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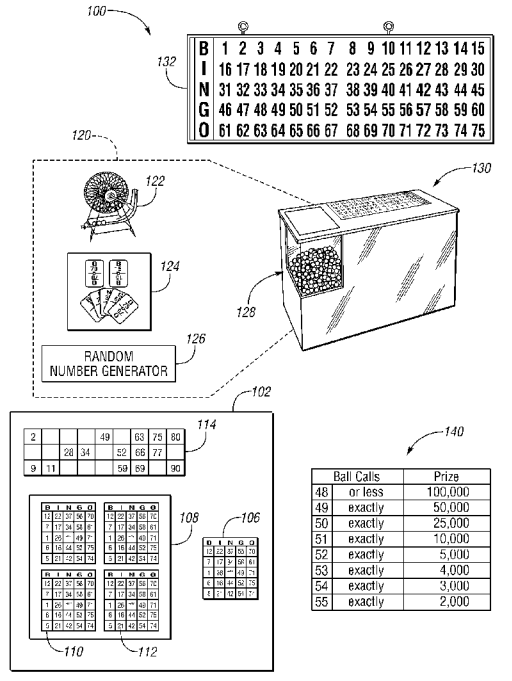

FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A system or method for providing a bingo game in which a pattern of player indicia on a player card is matched to house indicia selected during the game. The system or method includes providing a first player card of a plurality of player cards that each include a plurality of player indicia and a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia, using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia, determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game, and awarding a prize for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met. The partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

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BINGO GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD

BACKGROUND

[001] Embodiments of the present disclosure relate to a gaming system and method for playing bingo and related games with multiple prizes and/or winners.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[002] Systems and methods for playing a game of chance, which may either be played as a standalone game of chance or as secondary game for players who pay a premium or who are being allowed to play on a promotional basis, having a winning criterion associated with matching indicia such as objects, graphics, symbols, numbers, letters, or the like on a player card to indicia determined or selected by operator calls or an equivalent selection of game or house indicia identified by the gaming establishment, which may be generated manually by hand, ball cage, ball blower, playing cards, roulette wheel, etc., or electronically by a random number generator or the like, whether individually selected or selected as a group during play and/or pre-selected prior to play.

[003] In one embodiment, a method provides a bingo game in which a pattern of player indicia on a player card is matched to house indicia selected during the game. The method includes providing a plurality of player cards, wherein each player card includes a plurality of player indicia and a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia. The method further includes using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia and determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game. The method also includes awarding a prize for a first player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met. The partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[004] In another embodiment, a method provides a bingo game in which a pattern of player indicia on a player card is matched to house indicia selected during the game. The method includes providing a plurality of player cards, wherein each player card includes a plurality of player indicia and a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia. The method

further includes using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia, and awarding a first prize for every player card that achieves a complete pattern match after a number of house indicia is selected that is less than or equal to a first number of house indicia. The complete pattern match is achieved by matching each player indicia within the pattern with the selected house indicia. The method also includes awarding at least one second prize to every player that achieves the complete pattern match after each house indicia is selected up to and including a second number of house indicia, determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game, and awarding at least one third prize for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met. The partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[005] In yet another embodiment, a system for providing a game of chance includes a display for displaying a first player card of a plurality of player cards. Each player card includes a plurality of player indicia and a pattern including at least a portion of the player indicia. The system also includes a device for randomly selecting a plurality of house indicia and a processor programmed to determine whether a triggering criterion is met during the game of chance and award a prize for the first player card achieving a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met. The partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[006] In a still further embodiment, a system for providing a game of chance includes a display for displaying at least one player card of a plurality of player cards. Each player card includes a plurality of player indicia and at least one pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia. The system also includes a device for randomly selecting a plurality of house indicia and a processor programmed to award a first prize for every player card that achieves a complete pattern match after a number of house indicia is selected that is less than or equal to a first number of house indicia. The complete pattern match is achieved by matching each player indicia within the pattern with the selected house indicia. The processor is also programmed to award at least one second prize to every player that achieves the complete pattern match after each house indicia is selected up to and including a second number of house indicia, determine whether a triggering criterion is met during the game of chance, and award at least one third prize for each player card

that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met. The partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[007] Systems and methods for gaming according to embodiments of the present disclosure have a number of associated advantages. For example, the Multi-Win, Cased Bingo and other embodiments according to the present disclosure provide players more excitement and encourage players to cheer for one another rather than cursing when the first winner takes the prize and ends the game. The game may continue after the first winner matches a pattern until all prescribed calls, and associated winning chances, have been made. Various embodiments according to the present disclosure provide more winners, which may be paid by a third-party, with associated fewer consolation prizes paid by the gaming establishment operator. Similarly, embodiments according to the present disclosure offer multiple chances to win no-split prizes, which facilitates reduction in consolation prize expenses. In addition, various embodiments allow operators to generate more profit and restructure prize exposure in favor of a fixed cost per ticket making it possible to generate gross profit even with as little as one ticket sold. Players may also win prizes more frequently and experience more excitement as a result of being able to win prizes for partially matching a pattern in addition to, or instead of winning prizes for matching the complete pattern.

[008] Gaming strategies according to the present disclosure may be applied to virtually any existing or future variations of bingo and similar games of chance. Various embodiments may be used with any winning pattern, combination, or number selections and the like. Cards or tickets may comprise paper, card stock, fixed, portable, or handheld electronic displays, and the like. Embodiments according to the present disclosure may be applied to fixed odds payouts, pari-mutuel, progressive, or any combination thereof. Similarly, embodiments may also be played with any approved method of determining, selecting, or calling house or game indicia such as numbers, words, or other elements to be matched including but not limited to pre-called games, random number generators, ball blowers, card draws, roulette style draws, and the like.

[009] Various embodiments according to the present disclosure may be played with at least two players each playing one or more card faces. Multi-player implementations may be required in some jurisdictions. For example, Class II gaming generally requires the game to be played with at

least two players. In addition, various embodiments of the present disclosure may include one or more players playing one or more cards against the house, which may play one or more selected cards. The embodiments of the present disclosure may also be used in various computer or machine based implementations.

[0010] The above advantages and other advantages and features will be readily apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments when taken in connection with the accompanying drawings.

[0011] The Multi-Win method of play in general describes bingo games in which balls continue to be drawn and winners paid regardless of the number of winners that have achieved the winning bingo pattern.

[0012] The Cased Bingo method of play in general describes bingo games in which players have an opportunity to win prizes for almost achieving a winning pattern when another card in the game achieves the winning bingo pattern or after a predefined number of balls have been called.

[0013] Additionally, there are another group of variants in which elements of both Multi-Win and Cased are combined into a single game.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] Embodiments of the present disclosure described herein are recited with particularity in the appended claims. However, other features will become more apparent, and the embodiments may be best understood by referring to the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0015] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating operation of a system or method for playing a game of chance according to various embodiments of the present disclosure;

[0016] FIG. 2 is an alternative representation illustrating a system or method for playing a game of chance such as bingo or a related game having multiple prizes and/or winners according to embodiments of the present disclosure.

[0017] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a system including a plurality of gaming devices for use in playing a game of chance according to various embodiments of the present disclosure;

[0018] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a computing device that may be used with the systems and methods described herein; and

[0019] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of providing a game of bingo or other game of chance according to various embodiments of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] As those of ordinary skill in the art will understand, various features of the embodiments illustrated and described with reference to any one of the Figures may be combined with features illustrated in one or more other Figures to produce embodiments that may not be explicitly illustrated or described in detail. The combinations of features illustrated provide representative embodiments for typical gaming applications for bingo and related games. However, various combinations and modifications of the features consistent with the teachings of the present disclosure may be desired for particular applications or implementations. The representative embodiments used in the illustrations relate generally to a game of chance, such as bingo or a related game, with multiple prizes and/or winners. Those of ordinary skill in the art may recognize similar games or other applications or implementations not specifically described, but that are within the scope of the claims.

[0021] The descriptions of various styles of bingo and related gaming are purely illustrative. The systems and methods for gaming according to various embodiments of the present disclosure are generally independent of the size of the pool of indicia and are not limited to the 75 or 90 indicia, elements, balls, or numbers used in various representative embodiments. In addition, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that any reference to balls or ball calls apply equally to games where other indicia such as letters, words, names, symbols, constellations, figures, patterns, and the like may be used in place of, or in combination with numbers.

[0022] In general, the various embodiments of the present disclosure are independent of the particular manner or strategy for selecting, determining, sequencing, calling, etc. of the house or game indicia. As such, the winning combination, matched selection, number of matches, or pattern of matches for any game may generally be obtained by any predetermined or random selection of indicia using manual, electrical, mechanical, electronic, or computer controlled or assisted devices to match less than or equal to the total number of possible selections. Likewise, operator calls, house or game indicia may be determined, selected, or sequenced individually one at a time, and/or in groups or sets and subsequently displayed or otherwise provided to game players. Whether selected individually or as a group or set, house or game indicia may be displayed or presented individually and/or as a group. For example, a group of game or house indicia may be pre-selected prior to the beginning of a game and displayed or presented as a group to the players. Subsequent

selection and presentation may occur for individual calls in substantially real time during game play. As another example, all of the available pool of indicia may be pre-selected or sequenced prior to game play and then called or presented individually to the game players to determine prize awards as described herein.

