

1 **TITLE:** METHOD FOR MULTI-LEVEL PROGRESSIVE JACKPOTS ON A
2 BONUS WHEEL WAGERING GAME
3

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6 **CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**
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8 This application claims the benefit of US Provisional Patent Application 61/248,488,
9 filed on 10/04/2009, and US Non-Provisional Patent Application 12/761,976, filed on
10 04/16/2010, both incorporated herein by reference.
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12

13 **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**
14

15 This invention relates to gaming devices, and more particularly to an improved
16 method and apparatus for a wheel-of-fortune-type gaming device.
17
18

19 **DISCUSSION OF RELATED ART**
20

21 Progressive jackpot games are well known in the art. For example, US Patent
22 5,743,523 to Kelly et al. on Apr. 28, 1998 teaches such a device. Such devices are
23 made to provide additional excitement and motivation to play a game, especially a
24 casino type game. However, despite the development of many approaches to
25 progressive jackpot games, these approaches often have significant limits.

1
2 US Patent 5,743,523 to Kelly et al. on Apr. 28, 1998 teaches a multi-game system
3 with progressive bonus. The '523 device teaches using a traditional wheel-of-fortune-
4 type gaming device to award a bonus. This type of device is fine for its intended
5 purpose. However, a standard wheel-of-fortune-type gaming device is well known
6 and commonplace and does not provide a heightened sense of excitement or
7 motivation to play a game. Therefore, a device is needed that provides additional
8 features beyond a traditional wheel-of-fortune-type gaming device.

9
10 US Patent 7,614,952 to Elias on Nov. 10, 2009 teaches a gaming device having
11 multiple interacting rotators and translating indicator. However, even with this
12 approach the novelty of the idea will eventually be common and boring. Without
13 variation, players will eventually become bored with the same wheel-of-fortune
14 layout. Therefore, a wheel-of-fortune device is need that adds more variation.

15
16 US Patent 7,591,723 to Cregan et al. on Sep. 22, 2009 teaches a gaming device having
17 a mechanical indicator with a multiple win section. The Cregan device provides the
18 excitement of multiple wins on one play. Also, the Cregan device teaches a wheel
19 with changing LED lights for additional variation. Despite, the benefits taught by
20 Cregan, there is still a need for additional elements of excitement and unpredictability
21 to bring further enthusiasm to the playing action. Therefore, a wheel-of-fortune-type
22 progressive jackpot gaming device is needed that requires that a win designator match
23 the color or symbol on the wheel segment, making multiple wins more uncertain and
24 exciting. Additionally, a wheel-of-fortune-type progressive jackpot gaming device is
25 needed where the jackpot indicators on both the wheel and on the win designators

1 intermittently change as the progressive jackpot totals increase adding an element of
2 unpredictability. Furthermore, such a needed device would include multiple win
3 designators to provide a distinct visual that multiple progressive jackpots can be won
4 at the same time.

5
6 Therefore, there is a need for a device that provides additional features beyond a
7 traditional wheel-of-fortune-type gaming device and adds more variation. Such a
8 needed device would require that the win designator and the wheel segment match,
9 making multiple wins more uncertain and exciting. Additionally, a wheel-of-fortune-
10 type progressive jackpot gaming device is needed where the jackpot indicators on
11 both the wheel and on the win designators intermittently change adding an element of
12 unpredictability. Furthermore, such a needed device would include multiple win
13 designators to provide a distinct visual that multiple progressive jackpots can be won
14 at the same time. The present invention accomplishes these objectives.

17 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

18
19 The present device is a progressive jackpot system for a plurality of gaming machines.
20 The progressive jackpot system includes at least one progressive jackpot. Each
21 progressive jackpot has a different associated jackpot indicator. Each jackpot
22 indicator is based on color or symbols. The colors or symbols of each jackpot
23 indicator may be displayed by an electronic illumination means.

1 The progressive jackpot system includes a plurality of rotatable display wheels each
2 associated with and actuated by one of the gaming machines in accordance to a
3 predetermined set of spin rules. Each display wheel includes a front face portioned
4 into a plurality of segments. Each segment is adapted to display a numeric indicator
5 and a first jackpot indicator. At least one win designator is positioned peripherally to
6 each display wheel and adapted to indicate one of the plurality of segments as a
7 selected segment and displays a second jackpot indicator. A progressive display
8 displays each progressive jackpot and each associated jackpot indicator.

