also be associated with a special bet or a tournament. The trigger may come from the base game or from a system associated with the game.

Choices provided in feature game

15 Once the feature game has been triggered, the player is presented by the gaming apparatus with a plurality of game options. In each game option the player is offered a series of bonus games. In each bonus game, a plurality of spinning reels is displayed on the gaming machine 10. Associated with each game option is a designated multiplier that is applied to the prize payable at the end of the bonus game.
20 Game options that offer more bonus games are associated with lower multipliers during the bonus games. There is thus an inverse relationship between the duration of the series of bonus (or "free") games and the magnitude of the designated multiplier in each game option.

25 The player selects a game option, for example using touch screen 106A or user interface 107, and the processor 102 acts to display the selected series of bonus games on the displays 106. In each bonus game the spinning reels are animated to appear to spin. When the spinning ceases, a randomly selected array of symbols is displayed on the stationary reels. The symbols may, for example, be selected using the random number generator 113. Winning configurations may then be selected for display in one
30 of the bonus games 13, the winning configurations each corresponding to a prize as defined in a paytable which, at the end of the bonus game, are multiplied by the designated multiplier associated with the duration of the series of the selected option. Thus, the fewer bonus games chosen by the player, the higher the probability of a

winning a larger prize in any one bonus game, and vice versa.

The paytables corresponding to the different options may be specified such that the expected player return is constant regardless of which option is chosen. Thus the return to player may be kept constant by maintaining an inverse relationship between the number of opportunities for winning and the magnitude of the total prize in each of the opportunities. In other embodiments, respective paytables may be specified so as to provide the player with a plurality of predefined volatility options for the bonus game.

Each series of bonus games presented in the different game options has a fixed duration, defined either by the number of bonus games in the series or by a time interval. The feature may include a re-trigger, which may result in more free games or in the display of another selection screen.

The feature game may be designed to terminate if specified criteria are met. For example, the feature game may cease when a maximum prize value is reached. This may be in accordance with requirements in the jurisdiction in which the gaming machine operates. In a further example, play of the bonus games may involve the spinning up of particular symbols that are counted. The feature game may then continue until a specified number of symbols are collected and then end. A bonus amount multiplied by the designated multiplier associated with the duration of the series of the selected option may be awarded if the specified number of symbols is collected.

When the feature game is triggered, the gaming machine presents the player with a plurality of game options. The game options may differ from one another in one or more of the following aspects provided it varies in the number of free games:

- the number or location of the reels may differ between game options;
- different types of bonus game may be offered in different game options;
- different types of special symbol may be offered in different game options; and
- the paytables associated with the game options may differ.

The type of bonus games offered in the game options may vary. For example, the bonus games may be free games. Alternatively, the bonus games may be hold-and-re-spin games in which the player may elect to hold one or more reels as displayed, and

re-spin one or more of the remaining reels displayed in the bonus game. The bonus games may be purchased games with special features. The bonus games may also be repeat win games that remember a trigger feature and repeat the feature if a specified triggering event occurs.

5 Different game options may offer games that use different numbers of reels. For example, a 4 by 5 array of lines and reels may be provided in one game while other games may use a 5 by 5 array of symbols.

One or more of the game options may offer the possibility of a progressive win. For example 4 scatter symbols may trigger a jackpot.

10 In one arrangement the player has the option of paying extra money to get an extra feature offered which has a better return. The extra money may be paid at the start of the base game from which the feature game is triggered. The gaming apparatus on which the game is played may have an ante-bet, or bash button, for example amongst the buttons 22 or on a touch screen. Using the ante-bet, the player may
15 choose, for example, to pay an extra 5 credits per spin in the base game. The consequence of this extra payment is that, if the feature game is triggered, options are displayed that are more favourable to the player. In one arrangement the ante-bet increases the likelihood of the feature being triggered. The amount of the ante-bet is game specific. The ante bet may be offered as an additional stake regardless of how
20 many lines or reels are being played. Alternatively the player may be offered more favourable options if the player has bet more per line or more per reel.

Examples of determining the associated designated multipliers

Figure 6 shows a schematic diagram of a hypothetical screen shot 400 displayed on display 106 in the regular or base game. The combination of symbols in screen shot
25 400 entitles a player to a feature game. The screen shot 400 shows five reels 408, 410, 412, 414 and 416. Each reel has three lines. Reel 408 shows three symbols, designated 'a', 'b' and 'c'. Reel 410 shows 'd', a scatter symbol on the second line and symbol 'e' on the third line. Reel 412 shows symbol 'a', a scatter symbol and symbol 'b'. Reel 414 shows a scatter symbol followed by symbols 'c' and 'd'. Reel 416 shows
30 symbol 'e' on the first line followed by a scatter symbol and symbol 'a'. As shown at 402, the player currently has a credit of 0 units. As shown at 404, the player has bet 25 units, and as shown at 406 the simultaneous display of four scatter symbols has won the player 500 units.

