

NOVEL GAMES, METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR PLAY IN GAMES OF CHANCE

Field of the Invention

These inventions relate to methods, an apparatus for their implementation, of unique player participation games, and for improved methods of play for games of chance. More particularly, these inventions relate to new and improved games involving player participation in a broadcast medium, such as television, and in other communication media, such as over the Internet or other communications network.

Related Application Information

This application is related to application Serial No. 09/672,179, filed September 27, 2000, entitled "Novel Games, and Methods and Apparatus for Game Play in Games of chance" and to application Serial No. 09/585,987, filed June 2, 2000, entitled "Novel Games, and Methods for Improved Game Play in Games of Chance and Games of Skill", which are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth herein.

Background of the Invention

Player participation games fall broadly under the categories of games of chance and games of skill. One of the main forms of games of chance is lotteries, which by definition, involve the three elements of: 1) prize, 2) chance and 3) consideration. If these three elements are present, then the game is considered to be a lottery, and is typically then run by a governmental entity. In the United States, lotteries are typically run by the individual states, or collectively by a group of states. In other countries, it is typically the national government that runs the lottery. Countries and states attempt to strictly limit the game play to their geographic boundaries. For example, in Austria, while electronic access to the game may be available over the Internet, or in order to play, the person must have a bank account in Austria, and be able to navigate the non-english menu.

Games have been conducted in any of a number of formats. Certainly, live, in person games have been performed. Yet other games have been played and broadcast

over a broadcast medium, such as radio or television. Yet other games have been played through active communication media, such as the telephone, or over a communication network such as the Internet.

Various attempts have been made to provide game play over the Internet. By way of example, the game show Jeopardy has been placed on the web at <http://www.sony.com>.

Various other attempts have been made to extend the general concept of gambling to broad communication media, such as the Internet. For example, United States Patent No. 5,800,268 entitled, "Method of Participating in a Live Casino Game from a Remote Location" has been asserted in a litigation in against an off shore corporation. The '268 patent discloses a system in which a player may participate in a live casino game from a location remote from the casino. A player interface station, such as a computer terminal or other special input device, is connected by a communication line to the casino. A second communication line is established from the casino to the player's financial institution. The player is presented with an image of an actual "live" game. The player then participates directly as if they were physically present at the casino. A wager is cleared with the player's financial institution to insure adequate resources to cover the bet.

United States patent no. 4,845,739 to Ronald A. Katz is entitled, "Telephonic - Interface Statistical Analysis System". The patent describes various operating formats, including a format to be performed in association with television media. Specifically, in one embodiment, a real-time format is provided in which television viewers participate on a real-time basis in a game show for prizes. Expanded audience participation is achieved. Various levels of qualification are provided, such as for a child's television game format is utilized, parental clearance may be required. The use of personal identification numbers (pin numbers) is disclosed. In one implementation, the caller is prompted to identify which of the actual studio of audience participants the caller will be aligned with. Additionally, the caller may be instructed to indicate the extent of a wager. As the game progresses, the individual player's accounts are credited or debited, thereby providing on-going accounting data. In yet another implementation, a non real-time operation is provided. Such a show might involve a quiz for callers based on their ability to perceive and remember occurrences within the show. Pre-registration is optionally utilized. In this implementation, a sequence or time clock would be utilized in order to limit or control individual interfaces to a specific time or geographic "window". In this way, the caller

questions may be utilized across various time zones without the caller having obtained the question earlier than other callers within a given time zone.

Berman, U.S. Patent No. 5,108,115 discloses a game show and method entitled "Interactive Game Show and Method for Achieving Interactive Communication Therewith". An interactive communication system is provided which permits individuals to electronically select at least one possible outcome of a plurality of outcomes of a future event. Successful contestants possibly share in a prize which is associated with the event. A home audience of a televised game show may electronically communicate a series of random numbers using their touch tone telephone to participate in the show.

Recently, various governmental entities and trade organization have addressed the issue of game play over the Internet. Congressman Kye has introduced a bill which would preclude the offering of Internet based gaming, though permitting states to offer Internet gambling. Consideration has been given to requiring that the states sponsored gaming be limited to an intranet, in an effort to limit those participating to persons physically resident within the states boundaries. Various international lottery organizations have promoted similar restrictions, namely, precluding the individuals offering of games of chance, and reserving that option exclusively to the state.

Various lottery formats are known to the art. In one classic format, a pre-determined number of tickets are provided with certain printed matter, such as numbers or other indicia, where the information is then obscured by a scratch off layer. By removing the layer and revealing the underlying information, the ticket holder may determine whether they have won or not. Various extensions have been made to a "virtual" scratch off ticket where no physical product is provided.

A conventional lottery proceeds as follows. First, a series of numbers are selected, either by the player or by some automated selection system, such as by computer. Upon the occurrence of a pre-determined event, such as on a set date and time, numbers are randomly chosen. Both mechanical methods, such as selection of ping-pong balls bearing numeric designations, or electronic means such as through a random number generator, may be utilized. The selected numbers are then provided to the participants, such as through a broadcast medium like newspapers, radio and television. Finally, the holder or holders of winning the tickets then present their ticket for payment.

In yet another aspect of game play, a typical television presented game show lasts on the order of one half hour. Various shorter format games or shows have been utilized,

for example, a football based advertisement or game has been presented by IBM during televised football games under the name "you make the call". Yet other shorter version games have been presented over web TV or on the game show network.

The television game show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" is believed to have originated in Britain, and has become extremely popular in the United States. The game is a trivia game. While being principally a game of skill, the nature of the questions, or the contestants knowledge of the potential answers, makes the game at times a guessing game or game of chance. The format consists of one contestant and one host. The contestant is presented with a question and four possible answers. If the contestant answers the question correctly, they advance to a next level, each level being associated with a higher monetary prize amount, which is roughly twice the amount of the preceding level. A contestant is given three "life lines": a "50/50" where in two incorrect answers are removed, thereby leaving the correct answer and one incorrect answer, the "phone a friend", wherein the contestant may call a friend by telephone and solicit their response to the question, subject to a 30 second time limit, and an "ask the audience" option where the audience is polled regarding their view of the correct answer to the question. Various safe levels are established, such as at \$1,000.00 such that the contestant would be awarded that amount of money in the even that they fail to correctly answer a question. Finally, after a question is posed, the contestant may elect to discontinue play, and to receive that amount of money won at the preceding level.

