Providing a first partial outcome

Providing at least two second partial outcomes

Receiving player selection of at least one but not all second partial outcomes

Providing a game outcome resulting from the combination of first and selected second partial outcomes

It is provided a method, apparatus and computer program, to play a game of chance involving player selection, comprising providing a first partial outcome and at least two second partial outcomes. A player selection of at least one, but not all, of the second partial outcomes is received and the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s) are combined to form a game outcome. The game outcome is evaluated according to game rules.
Figure 2
Figure 3

1. Receiving credit information from a player
2. Receiving activation information from the player
3. Randomly generating a game outcome
4. Displaying the game outcome
5. Evaluating the game outcome according to game rules
6. Providing an award to the player
Providing a first partial outcome

Providing at least two second partial outcomes

Receiving player selection of at least one but not all second partial outcomes

Providing a game outcome resulting from the combination of first and selected second partial outcomes

Figure 4
Figure 5
Providing a first partial outcome

Providing at least two second partial outcomes

Receiving player selection of at least one but not all second partial outcomes

Providing a game outcome resulting from the combination of first and selected second partial outcomes

Evaluating the game outcome according to game rules

Generating a comparison outcome

Figure 6
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Figure 7
Figure 8
Figure 10
METHOD OF PLAYING A GAME OF CHANCE INVOLVING PLAYER SELECTION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority under 35 USC §119(e) of U.S. provisional patent application 60/687,314 filed Jun. 6th, 2005, the specification of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to a game of chance involving player selection.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Gambling has evolved a lot during the last few years, and game manufacturers are always searching for new methods to interest and entertain players. Players are always demanding more features and payout schemes.

[0004] Improvements in these kinds of games are desired to enhance the player's interest and entertainment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method of playing a game of chance comprising: providing a first partial outcome and at least two second partial outcomes, comprising game indicia. Receiving a player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes and combining the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s) to form a game outcome. Finally, evaluating the game outcome according to game rules.

[0006] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a method of providing a game outcome in a game of chance comprising: providing a first partial outcome and at least two second partial outcomes, comprising game indicia; receiving a player selection of at least one, but not all, of the second partial outcomes. A game outcome resulting from the combination of the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s) is provided.

[0007] In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a game apparatus comprising: displaying means for displaying a first partial outcome, at least two second partial outcomes and a game outcome; and input-receiving means for receiving player selection of at least one, but not all, of the second partial outcomes.

[0008] In accordance with yet another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a game apparatus comprising: controlling means for controlling at least one of the action of a) generating a first partial outcome comprising game indicia; b) generating at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia; and c) combining, according to game information, the first partial outcome and at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes to form a game outcome. The gaming apparatus also comprises communicating means for communicating game information.

[0009] In accordance to another embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a computer program embodied on a computer readable medium or in processor-readable memory having codes adapted to provide a first partial outcome comprising game indicia and at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia; to receive a player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes; and to provide a game outcome resulting from the combination of the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s).

[0010] For the purpose of the present invention, the words “partial outcome” mean a plurality of game indicia organized in a manner characteristic to a game of chance and forming an initial (not ready to be evaluated) or incomplete (missing at least one gaming indicium) game result.

[0011] For the purpose of the present invention, the words “game outcome” mean a plurality of game indicia organized in a manner characteristic to a game of chance and forming a game result which is ready to be evaluated.