[0023] Those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the Multi-Win and Cased Bingo strategies and other embodiments described in the present disclosure may be applied to virtually any existing or future variation of bingo and related games. The Multi-Win strategies and other embodiments may be used with any winning pattern, combination, number selections, and the like. Similarly, various embodiments of the present disclosure may be played on paper, card stock, or electronically via a video screen on a kiosk or handheld device, for example. Multi-Win strategies and other embodiments according to the present disclosure may be applied to games based on fixed odds payouts, pari-mutuel, progressive jackpots, or any combination thereof. Similarly, although various embodiments may refer to a ball call, an operator call or more generally selection or determination of house or game indicia, the Multi-Win strategies and other embodiments illustrated may be used in games that incorporate various methods for selecting or determining house or game indicia, which may include a number, letter, word, graphic, picture, etc., including but not limited to pre-called games, random number generators, ball blowers, card draws, roulette style draws, and the like. Depending on the particular application and implementation, an operator call or selection or determination of house or game indicia may be performed individually and/or in sets or groups of indicia during game play and/or prior to game play.

[0024] A technical effect of the systems, devices, and methods described herein includes at least one of (a) providing at least one player card including a plurality of player indicia and at least one pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia; (b) using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia; (c) determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game; and (d) awarding a prize for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[0025] Another technical effect of the systems, devices, and methods described herein includes at least one of (a) providing at least one player card including a plurality of player indicia and at least one pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia; (b) using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia; (c) awarding a first prize for every player card that achieves a complete pattern match after a number of house indicia is selected that is less than or equal to a first number of house indicia, wherein the complete pattern match is achieved by matching each player indicia within the pattern with the selected house indicia; (d) awarding at least one second prize to every player that achieves the complete pattern match after each house indicia is selected up to and including a second number of house indicia; (e) determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game; and (f) awarding at least one third prize for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

[0026] FIG. 1 is a block diagram illustrating operation of a system or method for playing a game of chance having a Multi-Win feature according to various embodiments of the present disclosure. System 100 includes a plurality of player cards 102. The actual type, arrangement, and content of player cards 102 may vary by the game being played. Cards 102 include two different types of cards that have various common features, such as player indicia or objects (numbers in this example) arranged in a grid, table, or array having a plurality of rows and columns. Of course, other arrangements of numbers or other objects are possible that are not in a two-dimensional array. Cards 102 generally include a first plurality of objects, 24 numbers in this example, selected from a pool of a second plurality of objects, such as 75 numbers, for example. The objects may be prearranged in a particular order or pattern, typically randomly. In some games, game players may optionally pick some of the numbers and/or arrange the numbers on the card as described in greater detail herein. In the embodiment illustrated, player card 106 includes a single card face having 24 numbers and a free space arranged in rows and columns with each column labeled with a letter, B,I,N,G,O, in this example. Card 108 includes multiple card faces 110, 112 that may be played for a single game, or may be used for multiple games or combination games depending on the particular implementation.

[0027] As also illustrated in FIG. 1, various embodiments having a Multi-Win feature according to the present disclosure may be played with a player card or ticket 114 such as commonly used in Europe, for example. Ticket 114 includes three rows and nine columns with five numbers or objects and four spaces in each row and at least one number or object in each column. Although multi-face cards 108 and single cards 106 may be used in a single game, most games would not include different types of cards, such as cards 114 and 106, for example. However, the Multi-Win feature of various games according to the present disclosure does not preclude the use of more than one type of card in any particular game.

[0028] System 100 includes at least one device as generally represented by reference numeral 120 for randomly selecting called objects from a pool of objects. For example, device 120 may be implemented by one or more of a ball cage 122, a deck of cards 124, an electronic or computer controlled random number generator 126, or a ball blower 128, although typically only one device is used in any particular game. The present disclosure is independent of the particular type of device 120 or method used to select, sequence, or otherwise determine called numbers or objects (also referred to as "house indicia") as previously described. A master table, chart, or board 130 may be used to keep track of called numbers in combination with a display 132 viewable by game players. In the embodiment of FIG. 1, display 132 is implemented by a bingo flashboard that displays each called number. Display 132 may have the numbers or objects arranged in rows and columns as shown, or in any other convenient format. In one embodiment, the winning criterion for a prize is determined based on at least in part on a pattern of numbers as arranged on flashboard 132. The winning criterion or criteria may also include a predetermined number of matching numbers and/or a pattern of matching numbers on a player card 102 as described in greater detail herein.

[0029] System 100 includes an associated prize schedule or pay table 140 that governs awarding of prizes and prize amounts for satisfying various winning criterion. As illustrated in FIG. 1, pay table 140 awards a first prize of $100,000 for every player card 102 that satisfies a first winning criterion, which is a coverall in this example, up to and including a first number of calls. As such, any card 102 that matches all 24 numbers in 48 calls or less is awarded the first prize of $100,000. In this embodiment, pay table 140 also includes prize amounts for awarding one or more subsequent prizes for every player card 102 that satisfies the first winning criterion (coverall or matching 24 numbers) after the first number of calls up to and including a second number of calls,

which is 55 in this example. Other embodiments may include only a single intermediate call number with an associated prize, or a group or set of predetermined call numbers between 48 and 55 calls that have associated prize amounts. For example, a prize may only be awarded for satisfying the winning criterion at 48 calls or less, 50 calls, and 55 calls. The prize amounts may be paid on a no-split basis, divided among multiple simultaneous winners, or some combination thereof, depending on the particular implementation. System 100 may also include a consolation prize (not specifically illustrated in this embodiment) awarded for a player card 102 that satisfies the first winning criterion after the second number of calls, i.e. play may continue until at least one player matches all 24 numbers or objects on a card. Alternatively, a pay table 140 having prizes associated with each possible number of matches for all player cards may be used as described in greater detail below. The game only ends once all calls up to and including the second number of calls have been made and cannot end simply because a player or players have achieved the prescribed winning criterion pattern or number beforehand.

[0030] System 100 may be used in various types of games with associated pay tables 140 as described herein. In one embodiment, with a modified pay table from that illustrated, a game offers a prize of $10,000 to players that achieve a coverall in 50 or fewer ball calls. In contrast to a traditional game where the game ends when a player wins on the 47th call, for example, the Multi-Win bingo game according to the present disclosure would not be over and the other players would still have a chance to win the $10,000 top prize through the 50th call. In a Multi-Win game of bingo or similar game according to the present disclosure, after the player is paid for winning on the 47th call, the 48th number is drawn and any winners would be awarded the top prize of $10,000. Then the 49th and 50th numbers are drawn and called and any winners are paid $10,000. Additionally, in this embodiment, all winners are paid the full amount even if there are multiple winners at a given ball call. For example, if three people achieve the winning pattern when the 49th number is drawn, they are each paid the full prize amount of $10,000.

[0031] Various embodiments according to the present disclosure include no-split progressive prizes or jackpots that may be in addition to the prizes awarded according to the associated prize schedule or pay table. For any game, the odds of multiple winners may be computed as described herein. Once these probabilities have been determined, the percentage or amount of each wager contributed to the progressive meter is determined. Having factored in the additional cost of multiple winners, the operator may offer to pay progressive jackpots in full to all winners on a no-

split basis. Depending on the particular implementation, a third-party or entity separate from the operator may assume financial responsibility for paying prizes awarded according to the pay table or prize schedule, with the operator responsible for consolation prizes, if any. Of course, the third-party or other entity obtains a fee associated with the game that may be a commission, percentage or similar fee, for example.

[0032] FIG. 2 is an alternative representation illustrating a system or method for playing a game of chance such as bingo or a related game having multiple prizes and/or winners according to embodiments of the present disclosure. System or method 200 may include distributing a plurality of player cards each having a first plurality of numbers selected from a pool having a second plurality of numbers as generally represented by block 202. The first plurality of numbers, symbols, graphics, words, or other objects may be prearranged on each card. In one embodiment players may select objects or numbers for each purchased player card and/or arrange selected numbers within a corresponding array or grid subject to various limitations as generally represented by block 210. Similarly, some games may include pre-selecting a predetermined number of called objects/numbers as represented by block 212. The game continues with the operator (implemented by computer in some cases) repeatedly selecting called objects as represented by block 214. After each called number up to and including a first number of calls, a prize is awarded for every card that includes objects satisfying a first winning criterion as represented by block 216. The first prize may be awarded on a no-split basis as represented by block 220 or on a shared or aggregate basis as represented by block 224. The first winning criterion may include matching a predetermined number of objects on the player card with objects determined by the operator calls, for example, or may include matching objects on the player card to form a designated pattern, such as a line, cluster, postage stamp, diagonal, four corners, or similar pattern. Alternatively, the first winning criterion may be the absence of any of a number of predetermined patterns or not matching any numbers, for example.

[0033] With continuing reference to Figure 2, play continues after the first number of operator calls with subsequent or secondary prizes awarded for each card satisfying the first winning criterion up to a second number of calls as represented by block 230. Similar to the top prize, one or more of the subsequent or secondary prizes may be awarded on a no-split basis as represented by block 220, or on a shared or aggregate basis as represented by block 224. If at least one card satisfied the first winning criterion as represented by block 232, the game ends after the second

number of calls as represented by block 250. If no winner is determined after the second number of calls, one or more consolation or standard prizes are awarded as represented by block 240. Depending on the particular implementation, a consolation prize may be awarded based on a prize schedule that includes a prize amount associated with each possible remaining outcome as represented by block 260 such that the game concludes in a fixed number of calls. Alternatively, or in combination, the game may continue until a consolation winner is determined, or for a third number of calls as represented by block 270. If a fixed third number of calls is specified and no winner is determined, then the consolation prizes are awarded using a pay table as described with reference to block 260. Otherwise, calls continue until at least one player card is determined to be a winner by satisfying the first winning criterion as represented by block 274. Alternatively, one or more consolation prizes may be awarded based on satisfying a second winning criterion as represented by block 272.

[0034] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a system 300 that may be used to execute methods described herein to play one or more games of chance, such as Multi-Win bingo or related games. The games of chance may be played by a player against other players, or may be played by the player against the house. System 300 and/or components thereof may be incorporated within and/or used with other systems and methods described herein.