Despite the wide spread participation in various forms of game play, as well as the suggestions for implementing those games on a mass communication network, such as through the telephone or Internet, the possibility for new games, or improved game play exists. In particular, there is a need for improved games of chance, which provide excitement for the player, and optionally a viewer audience.

Summary of the Invention

This invention relates to methods and associated apparatus for novel game play. In the preferred embodiment, the games are game of chance.

A first game comprises the steps of randomly selecting a target number from a first range of numbers having a minimum and a maximum, e.g., from 20 to 50. The number may be selected by the house, or by a player, or by an alternate method of number selection. After presenting the indication of the target number to the player, the player

selects numbers from a second range, having a minimum and a maximum, where the maximum is equal to or less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the minimum of the first range. For example, the second range may be from 1 through 10. The player elects whether or not to draw another number from the second range. The player continues to draw, and the total number of the various graphical depictions being summed, until the player declines to draw further. At that point, the system then draws repeatedly, and randomly, from the second range. The player wins if the system draws numbers which total in excess of the target number. The system wins if the drawn numbers exceed the player's total. Optionally, the system may provide an indication of the odds that the player would go over the target with a subsequent draw. This game is arbitrarily termed Jack-O.

In yet another game, arbitrarily termed POKO, the system receives a buy-in from the player. Multiple indicia are randomly selected from a predefined set, e.g., the numbers from 1 to 10. The system may select a predefined number of numbers, such as 5 numbers. A graphical depiction of the randomly selected indicia are displayed to the player. Optionally, the display may consist of a depiction of a ball, such as the type of ball used in a lottery drawing. Next, a second group of multiple indicia are randomly selected from the predefined set. The number of indicia selected is the same for both the player and the house or system. The first and second sets of numbers are then compared under predefined sets of rules to establish a winner. Payment is then provided to those winning under the rules. By way of example, the system may define a rule for an automatic winner where the player receives five of a kind, e.g., five 7's. Other rules may be utilized, including those from conventional games, such as Poker.

In yet another game format, a second or ancillary game is played in parallel with a first or primary game. By way of example, in association with a first game comprising a lottery number ball draw, a second game may involve a selected player's guessing whether the next ball draw will be of a higher or lower number, or odd or even or the like. For example, during the real time ball draw for a lottery, the improved game play would involve running a parallel or ancillary game along with the ball draw. One implementation would involve a first ball draw, followed then by game play by a contestant such as predicting whether the next ball drawn would be of a higher or lower number, or would be odd or even.

In one implementation, the master of ceremonies would advise the player which of these options had a better probability of being the outcome, thereby making the ancillary

game more a game of chance as opposed to a game of skill. Optionally, scoring may be done, such as where one player or audience participant is scored or ranked relative to another player or participant. Optionally, this game may be played through a quick pick format, or through an online or other real time communication network format.

Yet another game format is arbitrarily termed The Zone. In this game, a number is randomly selected from a first range of numbers preferably having a minimum equal to the sum of the lowest numbers to be drawn and a maximum equal to the sum of the highest numbers to be drawn. The game proceeds with sequential drawing of numbers until the player has a total of the draws approaching a predefined zone away from the target number. For example, the target zone may be numbers within 10 of the target. Payment amounts are based upon the player's proximity to the target number, preferably without going over the target number.

Yet another game is one played at a multiple number of levels. At each level, the contestant is presented with multiple options, such as a depiction of four uniquely labeled boxes, amongst which the contestant may choose. The options would include at least one positive outcome and at least one negative outcome. In the case of four boxes, e.g., one could include a strike, two could include a monetary amount, which may be either the same or different and optionally, the fourth box could comprise a mystery box, described below. The contestant selects, at random, one of the options. If the option selected is one of the positive options, such as a monetary amount, they proceed to the next level and the winnings are added to the prior winnings total. If a negative option is selected, such as a strike, in the preferred embodiment, the level is reset and play continues at that level. Preferably, the player is allowed a predetermined number of negative events, such as three strikes, prior to discontinuing play.

The 'mystery box' consists of a decision within a decision. A first decision was to select that option, which then was revealed as comprising a mystery box. The player is then given the option of whether to reveal that option. The option within the mystery box would include at least one positive result and at least one negative result. In the preferred embodiment, there would be three results possible with a mystery box, a positive result such as a multiplier for the money, such as a doubler of the contestant's prior winnings, an updating of the safe level for the player or an additional monetary amount. Alternatively, other positive results such as a free play or a reduction in the number of negative events is possible. Preferably, the probability of a negative result from the opening of the mystery

box should be equal to the probability of a negative event if the mystery box were not selected.

In yet another aspect, game play utilizes the real time data compiled during a lottery ball draw. Most particularly, the data regarding the number of potential lottery winners is utilized for companion game play. The data may be used directly, such as where the absolute number is guessed or by counting the number of times a give digit appears, or indirectly, such as where the game determines if a digit of the next number will be higher or lower than the last. The data may be used as a secondary random number generator.

The prizes at the various levels may be set as desired to result in a predetermined pay out for the game. Optionally, guaranteed low end prize structures (GLEPS) may require payment of predetermined prize amounts, and possibly payment of a minimum amount of a prize e.g., \$500.00. The monetary spacing between various levels may be set as desired, either as an arithmetic progression or as a multiplicative progression, e.g., a substantial doubling of the prize amount at every level. Optionally, when a maximum game level is reached a jackpot or other proportionally large prize may be awarded. If the jackpot is not won in a given game, it may then roll over to a subsequent game. Alternative forms of progressive play may be utilized.

In another aspect of this invention, game play in a first game may require progression through a plurality of levels, leading to game play on a second game for those who have reached the maximum level on the first game. In one implementation, the maximum prize level in the first game may be equal to the minimum prize level in the second game.