[0012] For the purpose of the present invention, the words “comparison outcome” mean a plurality of game indicia organized in a manner characteristic to a game of chance used to evaluate a game outcome. Such a comparison outcome may be a dealer’s poker or blackjack hand, a lotto winning sequence, player selected numbers in a keno game, etc.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] Further features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, taken in combination with the appended drawings, in which:

[0014] FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram showing a perspective view of a gaming machine suitable for an embodiment of the present invention;

[0015] FIG. 2 is a bloc diagram illustrating the components of the gaming machine of FIG. 1;

[0016] FIG. 3 is a flowchart illustrating the steps for playing a game of chance embodied on the gaming machine of FIGS. 1 and 2;

[0017] FIG. 4 is a flowchart illustrating the steps of a method for providing a game outcome according to a simple embodiment of the present invention as played on the gaming machine of FIGS. 1 and 2;

[0018] FIG. 5 is a screen shot of a lotto game played accordingly to a simple embodiment of the present invention;

[0019] FIG. 6 is a flowchart illustrating the steps of a method for playing a game of chance according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[0020] FIG. 7 is a screen shot of a keno game played according to a single-choice embodiment of the present invention;

[0021] FIG. 8 is a screen shot of a keno game played according to a two-choice embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] FIGS. 9a, 9b and 9c are screen shots of elements of a line game played according to a replacement combination embodiment of the present invention;
FIG. 10 is a screen shot of a lotto game played according to an variable number of indicia embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 11a to 11e are screen shots of elements of a line game played according to a mixed combination embodiment of the present invention.

It will be noted that throughout the appended drawings, like features are identified by like reference numerals.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The embodiments of the present invention are preferably carried out on a gaming apparatus, such as a personal computer, a gaming terminal, a server or the gaming machine illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. Said gaming machine 10 comprises displaying means 12, such as a video screen, an LCD screen or mechanical reels; credit-receiving means 14 such as a card reader, a coin or/and bill acceptor, or money transfer facility, whether from a casino-operated player account or from a bank account; input-receiving means 16, such as buttons, levers or a touch screen; awarding means 18, such as a ticket printer, a card reader, a hopper, or money transfer facility; storing means 20, such as RAM, flash memory, a hard drive or a removable memory medium; and controlling means 22, such as a computer, computer codes, or a hardware controller. The controlling means 22 comprise evaluating means 24, which also may correspond to a computer, computer codes or hardware components.

Such a gaming machine 10 is designed, as shown on FIG. 3, to receive credit information from a player (at step 30) either in a physical format (such as coins or bills) or in an electronic format (such as a player card or a money transfer from a bank account), to receive activation information from the player (at step 32), to randomly generate (at step 34) and display (at step 36) a game outcome, to evaluate said game outcome according to game rules (a pay table for example) (at step 38), and to award a prize to the player for a winning game outcome (at step 40). Embodiments of the present invention take place mostly during or replace steps 34 and 36. At any moment of the method, a comparison outcome may be generated (at step 42), depending on the game of chance played.

The invention may also be implemented, totally or in part, in a computer program. It may also be applied on a remote terminal, part of a local or wide area network or connected through the internet, wherein game information (not shown) is communicated using communicating means (not shown) such as a physical connection (cable or telephone line, for example), or broadcast facilities using an electrical or electromagnetic signal. The terminal may participate totally, in part or not at all, in the generation of the game outcome, depending on the nature of the game information communicated to and from it. Game information comprise all information useful to conduct the game of chance, such as the player identity, the game of chance played, the bet value, the level of play, the game outcome, the pay table, the pay schedule, player input, a comparison outcome, the prize awarded, etc. To apply embodiments of the present invention, game information also comprise the first partial outcome, the second partial outcomes, the manner in which the partial outcomes are to be combined and the player selection of at least one but not all second partial outcomes.

While illustrated in the block diagrams as groups of discrete components communicating with each other via distinct data signal connections, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the preferred embodiments are provided by a combination of hardware and software components, with some components being implemented by a given function or operation of a hardware or software system, and many of the data paths illustrated being implemented by data communication within a computer application or operating system. The structure illustrated is thus provided for efficiency of teaching the present preferred embodiments.

An embodiment of the present invention provides a method of providing a game outcome in a game of chance comprising, as illustrated on FIG. 4, providing a player with a first partial outcome (at step 50) and at least two second partial outcomes (at step 52); receiving a player selection of at least one, but not all, of the second partial outcomes (at step 54); and providing a game outcome resulting from the combination of the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s) (at step 56). This combination consists in completing the first partial outcome with game indicia from the selected second partial outcome(s), or replacing at least one game indicium from the first partial outcome with game indicia from the selected second partial outcome(s).