9
10 When each display wheel is rotated and allowed to slow down and stop, the selected
11 segment as indicated by the win designator indicates a selected won numerical
12 amount based on the numeric indicator. If the first jackpot indicator on the selected
13 segment matches the second jackpot indicator of the win designator, then the system
14 awards the progressive jackpot associated with the matching jackpot indicators as
15 displayed on the progressive display.

16
17 In one embodiment, each wheel includes a plurality of the win designators positioned
18 peripherally thereto, with each win designator adapted to indicate one of the plurality
19 of segments as a selected segment. The rotation of each display wheel as well as the
20 display of each first jackpot indicator and each second jackpot indicator may be
21 actuated by the associated gaming machine, in accordance with the predetermined set
22 of rules. Also, each progressive jackpot and associated jackpot indicator on the
23 progressive display are determined at least partially by data of each gaming machine.

24

1 The present invention is a device that provides additional features beyond a traditional
2 wheel-of-fortune-type gaming device and adds more variation. The device requires
3 that the win designator and the wheel segment matching jackpot indicators, making
4 multiple wins more uncertain and exciting. Additionally, the progressive jackpot
5 gaming device intermittently changes the jackpot indicators on both the wheel and on
6 the win designators adding an element of unpredictability. Furthermore, the needed
7 device includes multiple win designators to provide distinct visuals indicating that
8 multiple progressive jackpots can be won at the same time. Other features and
9 advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more
10 detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which
11 illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

14 DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

16 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the progressive jackpot system;

17 FIG. 2 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator;

18 FIG. 3 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator;

19 FIG. 4 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator;

20 FIG. 5 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator and wheel segment;

21 FIG. 6 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator and wheel segment;

22 FIG. 7 is a front elevational diagram of a win designator and wheel segment;

23 FIG. 8 is a front elevational diagram of a progressive display using colors;

24 FIG. 9 is a front elevational diagram of a rotatable display wheel and multiple win
25 designators using colors;

1 FIG. 10 is a front elevational diagram of a rotatable display wheel and multiple win
2 designators using symbols; and

3 FIG. 11 is a front elevational diagram of a progressive display using symbols.
4

5
6 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**
7

8 Illustrative embodiments of the invention are described below. The following
9 explanation provides specific details for a thorough understanding of and enabling
10 description for these embodiments. One skilled in the art will understand that the
11 invention may be practiced without such details. In other instances, well-known
12 structures and functions have not been shown or described in detail to avoid
13 unnecessarily obscuring the description of the embodiments.
14

15 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the
16 claims, the words “comprise,” “comprising,” and the like are to be construed in an
17 inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the
18 sense of “including, but not limited to.” Words using the singular or plural number
19 also include the plural or singular number respectively. Additionally, the words
20 “herein,” “above,” “below” and words of similar import, when used in this
21 application, shall refer to this application as a whole and not to any particular portions
22 of this application. When the claims use the word “or” in reference to a list of two or
23 more items, that word covers all of the following interpretations of the word: any of
24 the items in the list, all of the items in the list and any combination of the items in the
25 list.

1
2 With respect to the drawings, FIG. 1 illustrates a progressive jackpot system 10 for a
3 plurality of gaming machines 20. The progressive jackpot system 10 includes at least
4 one progressive jackpot 120 (FIG. 8). Each progressive jackpot 120 has a different
5 associated jackpot indicator 200, as illustrated in FIG. 8. In one embodiment, each
6 jackpot indicator 200 is based on color 130 (FIGS. 5,8). In another embodiment, each
7 jackpot indicator 200 is based on symbols 140 (FIGS. 10,11).

8
9 In FIG. 1, the progressive jackpot system 10 includes a plurality of rotatable display
10 wheels 30 each associated with and actuated by one of the gaming machines 20 in
11 accordance to a predetermined set of spin rules. Each display wheel 30 includes a
12 front face 35 portioned into a plurality of segments 40 (FIG. 1). Each segment 40 is
13 adapted to display a numeric indicator 50 and a first jackpot indicator 200a, illustrated
14 in FIGS. 1 and 9.

