

A Gaming Apparatus With A Player-Usage Tracking Meter

5 TECHNICAL FIELD

The present disclosure relates broadly to a gaming apparatus with a player-usage tracking meter and to a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus.

10

BACKGROUND

Entertainment businesses are typically subject to taxation laws. For entertainment businesses that utilise gaming machines or gaming apparatus, typically, each gaming apparatus may be subjected to a tax that is based on a player's usage at the gaming apparatus.

The inventors have recognized that there is a desire for a fairer system of taxation for gaming apparatus. For jurisdictions that levy a tax based on a total points/credits usage at a gaming apparatus, the tax to be paid may be relatively high due to rewarded points/credits being usable by the player.

It has also been recognized by the inventors that one increasingly apparent consequence of the above-mentioned taxation system is that an affected entertainment business/operator may typically attempt to maintain a relatively lower Return-To-Player (RTP) rate of the gaming apparatus to avoid incurring the relatively high tax. By lowering the RTP rate, there arises an additional problem of players not being encouraged to play the gaming apparatus as the likelihood of a lowered gaming experience, due to the RTP rate, is increased.

30

Hence, there exists a need for a gaming apparatus with a player-usage tracking meter and a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus that seeks to solve at least one of the above problems.

35

SUMMARY

In accordance with a first aspect of the present disclosure, there is provided a gaming apparatus with a player-usage tracking meter, the gaming apparatus comprising, a deposit module arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus; a input module arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game; a processing module configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result; a player-usage tracking meter to track an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount; and wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

The apparatus may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win points, the processing module being configured to convert the one or more game win points to one or more game win credits during a predetermined game play stage.

The apparatus may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win credits, a usable credits meter configured to accumulate the one or more player own credits and at least a portion of the one or more game win credits, wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to differentiate between the one or more player own credits and the at least a portion of the one or more game win credits.

The apparatus may further comprise the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount from a start of a first turn of the game to a last turn of the game whereby the player ends play at the gaming apparatus.

The apparatus may further comprise the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount over a pre-determined period of time.

The apparatus may further comprise the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount until a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus.

The apparatus may further comprise a random number generator arranged for output of the game output result.

The apparatus may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win credits, a player credits meter to store the one or more player own credits and a game wins credit meter to store the one or more game win credits.

The apparatus may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win points, a player credits meter to store the one or more player own credits and a game wins points meter to store the one or more game win points.

The apparatus may further comprise the processing module configured to deduct the one or more player own credits for the input amount before deducting the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award.

If the one or more player own credits is sufficient for the input amount, the input amount may be accumulated into the player-usage tracking meter, and wherein if the one or more player own credits is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is sufficient to supplement the one or more player own credits for the input amount, the one or more player own credits may be accumulated into the player-usage tracking meter.

The apparatus may further comprise the processing module configured to deduct the one or more game win credits, or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award, for the input amount before deducting the one or more player own credits.

If the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more player own credits is sufficient to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points for the input amount, the one or more player own credits used to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points may be accumulated into the player-usage tracking meter.

The apparatus may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win credits, the processing module configured to assign one or more tags to the one or more

game win credits and wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to distinguish against the one or more game win credits based on the one or more tags.

5 In accordance with a second aspect of the present disclosure, there is provided a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus, the method comprising, allowing a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus; accepting an input amount to play a turn of a game; tracking an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using a player-usage tracking meter; using a processing module configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result; and wherein the
10 player-usage tracking meter commences the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

The method may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win points, using the processing module to convert the one or more game win points to one or more game win credits during a predetermined game play stage.

15

The method may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win credits, using a credits meter to accumulate the one or more player own credits and at least a portion of the one or more game win credits, and differentiating between the one or more player own credits and the at least a portion of the one or more game win credits using the
20 player-usage tracking meter.

The method may further comprise tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter from a start of a first turn of the game to a last turn of the game whereby the player ends play at the gaming
25 apparatus.

The method may further comprise tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter over a pre-determined period of time.

30

The method may further comprise tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter until a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus.

The method may further comprise using a random number generator to output the game output result.