In the embodiment of Figure 6, a predefined number of scatter symbols being selected for display triggers the feature, such as 4. In Figure 6, a scatter symbol has been selected for display on each of reels 410 to 416, and thus a feature is triggered.

5 In one embodiment, the scatter symbol incorporates a bonus factor 508, as display in the screen shot of Figure 7. Bonus factor 508 may be predefined as a theme of the game. For example, the number 8 is auspicious in many Asian cultures and is consequentially adopted as a theme in many games. Therefore, one embodiment predefines the bonus factor as the number 8.

10 In other embodiments, bonus factor 508 is determined randomly, and then assigned dynamically to the scatter symbol. This assignment may occur before or after the scatter symbols are selected for display. In such embodiments, bonus factor 508 is assigned simultaneously to all the scatter symbols on reels 408 to 416. In other embodiments, however, the bonus factor may only be assigned to a subset of the scatter symbols, or only to scatter symbols located on a specific one of the reels 408 to 15 416. Furthermore, different bonus factors may be determined and dynamically assigned to different scatter symbols.

In these embodiments, bonus factor 508 is used to define a plurality of options 502, 504 and 506, as shown in Figure 7. In game option 502, the player is offered the option of 3 free games, and is associated with an x2 multiplier. In game option 504, the 20 player is given the option of 2 free games, and is associated with an x3 multiplier. In game option 506, the player is offered the option of 1 free game, and is associated with an x6 multiplier. That is, in this embodiment, the association between the number of games and the designated multiplier in each of options 502, 504 and 506 is that they must multiply together to give a result equal to bonus factor 508 – in this embodiment 25 the number 6.

In choosing between game options, the player determines the number of free games and the magnitude of the designated multiplier to be played during the feature game. Each reel displayed in the feature game has an associated set of symbols. When the reel is spun during the feature game, symbols from the associated set are 30 rendered to the display 106. Each reel may display a plurality of symbols and thus an array of symbols is rendered to the display.

When the reels stop spinning, processor 102 analyses the symbols selected for display to determine whether a winning combination has occurred, and determines from

a predefined payable the associated prize payable for that winning combination. That prize is then multiplied by the multiplier associated with the selected option and paid out to the player. For example, if the player selected option 506 of Figure 7, the total prize paid out to the player would be the prize defined by the payable multiplied by 6.

5 Note that the number of options selectable in the embodiment of Figure 7 is intended to exemplify the invention. In other embodiments, there may be more or less than three options, and the bonus factor may be any number other than 6. For example, if the bonus factor is determined to be 8, the options available could be any, or all, of:

- 10
- 1 free game and x8 multiplier;
 - 2 free games and x4 multiplier;
 - 4 free games and x2 multiplier;
 - 8 free games and x1 multiplier.

Note also that the invention is not limited to integer amounts of free games
15 and/or multipliers, as long as the multiplicand is equal to the bonus factor.

Description of method

Figure 5 shows a flow diagram of a particular embodiment of a method 300 of
providing a feature game. Initially, in step 302, the player plays the base game, which in
this instance is a five reel spinning reel game with an advertised prize schedule. In the
20 base game, the symbols include at least a wild symbol, a scatter symbol and a standard
symbol.

In the embodiment shown, the feature is triggered by the occurrence of three or
more scatter symbols. In step 304, software running on computational device 102
checks whether three or more scatter symbols are displayed anywhere on the display,
25 thereby entitling the player to a feature game. As explained previously herein other
trigger events could be used. In one alternative embodiment, the trigger event may be
the occurrence of a predetermined number of a designated symbol in the base game,
with more of the designated symbols appearing in the feature game or the
characteristics of a special symbols changing in the feature game.

30 In step 306, the computational controller 102 renders a new display to display

106 that offers the player three feature choices. An example 500 of three such choices is shown in figure 7. In game option 502, the player is offered the option of 3 free games that is associated with an x2 multiplier. In game option 504, the player is given the option of 2 free games that is associated with an x3 multiplier. In game option 506, the player is offered the option of 1 free game that is associated with and x6 multiplier.

Software running on the processor 102 then checks whether the player has made a choice of one of the 3 options 502, 504 or 506. The player may indicate an option by, for example, touching the touch screen 106A. Alternatively, a player may push one of the buttons 22.

10 In step 308, the software running on the processor 102 checks whether the player has selected the first feature, i.e. game option 502. If so, then in step 312 the display on display 106 is changed to a spinning reel game for the feature game. In step 314 the game machine 10 displays the number of free games available in the selected feature.

15 Then, in step 316, the software running on processor 102 selects from memory 103 the associated designated multiplier, and prize table for the first feature. In some embodiments, where the feature game differs from the base game, the software running on processor 102 also selects from memory 103 the appropriate reel strips to implement the first feature game.