In a lotto-game example of said embodiment, illustrated on FIG. 5, a first partial outcome, a first partial lotto number 60, as well as three (3) second partial outcomes, second partial lotto numbers 62, 64 and 66, is provided to the player. The player is invited to select one of the second partial outcomes 62, 64 or 66, and a game outcome, a complete lotto number 68, resulting from the combination of both the first partial lotto number and the selected second partial lotto number, is provided. The complete lotto number 68 of this example results from the combination of the first partial lotto number and the second partial lotto number 264.

The generation of the first partial outcome and the second partial outcomes, as well as the generation of the game outcome by combining the first and second partial outcomes may occur in the same place as the display of those partial outcomes and game outcome, or not. Meaning that a gaming machine may generate and provide the partial outcomes and game outcome to the player, or they can be generated by a gaming machine or server and provided by another gaming machine or a terminal.

Another embodiment of the present invention provides a method of playing a game of chance comprising, as illustrated on FIG. 6, providing a player with a first partial outcome (at step 70) and at least two second partial outcomes (at step 72); receiving a player selection of at least one but not all of the second partial outcomes (at step 74); and providing a game outcome resulting from the combination of the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcome(s) (at step 76). This combination performed by completing the first partial outcome with game indicia from the selected second partial outcome(s), or replacing at least one game indicium from the first partial outcome with game indicia from the selected second partial outcome(s).
The game outcome is evaluated (at step 78), according to game rules, including, if one is present, a comparison outcome. Said comparison outcome may be generated at any moment of the process, or even before it even begins (at step 80, the dashed line indicates it can happen at any moment of the process), depending on the game rules.

[0034] In a keno-game example of said first embodiment, illustrated on FIG. 7, a player selects, to generate a comparison outcome, ten (10) numbers, ranging from 1 to 80. In this example, the player selects the numbers 3, 12, 22, 34, 39, 45, 52, 65, 68, and 72, marked in bold on the player card 90. Twelve (12) balls, the first partial outcome, are randomly drawn from a blower containing balls, also bearing numbers ranging from 1 to 80, and displayed to the player 92. The drawn numbers are: 1, 3, 13, 18, 26, 39, 44, 52, 54, 59, 62, and 73. Three (3) second partial outcomes or groups of five (5) randomly and independently drawn numbers are then provided to the player. Groups being independently drawn means that each group is drawn from the blow, as it was just after the draw of the first partial outcome. The groups are: 12, 32, 46, 72 and 75 for Group 194; 4, 10, 16, 38 and 72 for Group 296; and 2, 4, 14, 36 and 78 for Group 398. The player is then invited to select one of the groups. Since the player knows the game rules and how its game outcome will be evaluated, he tries to select the group that will not only give him the best chances of winning, but also the best possible prize. According to keno game rules, the game outcome is compared to the player selected numbers to determine the number of matching numbers. Here the player would select Group 194, since it results in five (5) matching numbers (3 from the first partial outcome [circled] and 2 from the second partial outcome [circled in dashed line]), while the other groups would result in four (4) matching numbers for Group 296 and three (3) matching numbers for Group 398. The game outcome (the seventeen [17] numbers coming from the combination of the first and second partial outcomes) is compared to the comparison outcome, the player selected numbers, to determine the number of matching numbers. The number of matching numbers is then evaluated according to a pay table 100. The corresponding prize, in points, money or any other means of rewarding the player, may be awarded to the player.

[0035] The second partial outcomes may also be dependently generated, meaning they are generated, one at a time, from the same population of indicia. A population of indicia may be a deck of cards, a group of balls contained in a blower (such as those used for keno or bingo), etc. Dependently generating second partial outcomes results in that an indicia appearing only once in the population would not appear in more than one second partial outcome. Accordingly, in the keno example illustrated on FIG. 7, if the groups have been dependently generated, Group 2 would not contain the number “72” since it was already in Group 1, and the number “4” would appear only in Group 2.