Various modes of play are contemplated. In studio game play may be utilized with a broadcast, either live or for taped replay. Yet another mode of game play involves playing at a gaming venue, such as where other games of chance, e.g., slot machines, are played. Yet another venue may consist of game play by the player from their hotel room in a venue which allows gambling. In yet another mode of game play, a network, such as the internet, may be utilized to permit game play, whether for a monetary amount or to provide other points or indications of score. The game may be played in any venue where not prohibited, whether on land or in an airplane or ship, and may be played in any form of wired or wireless environment, such as via hand-held web enabled communication devices.

The game may be played by a single individual, or may be played with multiple players. The multiple players may play against one another, for scoring, or may merely play in parallel without further interaction.

In yet another aspect, methods and apparatus are provided for participating in on-line or other electronic access games, especially lottery games played over a network, such as the Internet. A player would obtain a lottery product, either scratch-off or on-line directed to playing an electronic game, such as a game on the Internet or played through a telecommunication network, either wired or wireless. By utilizing the conventional sales and distribution channels, the traditional safeguards regarding sales of gaming tickets to under aged players can be maintained. Having obtained the ticket containing a participation number, the player may then enter that number electronically, which would enable play for the amount of money purchased. Winnings may be paid out by presenting the ticket to a retailer, who could verify the winnings via a conventional on-line system. Optionally, the ticket may contain variable information regarding the electronic play, such as the amount to be won, the level of difficulty of a game or what game could be played.

In yet another aspect, the games described herein may be played either as a probability game or as a predetermined outcome game. In the case of a probability game, the outcome is determined based upon the actions of the player. In a predetermined outcome scenario, the system has determined which ticket or tickets are winners, or at what level the win will be paid, and the action of the player has no impact on the outcome of the game play. While the appearance of selection may still appear to be "random" to the player, the system may select the required number or other indicia in order to force the predetermined outcome.

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide an improved game of chance having a higher level of audience interest and potential participation.

It is yet another object of this invention to provide for an improved Internet game of chance.

It is yet a further object of this invention to provide for enhanced modes of game play in association with existing forms of game play.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 shows a screen of the type particularly adapted for a broadcast type format.

Fig. 2 is a flow chart showing options for game play.

Fig. 3 shows a perspective view of a casino type apparatus.

Fig. 4 shows a lottery ticket for possible participation in a feature broadcast game show.

Fig. 5 shows a perspective view of a scratch off implementation of the game.

Fig. 6 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game termed POKO.

Fig. 7 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game termed Jack-O.

Fig. 8 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game termed High-Low.

Fig. 9 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game termed The Zone.

Fig. 10 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game in miniature form.

Fig. 11 shows graphical depictions of a lottery game termed On the Nose.

Fig. 12 shows graphical depiction of a game termed Blank Check.

Fig. 13 shows a ticket containing a participation number.

Fig. 14 shows a schematic diagram of an electronic system for implementation of these games.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Fig. 1 is a view of one possible display for use in game play. For example, the depiction may be of a portion of a broadcast studio with associated game play, such as for television broadcast. The display 10 may optionally include a logo or other word mark region 12. The multiple options presented to the players may be depicted as uniquely designated boxes 14. While shown as numbers in Fig. 1, the designators for boxes 14 may be of any form, such as letters, characters or other visual depictions. The display preferably will include other functional aspects of the game. A safe level display 16 displays that amount of money or points which are guaranteed to the player in the event that they can no longer continue with the game given that they have reached a predetermined negative level. The total display 18 shows the total amount of money, points, prizes (cash or non-cash) or other winnings accumulated by the player. The strike display 220 shows a depiction of the number of negative events, here strikes, which have occurred. As shown, the display 10 contemplates three strikes in the game. As shown, sub box 24 includes a "X" indicating one strike.

Display region 26 shows the possible outcomes from the selection of the mystery box or other denominated decision within a decision. As shown in display 10, the outcomes of the mystery box include a multiplier for the monetary amount previously won

by the player, here shown to be a multiplicative doubler of the monetary amount (shown at 26a), or a negative result, such as a strike (shown at 26b) or an updating of the safe level (as shown at 26c).

Fig. 2 is a flowchart of one implementation of the game format. The game starts with start box 30. Level box 32 indicates the multiple levels possible for game play. Game play begins at the first level. The number of levels ends at the first level. The number of levels may be chosen consistent with the expected pay out and desired duration of the game. In a half-hour or full hour broadcast format, 10 or 15 game levels may be desired. In contrast, a sixty second or few minute game may only involve three, four or five levels. Decision box 34 determines whether the maximum level J has been reached, and if so, indicates that the jackpot 36 is to be awarded. In the event that the jackpot is not awarded, it may be rolled over for future games.

Returning now to the flowchart, the multiple options 40 are displayed to the contestant. As shown in Fig. 1, the multiple options could comprise four uniquely numbered boxes or squares. Any form of display or random selection may be utilized. Thus, while the term "display" is utilized, it should be construed in a manner consistent with selecting, such as where an alternative random selection method is utilized. One possible alternative is the ping pong ball draw, such as where the balls are distinguishable and are drawn by the machine. Yet another selection method could include a computer generated selection, such as through the use of a random number generator. Thus, the output of selection box 42 is a determination of one of the various possible outcomes from that election or selection.

As shown in Fig. 2, two positive options, positive option 1 44 and positive option 2 46 are shown. The positive options 44, 46 may represent a monetary amount, a point value or other financial or prize information. In the preferred embodiment, the positive options are of an equal amount, though they may be of differing amounts or of differing types of prize.

The negative result box 50 may be of various types. In the preferred embodiment, the negative result 50 may comprise a strike. Preferably, the game is structured as to permit a predetermined number of strikes, such as 3 strikes, prior to the player losing the game. In such a system, the system would update the negative result tally at box 52, and perform a comparison 54 of the totaled number of negative events to the maximum number of negative events allowed. If the comparison 54 indicates that the maximum

number has been reached, then program flow proceeds to box 74 where the player is awarded the last existing safe level amount, or if no such safe level amount exists, then whatever minimum prize is indicated according to the rules. That minimum amount may be 0 or some other guaranteed amount. Certain lottery systems require guaranteed low-end prize structure (GLEPS) which guarantee a certain prize or result for certain contestants.