20 In step 318, the game controller 101 acts to play the specified number of free games.

The appropriate prizes are multiplied by the associated designated multiplier and then paid in step 320, and then in step 342 process flow returns to the regular or base game.

25 If the player does not select feature 1, then in step 310 the game controller 101 checks whether the player has selected the second feature, i.e. game option 504. If the player has selected option 504, then the game controller performs steps 322-330. In step 322 the display 106 is updated to display the spinning reel game. In step 324, the number of free games remaining for the second game option 504 is displayed. In step 30 326 the associated designated multiplier and prize table are selected for the second game option 504. In step 328, the game controller acts to play the specified number of free games, and the appropriate prizes are multiplied by the associated designated

multiplier and paid in step 330. Thereafter, the processor returns to the base game in step 342.

5 If the player does not select the second option 504 in step 310 (the “No” option of step 310) then process flow proceeds to step 332, in which the screen is changed to the spinning reel game and, in step 334, the number of free games remaining for the third game option 506 is displayed.

10 In step 336, the game controller 101 selects the reel strips and prize table for the third game option 506. In step 338 the game controller acts to play the specified number of free games in the third option 506. The appropriate prizes are multiplied by the associated designated multiplier and paid in step 340 and then in step 342 the processor player returns the base game.

15 In one arrangement, if the player does not make a choice when the screen 500 is displayed, the option is displayed indefinitely on display 106. In another arrangement, the choice screen 500 times out after a specified time interval and either a default selection of one of the three options is made, or a random selection of one of the three options 502, 504, 506 is made.

For each feature game, the prize table may be the same as that in the base game except that prizes paid for winning combinations achieved during the free games are multiplied by an associated designated multiplier.

20 The multiplication factor is determined by dividing a predefined resultant by the number of free games of the selected option.

25 Figure 8 shows an example 600 of a free game displayed on display 106 when the player has selected game option 506, in which the wild symbol may appear on any of reels 610, 612, 614 or 616. In the example 600, the wild symbol has been selected and displayed on reels 612, 614 and 616.

As seen in 602, the player has a credit of 500 due to the award in the base game. The player has bet 25 units as shown in 604 and the player has currently won 50 units, as shown at 606.

30 In one arrangement, any three or more scatter symbols appearing during a free game retrigger the feature. The same number of free games that the player initially selected is added to their current number of remaining free games. The feature then

continues with the same reel strips.

While the foregoing description has been provided by way of example of the preferred embodiments of the present invention as presently contemplated, which utilise gaming apparatus and machines, those skilled in the relevant arts will appreciate that the present invention also may have application to internet gaming and/or have application to gaming over a telecommunications network, where handsets are used to display game outcomes and receive player inputs.

Further aspects of the method will be apparent from the above description of the system. It will be appreciated that at least part of the method will be implemented electronically, for example, digitally by a processor executing program code such as in the above description of a game controller. In this respect, in the above description certain steps are described as being carried out by a processor of a gaming system, it will be appreciated that such steps will often require a number of sub-steps to be carried out for the steps to be implemented electronically, for example due to hardware or programming limitations. For example, to carry out a step such as evaluating, determining or selecting, a processor may need to compute several values and compare those values.

As indicated above, the method may be embodied in program code. The program code could be supplied in a number of ways, for example on a tangible computer readable storage medium, such as a disc or a memory device, e.g. an EEPROM, (for example, that could replace part of memory 103) or as a data signal (for example, by transmitting it from a server). Further different parts of the program code can be executed by different devices, for example in a client server relationship. Persons skilled in the art, will appreciate that program code provides a series of instructions executable by the processor.

Where in the foregoing description reference has been made to integers having known equivalents, then those equivalents are hereby incorporated herein as if individually set forth.

Those skilled in the relevant arts will appreciate that modifications and additions to the embodiments of the present invention may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined in this specification

extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

5 It will also be understood that the term "comprises" (or its grammatical variants) as used in this specification is equivalent to the term "includes" and should not be taken as excluding the presence of other elements or features.

2019204105 12 Jun 2019

CLAIMS

1. A method of providing a game played on a computational gaming apparatus having a display and a user interface, the game being a spinning reel game in which at least one symbol is spun up on each of a plurality of spinning reels and displayed on the display to form one or more outcomes and if a particular outcome occurs the gaming apparatus awards an award, each reel having an associated set of symbols, the method comprising:

displaying a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier;

receiving a selection of one of the displayed game options; and

sequentially playing each of the number of free games according to the received selection, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the selected option.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said number of free games and said designated multiplier are associated based on an inverse relationship.
3. A method according to claim 2, wherein said game comprises a bonus factor, wherein said number of free games and said designated multiplier are associated based at least in part on said bonus factor.
4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the set of symbols includes at least one scatter symbol, and wherein said plurality of game options are displayed in response to a trigger event including said at least one scatter symbol occurring during play of the game.
5. A method according to claim 4, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol when said scatter symbol is selected for display.
6. A method according to claim 4, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol before said scatter symbol is selected for display.