15
16 At least one win designator 70 is positioned peripherally to each display wheel 30 and
17 adapted to indicate one of the plurality of segments 40 as a selected segment 80 and
18 displays a second jackpot indicator 200b, as illustrated in FIGS. 5-7. A progressive
19 display 100, in FIG. 8, displays each progressive jackpot 120 and each associated
20 jackpot indicator 200.

21
22 When each display wheel 30 is rotated and allowed to slow down and stop, the
23 selected segment 80 as indicated by the win designator 70 indicates a selected won
24 numerical amount 52 based on the numeric indicator 50, illustrated in FIG. 1. If the
25 first jackpot indicator 200a on the selected segment 80 matches the second jackpot

1 indicator 200b of the win designator 70, then the system 10 awards the progressive
2 jackpot 120 associated with the matching jackpot indicators 200a,200b as displayed
3 on the progressive display 100. For example, if a wheel segment 40 has a yellow
4 jackpot indicator 200a and stops on a win designator 70 also having a yellow jackpot
5 indicator 200b, the player (not shown) would win the amount indicated by the
6 numeric indicator 50 plus the value of the progressive jackpot 120 having a yellow
7 jackpot indicator 200.

8
9 In one embodiment, each segment 40 of each display wheel 30 has color 130 applied
10 at least partially thereto, and wherein the color 130 of the second jackpot indicator
11 200b of at least one of the at least one win designator 70 is driven by an electronic
12 illumination means 150. In another embodiment, each segment 40 of each display
13 wheel 30 has a symbol 140 applied thereto, and wherein the symbol 140 of the second
14 jackpot indicator 200b of at least one of the at least one win designator 70 is driven by
15 the electronic illumination means 150. In an additional embodiment, both the first
16 jackpot indicator 200a and the second jackpot indicator 200b are indicated using the
17 electronic illumination means 150. In another embodiment, the progressive display
18 100 is displayed using the electronic illumination means 150. Preferably, the
19 electronic illumination means 150 uses LCD technology. In additional embodiments,
20 the electronic illumination means 150 can be from other equivalents such as light
21 bulbs, LED lights, plasma display, or suitable television type technology.

22
23 In another embodiment, each wheel 30 includes a plurality of the win designators 70
24 positioned peripherally thereto, illustrated in FIGS 9 and 10. Each win designator 70
25 is adapted to indicate one of the plurality of segments 40 as a selected segment 80 and

1 to display at least one of the second jackpot indicators 200b. Each win designator 70
2 indicates different selected segments 80. Each win designator 70 can be enabled
3 simultaneously or one at a time to indicate the ability to win one or multiple
4 progressive jackpots 120. Each win designator 70 can be disabled to indicate that a
5 progressive jackpot 120 win is not available. To entice the player to bet more, more
6 win designators 70 can be enabled when a player bets more or be enabled due to some
7 other player selectable action such as payline played on the gaming machine 20.

8
9 In a preferred embodiment, the rotation of each display wheel 30 and the display of
10 each first jackpot indicator 200a and each second jackpot indicator 200b are actuated
11 by the associated gaming machine 20, in accordance with the predetermined set of
12 rules. In another embodiment, each progressive jackpot 120 and associated jackpot
13 indicator 200 on the progressive display 100 are determined at least partially by data
14 of each gaming machine 20.

15
16 In one embodiment, illustrated in FIGS 2 and 3, each win designator 70 includes an
17 area 75 for displaying text. In a preferred embodiment, each win designator 70
18 includes the text "Progressive" (FIG. 3) on it to indicate association with one of the
19 progressive jackpots 120. Also in another embodiment, the text "Progressive" on the
20 win designator 70 can be turned on or off to indicate when each progressive jackpot
21 120 is available to win or not, illustrated in FIGS 3 and 4. Likewise, the colors 130 or
22 symbols 140 on each win designator 70 can be turned on or off to indicate when each
23 progressive jackpot 120 is available to win or not. In addition, the jackpot indicators
24 200a,200b can change randomly or can change based on a predetermining factor such
25 as bet level.

1
2 In another embodiment, the invention includes a method of designating a winner of a
3 progressive jackpot 120 of a plurality of gaming machines 20. In a first embodiment
4 of the method, the progressive jackpot system 10 is provided for the plurality of
5 gaming machines. Each gaming machine 20 periodically rotates its associated display
6 wheel 30 and allows the display wheel 30 to slow and stop. The selected segment 80
7 is indicated by any associated win designators 70 indicating a selected won numerical
8 amount 52. If the first jackpot indicator 200a on any of the selected segments 80
9 matches the second jackpot indicator 200b of the associated win designator 70, then,
10 for each matching set of jackpot indicators 210, the system 10 adds to the won
11 numerical amount 52 each associated progressive jackpot 120 as displayed on the
12 progressive display 100.

