

METHOD OF PLAYING A WAGERING GAME AND GAMING DEVICES WITH A BINGO-TYPE SECONDARY GAME

[0001] The present invention is directed to methods of playing wagering games and gaming devices comprising a second payout indicator comprising a bingo-type game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Games of chance have been enjoyed by people for thousands of years and have enjoyed widespread popularity in recent times. Many people enjoy playing a wide variety of games that they have not previously played. Playing new games adds to the excitement of this recreational activity particularly when some form of "gaming" is involved. As used herein, the term "gaming" and "gaming devices" are used to indicate that some form of wagering is involved, and that players must make wagers of value, whether actual currency or some equivalent of value, e.g., token or credit.

[0003] One popular game of chance that has long been enjoyed by many players is the slot machine. Conventionally, a slot machine is configured for a player to input something of value, e.g., a denomination of currency or house token or other representation of currency or credit, and then to permit the player to activate the device which causes a plurality of reels to spin and ultimately stop to display a random combination of some form of indicia, for example, numbers or symbols. If this display contains one of a preselected plurality of winning combinations, the machine releases money into a payout chute or onto a credit meter for the player. For example, if a player initially wagered two coins of a national currency and that player won a high payout, that player may receive fifty coins of the same denomination in return.

[0004] Since it is desirable to offer players games which they have not played before, it would be desirable to provide a player with new games and additional opportunities to receive winning payouts. It would be particularly desirable to provide new methods of determining the amounts of such winning payouts.

[0005] It would therefore also be desirable to provide a novel second payout indicator which is discernible by a player and/or other observers.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Various embodiments of the present invention comprise gaming devices having a first gaming unit displaying a randomly selected combination of indicia, a signal generated by the first gaming unit and a bingo-type game which is activatable in response to a signal from the first gaming unit. For example, the signal generated by the first gaming unit can correspond with at least one of a predetermined plurality of winning indicia sets of said first gaming unit, the placement of a wager of a predetermined value such as a maximum wager on the first gaming unit, the simple activation of the first gaming unit by placement of any wager, the player's rate of wagering on the first gaming unit, or some intermediate event occurring during the play of the first gaming unit. For example, if the first gaming unit is a video card game, the bingo-type game can be automatically activated if the initial display comprises a pair or higher. The bingo-type game is preferably displayed on a screen and

includes indicia of a bingo card and indicia of bingo markers. The indicia of bingo markers may include bingo numbers or bingo balls displaying bingo numbers which may be displayed at random, at predetermined time increments, or in response to one or more of the signal criteria mentioned above with reference to initially rendering the bingo-type game activatable. For example, bingo numbers may be displayed on a three-dimensional screen every 10 or 20 seconds. Alternatively, the second indicia may be displayed at a predetermined time increment, at a rate related to the players' rate of wagering or after a predetermined number of games have been played.

[0007] The award provided by the bingo-type game can either change an award from the first gaming unit or can be independent of the first gaming unit. According to one preferred embodiment of the present invention, the total payout to a player by the bingo-type game is related to the amount of numbers or bingo balls drawn when bingo is won. A payout meter is preferably provided to indicate the winning payout for the bingo game. The payout meter of the bingo-type game preferably decreases after each bingo ball or number is drawn or at increments at which a number of balls or numbers have been drawn. Therefore, it is most advantageous to a player to win bingo quickly.

[0008] Several types of balls may be used with the present invention including a fun ball, a re-spin ball, a magic ball or an animation ball. For example, a magic ball reveals numbers which are randomly drawn at certain time increments or after a certain number of games have been played. Possible time increments for drawing numbers on the ball include 5 seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds, 20 seconds, etc. A player may still be provided with an opportunity to win bingo even if he stops playing the first gaming unit.

[0009] Additionally, according to another embodiment of the present invention, when the payout meter of the bingo game decreases to below a certain amount, the game dispenses a scratch-off card offering the player an additional opportunity to win an award.

[0010] According to most preferred embodiments, the bingo-type game may be used with any primary base device where the base game is selected from three reel slot machines, video slot machines, video poker games, Keno, etc. Alternatively, the bingo-type game may be a second screen event to a primary video base game or a dedicated video game.

[0011] According to one preferred embodiment of the present invention, a bingo-type game is only activated when a player makes the maximum wager in the first gaming unit. Alternatively, the bingo-type game may be activated when a player makes one of a plurality of predetermined wagers in the first gaming unit.

[0012] As described in more detail below, it is within the scope of the present invention to provide a payout from the primary gaming unit, a payout indicated by the bingo type game only, a payout from the primary gaming unit or the bingo-type game or a separate, plurality of payouts from the primary gaming unit and the bingo-type game.

[0013] Still other embodiments of the present invention comprise gaming devices having electronic means for displaying indicia of rotatable reels such as a video screen