7. A method according to claim 4, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol after said scatter symbol is selected for display.
8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein, said bonus factor is determined randomly.
9. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein, said bonus factor is predetermined.
10. A gaming apparatus providing a game in which a plurality of spinning reels is displayed, each reel displaying at least one symbol from an associated set of symbols to form one or more outcomes and if a particular outcome occurs the gaming apparatus awards an award, the gaming apparatus comprising:
 - a display that displays a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier; and
 - a game controller in communication with the display and arranged to:
 - (a) receive an input choosing one of the displayed game options; and
 - (b) sequentially play each of the number of free games according to the chosen game option, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the chosen game option.
11. A gaming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said number of free games and said designated multiplier are associated based on an inverse relationship.
12. A gaming apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said game comprises a bonus factor, wherein said number of free games and said designated multiplier are associated based at least in part on said bonus factor.
13. A gaming apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the set of symbols includes at least one scatter symbol, and wherein said plurality of game options are displayed in response to a trigger event including said at least one scatter

symbol occurring during play of the game.

14. A gaming apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol when said scatter symbol is selected for display.
15. A gaming apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol before said scatter symbol is selected for display.
16. A gaming apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said bonus factor is dynamically associated with said at least one scatter symbol after said scatter symbol is selected for display.
17. A gaming apparatus according to any one of the claims 10 to 16, wherein, said bonus factor is determined randomly.
18. A gaming apparatus according to any one of claims 10 to 16, wherein said bonus factor is predetermined.
19. A computer program comprising machine-readable program code for controlling the operation of a data processing apparatus on which the program code executes to perform a method of providing a game in which a plurality of spinning reels is displayed, each reel displaying at least one symbol from an associated set of symbols and if a particular outcome occurs an award is awarded, the method comprising:

displaying a plurality of game options, each game option designating a respective number of free games that are each associated with a designated multiplier;

receiving a selection of one of the displayed game options; and sequentially playing each of the number of free games according to the received selection, wherein if an award is payable as a result of playing the number of free games, that award is modified by the designated multiplier associated with said respective number of free games for the selected option.