[0035] System 300 may be operated using components and devices within one or more gaming establishments 302 or other suitable locations. Gaming establishments 302 may be, for example, casinos, racetracks, bingo halls, or any other establishments. In one embodiment, one or more gaming devices 304 are positioned within gaming establishment 302 to play or operate the game of chance.

[0036] In one embodiment, gaming establishment 302 includes a game server 306 coupled to a plurality of gaming devices 304 through a network 308, such as a private local area network (LAN) within gaming establishment 302. It should be recognized that any number of gaming devices 304 may be located in separate gaming establishments 302, or within the same gaming establishment 302.

[0037] In one embodiment, game server 306 is a server computer (or "server") that monitors and controls the games played on gaming devices 304. In addition, game server 306 may administer other background tasks that enable games to be played on gaming devices 304. For example,

game server 306 may facilitate authenticating gaming devices 304 and the players using gaming devices 304, and may facilitate allocating payments or credits between players and the house. In addition, game server 306 may interface with a player reward server to facilitate tracking and administering player rewards.

[0038] In one embodiment, game server 306 may enable gaming devices 304 connected to game server 306 to participate in one or more games that share one or more progressive or pari-mutuel prizes with other gaming establishments 302 and/or gaming devices 304. While progressive prizes are described in embodiments herein, it should be recognized that pari-mutual prizes may be substituted as desired, and vice versa.

[0039] Gaming devices 304 may include one or more kiosks, electronic gaming machines (EGMs) (also known as "slot machines"), desktop computers, or mobile gaming devices. Mobile gaming devices 304 may include, without limitation, cellular phones, tablet computing devices, and/or laptops. Mobile gaming devices 304 may connect to game server 306 and network 308 via a wireless data network. For example, mobile gaming devices 304 may connect to network 308 (and thereby to game server 306) via a "3G" or a "4G" wireless data network, and/or by a wireless Ethernet network.

[0040] In one embodiment, during play of a game of chance such as bingo, players may be awarded one or more prizes for completing a pattern and/or completing a portion of the pattern. Accordingly, more winners may be produced than in other games of chance known in the art.

[0041] One method of implementing the Cased Bingo game of chance includes offering prizes to players that almost achieve a winning pattern in a pre-defined number of ball calls. The following example is for a bingo coverall:

Ball Call	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
50	$1,000	$100	$10	$4	$3	$2	$1

[0042] In this illustration, prizes would be paid to players that are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 numbers "away" from completing the winning pattern once the 50th number has been called. As used herein, the term "away" or "away from" refers to the number of balls or indicia within a pattern that have not been matched by the called house indicia or balls. Accordingly, a 1 Away pattern

match refers to an occurrence of all balls or indicia within the pattern, except 1, being matched by the called balls or house indicia.

[0043] In another embodiment, the prizes for almost completing a winning pattern could be combined with a prize for completing the winning pattern as depicted below.

Ball Call	Coverall	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
50	$5,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$4	$3	$2	$1

[0044] For a coverall game, the prize structure could be extended all the way to 23 numbers away from matching the winning pattern since there are 24 numbers on a standard bingo card. The following pay table provides two illustrative prize groups for an American style bingo game for 48 numbers or other indicia drawn.

	Prize A	Prize B
Bingo	50,000	50,000
1 Away	25,000	20,000
2 Away	10,000	10,000
3 Away	5,000	5,000
4 Away	4,000	3,000
5 Away	3,000	2,000
6 Away	2,000	1,000
7 Away	1,000	100
8 Away	900	50
9 Away	800	40
10 Away	700	30
11 Away	600	20
12 Away	500	10
13 Away	400	5
14 Away	300	1
15 Away	200	5
16 Away	100	10
17 Away	90	20
18 Away	80	30
19 Away	50	40
20 Away	40	500
21 Away	10	5,000
22 Away	5	10,000
23 Away	1	20,000

[0045] A similar method of extending the prize structure or pay table to include all Away prizes may be applied to a European style bingo game as illustrated below.

	Prize A	Prize B
Full House	50,000	25,000
1 Away	25,000	10,000
2 Away	10,000	5,000
3 Away	5,000	3,000
4 Away	4,000	2,000
5 Away	3,000	1,000
6 Away	2,000	500
7 Away	1,000	200
8 Away	900	50
9 Away	700	20
10 Away	500	1
11 Away	300	100
12 Away	200	1,000
13 Away	50	3,000
14 Away	10	5,000

[0046] The same methods of extending prize structures or pay tables to include prizes for almost matching a pattern may be applied to any bingo pattern or combination of numbers on bingo card as illustrated by the following examples for a large picture frame pattern which includes matching all the numbers around the outer edge of a bingo card. The first example includes various prizes awarded for almost completing the pattern (e.g., for achieving a 1 Away pattern match, a 2 Away pattern match, etc.).

Ball Call	Picture Frame	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
30	N/A	$20,000	$5,000	$500	$50	$10	$3	$2

[0047] As with the other embodiments described above, a prize for completing a pattern may be included with the prizes for almost completing the pattern as shown below.

Ball Call	Picture Frame	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
30	$50,000	$20,000	$5,000	$500	$50	$10	$3	$2

[0048] Similar methods of game play (e.g., extending the prize structure or pay table to include prizes for all Away pattern match embodiments) may also be applied to European style bingo games as illustrated below.

Ball Call	Single Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away
7	N/A	$1,000	$100	$10	$4

Ball Call	Double Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away
20	N/A	$5,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$3	$1

Ball Call	Full House	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
30	N/A	$20,000	$10,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$5	3

[0049] The fee or wager for participating in the games of chance described above may be structured as a separate wager or packaged in the price of a series of games. If a winning pattern has not been achieved in the prescribed number of calls, players that win prizes for almost completing a winning pattern could be allowed to continue to play their card and possibly win another prize for matching additional portions of the pattern and/or for completing the winning pattern. This would allow players the opportunity to win two or more prizes on a single bingo card.

[0050] As with the American style game, the prizes for European style bingo may include prizes for completing the winning pattern along with prizes for almost completing the winning pattern (i.e., achieving an Away pattern match) as shown below.

Ball Call	Single Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away
7	$5,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$4

Ball Call	Double Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away
20	$10,000	$5,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$3	$1

Ball Call	Full House	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away	6 Away	7 Away
30	$50,000	$20,000	$10,000	$1,000	$100	$10	$5	3

[0051] The bingo prizes may be coupled with Multi-Win style prizes described above by offering tiered prizes based on the ball call at which the winning pattern is achieved along with prizes for almost achieving the winning pattern as shown below.

Ball Calls		Bingo	1 Away Prize	2 Away Prize
49	or less	20,000	2,000	1,000
50	exactly	5,000	1,000	500
51	exactly	4,000	500	250
52	exactly	3,000	300	100
53	exactly	2,000	50	30
54	exactly	1,000	25	10

[0052] There are different methods of offering the tiered prize structure as depicted below. In a first embodiment, the 1 Away and 2 Away prizes may only be made available if at least one card in the game achieves a winning pattern. For example, using the pay table example shown above, if one or more cards achieve a winning pattern on the 50th ball call, players having cards with the winning pattern ("winning cards") would each be paid $5,000. Additionally, players that have cards that are 1 Away would be paid $1,000 and players with cards that are 2 Away would be paid $500. This arrangement is unique in that the 1 Away and 2 Away prizes are only made available if another card in the game (e.g., a card being played by another player) achieves the winning pattern. In the example according to the pay table shown above, the game would effectively end once there is a winning bingo or after the 54th ball is drawn in the example described above.

[0053] The method of game play described in the first embodiment in which the 1 Away, 2 Away, etc., prizes are only made available if another card in the game achieves a winning pattern has interesting characteristics. Assume that prizes are grouped as either being bingo prizes (or winning prizes) for achieving the winning pattern and "Away" prizes for being 1, 2, 3, etc., away from completing the winning pattern. The probability of a player winning a bingo prize is directly proportionate to the number of bingo tickets or bingo faces being played. However, the probability

of that same player winning an Away prize is dependent on the number of bingo tickets or bingo faces being played by the player and the number of tickets being played by other players. The reason that the total number of tickets being played is relevant is it affects the probability that there will be a bingo. So, for this type of game, a player's chances of winning vary depending on how many tickets the player has and how many total tickets are being played by all the players in the game.

[0054] In a second embodiment, the prizes shown in the pay table above may be offered for any card that achieves the winning pattern, or for any card that is 1 Away or 2 Away in the prescribed number of ball calls. In this method of play, at least 54 balls would be drawn for each game. In addition, the 1 Away and 2 Away prizes are not contingent on having another card achieve a winning pattern.

[0055] In a third embodiment, the prizes may be offered in the Multi-Win style of play in which at least 54 numbers may be drawn and the 1 Away and 2 Away prizes are only made available if there is at least one card that achieves the winning pattern. For example, if one or more cards achieve a winning pattern on the 50th ball call, players having those cards would each be paid $5,000. Additionally, players that have cards that are 1 Away would be paid $1,000 and players that have cards that are 2 Away would be paid $500. The game and ball draw would continue. If there are no cards that achieve the winning pattern on the 51st ball, no prizes are paid. If one or more cards achieve a winning pattern on the 52nd ball call, players having those cards would each be paid $3,000. Additionally, players that have cards that are 1 Away would be paid $300 and 2 Away would be paid $100.

[0056] In the second and third embodiments described above, players that have the opportunity to claim a 1 Away or 2 Away prizes may be offered various options. A first option enables players to claim their prize and have their card effectively cancelled for any future possible prizes. Accordingly, the game may be continued for other players to allow the other players or player cards to win prizes, but the canceled card would not be able to win any more prizes (i.e., the game would effectively end for the canceled card). A second option enables players to claim their prize and continue to play the card for additional prizes. As an example, if a player wins a 2 Away prize, he or she could continue to play the same card to win a 1 Away or bingo prize for achieving the winning pattern.