13
14 In one embodiment of the method, the rotation of each display wheel 30 and the
15 display of each first jackpot indicator 200a and each second jackpot indicator 200b
16 are actuated by the associated gaming machine 20, in accordance with the
17 predetermined set of rules. In another embodiment of the method, each progressive
18 jackpot 120 and associated jackpot indicator 200 on the progressive display 100 are
19 determined at least partially by data of each gaming machine 20.

20
21 In one embodiment, each numeric indicator 50 on each wheel 30 may be
22 intermittently changed according to a predefined set of jackpot rules that are
23 established by the operators of the system 10. For example, periodically each
24 numeric indicator 50 might jump by a factor of 10 for one minute, for example,
25 lending to increased excitement of the players and an entertaining, apparent

1 unpredictability of the system 10. Likewise, each progressive jackpot 120 on the
2 progressive display 100 may be intermittently changed according to the predefined set
3 of jackpot rules in a similar or alternate manner.
4

5 While a particular form of the invention has been illustrated and described, it will be
6 apparent that various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and
7 scope of the invention. For example, in addition to colors 130 or symbols 140,
8 jackpot indicators 200 can use letters or text to identify each progressive jackpot 120.
9 Also, in another embodiment each wheel segment 40 and each win designator 70 can
10 all display the same jackpot indicator 200 when a guaranteed win is desired.
11 Accordingly, it is not intended that the invention be limited, except as by the
12 appended claims.
13

14 Particular terminology used when describing certain features or aspects of the
15 invention should not be taken to imply that the terminology is being redefined herein
16 to be restricted to any specific characteristics, features, or aspects of the invention
17 with which that terminology is associated. In general, the terms used in the following
18 claims should not be construed to limit the invention to the specific embodiments
19 disclosed in the specification, unless the above Detailed Description section explicitly
20 defines such terms. Accordingly, the actual scope of the invention encompasses not
21 only the disclosed embodiments, but also all equivalent ways of practicing or
22 implementing the invention.
23

24 The above detailed description of the embodiments of the invention is not intended to
25 be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed above or to the

1 particular field of usage mentioned in this disclosure. While specific embodiments of,
2 and examples for, the invention are described above for illustrative purposes, various
3 equivalent modifications are possible within the scope of the invention, as those
4 skilled in the relevant art will recognize. Also, the teachings of the invention
5 provided herein can be applied to other systems, not necessarily the system described
6 above. The elements and acts of the various embodiments described above can be
7 combined to provide further embodiments.

8
9 All of the above patents and applications and other references, including any that may
10 be listed in accompanying filing papers, are incorporated herein by reference.

11 Aspects of the invention can be modified, if necessary, to employ the systems,
12 functions, and concepts of the various references described above to provide yet
13 further embodiments of the invention.

14
15 Changes can be made to the invention in light of the above "Detailed Description."

16 While the above description details certain embodiments of the invention and
17 describes the best mode contemplated, no matter how detailed the above appears in
18 text, the invention can be practiced in many ways. Therefore, implementation details
19 may vary considerably while still being encompassed by the invention disclosed
20 herein. As noted above, particular terminology used when describing certain features
21 or aspects of the invention should not be taken to imply that the terminology is being
22 redefined herein to be restricted to any specific characteristics, features, or aspects of
23 the invention with which that terminology is associated.

24

1 In general, the terms used in the following claims should not be construed to limit the
2 invention to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification, unless the above
3 Detailed Description section explicitly defines such terms. Accordingly, the actual
4 scope of the invention encompasses not only the disclosed embodiments, but also all
5 equivalent ways of practicing or implementing the invention under the claims.