Figure 1

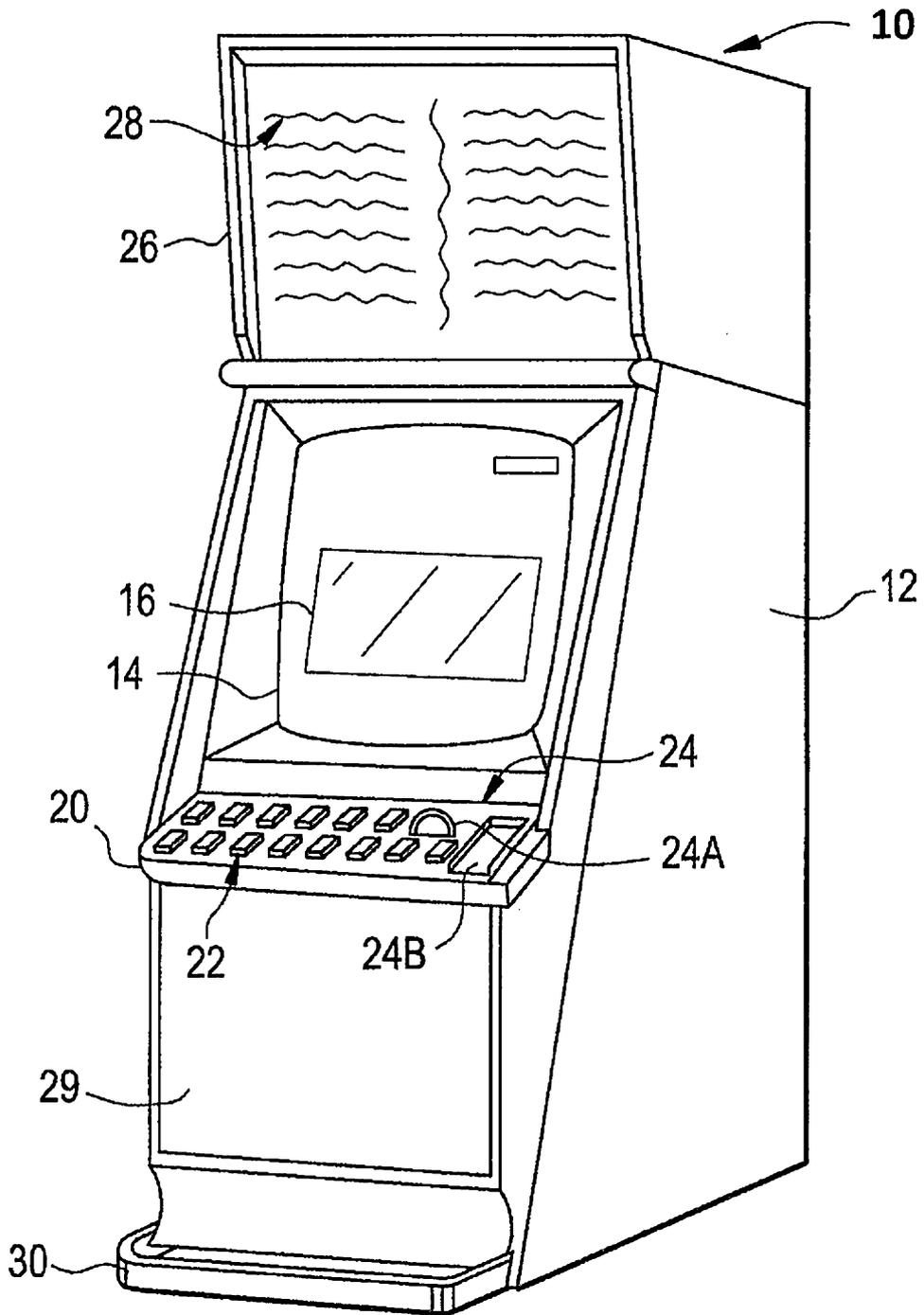


Figure 1

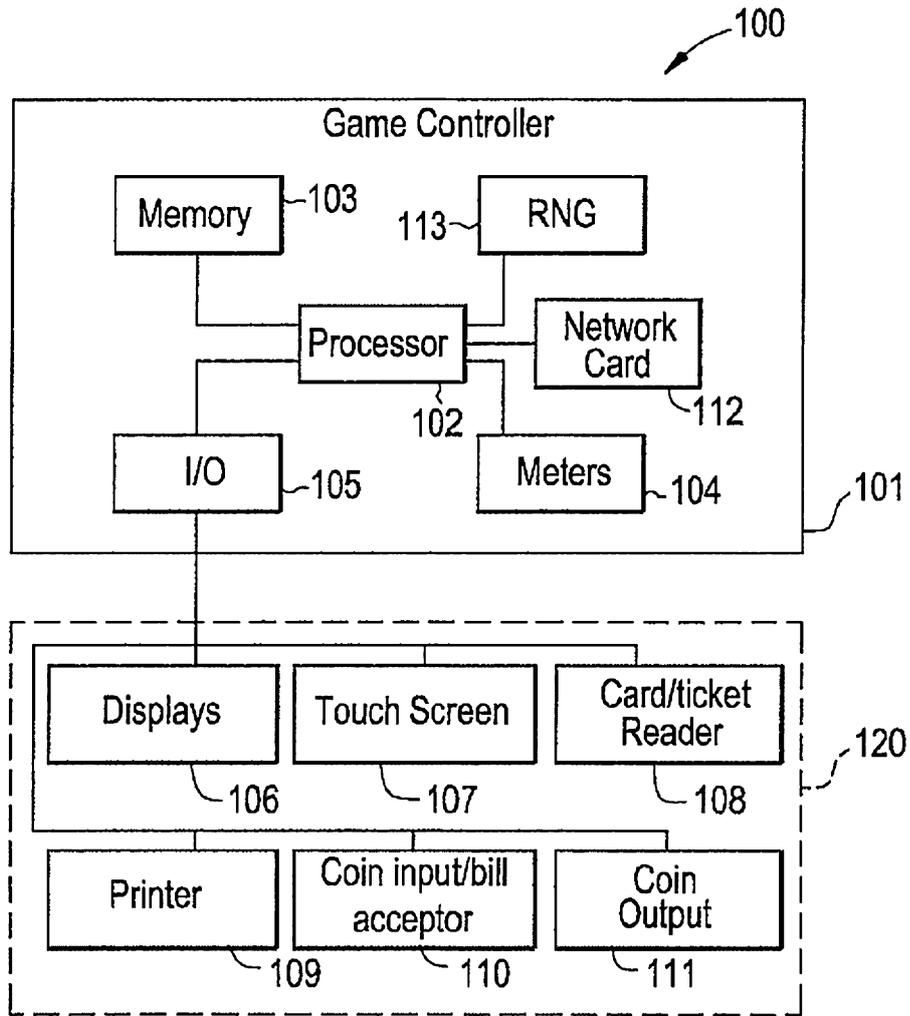