5 The method may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win credits, storing the one or more player own credits using a player credits meter and storing the one or more game win credits using a game wins credit meter.

10 The method may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win points, storing the one or more player own credits using a player credits meter and storing the one or more game win points using a game wins points meter.

15 The method may further comprise using the processing module to deduct the one or more player own credits for the input amount before deducting the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award.

20 The method may further comprise wherein if the one or more player own credits is sufficient for the input amount, accumulating the input amount into the player-usage tracking meter, and wherein if the one or more player own credits is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is sufficient to supplement the one or more player own credits for the input amount, accumulating the one or more player own credits into the player-usage tracking meter.

25 The method may further comprise using the processing module to deduct the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award for the input amount before deducting the one or more player own credits.

30 The method may further comprise wherein if the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more player own credits is sufficient to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points for the input amount, accumulating the one or more player own credits used to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points into the player-usage tracking meter.

35 The method may further comprise, if the award is as one or more game win points, assigning one or more tags to the one or more game win credits and using the player-usage

tracking meter to distinguish against the one or more game win credits based on the one or more tags.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Example/Exemplary embodiments of the present disclosure will be better understood and readily apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art from the following written description, by way of example only, and in conjunction with the drawings, in
10 which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a gaming machine/apparatus in an exemplary embodiment.

15 FIG. 2A is a schematic front view diagram of a front panel of a gaming apparatus/machine in an exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 2B is a schematic front view diagram of the gaming apparatus/machine with the front panel opened in part from the gaming machine in the exemplary embodiment.
20

FIG. 3 is a schematic flowchart illustrating a player-usage tracking meter operation of a gaming machine in an exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 4 is a schematic flowchart illustrating a player-usage tracking meter
25 operation of a gaming machine in another exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 5 is a schematic drawing illustrating a screenshot of an exemplary main game output result in an exemplary embodiment.

30 FIG. 6 is a schematic flowchart illustrating a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus in an exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 7 is a schematic diagram illustrating a plurality of gaming apparati in a network in an exemplary embodiment.
35

FIG. 8 shows a schematic drawing of a game system according to an exemplary embodiment.

FIG. 9 is a schematic drawing of a computer system suitable for implementing an

FIG. 10 is a schematic drawing of a wireless communication device suitable for implementing an exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Exemplary embodiments described herein may provide a gaming apparatus with a player-usage tracking meter and a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus. It may be provided that a player's usage of the player's own credits may be tracked or recorded. The player's own credits are credits that are deposited by the player, or originally owned by the player, to play one or more games at a gaming apparatus. Such own credits are distinguished from e.g. game win credits or game win points which are referred to as rewards/awards provided by game play at the gaming apparatus. The player-usage tracking meter and the method described herein may provide tracking of a player's usage of the player's own credits even if the game win credits and the player's own credits have the same currency, i.e. both may be mixed as a same unit of measure and usable to play one or more games at the gaming apparatus. In such a scenario, a single usable credits meter may be used to show the consolidated amount of player own credits and at least a portion of game win credits. The single usable credits meter may be displayed.

In exemplary embodiments herein, game win credits and game win points are different types of an award. For example, if one or more game win points are awarded, it is provided that the one or more game win points are converted to one or more game win credits during a predetermined game play stage e.g. during termination/end of game play at a gaming machine/apparatus.

In exemplary embodiments herein, a RNG (Random Number Generator) may be used for RNG processes. A RNG may provide randomly generated numbers from which, for example, the outcomes of games are based upon. For example, the randomly generated

numbers may be matched to a list of pre-determined numbers to determine whether the randomly generated numbers are a match. For example, if there is a match, a successful outcome is provided. The RNG is preferably independent of external factors. The RNG may generate random numbers without any input or preferably, with a preceding/previous random number as an input to generate a subsequent random number.

In an example implementation, the RNG may be in the form of a crystal oscillator that instructs a number generator processor to periodically generate new random numbers. If there is a seed (or preceding/previous random number) available, the number generator may use that seed as an input for the number generation.

FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram illustrating a gaming machine/apparatus in an exemplary embodiment. The gaming apparatus 100 comprises a deposit module 102 arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus. The gaming apparatus 100 further comprises a processing module 104 coupled to the deposit module 102. The processing module 104 is configured to implement one or more games on the gaming apparatus 100. The gaming apparatus 100 also comprises an input module 106 coupled to the processing module 104. The input module 106 is arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game. The processing module 104 is also configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result. In this exemplary embodiment, the award is as one or more game win credits. In other exemplary embodiments, the award is as one or more game win points. In the exemplary embodiment, the gaming apparatus 100 further comprises a player-usage tracking meter 108. The player-usage tracking meter 108 is provided to track an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter 108 is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

The inventors have recognised that by configuring the player-usage tracking meter 108 to commence the tracking/recording after a first turn of a game begins, a taxation situation may be avoided whereby a player deposits his/her player own credits at the deposit module 102 to use the gaming apparatus 100 but then requests a withdrawal of the player own credits without playing a single game at the gaming apparatus 100.

In the exemplary embodiment, an output module 110 may optionally be provided coupled to the processing module 104 for implementing a withdrawal of remainder credits to a player.

5 In the exemplary embodiment, a display member 112 is also coupled to the processing module 104. The display member 112 is arranged to display the one or more games of the gaming apparatus 100. In the exemplary embodiment, the processing module 104 may be arranged to instruct the display member 112 to visually display a single credit meter that accumulates both the player own credits deposited via the deposit module 102
10 and at least a portion of game win credits as a unit of measure or currency. That is, the single credit meter may show a consolidated amount of credits, that is made up of at least a portion of awarded game win credits and the player own credits, available for use at the gaming apparatus 100.

15 In the exemplary embodiment, the processing module 104 may be arranged to provide a game output result based on one or more random numbers generated by a random number generator 114 that is coupled to the processing module 104. In some examples, the game output result may be the final symbols and/or positions of a reel game.

20 The processing module 104 is capable of awarding a reward value associated with a game output result to the player. In this exemplary embodiment, the award is provided as one or more game win credits. In some examples of game win points, the reward value may be the total points awarded or total win amount for a game output result. For example, for a reel game, the total points awarded may be the total points that is a summation of all
25 possible winning combinations.

 In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter 108 is configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used in an accumulative manner from the start of a first turn of playing a game at the gaming apparatus 100 until the player
30 ends play (or a last turn of playing a game) at the gaming apparatus 100. Thereafter, the player-usage tracking meter 108 may be reset. The player-usage tracking meter 108 may also be configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used in an accumulative manner over an extended period of time, e.g. for different players or different rounds of playing at the gaming apparatus 100. For example, the player-usage tracking
35 meter 108 may be configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used

at the gaming apparatus 100 over a taxation period, e.g. over a period of a number of months of a financial year. Thereafter, the player-usage tracking meter 108 may be reset. The player-usage tracking meter 108 may also be configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used in an accumulative manner as long as the gaming apparatus 100 is in operation. For example, the player-usage tracking meter 108 may be reset when a hard-reset or a factory reset or a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus 100.

In the exemplary embodiment, the processing module 104 is coupled to a storage device 116. The storage device 116 may store the player-usage tracking meter 108 as one or more databases. The storage device 116 may also store the one or more player own credits deposited via the deposit module 102 as a player credits meter or database. The storage device 116 may also store the one or more game win credits awarded by the processing module 104 as a game win credits meter or database. In some other exemplary embodiments, the storage device 116 may alternatively or additionally store one or more game win points awarded by the processing module 104 as a game win points meter or database. In such exemplary embodiments, conversion of the game win points to game win credits may occur during a game play stage e.g. during termination of game play at the gaming apparatus 100. The converted game win credits may then be added to any remainder of the player own credits e.g. during withdrawal of remaining credits. In some exemplary embodiments, the storage device 116 may be external the gaming apparatus 100.