The fourth option shown in Fig. 2 consists of the mystery box 60. In the preferred embodiment, the competitor is given the option at decision stage 62 whether to reveal the content of the mystery box. If the player elects not to elect the content of the mystery box, then play resumes at the same level with four boxes. However, if the player elects to reveal the content at step 64, the content may consist of a negative option 66, positive result 68 or safe level update 70. In the event that the negative option 66 is selected, the negative result is updated at box 52, with the player indicated comparison step 54 being performed. Program operation is the same as for the flow leading from the negative result box 50. In the event that a positive result 68 occurs, the program flows to box 48 for an update of the positive result. For example, if the positive option 1 44 is a monetary amount, the monetary amount may then be added to prior winnings, or alternatively may be the entirety of the award which may be won.

If the safe level update box 70 is selected, the safe level is updated at box 72. In this way, when the player has reached the maximum number of events at box 54, the safe level amount 72 is then provided. After the update of the positive result 48, and optionally, an update of the safe level 72, program flow returns to the level selection 32, at which time the next higher level is selected.

In the preferred embodiment if the number of negative results is less than the maximum number of negative results (box 54), then the decision flows to path A, which returns the player to the decision to select among the available options 42. In the preferred embodiment, when the player has received a strike at a given level, the level is reset and played again. Alternatively, in the event of a negative event, the negative event could be tallied and the player advanced to the next level.

Fig. 3 shows a perspective view of a device for use at a gambling or gaming venue. A housing 80 may include a display 82, such as a CRT or flat panel display, on which is displayed the multiple options 84. The other information or designations may be as described in connection with Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. For example, the display 82 may include a

designator 86 for the amount the gamer is playing for. A display 88 may visually depict the number of strikes existing. A selection system 90, such as an array of buttons is utilized for player input of the desired selection. However, any mode or manner of input may be utilized. For example, a computer mouse, voice detection system or other input mechanism permitting the player to interface with the machine may be utilized consistent with the goals and objects of this invention. The display may include a depiction of the total amount then won, or comprising a safe level. Optionally, a slot 94 for pay back of a player's winnings may be provided. Alternatively, the payment format may be of any various mode, such as if players based upon the use of credit card information, the credit card may be provided with a credit in the event that the player is a winner.

The displays of Fig. 1 and Fig. 3 may be of various types and resolution. For example, certain of the displays may be in a standard resolution format, whereas others may be in a high resolution format. Certain of the displays may show a graphical image, whether static or dynamic, and yet other displays may show textual information. Combinations of any of the preceding, e.g., text on certain displays and high resolution dynamic images on other displays, may be utilized.

In addition to visual displays, voice prompts may be provided, such as where the contestant is prompted to enter information or is otherwise cued to provide a responsive action. Voice input to the system is also feasible.

Fig. 4 shows a ticket 100 having a front face and a back face. The ticket 100 may include textual data such as state lottery or may include other graphic indicia indicative of the game. In one implementation, the lottery ticket 100 includes a means or mechanism for the players to be selected for inclusion in a broadcast in the underline game. A scratch off layer 106 is deposited an operative portion of the ticket, which, when removed, reveals images. As shown in Fig. 4, the scratch off layer has already been removed from the left and center images, depicting the television sets. Thus, if the player were to possess a card 100 that had three television sets, that may form the basis for their participation in the broadcast game show, or to permit them to participate in the selection process leading to the broadcast game. By way of example, having a lottery ticket with three similar images may permit the player to be entered into a drawing or other selection mechanism for game play.

The images 104 and game play associated therewith may be in addition to the game play of a lottery, such as designated by the numbers 108. Thus, if a player purchases

a ticket and receives numbers 108, they may be additionally entitled to play the game depicted by the graphics 104 for possible play on a future lottery game show. In this way, interest in a future lottery game may be created through game play on an existing lottery.

As shown, the ticket 100 optionally includes a bar code 112. As shown, the bar code 112 is disposed on the backside of the lottery ticket. The bar code 112 may be placed wherever desired. In operation, the machine readable bar code may be utilized for tracking or other monitoring purposes.

Fig. 5 shows a perspective view of a ticket or card 120 representing a scratch off version of the multilevel game. Card stock or other substrate 120 has printed thereon an indication of the various levels of the game 122, such as 1, 2, 3 ... 15. The player is presented with multiple regions 126 for scratch off. As shown, the player having scratched off the first box at level 1 revealed a winning prize of \$2.00 at level 2, the player selected the second column, which results in a strike or X. At level 3, the player revealed the right most scratch off, revealing a winning number of \$3.00. At level 4, an X was revealed in the third column. At this point, the player has two strikes. The player has then further elected at level 5 to reveal the scratch off in the first column. Thus, at this stage, the player has \$7.00 of revealed winnings and two strikes. At this stage, the player could elect to discontinue play. The ticket may then be brought to a redemption center and receive the money in exchange for the ticket. In the event that the player continued to reveal obscure information, and that the predetermined number of negative events, such as 3 strikes, was reached, the ticket would become void and no compensation would be provided.

The games of this invention may be adapted to an on-line selection format, such as where a potential player purchases a lottery or lotto ticket at a retail vending location. The player may be prompted to provide their selection of numbers, such as where they provide one of four numbers for each level. That information may then be passed in an on-line manner to the lottery system. Optionally, game play on the television or other broadcast media may be used for game play by the viewing audience. For example, the game play of successful game play at a given level may be compared to the player's selections previously made through the on-line process. Improved audience viewing levels of a game of chance would result.

The game described herein may be played in any variety of formats. For example, the game may be played in a 30 minute or 1 hour television broadcast type format.

Alternatively, the game is adaptable to a short, e.g., 60 second, format. Game play may be done in a broadcast mode, such as through in studio participation, either live or taped. Alternate modes may be utilized, such as in a gaming or gambling establishment. Game play may be over a network, such as the Internet or an Intranet. In an Internet game the player may provide credit card information or otherwise have an account with a monetary stake, and that amount may be increased or decreased as the player wins or loses. Alternatively, instead of money, the player may play for points.