Figure 2

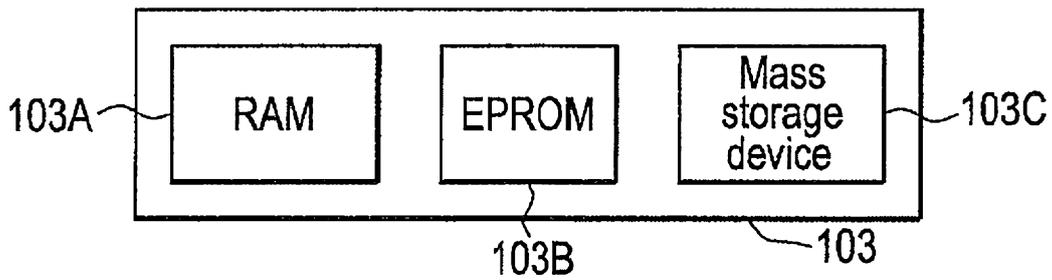


Figure 3

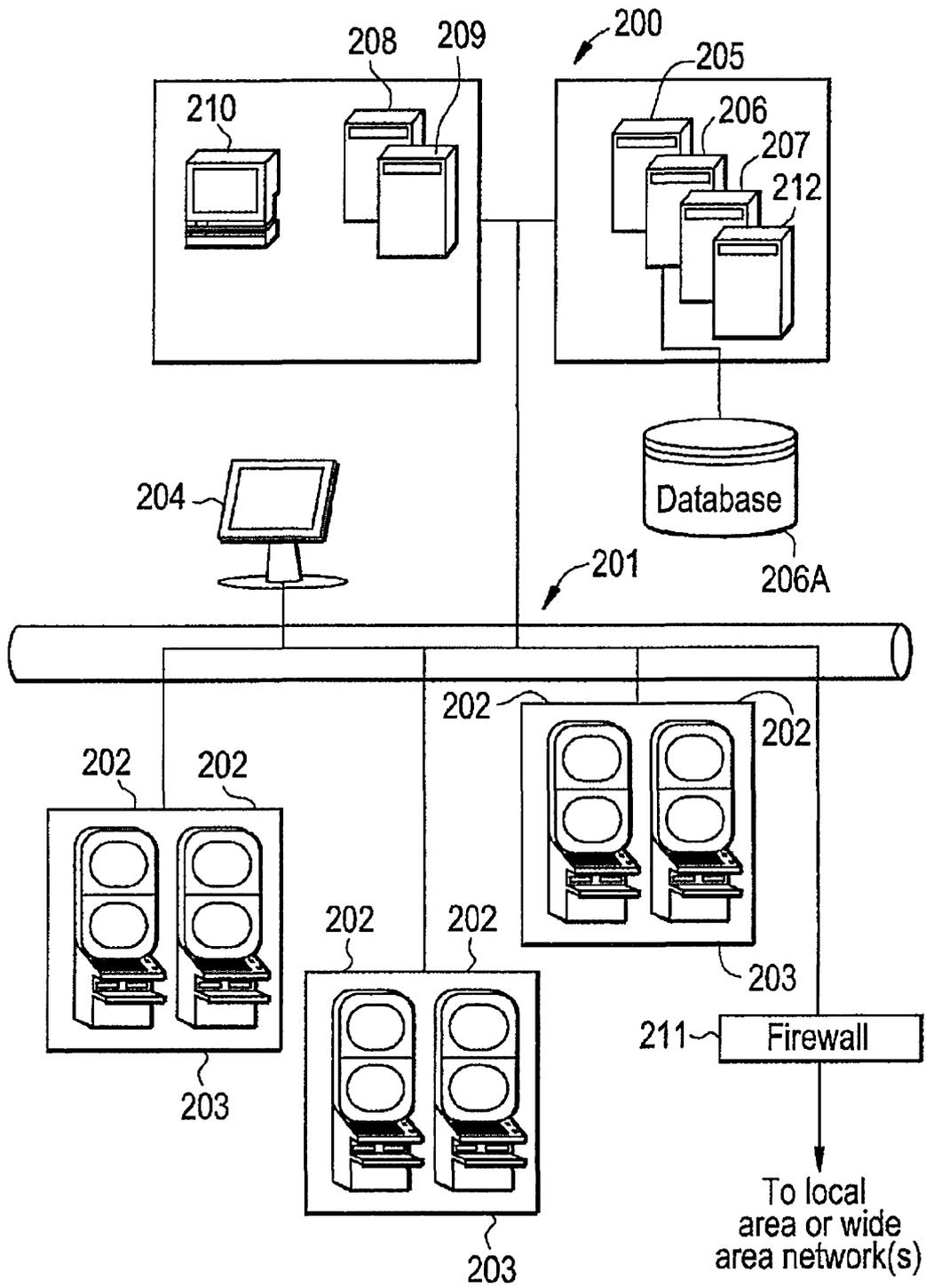