[0036] In another embodiment, the player selects more than one second partial outcome. In the keno game of FIG. 8, the player selection (comparison outcome) and the first partial outcome 92 are the same as those found in the example of FIG. 7. The player is provided with five (5) groups of three numbers 110, 112, 114, 116 and 118. He is invited to select two (2) of those groups. Here, selecting Group 4116 results in three (3) matching numbers. Group 1110 and Group 2112 both comprise two (2) matching numbers, but number “12” appears in Group 1 and Group 4116, which results in four (4) matching numbers between the two groups (Group 1110 and Group 4116), while selecting Group 2112 and Group 4116 results in five (5) matching numbers. By combining the first partial outcome and the selected second partial outcomes (Group 1110 and Group 4116), and comparing their indicia to the player selected numbers (comparison outcome), the player gets eight (8) matching numbers. The game outcome is evaluated by comparing the number of matching numbers to a pay schedule.

[0037] In all the preceding examples, the game outcome resulting from the combination was generated by completing the first partial outcome using the indicia from the second partial outcome. In another embodiment of the present invention, each indicium of the selected second partial outcomes replaces an indicium from the first partial outcome.

[0038] In a line-game example illustrated in FIGS. 9a, 9b and 9c, a five-reel nine-line game is conducted. FIG. 9a illustrates a first partial outcome generated by spinning and stopping the five reels. Three second partial outcomes 120, 122, and 124, each in the shape of a set of reels comprising at least one randomly determined and positioned symbol, are provided to the player, as illustrated on FIG. 9b. After the player has selected a set of reels, each symbol from the selected second partial outcome replaces the symbol from the first partial outcome that occupies the same position on the reels. Accordingly, combining a first partial outcome and a second partial outcome results in replacing symbols from said first partial outcome by the position-corresponding symbols from the second partial outcome. FIG. 9c illustrates the game outcome after the player has selected the third second partial outcome 124.

[0039] The example of FIGS. 9a, 9b and 9c also shows that the number of indicia in the different second partial outcomes does not need to be constant. In this example, in choosing the first set of reels, four (4) indicia from the first partial outcome would be replaced while three (3) indicia would be replaced if the second or third set of reels would be selected. Varying the number of indicia in second partial outcomes modifies the impact of said second partial outcomes on the game outcome and thus, potentially on the chances of winning. A second partial outcome having more indicia than another has a bigger impact on the resulting game outcome, but this impact may be positive (increase chances of winning and/or the prize awarded), or negative (decrease chances of winning and/or the prize awarded). The player has to take into account this impact in making his decision on which second partial outcome(s) to select. Examples of positive and negative impacts regarding the number of indicia varying from a second partial outcome to another are illustrated on FIG. 10. In this lotto game, when the first partial outcome 132 is compared to a comparison outcome, the winning sequence 130, only one number matches. Three (3) second partial outcomes, or sequences 134, 136 and 138, are offered, each having a different number of indicia. Sequence 1134 comprises two (2) indicia and, after combination by replacing indicia of the first partial outcome 132, results in two (2) matching numbers in any positions. Group 2136 comprises four (4) indicia and results, after combination, in only one matching number, since the matching number coming from the first partial outcome 132
has been replaced by a non-matching number coming from the second partial outcome 136. Having more indicia in this sequence is a disadvantage for the player since an indicia participating in a winning result is replaced by an indicia which cannot participate. On the other hand, Group 3138, with its three (3) indicia, results in two (2) matching numbers in the first two positions. This time, having more indicia has a positive impact on the chances of winning and the prize awarded since, by comparing these possible game outcomes to a pay schedule 140, it becomes evident that selecting Group 3138 is more advantageous than selecting Group 1134.