Contestant selection may be done by any number of modes or modalities. For example, as described in connection with Fig. 4, a scratcher type ticket approach may be utilized. Alternatively, an online ticket may be utilized wherein during the printing of the play slip (to reflect the numbers either selected by the customer or generated by a quick pick). In an alternative implementation, Internet play, such as the high score may be utilized to select future contestants. In yet another implementation, a real time selection may be utilized, such as where a player is on the net and is selected by the system for future game play.

Fig. 6 shows various graphical depictions relating to a lottery game. The game is termed "POKO", but may be variously named. In a first step, a player "buys in" to the game, either by affirmatively providing a wager amount, or by accepting a preset amount as a buy in. The acceptance may either be through an affirmative act, such as through payment of an amount at an in-store, on-line location, or through other forms of remote game play, such as by clicking or otherwise accepting or entering an amount into a computer or communications device, or merely through acquiescence and continuing game play (especially where a preexisting credit account or other ability to determine credit worthiness is utilized).

After having received the player's buy-in, the system randomly selects multiple indicia from a predefined set. In one embodiment, the predefined set may comprise a set of numbers, such as 1 through 10, and the number of indicia selected may be 5. As shown in Fig. 6, the graphical indicia may constitute numbers, further being depicted on an image of a ball, most preferably a ping-pong type ball. In addition to, or in lieu of numbers, graphical images may be utilized, including classic card images including Ace, King, Queen and Jack. Since a physical card deck is not utilized to select the multiple indicia, but rather, a random selection is utilized, it is not possible for the player to "count cards" in the game.

After the various indicia, e.g., a set of first numbers, is selected, they are provided to the player in some graphical depiction. The mode of presentation of the graphics may vary, and the mode of presentation may be selected consistent with the communication bandwidth available. For example, if the game is played over a wireless device, especially one using a text messaging service, such as SMS or equivalent service, the graphical depiction may be merely of the number of other alpha numeric character supported by the display set of the device. For example, when playing POKO, the display may show 77777 indicating the player's numbers, or may optionally also include the display for the house. Characters may be displayed all at once or over some period of time. In a relatively higher bandwidth environment, the graphical depiction may constitute an image of the indicia, such as a number, on a ball, such as a ping-pong ball. The indicia may be displayed to the user on a screen, such as when the game is played over a computer network (wired or wireless), or may be printed on paper or other support media such as when a player purchases a ticket from a business establishment utilizing an on-line ticket dispensing system. Alternatively, the numbers may have been picked beforehand, printed onto a support medium and obscured, such as through the use of a scratch off layer.

The player now having received their numbers or indicia, the game proceeds to the random selection of a second group of multiple indicia from the same predefined set. Thus, in one embodiment, the "house" (also variously referred to as the system or equivalent terminology) would select an equal number of indicia, such as by selecting five numbers. Preferably, the mode of display of the second group of numbers is similar to the first. Thus, as shown in Fig. 6, the ball indicia are utilized for both the first set of numbers (the players) and a second set of numbers (the house). Next, the first set of indicia and the second set are compared in order to establish a winner under a predefined set of rules. As shown in Fig. 6, a "POKO" may consist of all indicia being identical, such as where five 7's are drawn. In relative order, five of a kind would be four of a kind, which in turn would be a full house, which in turn would be three of a kind, which in turn would be two pairs, which in turn would be a single pair, which in turn would beat a high ball. As shown in the graphic of Fig. 6, if the player's hand consisted of a 9 4 9 9 9, and the dealer's hand consisted of an 8 8 8 8 7, each player having four of a kind, the player would win given that their number is higher.

Finally based upon the outcome of the winner determination, payment is provided, as appropriate. In one implementation, any POKO winner would share the overall

jackpot. Other winning hands may be paid out with a fixed amount. For example, those having five a of a kind may receive \$100, those having four of a kind receiving a smaller amount, e.g., \$50, and so on.

While the foregoing description utilize the winning hand determination of poker as the defined set of rules, other existing game rules may be utilized as desired. By utilizing a truly random mechanism for selecting the indicia, the game becomes one of chance, as opposed to having a component based upon skill. Further, by utilizing a graphical depiction drawn from the conventional images associated with a random draw in a lottery, the game achieves more of a look and feel of a lottery, as opposed to a game of skill.

While described, above, for one player, the game may be expanded to an arbitrarily large number of players. When the game is played in a real time environment, such as over the television or other communication network (wired or wireless) the game may be played at predetermined times. For example, the game may be played every 15 minutes on the hour, once a day, etc. Optionally, a portion of the collective monies being wagered may go into the pot. In this way, there is the possibility of a carry-over amount, and the possibility of a “lottery fever”. In yet another aspect, the game permits multiple purchases of entries. For example, a player buying tickets at a retail establishment may purchase a first ticket and only receive a “pair” of matching numbers. The player may continue to purchase additional tickets until receiving one that the player believes may be sufficiently valuable to have a acceptable chance of success. Such an arrangement may be performed either through a standard quick pick arrangement or via a scratch off. In contrast to a conventional lottery number selection scheme, the player must be precluded from selecting their own numbers in this game.

In yet another aspect, a push/pull system may be utilized. In such a system, the main system initiates the contact with the prospective players, such as by sending an SMS message or email. The player may then elect to participate, or not. In the event that the system provides information to the prospective player about their possible numbers, then the system may require a variable level of payment, such as where the system charges a first amount if the player elects to pass, in a second, higher amount, if the player elects to participate in the game.

Fig. 7 shows a depiction of a lottery game termed “JACK-O”. As shown in Fig. 7, a target number is randomly selected from a first range of numbers. The range of numbers includes a minimum number and a maximum number. For example, a typical range for

the target numbers would be from 20 to 50. The player or the "house" (the system implementing the game) may select the target number. A graphical indication of the target number is presented to the player.