[0057] In a third option, players may be given a choice of claiming their entire prize for achieving a 1 Away or 2 Away pattern match, or forfeiting a percentage of their prize for the right to continue playing the card for other prizes. For example, if a player is eligible to claim a 2 Away prize on the 49th ball call for $1,000, he or she could claim the full prize amount or only take $500 and continue to play the card in hopes of winning a 1 Away or bingo prize for achieving the winning pattern with the remaining ball calls in the game. Any additional pattern matches or partial pattern matches achieved by the player according to the third option would result in additional prizes to be paid along with the original prize that was partially forfeited.

[0058] The first, second, and third embodiments (and associated options or variations thereof) described above may also be applied to European style 90 number bingo as illustrated below.

Single Bingo

Ball Call		Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away
12	or less	5,000	500	50	5	2	1
13	exactly	2,000	300	25	3	2	1
14	exactly	1,000	200	10	2	1	0.5

Double Bingo

Ball Call		Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away
24	or less	10,000	1,000	500	300	200	100
25	exactly	5,000	900	400	250	150	75
26	exactly	3,000	800	300	200	100	50
27	exactly	2,000	600	200	150	75	25
28	exactly	1,000	500	100	75	50	10

Full House or Triple Bingo

Ball Call		Bingo	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away
40	or less	20,000	3,000	2,500	2,000	1,500	1,000
41	exactly	5,000	2,500	2,000	1,500	1,000	800
42	exactly	4,000	2,000	1,500	1,000	750	500
43	exactly	3,000	1,500	1,000	750	500	300
44	exactly	2,000	1,000	750	500	300	100
45	exactly	1,000	750	500	300	100	50

[0059] The prizes for almost completing a pattern may also be extended out to include all possibilities for matching all or portions of the pattern as indicated in Figure 8 above for a 90 number game and the illustration below for a 75 number coverall in 50 ball calls or less.

Match	Prize
Bingo	10,000
1 Away	2,000
2 Away	1,000
3 Away	500
4 Away	450
5 Away	400
6 Away	350
7 Away	300
8 Away	250
9 Away	200
10 Away	150
11 Away	100
12 Away	95
13 Away	90
14 Away	80
15 Away	85
16 Away	70
17 Away	65
18 Away	60
19 Away	55
20 Away	50
21 Away	30
22 Away	20
23 Away	10
24 Away	1

[0060] Another variation of the embodiments described above may include a pay table structured to award greater prizes for cards that are farthest away from completing a pattern as illustrated below:

Match	Prize
Bingo	10,000
1 Away	-
2 Away	-
3 Away	-
4 Away	-
5 Away	-
6 Away	-
7 Away	-
8 Away	-

9 Away	-
10 Away	-
11 Away	-
12 Away	-
13 Away	-
14 Away	1,000
15 Away	5,000
16 Away	10,000
17 Away	30,000
18 Away	40,000
19 Away	50,000
20 Away	60,000
21 Away	70,000
22 Away	80,000
23 Away	90,000
24 Away	100,000

[0061] All of the embodiments and illustrations described herein may be modified and applied to American style 75 number bingo, European style 90 number bingo, other variations of bingo with different ball sets, other number-based games such as lottery or keno, or other games in which indicia on a player card (also referred to as "player indicia") are matched to house indicia.

[0062] It should be recognized that any of the prize structures or pay tables described herein may be offered independently or collectively. For example, a pay table for a bingo game may be configured to award a prize of $5,000 for matching a bingo pattern in 41 balls called along with a 1 Away prize of $2,500 for matching all but one of the balls within the bingo pattern in 41 balls called. Alternatively, the pay table may be configured to award only the 1 Away prize of $2,500, or any other grouping of prizes. The prizes for the games may be offered as an integrated part of a primary game that is available to all participants or may be offered along with an existing primary game as a secondary game for a separate fee.

[0063] In some embodiments, prizes for the games may be offered on an aggregate basis in which multiple winners split the prize amount or may be offered in a manner in which all prizes are paid in full to each winner on a no split basis. In addition, pay tables that include prizes for all possible outcomes (e.g., all possible pattern match outcomes) may be arranged to effectively have a pari-mutuel pay-out that ensures a guaranteed winner while offering prizes that are independent of the

number of players. Furthermore, any of the games or pay tables may be structured to have progressive prize amounts at one or more of the prize levels.

[0064] The use of the methods describe herein can result in complex pay structures for both achieving the winning pattern and almost achieving a winning pattern. The result is that players may find it difficult to follow the game and determine what prizes are available as they may change with each ball that is called. The gaming system should be designed to automatically display the prizes that are available at each ball call for achieving the winning pattern and almost completing the winning pattern. The system may also be designed to display the prizes before each ball is called so that players know what they have a chance win on the next ball that is called.

[0065] The prizes for almost achieving a winning pattern may result in large numbers of possible combinations of patterns. The number of combinations of choosing K objects from a pool of N objects can be computed as follows:

$$C\left(\frac{N}{K}\right) = \frac{N}{K(N-K)}$$

[0066] Where N represents the number of objects in the pool from which to choose and K represents the number of objects chosen. To further illustrate the potential issue, the table below shows the number of combinations for almost achieving a winning pattern for a coverall for some of the Away prizes:

Coverall Combinations	1 Away	2 Away	3 Away	4 Away	5 Away
1	24	276	2,024	10,626	42,504

[0067] It is impractical to expect a system user to correctly select all the possible 5 Away or possibly even all the 2 Away pattern combinations. As a result, the gaming system should be designed to automatically select all the possible 1 Away, 2 Away, 3 Away, etc. pattern combinations automatically for any given pattern, and assign a prize level for each ball call. This will result in an array of prize levels associated with each ball call for achieving the winning pattern and almost achieving the winning pattern for each ball call and combination of patterns. One unique aspect of this system method is that as for the coverall described above there would be 42,504 different patterns associated with the prize level for 5 Away for each ball call. One method of determining all of the different patterns for each level of away prizes is to assign a

symbol, letter, or number to each element of the pattern. The gaming system then generates all possible combinations for each level of Away prizes, and then associates a prize amount for each ball call to each of the possible pattern combinations.

[0068] There is symmetry to the number of combinations for any possible pattern. For example, there are 276 combinations for being 2 Away for the coverall described above. Likewise, there are 276 combinations for being 22 Away. The result is that the gaming system may either select all combinations of 22 elements of the possible 24 for the coverall pattern or remove all combinations of two elements to achieve all the possible 2 Away patterns.

[0069] The gaming system will be programmed to only activate the Cased Bingo Away prizes once there has been an triggering event such as a card achieving a the prescribed winning bingo pattern or a pre-defined number of ball calls

[0070] In another embodiment, games of chance may offer additional fixed or variable bonus prizes in the event of multiple winners. For example, if multiple players match a winning pattern (either on the same ball call or on different ball calls), one or more bonus prizes may be paid to all participants, one or more bonus prizes may be paid to all winning participants, and/or one or more bonus prizes may be paid to all participants who made one or more predefined purchases, such as buying one or more game entries.

[0071] By way of example, a bonus prize of $3,000 might be paid to one or more of the groups of participants described above when there are multiple winners of the winning pattern and/or Away prizes. The bonus prize may also be tiered to increase based on the total number of winners for winning patterns and away prizes.

[0072] FIG. 4 is a block diagram of a computing device 400 that may be used with the systems and methods described herein. For example, game server 306, gaming devices 304 (including handheld gaming devices 304), and/or any other devices described in system 100 or system 300 may be implemented as a computing device 400.

[0073] Computing device 400 includes a plurality of computing device components 402, such as a processor 404, a computer-readable memory device 406, and a communication device 408. In one embodiment, computing device 400 may also include a display 410, a user interface device 412, and/or an audio output device 414. It should be recognized that memory device 406,

communication device 408, display 410, and user interface device 412 (if provided) may be connected to processor 404 and/or to each other via any suitable bus or busses, interfaces, or other mechanisms.

[0074] Processor 404 includes any suitable programmable circuit including one or more microcontrollers, microprocessors, application specific integrated circuits (ASICs), systems on a chip (SoCs), programmable logic circuits (PLCs), field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), and/or any other circuit capable of executing the functions described herein. The above examples are exemplary only, and thus are not intended to limit in any way the definition and/or meaning of the term "processor."

[0075] Memory device 406 includes one or more non-transitory computer readable media, such as, without limitation, random access memory (RAM), flash memory, a hard disk drive, a solid state drive, a compact disc, a digital video disc, and/or any suitable memory. Memory device 406 may include data as well as instructions that are executable by processor 404 to program processor 404 to perform functions described herein. For example, the methods described herein may be performed by one or more processors 404 executing instructions stored within one or more memory devices 406.

[0076] Communication device 408 may include, without limitation, a network interface controller (NIC) or adapter, a radio frequency (RF) transceiver, a public switched telephone network (PSTN) interface controller, or any other communication device that enables computing device 400 to operate as described herein. In one embodiment, communication device 408 may connect to communication devices 408 of other computing devices 400 of system 100 or system 300 through network 108 or another network using any suitable wireless or wired communication protocol.

[0077] Display 410 may include, without limitation, a liquid crystal display (LCD), a vacuum fluorescent display (VFD), a cathode ray tube (CRT), a plasma display, a light-emitting diode (LED) display, a projection display, and/or any suitable visual output device capable of displaying graphical data and text to a user. For example, display 410 may be used to display a graphical user interface to a player or an administrator, one or more images associated with a game such as bingo, keno, or another game of chance, player statistics, gameplay data, player cards, player indicia, and/or any other suitable data.