Figure 4

300

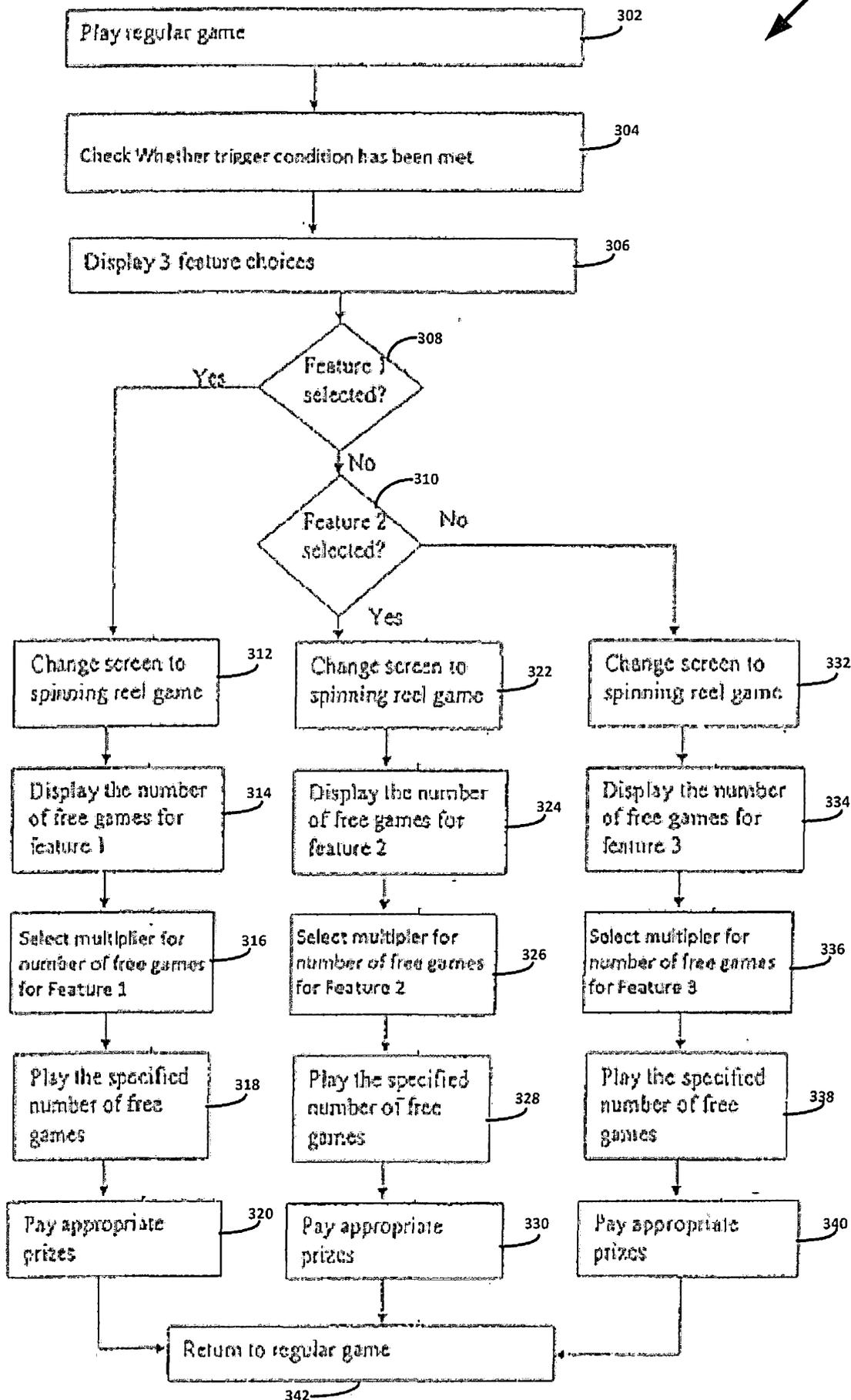


FIGURE 5