Next, a number is randomly selected for the player, where the number is selected from a second range, the range having a minimum and a maximum number. The maximum of the second range is equal to or less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the minimum of the first range. By way of example, if the second range is from 1 to 10, the first range is at least 20. Game play continues by receiving an indication from the player as to whether to draw again. If the player elects to do so, a next randomly selected number from the second range is presented to the user. The cumulative amount of the draws is titled. This step is repeated either until the player declines to draw further or the title exceeds the target number. In the event that the player declines to draw, the system randomly selects numbers from the second range, accumulating those numbers and comparing the total to the player's accumulated total amount. The winner is the one who has the highest total closest to or equal to, but not exceeding, the target number.

In yet another aspect of this invention, the player may be advised upon the option for a draw that there is a possibility going over the target number. Further, the system may optionally provide an indication of the odds of exceeding the target number.

In one implementation, this game would be played in an interactive mode. Computer or other communication access would permit effective game play. Multiple players may play in parallel against the house, with the display for the other players being included upon all player's screens. While the main implementation contemplated includes a graphical display, yet other forms of conveying information to a player may be utilized, e.g., by providing the information audibly to the player, such as via the telephone or other speaker arrangement on a communications device.

Various aspects of enhanced game play and novel game are disclosed. In a first aspect, the game play method and system provides for the playing or running of a parallel game or ancillary game along with a first or primary game. For example, during the real time ball draw for a lottery, the improved game play would involve running a parallel or ancillary game along with the ball draw. One implementation would involve a first ball draw, followed then by game play by a contestant such as predicting whether the next ball drawn would be of a higher or lower number, or would be odd or even.

In one implementation, the master of ceremonies would advise the player which of these options had a better probability of being the outcome, thereby making the ancillary game more a game of chance as opposed to a game of skill. Optionally, scoring may be done, such as where one player or audience participant is scored or ranked relative to another player or participant.

Fig. 8 shows a graphical depiction of a game termed "HIGH LOW". The game is played along with a first lottery selection of a series of randomly selected numbers. For example, the instant game would be played in conjunction with a ball draw of six randomly selected balls bearing unique numbers for purposes of a traditional lottery game. The instant game then includes the step of receiving an indication whether the second ball to be randomly drawn in the base game will be higher or lower than the first draw. The player may continue through the game so long as their prediction as to higher or lower is correct.

In one implementation, the monetary award to the player may be based upon the number drawn in the base lottery. For example, if the first ball drawn in the lottery is 17, the potential prize award amount could be some multiple thereof, such as \$17,000.00. If the next number drawn in the base lottery is 35, and the player has guessed "higher", then the 35 x the multiplier, e.g., \$35,000.00, may be added to the prior total, raising the potential winnings to \$52,000.00.

The game may be played in real time, that is, simultaneously with the base game, where the input mode permits essentially real time input. For example, input via a computer system or other communication system (wired or wireless) may be utilized. Alternatively, the selection of high/low may be made prior to the selection of the base numbers. The selection of the high/low may be made affirmatively by the player or may be done by a quick pick method. As shown in Fig. 8, a ticket may include an indication as to when the base game will be played, e.g., June 27, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. And indicates the series of high/low outcomes. By running this game in parallel with the base lottery selection, viewer interest in the base lottery drawing is prolonged. Optionally, yet another option to win based on the full outcome of the base lottery selection may be provided. For example, the total number of "higher" ball draws may be rewarded. Alternatively, the final sum of the various ball draws may be rewarded.

In addition to monetary awards, the result of the game play may result in other opportunities or prizes. For example, the winner of the corollary or ancillary game may be

placed in a pool for a drawing to be on a subsequent television or other broadcast show, such as a subsequent base ball draw. Systems and software currently exist, such as those supplied by Gtech, which permit the real time monitoring of the number of players holding tickets or participation interests which are still potential winners. In connection with the high/low game, the system may also monitor in real time the number of players of the high/low game who remain as potential winners.

Fig. 9 shows a graphical depiction of a game entitled "The Zone". The game is intended to be played in conjunction with a lottery type ball draw, that is, a drawing involving a random selection of a series of numbers. Typically, the series of numbers for the ball draw is in the range from 1 to 49. The maximum total of the numbers in the ball draw may be determined. Where the numbers are sequential, summing of the six largest numbers (44 to 49) is 279. The minimum number (summing 1 through 6) is 21. The player receives a randomly generated number. The number may be provided through a quick pick scheme, through a scratch off of a preprinted ticket, or by transmission of the selected number over a communications network (wired or wireless).

The random selection of a series of numbers for the base lottery then proceeds. The numbers for the base lottery are then tallied. Prizes are assigned or awarded to players based upon a schedule. For example, if the player's number equals the lottery total, the maximum prize would be awarded, e.g., \$100,000.00. If the player's number is 1 away from, preferably 1 less than, the lottery total, a lesser prize is awarded, e.g., \$5,000.00. The prize amounts continue to decrease as the difference between the player's number and the lottery total increase. Optionally, no further prizes are awarded once the difference between the player's number and the lottery total exceeds a certain number, e.g., 10 away. In the preferred mode of play, prizes are awarded only to those who have a player's number not exceeding the lottery total.

Fig. 10 shows a graphic depiction of a game show format, preferably played in a "miniature" format, namely, less than 10 minutes, more preferably less than 5 minutes and most preferably, in 3 minutes or less. In order for a person to participate in the show, home players may qualify to play via a communication path, such as telephone, internet or other wired or wireless communication device. Typically, a predetermined number of people will qualify to play from home on the television show. Preferably, the on-air participants are selected to ensure quality game play and programming. The in-studio contestant is then asked a series of "super match" questions against a clock as a stake

setter. The contestants are paid off for each correct answer they give, the game optionally limiting pay-off for any 1, 2, 3 answers. Contestants must answer the same as a contestant in order to remain in the game. Players are eliminated if they do not provide the same answer as the contestant. Optionally, at the end of the predetermined time, the contestant may keep their money or try to multiply it by a multiplier factor, e.g., 5 times. Out of the remaining home players who have answered as the in-studio contestant, a player will be picked, preferably at random. The remote contestant then must match the player in a head-to-head match.