[0078] User interface device 412 may include, without limitation, a keyboard, a keypad, a touch screen, a mouse, a scroll wheel, a pointing device, an audio input device employing speech-recognition software, a video input device that registers movement of a user, and/or any other suitable device that enables the user to input data into computing device 400 and/or retrieve data from computing device 400.

[0079] Audio output device 414 may include, without limitation, one or more speakers, or any other device that enables data to be audibly output from computing device 400. For example, gameplay data and/or music may be audibly output from audio output device 414. In addition, if the player wins a prize, audio output device 414 may be used to alert the player and/or others about the win.

[0080] While the foregoing computing device components 402 have been described as being included within a computing device 400, it should be recognized that at least some computing devices 400 may not include each component 302. For example, a computing device 400 may not include audio output device 414 and/or other components. In addition, a computing device 400 may include any suitable number of each individual computing device component 302. For example, a computing device 400 may include a plurality of processors 404 or processor cores and/or a plurality of memory devices 406 (of the same or different types, sizes, etc.). In addition, computing device 400 may include a plurality of displays 410, such as a first display 316 and a second display 318. In one embodiment, first display 316 may provide a graphical user interface to a player, and second display 318 may display one or more aspects of gameplay to the player as described more fully herein. Alternatively, first display 316 and second display 318 may display any suitable aspect of the game as desired.

[0081] FIG. 5 is a flowchart of a method 500 of providing a game of chance to a player. Method 500 may provide one or more prizes to a player for completing a pattern and/or for completing a portion of a pattern as a result of playing the game. In one embodiment, method 500 may be executed using system 100 (shown in FIG. 1) and/or system 300 (shown in FIG. 2). For example, in one embodiment, method 500 may be executed by game server 306 and/or by one or more gaming devices 304 (e.g., by one or more processors thereof). In some embodiments, method 500 may also be combined with method or system 200, or aspects thereof.

[0082] During play of the game of chance, one or more house indicia is selected 502. For example, game server 306, device 120, or another device or system may randomly select one or more numbers or other indicia for use in the game by conducting one or more ball calls. The numbers or other indicia may be selected individually or may be selected in one or more groups.

[0083] After each number or other indicia has been selected, method 500 determines 504 whether a triggering criterion is met. The triggering criterion may include, for example, the selection of a prescribed or predefined number of house indicia, the completion of a pattern by another player in the game, an additional wager by the player to unlock a bonus game or additional prizes, or any other suitable condition. The triggering criterion may be used, for example, to initiate a determination of whether the player is eligible to win a prize, such as a prize for matching a portion of a pattern (sometimes referred to as an "away prize"). In embodiments in which the game of chance is played by a plurality of players (with each player having at least one respective player card), the same house indicia are used for each player card and each player card uses the same pattern for determining whether a pattern match occurs.

[0084] If the triggering criterion is not met, method 500 determines 506 whether a game ending criterion is met. The game ending criterion may include, for example, the selection of a prescribed or predefined number of house indicia, the completion of a pattern by another player in the game, or any other suitable condition. In some embodiments, the game ending criterion may be the same as the triggering criterion. For example, the game ending criterion and the triggering criterion may both include the selection of all the house indicia prescribed for the game. In another embodiment, the triggering criterion may include the completion of the pattern by another player and the game ending criterion may include the selection of all the house indicia prescribed for the game. It should be recognized, however, that the above-described examples are merely illustrative, and any suitable criterion or criteria may be used for the triggering criterion and the game ending criterion. If the game ending criterion is met, the game ends 508. If the game ending criterion is not met, however, one or more additional house indicia is selected 502.

[0085] If the triggering criterion is met 504, method 500 optionally includes determining 510 whether a primary winning criterion is met. In one embodiment, the primary winning criterion is determined 510 even without an occurrence of a triggering criterion, i.e., after each number or other indicia is selected. The primary winning criterion may include, for example, the matching

of a predefined pattern by the player (e.g., a winning pattern in embodiments having more than one matchable pattern). Alternatively, the primary winning criterion may include any other suitable criterion.

[0086] If the primary winning criterion is determined 510 to be met (e.g., if the player matches the pattern), a prize associated with the matched pattern is awarded 512 to the player and the game is ended. In one embodiment, the prize may be awarded based on the number of house indicia that have been selected and based on the type of pattern matched, for example.

[0087] If the primary winning criterion is determined 510 to not be met (e.g., if the player has not yet matched the complete pattern), method 500 includes determining 514 whether a secondary winning criterion is met. The secondary winning criterion may include, for example, the player matching a predetermined portion of the pattern. For example, the secondary winning criterion may be that the player has matched all but 1 of the numbers within the pattern (i.e., a "1 Away" match), all but 2 of the numbers within the pattern (i.e., a "2 Away" match), and/or any other suitable criterion. As a further example, the secondary winning criterion may include achieving any of the partial pattern matches that qualify for prizes on an associated pay table.

[0088] If the secondary winning criterion is not met, method 500 determines 506 if the game ending criterion is met. If the game ending criterion is met, the game ends 508. Otherwise, one or more additional house indicia is selected 502 as described above.

[0089] If the secondary winning criterion is met, however, method 500 may perform one of three actions (or additional actions may be available if desired). For example, a first action may include awarding 512 a prize associated with the secondary winning criterion and ending the game. Accordingly, if the player achieved a 1 Away partial pattern match within 50 ball calls, the player would receive a prize corresponding to the 1 Away partial pattern match identified in an associated pay table.

[0090] A second action that may be performed if the secondary winning criterion is met is awarding 516 a prize associated with the secondary winning criterion and continuing the game to enable the player to match additional numbers within the pattern. For example, if the player achieved a 1 Away partial pattern match within 50 ball calls and 54 ball calls were prescribed to be called during the game, the player may have 4 more ball calls in which to match the final

number in the pattern. If the player matches the final number in the pattern, the player would receive an additional prize associated with the complete pattern match. As another example, if the player wins a prize for achieving a 2 Away pattern within 50 ball calls and 54 ball calls were prescribed to be called during the game, the player may have 4 more ball calls in which to match one or both of the remaining numbers within the pattern. In such an example, the player may be able to win prizes for the 2 Away pattern match, the 1 Away pattern match, and the complete pattern match if the player matches the remaining numbers in the pattern with the called house indicia. Alternatively, one or more prizes for achieving partial pattern matches may be subsumed by a prize for a more complete pattern match. For example, a 2 Away prize may be subsumed by a 1 Away prize, and a 1 Away prize may be subsumed by a prize for a complete pattern match.

[0091] In an alternative embodiment, the game may be continued past the prescribed number of ball calls for only those players who have met the secondary winning criterion. In such an embodiment, only the players who have met the secondary winning criterion may play to win further prizes as described above.

[0092] A third action that may be performed if the secondary winning criterion is met is determining that the player is eligible to win an associated prize and offering 518 to continue playing the game in exchange for the player forfeiting a portion of the prize. If the player accepts 520 the offer, the remaining or partial prize (i.e., the portion of the prize that was not forfeited) may be awarded 522 to the player and the game continues to enable the player to win additional prizes. If the player does not accept the offer, the full prize for the secondary winning criterion is awarded 512 to the player and the game ends.

[0093] As an example of how the offer may work, if the player achieved a 1 Away pattern match within 50 ball calls and 54 ball calls were prescribed to be called during the game, the player may be offered the choice of taking or "cashing out" the full amount of the prize and ending the game, or forfeiting a portion (such as 50% or 75%) of the prize in exchange for conducting 4 more ball calls in which to match the final number in the pattern. If the player matches the final number in the pattern, the player would receive an additional prize associated with the complete pattern match. As another example, if the player achieved a 2 Away pattern match within 50 ball calls and 54 ball calls were prescribed to be called during the game, the player may be offered the choice of taking the full amount of the prize and ending the game, or forfeiting a portion of the

prize in exchange for conducting 4 more ball calls in which to match one or both of the remaining numbers in the pattern. The player may win an additional prize for matching each additional number of the pattern in this example. As described above, however, one or more prizes for partial pattern matches may alternatively be subsumed by a prize for a more complete pattern match.

[0094] It should be recognized that in some embodiments in which a plurality of players play the game using respective player cards, prizes may be awarded for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match and/or a complete pattern match identified on an associated pay table in accordance with the embodiments described herein. Accordingly, multiple players may be awarded 1 Away prizes, 2 Away prizes, prizes for the complete pattern match, and/or any other suitable prize based on the number of player indicia matched by the selected house indicia. The prizes for one or more partial pattern matches may be awarded in addition to the prize for the complete partial pattern match, or may be awarded even if no player (or player card) achieves a complete pattern match during the game.

[0095] While the above-described embodiments generally refer to matching a single pattern, or a portion thereof, to win one or more prizes, it should be recognized that multiple patterns may be used with the described embodiments. For example, in some embodiments, prizes may be offered for a player completing or matching any Single, Double, Triple, and Full House patterns during a single game. As another example, prizes may be offered for completing or matching any Four Corners, Letter X, Large Picture Frame, and Coverall patterns during the same game. The examples described above are merely exemplary, and it should be recognized that any suitable patterns and/or partial patterns may be available during the game. Prizes may also be awarded for partially completing the patterns in a similar manner as described above. In some embodiments, players may be given the opportunity to buy tickets and/or enter wagers for a chance to complete single patterns, multiple patterns, and/or partial patterns as desired.