6
7 While certain aspects of the invention are presented below in certain claim forms, the
8 inventor contemplates the various aspects of the invention in any number of claim
9 forms. Accordingly, the inventor reserves the right to add additional claims after
10 filing the application to pursue such additional claim forms for other aspects of the
11 invention.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A progressive jackpot system for a plurality of gaming machines, the system comprising:

a plurality of rotatable display wheels each associated with and actuated by one of the gaming machines in accordance to a predetermined set of spin rules, each display wheel including a front face portioned into a plurality of segments, each segment adapted to display a numeric indicator and a first jackpot indicator;

at least one win designator positioned peripherally to each display wheel and adapted to indicate one of the plurality of segments as a selected segment and to display a second jackpot indicator;

a progressive display for displaying at least one progressive jackpot and an associated jackpot indicator for each progressive jackpot;

whereby when each display wheel is rotated and allowed to slow down and stop, the selected segment as indicated by the win designator indicates a selected won numerical amount and if the first jackpot indicator on the selected segment matches the second jackpot indicator of the win designator, then the system awards the progressive jackpot associated with the matching jackpot indicators as displayed on the progressive display.

2. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein the jackpot indicators of each display wheel and each win designator are based on color.

1 3. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein the jackpot indicators of each
2 display wheel and each win designator are based on symbols.

3
4 4. The progressive jackpot system of claim 2 wherein each segment of each display
5 wheel has a color applied at least partially thereto, and wherein the color of the second
6 jackpot indicator of at least one of the at least one win designator is driven by an
7 electronic illumination means.

8
9 5. The progressive jackpot system of claim 3 wherein each segment of each display
10 wheel has a symbol applied thereto, and wherein the symbol of the second jackpot
11 indicator of at least one of the at least one win designator is driven by an electronic
12 illumination means.

13
14 6. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein each wheel includes a plurality
15 of the win designators positioned peripherally thereto, each win designator adapted to
16 indicate one of the plurality of segments as a selected segment and to display at least
17 one of the second jackpot indicators, each win designator indicating different selected
18 segments.

19
20 7. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein the rotation of each display
21 wheel and the display of each first jackpot indicator and each second jackpot indicator
22 are actuated by the associated gaming machine, in accordance with the predetermined
23 set of rules.

24

1 8. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein each progressive jackpot and
2 associated jackpot indicator on the progressive display are determined at least
3 partially by data of each gaming machine.
4

5 9. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein each numeric indicator on each
6 wheel may be intermittently changed according to a predefined set of jackpot rules.
7

8 10. The progressive jackpot system of claim 1 wherein each progressive jackpot on
9 the progressive display may be intermittently changed according to the predefined set
10 of jackpot rules.
11

12 11. A method of designating a winner of a progressive jackpot of a plurality of
13 gaming machines, comprising the steps of:
14

15 a) providing a progressive jackpot system for the plurality of gaming
16 machines, the system comprising: a plurality of rotatable display wheels each
17 associated with and actuated by one of the gaming machines in accordance to a
18 predetermined set of spin rules, each display wheel including a front face portioned
19 into a plurality of segments, each segment adapted to display a numeric indicator and
20 a first jackpot indicator; at least one win designator positioned peripherally to each
21 display wheel and adapted to indicate one of the plurality of segments as a selected
22 segment and to display a second jackpot indicator; a progressive display for
23 displaying at least one progressive jackpot and an associated jackpot indicator for
24 each progressive jackpot;

1 b) each gaming machine periodically rotating its associated display wheel and
2 allowing it to slow and stop, the selected segment as indicated by any associated win
3 designators indicating a selected won numerical amount; and

4 c) if the first jackpot indicator on any of the selected segments matches the
5 second jackpot indicator of the associated win designator, then for each matching set
6 of jackpot indicators adding to the won numerical amount each associated progressive
7 jackpot as displayed on the progressive display.

8
9 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the rotation of each display wheel and the
10 display of each first jackpot indicator and each second jackpot indicator are actuated
11 by the associated gaming machine, in accordance with the predetermined set of rules.

12
13 13. The method of claim 11 wherein each progressive jackpot and associated jackpot
14 indicator on the progressive display are determined at least partially by data of each
15 gaming machine.

16
17 14. The method of claim 11 wherein each progressive jackpot and associated jackpot
18 indicator on the progressive display are determined at least partially by data of each
19 gaming machine and at least partially by a predefined set of jackpot rules that provide
20 for intermittent changing thereof.

21
22 15. The method of claim 11 wherein each numeric indicator on each wheel is
23 intermittently changed according to the predefined set of jackpot rules.