

components 49, as known in the art. The various elements of gaming device 40 and their association with each processor 42 and with one another are well known in the art.

[0051] As each processor 42 is under control of programming that effects the method of the present invention, the programming causes various logic circuits or groups of logic circuits of one or more processors 42 to execute various functions, or elements of the method. As used herein, the term "logic circuit" may encompass a single logic circuit of a processor 42 or a group of logic circuits of one or more processors 42 that together perform a specific function. Moreover, different logic circuits of one or more processors 42, as defined by a program or portion thereof, may utilize one or more of the same elements as other logic circuits of one or more processors 42.

[0052] In the exemplary embodiment described herein with reference to FIGS. 4-6, one logic circuit of processor 42 (FIG. 7) may identify selected paylines 35' upon placement of a wager thereon of the money credits or tournament points indicated by memory 43 (FIG. 7) to be available. Another logic circuit may randomly generate or "assign" cards 36' of a deck set to image sites 32' of an array 30'. Yet another logic circuit of processor 42 may determine whether a winning hand of cards 36' is present along any selected payline 35' and, if so, determine the corresponding award, while another logic circuit may cause the credit stored in memory 43 to be increased by an appropriate amount. Still another logic circuit may determine whether a bonus triggering event has occurred, either in or along a selected payline 35' or at a trigger site 32T'. Logic circuits of processor 42, under control of appropriate programming, may also effect the appropriate bonus events, including both bonus games and increases in awards, as well as other process elements that are within the scope of the present invention.

[0053] FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, wherein symbols 36" are of a type typically associated with a slot machine or other reel type gaming device. As illustrated in FIG. 8, an array 30" of image sites 32" includes several columns 33" of symbols 36". Each column 33" may be formed from the visible symbols 36" of a corresponding reel, which are the symbols that match up with image sites 32" of array 30" as the reel ceases independent "rotation" relative to the other reels that make up array 30". Each reel may include a fixed number of symbols 36" that are in a predetermined sequence, as on the mechanical reels of a conventional slot machine. Alternatively, the sequence of symbols on each reel may be randomly determined, as may the number of symbols that may be assigned to the image sites 32" of each column 33" of array 30". As another alternative, images from a predetermined set may be randomly assigned to image sites 32" of array 30". Preferably, a set of symbols 36" includes a fixed number of symbols 36", as well as a fixed number of each type of symbol 36".

[0054] In the primary game illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9, a player selects one or more available paylines 34" along array 30", which are referred to as "selected" paylines 35". A payline 34" may be selected, as known in the art, for example, by placing a wager of money, money credits, or tournament points thereon. Once a player indicates that all of the desired paylines 34" have been selected, symbols 36" are randomly assigned to each image site 32" of array 30".

[0055] After each image site 32" of array 30" has a symbol 36" assigned thereto, each selected payline 35" across array 30" is evaluated to determine whether it includes a winning combination of symbols 36". For example, in a reel type game with four columns 33", a winning combination may include four of the same symbols 36" along a selected payline 35" or a combination including a "wild" symbol 36" and one other type of symbol 36" along a selected payline. Optionally, similar, three-image site 32" combinations may also comprise lesser winning combinations, for which a lesser award would be granted to the player.

[0056] If a particular, predetermined or prespecified (e.g., by the player) trigger symbol 36T" is present in a selected payline 35", play may proceed to a bonus round. Entry into the bonus round may be automatic, or may be optional to the player. If entry into the bonus round is optional, in order to play the bonus game, the player may be required to make an additional wager or to contribute all or part of an award from at least the corresponding selected payline(s) 35" of the primary game (i.e., each selected payline in which trigger symbol 36T" was present). As an alternative to the use of a single trigger symbol, another predetermined or preselected triggering event, such as the presence of a certain combination of symbols 36" along a selected payline 35", may qualify the player for a bonus round.

[0057] As depicted in FIG. 9, at least one symbol 36" from the corresponding selected payline 35" of the primary game is replaced with a randomly selected replacement symbol 36R". A player may be given the option to hold over one or more symbols 36" from the corresponding selected payline 35" (FIG. 8) to the bonus payline 38". Alternatively, a new, replacement symbol 36R" may be randomly assigned to each image site 32" of bonus payline 38". Replacement symbol 36R" may be a previously undisplayed symbol from the set of symbols that was previously used in the primary game. Alternatively, replacement symbol 36R" may comprise a previously displayed symbol, such as a symbol of the same, recirculated reel that displayed the discarded symbol 36D" (FIG. 8). As another alternative, replacement symbol 36R" may be selected from a new set of symbols 36". Of course, the amount of award or the amount of increase in award granted to the player is based upon the combination of symbols 36" that appears along bonus payline 38".

[0058] Referring again to FIG. 8, if a predetermined or preselected (e.g., player selected) trigger symbol 36T" appears at a predetermined or prespecified (e.g., player-selected) trigger site 32T" of array 30", the player may be awarded another bonus event. As one example of an additional bonus event, the award provided to the player based upon the results of each primary game and/or any bonus games may be increased (e.g., doubled). In another example of an additional bonus event, the player may be awarded a bonus round, such as that described previously herein with reference to FIG. 9.

[0059] Turning now to FIG. 10, another exemplary embodiment of gaming device 50 incorporating teachings of the present invention is depicted. Gaming device 50 effects the reel type gaming method described herein with reference to FIGS. 8 and 9. Accordingly, gaming device 50 may be either an electronic device or an electromechanical device.

[0060] Gaming device 50 includes one or more processors 52 under control of programming (e.g., software or firm-