[0096] While one or more embodiments have been illustrated and described, it is not intended that these embodiments illustrate and describe all possible embodiments within the scope of the claims. The words used in the specification are words of description rather than limitation, and various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure. While various embodiments may have been described as providing advantages or being preferred over other embodiments or prior art implementations with respect to one or more desired characteristics, as

one skilled in the art is aware, one or more features or characteristics may be compromised to achieve desired overall attributes, which depend on the specific application and implementation. These attributes include, but are not limited to: cost, strength, durability, life cycle cost, marketability, appearance, packaging, size, serviceability, weight, manufacturability, ease of assembly, distribution, etc. The embodiments described as less desirable than other embodiments or prior art implementations with respect to one or more characteristics are not outside the scope of the disclosure and may be desirable for particular applications or implementations.

[0097] Although specific features of various embodiments of the disclosure may be shown in some drawings and not in others, this is for convenience only. In accordance with the principles of the disclosure, any feature of a drawing may be referenced and/or claimed in combination with any feature of any other drawing.

[0098] This written description uses examples to describe embodiments of the disclosure, including the best mode, and also to enable any person skilled in the art to practice the embodiments, including making and using any devices or systems and performing any incorporated methods. The patentable scope of the disclosure is defined by the claims, and may include other examples that occur to those skilled in the art. Such other examples are intended to be within the scope of the claims if they have structural elements that do not differ from the literal language of the claims, or if they include equivalent structural elements with insubstantial differences from the literal language of the claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a bingo game in which a pattern of player indicia on a player card is matched to house indicia selected during the game, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of player cards, each player card of the plurality of player cards including a plurality of player indicia and a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia;

using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia;

determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game; and

awarding a prize for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the triggering criterion includes achieving a complete pattern match by a second player card of the plurality of player cards by matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern of the second player card.

3. The method of Claim 2, further comprising awarding a prize for achieving the complete pattern match that is different than the prize for achieving the partial pattern match.

4. The method of Claim 3, further comprising awarding both the prize for the partial pattern match and the prize for the complete pattern match upon a determination that both the partial pattern match and the complete pattern match were achieved during the bingo game.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the triggering criterion includes completing a selection of a predetermined number of house indicia.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising ending the bingo game when the predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

7. The method of Claim 5, further comprising awarding the prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the partial pattern match even when no player card

achieves a complete pattern match during the bingo game, wherein the complete pattern match includes matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising offering an option to continue the bingo game in exchange for forfeiting a portion of the prize upon a determination that the first player card achieves the partial pattern match.

9. The method of Claim 8, further comprising awarding the prize and ending the bingo game for the first player card upon a determination that the option is declined.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising continuing the bingo game for at least one second player card of the plurality of player cards after the bingo game is ended for the first player card.

11. The method of Claim 8, wherein upon a determination that the offer is accepted, said method further comprises continuing the bingo game for the first player card by selecting at least one additional house indicia until a predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein upon a determination that at least one additional partial pattern match or a complete pattern match is achieved for the first player card after the offer is accepted, said method further comprises awarding an additional prize for each additional partial pattern match and complete pattern match achieved by the first player card, wherein the complete pattern match includes matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern.

13. The method of Claim 1, wherein at least one bonus prize is awarded if a predetermined number of player cards win a prize.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the amount of the at least one bonus prize is based on the number of player cards that win a prize.

15. A method for providing a bingo game in which a pattern of player indicia on a player card is matched to house indicia selected during the game, said method comprising:

providing a plurality of player cards, each player card of the plurality of player cards including a plurality of player indicia and a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia;

using a device to randomly select a plurality of house indicia;

awarding a first prize for every player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves a complete pattern match after a number of house indicia is selected that is less than or equal to a first number of house indicia, wherein the complete pattern match is achieved by matching each player indicia within the pattern with the selected house indicia;

awarding at least one second prize to every player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the complete pattern match after each house indicia is selected up to and including a second number of house indicia;

determining whether a triggering criterion is met during the bingo game; and

awarding at least one third prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the at least one third prize is awarded for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the partial pattern match, and wherein the triggering criterion includes achieving the complete pattern match by a second player card of the plurality of player cards.

17. The method of Claim 15, wherein the triggering criterion includes completing a selection of a predetermined number of house indicia.

18. The method of Claim 17, further comprising ending the bingo game when the predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

19. The method of Claim 17, further comprising awarding the at least one third prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the partial pattern match even when no player card achieves the complete pattern match during the bingo game.

20. The method of Claim 17, further comprising awarding the at least one third prize for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the partial pattern match, and awarding the first prize for a second player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the complete pattern match.

21. The method of Claim 17, further comprising awarding the at least one third prize for the partial pattern match and the first prize for the complete pattern match to a first player card of the plurality of player cards upon a determination that the first player card achieves the partial pattern match and the complete pattern match.

22. The method of Claim 15, wherein the at least one third prize is awarded for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the partial pattern match, said method further comprising offering an option to continue the bingo game for the first player card in exchange for forfeiting at least a portion of the at least one third prize.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising awarding the at least one third prize and ending the bingo game for the first player card upon a determination that the option is declined.

24. The method of Claim 23, further comprising continuing the bingo game for at least one second player card of the plurality of player cards after the bingo game is ended for the first player card.

25. The method of Claim 22, wherein upon a determination that the offer is accepted, said method further comprises continuing the bingo game for the first player card by selecting at least one additional house indicia until a predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

26. The method of Claim 25, further comprising awarding an additional prize for each additional partial pattern match and complete pattern match achieved by the first player card after the offer is accepted.

27. The method of Claim 15, wherein at least one bonus prize is awarded if a predetermined number of player cards win a prize.

28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the amount of the at least one bonus prize is based on the number of player cards that win a prize.

29. A system for providing a game of chance, said system comprising:

a display for displaying a first player card of a plurality of player cards, wherein each player card of the plurality of player cards includes:

a plurality of player indicia; and

a pattern including at least a portion of the player indicia;

a device for randomly selecting a plurality of house indicia; and

a processor programmed to:

determine whether a triggering criterion is met during the game of chance; and

award a prize for the first player card achieving a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

30. The system of Claim 29, wherein the triggering criterion includes achieving a complete pattern match by a second player card of the plurality of player cards by matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern of the second player card.

31. The system of Claim 30, wherein said processor is further programmed to award a prize for achieving the complete pattern match that is different than the prize for achieving the partial pattern match.

32. The system of Claim 31, wherein said processor is further programmed to award both the prize for the partial pattern match and the prize for the complete pattern match upon a

determination that both the partial pattern match and the complete pattern match were achieved during the game of chance.

33. The system of Claim 29, wherein the triggering criterion includes completing a selection of a predetermined number of house indicia.

34. The system of Claim 33, wherein said processor is further programmed to end the game of chance when the predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

35. The system of Claim 33, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the partial pattern match even when no player card achieves a complete pattern match during the game of chance, wherein the complete pattern match includes matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern.

36. The system of Claim 29, wherein said processor is programmed to offer an option to continue the game of chance in exchange for forfeiting a portion of the prize upon a determination that the first player card achieves the partial pattern match.

37. The system of Claim 36, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the prize and end the game of chance for the first player card upon a determination that the option is declined.

38. The system of Claim 37, wherein said processor is further programmed to continue the game of chance for at least one second player card of the plurality of player cards after the game of chance is ended for the first player card.

39. The system of Claim 36, wherein upon a determination that the offer is accepted, said processor is further programmed to continue the game of chance for the first player card by causing at least one additional house indicia to be selected until a predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

40. The system of Claim 39, wherein upon a determination that at least one additional partial pattern match or a complete pattern match is achieved for the first player card after the offer is accepted, said processor is further programmed to award an additional prize for each

additional partial pattern match and complete pattern match achieved by the first player card, wherein the complete pattern match includes matching the selected house indicia with each player indicia within the pattern.

41. The system of Claim 29, wherein at least one bonus prize is awarded if a predetermined number of player cards win a prize.

42. The system of Claim 41, wherein the amount of the at least one bonus prize is based on the number of player cards that win a prize.

43. A system for providing a game of chance, said system comprising:

a display for displaying a first player card of a plurality of player cards, wherein each player card of the plurality of player cards includes:

a plurality of player indicia; and

a pattern that includes at least a portion of the player indicia;

a device for randomly selecting a plurality of house indicia; and

a processor programmed to:

award a first prize for every player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves a complete pattern match after a number of house indicia is selected that is less than or equal to a first number of house indicia, wherein the complete pattern match is achieved by matching each player indicia within the pattern with the selected house indicia;

award at least one second prize to every player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the complete pattern match after each house indicia is selected up to and including a second number of house indicia;

determine whether a triggering criterion is met during the game of chance; and

award at least one third prize for each player card that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been

met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.

44. The system of Claim 43, the at least one third prize is awarded for a first player card achieving the partial pattern match, and wherein the triggering criterion includes achieving the complete pattern match by a second player card of the plurality of player cards.

45. The system of Claim 43, wherein the triggering criterion includes completing a selection of a predetermined number of house indicia.

46. The system of Claim 45, wherein said processor is further programmed to end the game of chance when the predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

47. The system of Claim 45, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the at least one third prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves the partial pattern match even when no player card achieves the complete pattern match during the game of chance.

48. The system of Claim 45, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the at least one third prize for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the partial pattern match, and to award the first prize for a second player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the complete pattern match.

49. The system of Claim 45, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the at least one third prize for the partial pattern match and the first prize for the complete pattern match for a first player card of the plurality of player cards upon a determination that the first player card achieves the partial pattern match and the complete pattern match.

50. The system of Claim 43, wherein the at least one third prize is awarded for a first player card of the plurality of player cards achieving the partial pattern match, and wherein said processor is programmed to offer an option to continue the game of chance for the first player card in exchange for forfeiting at least a portion of the at least one third prize.

51. The system of Claim 50, wherein said processor is further programmed to award the at least one third prize and end the game of chance for the first player card upon a determination that the option is declined.

