

associated with the player's personal identifier. The personal identifier on the card **154** is used to address and retrieve this personal record. By tracking the individual players, individual player usage can be monitored by associating certain of the audit data with the players' personal identifiers. This allows gaming establishments to target individual players with direct marketing techniques according to the individual's usage.

[0036] In addition to being used for player tracking and cashless gaming, the player identification card **154** may be used to save/record the status of a game involving a continuing performance or progression of events when the player chooses to pause the game. The game may be paused at any time the player wishes. When paused, the status of the game is preferably saved in the player's personal record in the database **158** at the host computer **150**. Then, when the player wants to resume the game, the player may input the player identification card **154** into any of the gaming machines **10** that execute that game. The gaming machine then addresses the personal database record associated with the personal identifier on the card **154**, retrieves the last status of the paused game, and configures itself to initiate play of the game from the point at which the game was paused.

[0037] Instead of identifying a player to the host computer **150** using a personal identifier on the player identification card **154**, the player may be identified by biometrics (e.g., fingerprint, eye scan, etc.) or by a personal identifier manually entered via a keypad **160** or touch screen at the gaming machine **10**.

[0038] Thus, the player may play an entire football game or boxing match, for example, without having to stay at the machine the entire time, and without having to return to the same machine in the future to conclude the game. This embodiment could further be used, for example, for a player to simulate a season in football, baseball, or any other team sport or a career in boxing, tennis, or any other individual sport. Further, in sports such as horse racing and auto racing, this embodiment could be used to allow the player to build up a stable of horses or a team of automobiles that would be managed over time by the player. Thus, in addition to the payoffs granted by the machine, the player may build up status on the game over time, and these status improvements may be used by casino operators to grant special bonuses.

[0039] Furthermore, the saved status of first game may be loaded into the same game or, if certain predetermined requirements are met, into a second game such as a sequel to the first game. For example, if a player fulfilled the game requirements on a first game and saved the status of the "completed" first game at the central database, the saved game status may be loaded into the second game. Loading the saved game status into the second game may, for example, unlock secret features of the second game. Secret features may include bonus rounds, characters, reel symbols, special effects, and other game play elements that are not ordinarily available to a player but are made available if the player saves and loads the status of the "completed" first game into the second game. Thus, the player is motivated to play the first game until fulfilling all of its requirements so that the player can unlock and take advantage of the secret features of the second game.

[0040] While the present invention has been described with reference to one or more particular embodiments, those

skilled in the art will recognize that many changes may be made thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, the basic game may itself be implemented on the video display **12** or on a separate video display. Further, though the present invention has been described as an entire game, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention could also be implemented as a bonus game for known types of gaming machines. In addition, though the present invention has been described with respect to the portrayal of simulated sporting events, the invention is not limited to portraying simulated sporting events and includes the portrayal of other types of events and actions. Further, though specific embodiments have been described having two displays, the invention may be implemented on machines having only one display and may also be implemented on machines having more than two displays. Each of these embodiments and obvious variations thereof is contemplated as falling within the spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

1-25. (Cancelled)

26. A method of conducting a wagering game on a network having a central database linked to a plurality of gaming machines, said central database being remote from said plurality of gaming machines, said method comprising:

receiving a wager from a player at a first one of said plurality of gaming machines;

initiating a wagering game at said first one of said plurality of gaming machines;

pausing said wagering game;

developing status information corresponding to a paused state of said wagering game;

receiving, from said player at said first one of said plurality of gaming machines, a player card having identifying information;

in response to receiving said player card, locating a record in said central database corresponding to said identifying information;

storing said status information in said central database in association with said record;

receiving, from said player at a second one of said plurality of gaming machines, said player card;

retrieving said status information of said paused state of said wagering game from said central database;

receiving another wager from said player at said second one of said plurality of gaming machines; and

continuing play of said wagering game at said second one of said plurality of gaming machines beginning from a point of said paused state of said wagering game.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said plurality of gaming machines are connected to said central database through a wireless communication network.

28. The method of claim 26, wherein said plurality of gaming machines are connected to said central database through a wide-area communication network.

29. The method of claim 26, wherein said wagering game includes a continuing performance.