Fig. 11 shows a graphical depiction of a game entitled "On the Nose". In this game, the house draws a target number from a universe of numbers, e.g., 20 to 50. One or more players draw numbers from a universe from 1 to 10. Players attempt to hit the target number on the nose without going over that number. Optionally, the player may freeze, that is, decline further draws, if they are within a predetermined amount from the target number. For example, the predetermined number may be 1, such that if the player is 1 away from the target number they may elect to freeze. The system (house) then draws in an attempt to beat the players. If the house hits the target exactly, the jackpot rolls over. The house will continue to draw at least to within the same predetermined distance from the target number as applies to the player. While any number of pay-out schemes may be utilized, one preferred method is to share the jackpot amongst those hitting the target number on the nose, and to give those players who were within the predetermined distance from the target number an incentive for future game play, such as a free game play or reduced entry fee play.

Current lottery systems are often implemented in an "on-line" environment. That is, the sale of a lottery ticket, and the numbers corresponding to that ticket are, received by and stored in the overall system prior to the actual drawing of the lottery numbers. Thus, prior to the drawing of the lottery numbers, the system may determine how many tickets have certain combinations of numbers. That information may then be utilized for ancillary game play or for another purpose, such as for a secondary, random number generator. The following table provides exemplary numbers. For example, if the #1 ball is 28, there may be 22,316,429 people remaining. After the second ball draw of 15, there may be 6,562,156 remaining. The table then continues on through the sixth ball draw whereupon only two people remain.

Ball	Number	# of Players with Numbers
1	28	22,316,429
2	15	6,562,156
3	9	171,025
4	25	3,790
5	49	83
6	31	2

The absolute number of players remaining may be utilized directly. For example, either the absolute number may be utilized, for example, is the number higher or lower than a predetermined number, or some portion of the number may be used. For example, the last digit may be compared to the prior last digit as to whether it is higher or lower. For at least the first number of ball draws, the last digit should be substantially random. In this way, a secondary random number generator is provided. The data regarding the number of players remaining may be used indirectly. For example, the contestants may indicate the number of occurrences of a given digit, such as the number of occurrences of a given digit, such as the number of 9's in a given number. Thus, those who had wagered that there would be one 9 in the number of players with the given number would be winners as to ball draw #1. In this way, game play is based upon the numbers of remaining players as determined in substantially real time. In yet another mode of game play, players may be awarded a certain amount of money for every predetermined digit. For example, a player may select a 4 and then for every 4 being revealed during the game, the contestant wins a predetermined amount, e.g., \$25,000.00 for each occurrence. Thus, utilizing the data in the table above, the contestant would win \$25,000.00 after the first ball draw because of the occurrence of one 4, but would not win further in this aspect as no further 4's arose. Viewer interest in the underlying lottery draw may be maintained as the players continue to potentially win through to the end. Thus, even if the viewer has "lost" on the underlying lottery, they may still be incentivized to watch where each new ball draw generates an event which may lead to a further win. In yet another implementation, the numerical data relating to the number of players remaining may be categorized for the number of draws which ended up with numbers that were odd or even.

Fig. 12 shows a graphical depiction of a game entitled "Blank Check". A player is provided with a series of numbers, typically five numbers, corresponding to a monetary amount. The digits are randomly selected from the set from 0 to 9. In the example of Fig.

9, the player amount is 84,334. The game proceeds with a sequential random selection of numbers from the same range. As shown in Fig. 9, the sequence of selected numbers is 84337. For the first four digits, the player was still in the game.

In yet another aspect, the game play includes the use of contestant game play to determine lottery numbers. For example, a contestant may be blind folded or otherwise be made unable to see various options. The person then selects from among the various options as the means by which the random lottery numbers are drawn. One example could comprise a blind folded contestant selecting objects.

In yet another aspect, this invention relates to an interstitial game show. Main or regular programming, such as is broadcast on a given evening during prime time on a broadcast network would additionally include multiple interspersed, typically short, segments relating to game play. In the preferred embodiment, the game play would be for a relatively short period of time, for example, 1 to 2 minutes. For example, at 8:00 an initial round may be played prior to the beginning of prime time programming. Normal programming would then resume through the remainder of the 8:00 hour. At 9:00, a second short segment may be played. The play may continue at later times, such as to culminate at a show at 11:00. Preferably, the short segments would not necessarily be shown at a predetermined or predeterminable time as far as the audience was concerned. In that way, viewers who wish to see the progression of the game segments would need to continue viewing that channel, or at least, return to the channel fairly frequently. Optionally, the game play may be progressive from one interstitial game segment to another. Players may be presented with the option of stopping play or continuing.

In yet another game format, the show would include a display having an underlying image, with that image being at least partially obscured by overlying image regions which differ from the underlying image region. A contestant would be given a time limit in which they would be presented with information relating to a suggestion or a clue relating to an overlying image region, which if the player responded correctly, would be removed so as to reveal that portion of the underlying image which was below the overlying image. The suggestion or clues may be related to the underlying image or may merely be unrelated suggestions or clues with respect to that particular overlying image region.

Yet another embodiment of game play provides for the repurposing of an existing taped game show. The previously recorded game show would be segmented into subsets

of issues, for example, presentation of questions or answers (as in the case of Jeopardy), those issues would be presented to one or more players, a response would be received from those players, and the answer would be compared to the correct answer. Scoring would then rank players relative to one another or to indicate the amount of the prize. In yet another game play implementation, one or more contestants would be presented with multiple images upon which predetermined data had been assembled. For example, images of five actresses may be presented to the player and the associated data would comprise opinion polling information as to whom the audience thought was the most attractive. The players would then play against each other to eliminate the images which they believe do not correspond to the most popular or number one response. The players would alternate until one player remained. In a second round, individual play, as opposed to play between contestants is utilized. Again, the player attempts to eliminate those answers which were other than the most popular answer of the audience.

In yet another aspect of enhanced game play, audience participation via an interactive video display, such as a computer connected over the Internet, or via an interactive television arrangement, may participate in the program.