52. The system of Claim 51, wherein said processor is further programmed to continue the game of chance for at least one second player card of the plurality of player cards after the game of chance is ended for the first player card.

53. The system of Claim 50, wherein upon a determination that the offer is accepted, said processor is further programmed to continue the game of chance for the first player card by causing at least one additional house indicia to be selected until a predetermined number of house indicia have been selected.

54. The system of Claim 53, wherein said processor is further programmed to award an additional prize for each additional partial pattern match and complete pattern match achieved by the first player card after the offer is accepted.

55. The system of Claim 43, wherein at least one bonus prize is awarded if a predetermined number of player cards win a prize.

56. The system of Claim 55, wherein the amount of the at least one bonus prize is based on the number of player cards that win a prize.

57. A system for providing a game of chance, said system comprising:

a plurality of player cards, wherein each player card of the plurality of player cards includes:

a plurality of player indicia; and

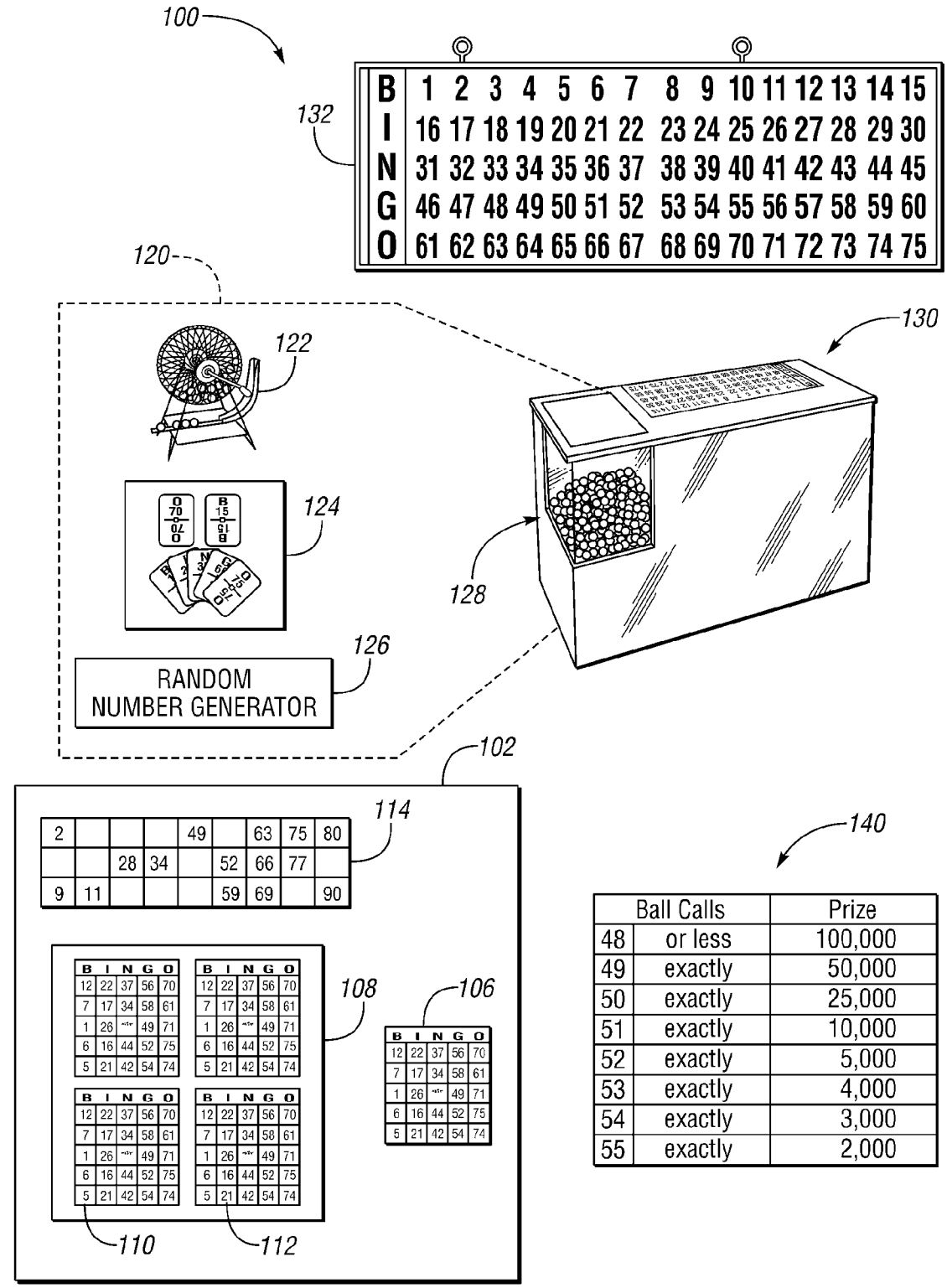
a pattern including at least a portion of the player indicia;

a first device for randomly selecting a plurality of house indicia; and

a second device configured to:

determine whether a triggering criterion is met during the game of chance; and

award a prize for each player card of the plurality of player cards that achieves a partial pattern match with the selected house indicia upon the determination that the triggering criterion has been met, wherein the partial pattern match is achieved by matching the selected house indicia with a predetermined number of player indicia, but not all of the player indicia, within the pattern.



Ball Calls		Prize
48	or less	100,000
49	exactly	50,000
50	exactly	25,000
51	exactly	10,000
52	exactly	5,000
53	exactly	4,000
54	exactly	3,000
55	exactly	2,000

FIG. 1

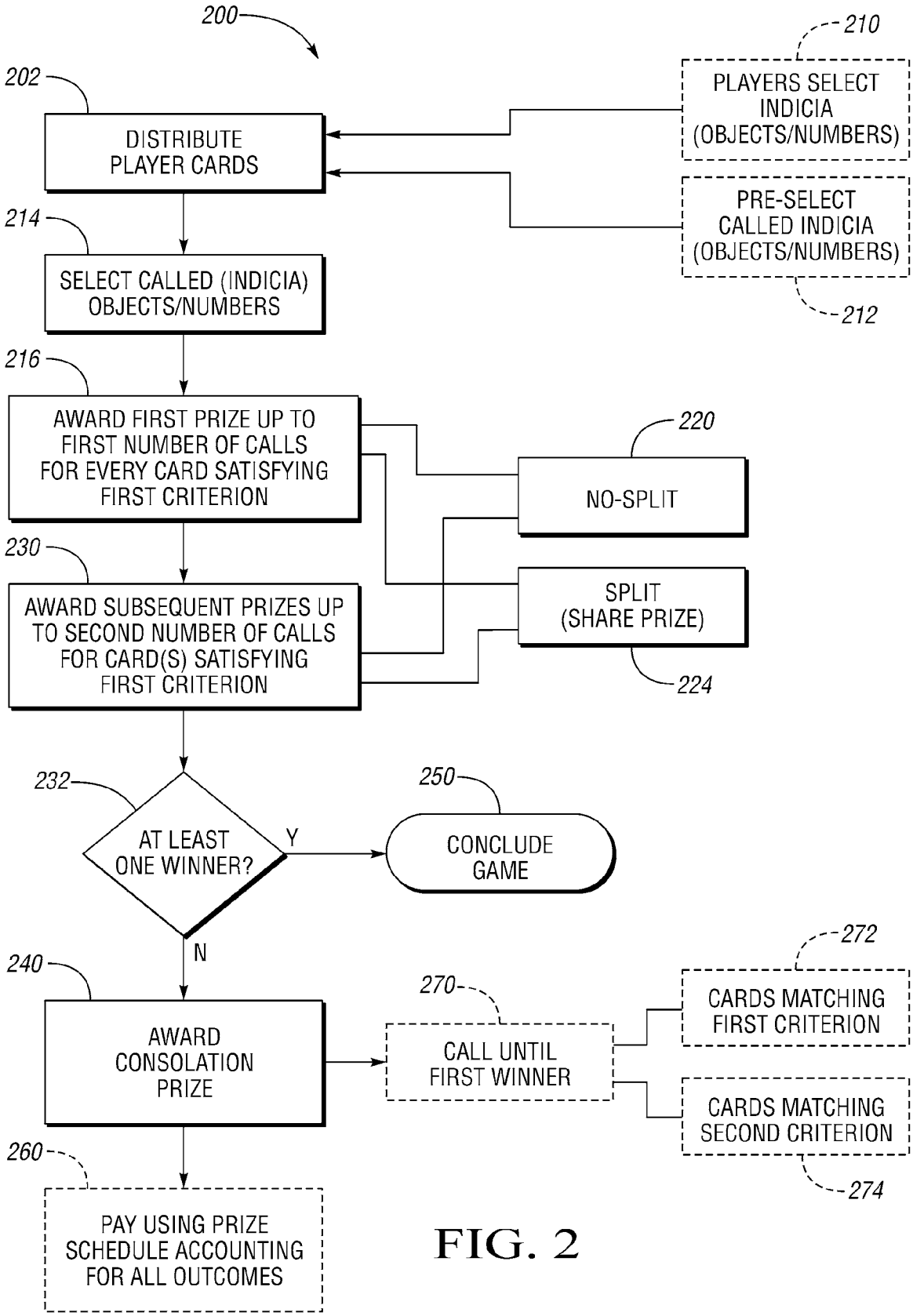

200
202
DISTRIBUTE PLAYER CARDS
210
PLAYERS SELECT INDICIA (OBJECTS/NUMBERS)
PRE-SELECT CALLED INDICIA (OBJECTS/NUMBERS)
212
214
SELECT CALLED (INDICIA) OBJECTS/NUMBERS
216
AWARD FIRST PRIZE UP TO FIRST NUMBER OF CALLS FOR EVERY CARD SATISFYING FIRST CRITERION
220
NO-SPLIT
230
AWARD SUBSEQUENT PRIZES UP TO SECOND NUMBER OF CALLS FOR CARD(S) SATISFYING FIRST CRITERION
SPLIT (SHARE PRIZE)
224
232
AT LEAST ONE WINNER?
Y
250
CONCLUDE GAME
N
240
AWARD CONSOLATION PRIZE
270
CALL UNTIL FIRST WINNER
272
CARDS MATCHING FIRST CRITERION
CARDS MATCHING SECOND CRITERION
274
260
PAY USING PRIZE SCHEDULE ACCOUNTING FOR ALL OUTCOMES

