

hand are then replaced with other, undealt cards that remain in the deck. In a variation of this method, the remaining cards for each additional hand may be correspondingly positioned cards that are provided from hands that are dealt at roughly the same time as the first hand. Each additional hand, therefore, is a "five card draw" hand, in which the held cards are some of the cards that were dealt in the original hand. Awards for each additional hand are also provided to the player based on the results of the additional hands.

[0016] Gaming devices or methods are not known in which two different types of bonus events, such as bonus games and the bonus of increased awards, may be made available to a player. Nor are gaming devices or methods in which the results of multiple, concurrently played primary games may be monitored for a triggering event and a bonus game similar in type to the primary game may be awarded if the triggering event occurs in one or more of the concurrently played primary games.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The present invention includes a gaming method providing a primary game in conjunction with one or more bonus games, as well as apparatus for effecting the method. In the primary game, a player selects, from an array of symbols to be randomly generated, one or more paylines along which the game will be played. The array of symbols is then generated and displayed. If a trigger symbol is present along one or more of the selected paylines, one or more bonus games may be initiated. In addition, the presence of a trigger symbol in a specified location within the array, such as at the center, may cause another bonus event to occur. For example, a part of the payout or the total payout of game may be increased as a result of the additional bonus event.

[0018] In order to initiate the primary game on an apparatus according to the invention, a player first selects certain paylines by, for example, placing wagers, or bets, on each selected payline of an array of symbols, such as poker card symbols or reel type slot machine type symbols. Once the player has indicated that each desired payline has been selected, the symbols from a predetermined set of symbols are randomly generated and displayed in an array of fixed size comprising, for example, one or more rows and columns of symbols. The symbols present along each payline are examined to determine whether any winnings, such as tournament qualification points, tournament points, or a monetary payout, will be awarded to the player.

[0019] Each payline is also examined to determine whether the trigger symbol is present along that payline. If so, the game progresses to one or more bonus rounds. For example, the gaming method may award to the player a single round of bonus play if the trigger symbol is present in at least one payline that was previously selected by the player. Alternatively, a bonus round of play may be awarded to the player for each payline in which the trigger symbol is present. While the game of each bonus round is preferably related in some way to the primary game (i.e., a card type bonus game resulting from a card type primary game), types of bonus round games differing from the primary game are also within the scope of the present invention.

[0020] In addition to the possibility of receiving the opportunity to play a bonus game based on the presence of a

trigger symbol in a selected payline, a bonus event may also occur if the trigger symbol appears in one or more specified locations (e.g., at the center) of the array of symbols. The bonus event may comprise one or more bonus games, an increase in the player's winnings along one or more of the selected paylines of the primary game, or a combination thereof.

[0021] Gaming machines and other apparatus for effecting gaming methods of the present invention are also within the scope of the present invention. Such apparatus may be electronic or electromechanical systems which include or communicate with a processor under control of a suitable computer program, as well as components for displaying to a player the array of symbols and other information associated with the primary game and bonus event, player interface components, and components for receiving payment from a player and for providing payment of monetary awards to the player. Apparatus incorporating teachings of the present invention may comprise individual player stations of the stand-alone type, or player stations that are networked with a central computer or with one or more other player stations.

[0022] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art through a consideration of the ensuing description, the accompanying drawings, and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0023] In the drawings, which illustrate exemplary embodiments of the present invention and in which like reference characters denote like elements:

[0024] FIG. 1 is a flow chart depicting a broad aspect of one embodiment of the method of the present invention;

[0025] FIGS. 2 and 3 are schematic representations illustrating basic, possible events that may occur in effecting the embodiment of the method depicted in FIG. 1;

[0026] FIGS. 4 is a schematic representation of a primary game of an exemplary, poker embodiment of the method of the invention, wherein the primary game is stud poker;

[0027] FIGS. 4A-4B are schematic representations of a variation of the method of FIG. 4, wherein the method includes a primary game of draw poker;

[0028] FIGS. 5 and 6 are schematic representations of a bonus game of the exemplary, poker embodiment of the methods illustrated in FIG. 4 and in FIGS. 4A-4B, wherein the bonus game is draw poker;

[0029] FIG. 5A is a schematic representation of another bonus game of the exemplary, poker embodiment of the methods illustrated in FIG. 4 and in FIGS. 4A-4B, wherein the bonus game is stud poker;

[0030] FIG. 7 is a schematic representation, in perspective view, of an exemplary gaming device by which the poker embodiment of the inventive method, depicted in FIGS. 4-6, may be effected;

[0031] FIGS. 8 and 9 are schematic representations of another exemplary, reel type embodiment of the method of the invention;