The advent of electronic access to games has raised the serious issue of under-aged player participation. Controlling access by under-age players accessing a game over the Internet or other communication device, e.g., pager, cell phone, wireless application protocol device, SMS device, etc., has proved to be difficult. The inventive method and apparatus may be understood in connection with Fig. 13. A ticket comprising cardstock or other substrate or support media is provided with various printed matter. For example, the ticket may identify the various game, such as a lottery, and indicate that it is a lottery electronic access ticket. The ticket would provide a participation number, such as a pure numeric indication or alpha-numeric indication. Preferably, the ticket would have an indication of its value or purchase price. Optionally, date and time information may be provided. Having purchased the ticket, the presumably age qualified bearer of the ticket could then access the game, such as by addressing a website or by otherwise communicating with the game location. The player would be prompted or otherwise permitted to enter the participation number, such as by typing or keying it in. Game play could then proceed once the system had verified that the participation number was a valid participation number. Optionally, where the ticket is obtained from a retailer having an on-line ticket printing system, the participation number could be activated only upon the

actual generation of the ticket bearing that number. If the participation number is valid, and a monetary amount remains available to the player, game play is permitted to proceed. The player is then provided with an indication of whether they have won, and if so, the amount. The monetary amount remaining on the card may be updated, such as by deducting losses or crediting wins. Optionally, the method includes the step of presenting the ticket bearing the participation number to a physical retail location, which may then access the system through its on-line connection, thereby verifying that the game play associated with the participation number is to be compensated.

In one aspect of this invention, the entertainment value of the retail purchase may be increased. For example, the tickets may contain variable information, either obscured or not obscured, regarding the electronic play. In one aspect, the amount of prize that the player can win could be presented. In the case of on-line ticket distribution, this amount would not need to be obscured, but would be obscured such as by a scratch-off strip in the case of a preprinted ticket. Yet another variable which could be utilized relates to the level of difficulty of game play. Yet another variable could be an indication of which of a plurality of games could be played by the player, e.g., POKO, LOTTO, The Zone, etc.

Fig. 14 shows a schematic diagram of an overall system for use in performance of the games described herein. A processor is coupled to one or more player participating via an electronic communication system. For example, a player may participate through a wireless device, such as a cell phone, personal digital assistant, pager, messaging system or any portable wireless unit. Yet an alternative communication path may be through the conventional wired telephone network. Communication may alternatively be made through a cable network, such as where a computer or interactive television is provided. User input would typically be generated by a key pad, such as through a full sized key board or through a smaller sized remote input unit. In yet another mode, the Internet may be used as a communication path, typically coupling to a computer having a communication device, e.g., a modem, a microprocessor and associated storage.

The system also preferably includes a connection to a physical vending location for providing tickets. Preferably, the system includes an electronic communication between the system, e.g., the processor, and a on-line retail vendor. Preferably, the vendor possesses a ticket printing system which can print the tickets based upon input from the processor. The processor in turn potentially communicates with a number of databases. A ticket database would contain at least information regarding the tickets sold and the

associated information (e.g., the numbers selected for a lottery game, the amount of value associated with a ticket purchased, the amount associated with a prize, information regarding a game to be played or the level of difficulty of the game). In order to permit real time game play, the system would have a input path permitting entry of data from a live event, such as a televised ball draw. Optionally, the system also couples to a substantially real-time lottery information system, such as the fast-track system whereby ancillary games based upon the fast-track data may be played.

In yet another aspect of this invention, the previously described games may be played either as probability games (where the outcome of the game is determined based upon the actions of the player) or as a predetermined game (where the "winning" status of a particular game play is determined prior to the player's participation or other game play). As described previously, the game JACK-O was a probability game in that the user's election of whether or not to draw was a factor in determining the outcome of the game. JACK-O could be implemented as a predetermined win game. The system would determine whether, and in what amount, the player would win. The system could then force that outcome, such as by presenting a certain number to the player based upon the ball draw. Thus, while game play may appear "random" to the player, the system would act in a manner so as to cause the predetermined outcome. Optionally, game play may include steps which aid in achieving the desired outcome, such as by requiring the player to draw when their tally is within a predefined number (e.g., less than 5 away) from a target number.

Although the foregoing invention has been described in some detail by way of illustration and example for purposes of clarity and understanding, it will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in light of the teachings of this invention that certain changes and modifications may be made thereto without departing from the spirit or scope of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED :

1. A system for communication of information, the system comprising:
 - a system processor,
 - a ticket vending entity,
 - the ticket vending entity being coupled to the system processor for electronic communications,
 - the ticket vending entity including physical tickets bearing at least a participation number,
 - a ticket information database,
 - the ticket database being coupled to the system processor,
 - the ticket database containing information about the tickets, the participation number being associated with variable information about the ticket,
 - one or more user electronic access devices,
 - the electronic address devices adapted for coupling to the system processor by a link,
 - the ticket vending entity vending a ticket to a user,
 - the user electronic access device
 - coupling to the system by the link and
 - receiving a prompt from the system for the participation number,
 - the user electronic access device
 - communicating the participation number over the link to the system processor,
 - the system processor accessing the ticket database to
 - performing a validity check on the participation number and
 - retrieving the variable information regarding the display information for that number,
 - communicating the display information over the link,
 - displaying at least the variable information on the user electronic access device, and
 - the ticket vending entity paying winnings to the user.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the variable information includes whether the ticket has a winner or a loser, and if a winner, the amount.
3. The system of claim 1 wherein the tickets contain preprinted information.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein the tickets contain information printed by an on-line ticket system.
5. The system of claim 1 wherein the tickets includes obscured information.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein the participation number is numeric.
7. The system of claim 1 wherein the participation number is alpha numeric.
8. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic access device is a cell phone.
9. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic access device is a pager.
10. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic access device is a computer.
11. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic access device is a PDA.
12. The system of claim 1 wherein the electronic access device is a portable wireless unit.
13. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication device includes a text messaging device.
14. The system of claim 13 wherein the text messaging device is an SMS device.

15. The system of claim 1 further including a participation number validity check system.
16. The system of claim 1 further including an interface to a live event.
17. The system of claim 16 wherein the live event is a lottery draw.