FIG. 2

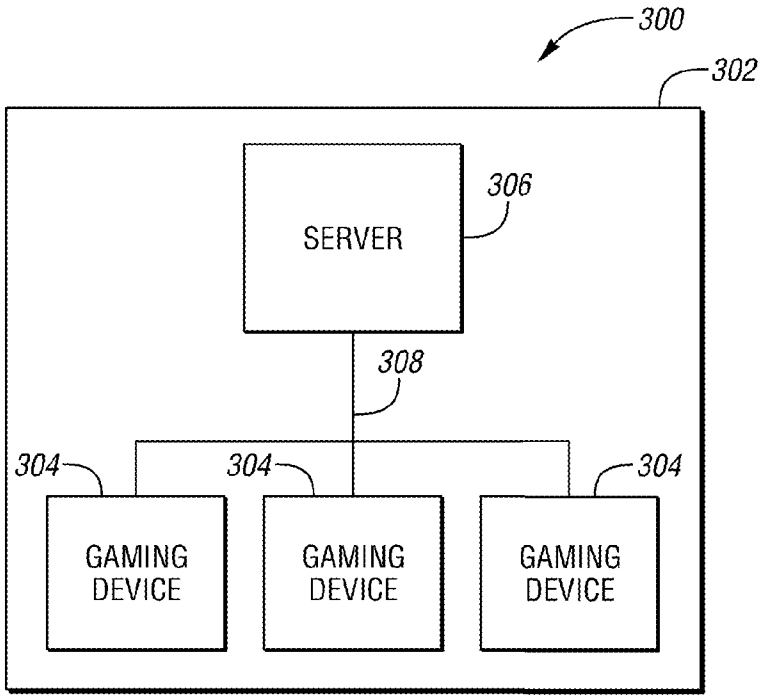

300
302
SERVER
306
308
304
304
304
GAMING DEVICE
GAMING DEVICE
GAMING DEVICE

FIG. 3

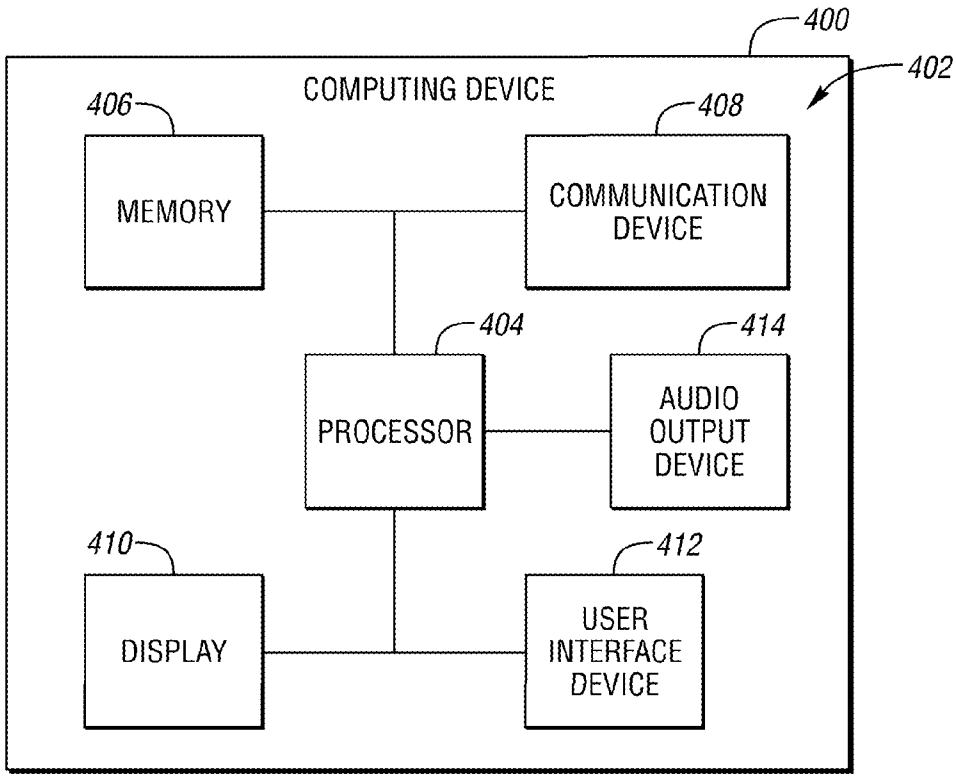

400
402
COMPUTING DEVICE
406
408
MEMORY
COMMUNICATION DEVICE
404
414
PROCESSOR
AUDIO OUTPUT DEVICE
410
412
DISPLAY
USER INTERFACE DEVICE

FIG. 4

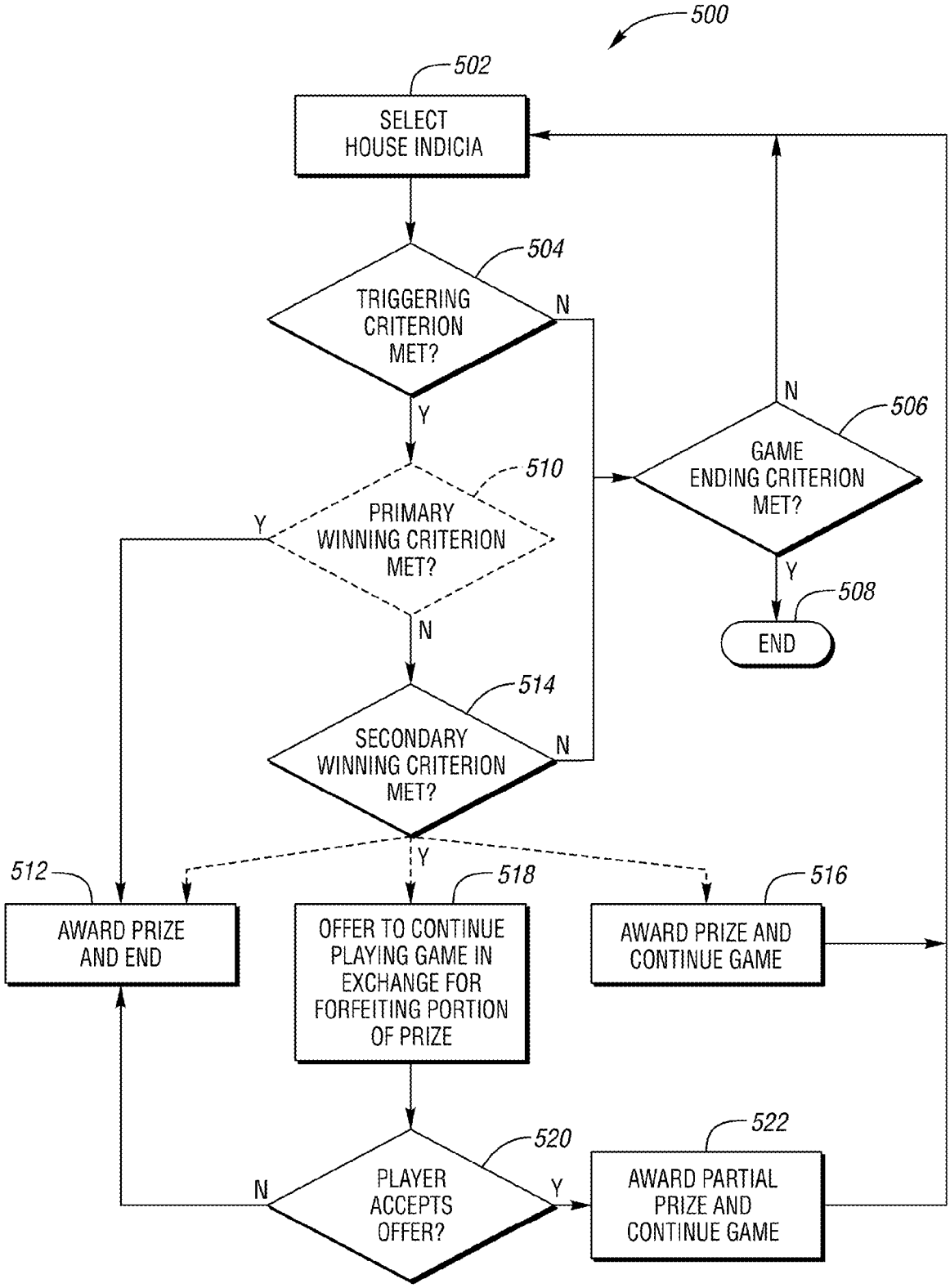

500
502
SELECT HOUSE INDICIA
504
TRIGGERING CRITERION MET?
N
Y
506
GAME ENDING CRITERION MET?
N
Y
508
END
510
PRIMARY WINNING CRITERION MET?
Y
N
514
SECONDARY WINNING CRITERION MET?
N
Y
512
AWARD PRIZE AND END
518
OFFER TO CONTINUE PLAYING GAME IN EXCHANGE FOR FORFEITING PORTION OF PRIZE
516
AWARD PRIZE AND CONTINUE GAME
520
PLAYER ACCEPTS OFFER?
N
Y
522
AWARD PARTIAL PRIZE AND CONTINUE GAME

FIG. 5