[0040] In another embodiment of the present invention, the first partial outcome and at least one second partial outcome are combined by both completing the first partial outcome and replacing some of its indicia. If more than one second partial outcome is selected, each second partial outcome is treated individually, and thus one may be combined by completing or replacing only while another one may do both. This embodiment may result in game outcomes in which the number of indicia is less than the number of indicia found in a game outcome generated without applying embodiments of the present invention.

[0041] An example of such an embodiment is illustrated on FIGS. 11a to 11e. The first partial outcome is shown on FIG. 11a. FIG. 11b illustrates three (3) second partial outcomes or set of reels 140, 142 and 144 that may be combined with the first partial outcome to generate a game outcome. FIG. 11c illustrates the result of the combination of the first partial outcome with the first set of reels 140. This set of reels only comprises symbols at positions where the first partial outcome does not have symbols, and thus, the combination is done by completing the first partial outcome without replacing any symbols. A winning line of three (3) oranges results from this combination. FIG. 11d illustrates the combination of the first partial outcome with the second set of reels 142. This time, symbols from the first partial outcome are replaced by symbols from the second set of reels 142. Since no symbols appeared on the second set of reels at the unoccupied position in the first partial outcome, the game outcome has fewer symbols than positions, even so, a line of four (4) cherries results from the combination. Finally, FIG. 11e illustrates the combination of the first partial outcome with the third set of reels 144. In this combination, both completion and replacement take place since at least one symbol appears in the third set of reels 144 at a position where there is a symbol in the first partial outcome, and at least one symbol appears in the third set of reels 144 at an unoccupied position in the first partial outcome. This combination also results in a winning outcome of three (3) cherries on a line.

[0042] In yet another embodiment of the present invention, at least one, but not all, indicia of either the first or second partial outcomes, or both is displayed to the player. In this embodiment, the player does not have all the information about at least one of the partial outcomes.

[0043] An example of such an embodiment is a poker game wherein the player is dealt a first partial outcome, an initial hand, wherein three (3) of the five (5) cards are dealt face up and two (2) are dealt face down. Three (3) second partial outcomes or hands of replacement cards are dealt face up. The player selects a hand of replacement cards, and the cards of the selected hand replace the cards occupying the same position in the initial hand, regardless of whether they were dealt face up or face down. The face down cards, if any left, are revealed and the final hand, the game outcome, is evaluated by comparing it, whether to a dealer’s hand, another player’s hand or a pay schedule.

[0044] Another example of such an embodiment is a poker game wherein the player is dealt a first partial outcome of two (2) cards. Three (3) second partial outcomes or community hands are dealt (to be used whether by a single player, players of a bank of machine or players playing on the Internet, for example), one (1) card face up and two (2) cards face down. The player selects one of the community hands, the face down cards are revealed, and the game outcome, the final hand, is generated by completing the first partial outcome with the selected community hand.

[0045] In yet another embodiment, at least one of the first partial outcome and the second partial outcomes is controlled according to generation rules. Generation rules for a controlled first partial outcome may be generating only first partial outcomes that do not comprise winning outcomes, or first partial outcomes that comprise “near miss” outcomes, meaning outcomes comprising a substantial portion of the indicia necessary to get a winning outcome, such as in a line game, a possible line of three identical symbols of which one is missing, or a keno game wherein the first partial outcome comprises two matching numbers, so the player only needs one to get a winning outcome. The first partial outcome may be controlled to add interest in a game, to control the payout of the game or to comply to rules or laws in different jurisdictions for example. On the other hand, the second partial outcomes may be controlled to control the payout of the game, to add interaction to the game while controlling the payout, or to award a predetermined prize to a player, for example.

[0046] In some jurisdictions, a player has to show some skill to win. In a lotto-game example, a controlled first partial outcome would not comprise more than one matching number, and if one matching number is present, it would not be in the first position. Thus, if the player may select a comparison outcome (the sequence the player has initially), the first partial outcome (the winning sequence) may be generated randomly but will be verified for preventing it from comprising a winning outcome before being displayed to the player. The second partial outcomes may be randomly generated or controlled also.