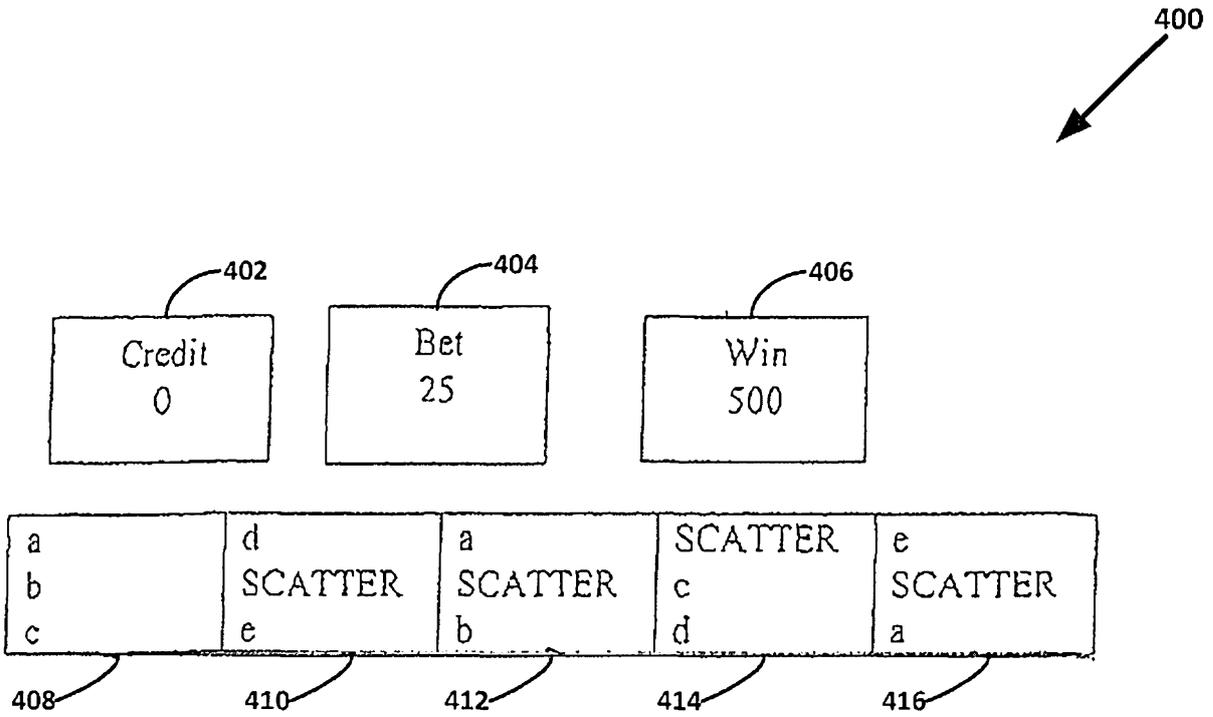


FIGURE 6

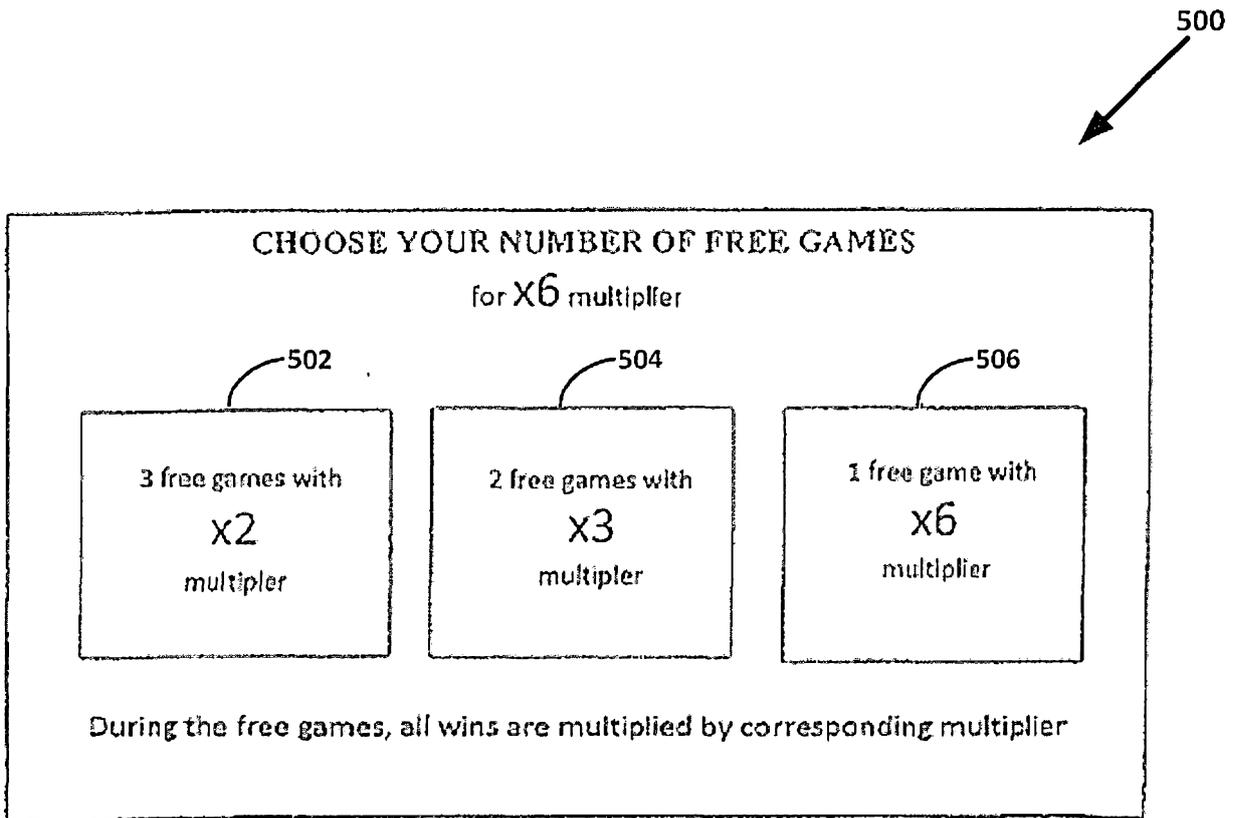


FIGURE 7