[0047] It is desired to control the generation of the second partial outcomes, for example in a system wherein the game is played on a terminal, but where the game results are generated by a server communicating with this terminal. After the server has generated a game result, which may be as simple as a prize value, or as complete as the actual indicia and their arrangement in the game, the terminal generate a first partial outcome, which may be controlled or randomly generated. Then, second partial outcomes are generated as to comply with the game result communicated by the server.

[0048] It should be noted that the present invention can be carried out as a method, can be embodied in a system, a computer readable medium, processor-readable memory or an electrical or electro-magnetic signal.
[0049] The embodiments of the invention described above are intended to be exemplary only. The scope of the invention is therefore intended to be limited solely by the scope of the appended claims.

1. We claim:
   1. A method of playing a game of chance comprising the steps of:
      providing a first partial outcome comprising game indicia;
      providing at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia;
      receiving a player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes;
      combining said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s) to form a game outcome; and
      evaluating said game outcome according to game rules.
   2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of combining comprises a) using the game indicia of both said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s) to form said game outcome; b) replacing an indicia of said first partial outcome by an indicia of said selected second partial outcome(s); or c) both a and b.
   3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing a first partial outcome comprises randomly generating said first partial outcome.
   4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing a first partial outcome comprises generating said first partial outcome according to generation rules.
   5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing at least two second partial outcomes comprises randomly generating said second partial outcomes.
   6. The method of claim 5, wherein the step of randomly generating said second partial outcomes comprises generating said second partial outcomes independently from each other.
   7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing at least two second partial outcomes comprises generating said second partial outcomes according to generation rules.
   8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing a first partial outcome comprises displaying at least one indicium of said first partial outcome.
   9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing at least two second partial outcomes comprises displaying at least one indicium of each of said second partial outcomes.
  10. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing at least two second partial outcomes comprises providing second partial outcomes having all the same number of indicia.
  11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of evaluating comprises at least one of a) comparing said game outcome to a pay schedule; b) comparing said game outcome to another player’s game outcome; and c) comparing said game outcome to a comparison outcome.
  12. The method of claim 1, wherein the game of chance comprises a wagering game.
  13. The method of claim 1, wherein the game indicia comprise card, symbol, number, or die values.
  14. A method of providing a game outcome in a game of chance, comprising the steps of:
     providing a first partial outcome comprising game indicia;
     providing at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia;
     receiving a player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes; and
     providing said game outcome resulting from the combination of said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s).
  15. A gaming apparatus for playing a game of chance comprising:
     displaying means for displaying a first partial outcome, at least two second partial outcomes and a game outcome resulting from the combination of said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s); and
     input-receiving means for receiving player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes.
  16. The gaming apparatus of claim 15, further comprising communicating means for communicating game information from or to said gaming apparatus.
  17. The gaming apparatus of claim 15, further comprising controlling means for controlling at least one of the action of a) generating said first partial outcome comprising game indicia; b) generating said at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia; and c) combining said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s) to form said game outcome.
  18. The gaming apparatus of claim 15, further comprising evaluating means for evaluating said game outcome according to game rules.
  19. A gaming apparatus comprising:
     controlling means for controlling at least one of the action of a) generating a first partial outcome comprising game indicia; b) generating at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia and c) combining, according to game information, said first partial outcome and at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes to form a game outcome; and
     communicating means for communicating said game information from or to said gaming apparatus.
  20. The gaming apparatus of claim 19, further comprising evaluating means for evaluating said game outcome.
  21. A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium or in processor-readable memory having codes adapted to:
     provide a first partial outcome comprising game indicia;
     provide at least two second partial outcomes, each comprising game indicia;
     receive a player selection of at least one, but not all, of said second partial outcomes; and
     provide a game outcome resulting from the combination of said first partial outcome and said selected second partial outcome(s).