FIG. 2A is a schematic front view diagram of a front panel of a gaming apparatus/machine in an exemplary embodiment. The gaming machine 200 comprises a front panel 201 that in turn comprises a top screen 202, a main screen 204, a player transactions panel 206 and a player interaction panel 208. The gaming machine 200 may optionally comprise a printer outlet 210, a tower light 212 and a poster display portion 214. The gaming machine 200 allows a player to play one or more games installed or network-implemented by the gaming machine 200.

In the exemplary embodiment, the top screen 202 may be used to display game celebrations, promotional/advertising information or other information that is typically not primarily related to progression of the games of the gaming machine. The main screen 204 is used to display the games of the gaming machine 200, for the player's attention.

Typically, the main screen 204 is the screen that the player focuses on for playing the games.

In the exemplary embodiment, the player transactions panel 206 is provided for the player to transact with the gaming machine 200. The player transactions panel 206 may be coupled to or may comprise a deposit module arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming machine 200. The player transactions panel 206 may also be coupled to or may also comprise an output module for implementing a withdrawal of remainder credits to a player. The term "transactions" is taken to mean extraction of remaining credits/points that the player possesses or insertion of credits/points that the player possesses, for example, in a magnetic identification card or a radio frequency identification (RFID) card or any stored-value card. The term should not be limited to monetary transactions. The player transactions panel 206 comprises a liquid crystal display (LCD) information screen 216 and a card insert slot 218. The card insert slot 218 is used for receiving, in the case of a card insert slot, an identification card containing the credits/points and/or identification belonging to the player. The credits/points may be extracted from the card into the gaming machine 200 for playing the games installed in the gaming machine 200. For exemplary embodiments relating to using player identification cards, the player transactions panel 206 may retrieve credits/points information of the player from an external server or database based on player identification. The retrieved information may then be used at the gaming machine 200 for playing the games. The credits/points extracted and deposited into the gaming machine 200 are termed as player own credits.

Upon the player deciding to end play at the gaming machine 200, the player transactions panel 206 may store the latest/updated credits/points information in the stored-value card. For embodiments relating to using player identification cards, upon the player deciding to end play at the gaming machine 200, the player transactions panel 206 may transmit the latest/updated credits/points information to be stored on the external server or database based on the player identification. It will be appreciated that the card insert slot 218 may be in other forms depending on the type of identification card used by the player. For example, if the player is using a RFID card, the transactions module 218 may be a RFID reader/writer. The LCD information screen 216 is used to display e.g. the credits/points information contained in the card.

The player interaction panel 208 comprises push buttons e.g. 220 provided to allow the player to actuate the buttons e.g. 220 for interacting with the games being played on the gaming machine 200. For example, the player may use the buttons e.g. 220 to make player selections being displayed on the main screen 204. The player interaction panel 208 may be coupled to or may comprise an input module arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game. For example, the player may use the buttons e.g. 220 to make a player input. In an alternative embodiment, the push buttons e.g. 220 may be replaced by a touch-sensitive screen that corresponds to the display on the main screen 204 to allow the player to interact with the games using touch commands. This may be in the form of a touch sensitive membrane with switch panels each corresponding to a display position of a display on the main screen 204.

A bill validator 222 may be provided for a player to use paper money to buy and deposit credits/points for playing the games of the gaming machine 200. This is similar to, for example, using paper money at a vending machine to buy drinks/food.

It will be appreciated that although a card-in (using the card insert slot 218) and bill-in (using the bill validator 222) have been discussed above, the gaming machine is not limited as such and may comprise mechanisms to allow coin-in, key-in, ticket-in etc. for depositing credits/points for playing the games in the gaming machine.

It will be appreciated that the main screen 204 may be in the form of a touch-sensitive screen that may complement or replace the player interaction panel 208. The touch-sensitive screen may be a capacitive-type sensing screen, pressure-type sensing screen or the like. That is, the main screen 204 may be a touch-sensitive screen that allows the player to interact with the gaming machine 200 using touch commands. For example, the player may use touch commands to make a player input (compare input module).

In the exemplary embodiment, the printer outlet 210 may be provided for the gaming machine 200 to output information in printed form to the player. For example, the gaming machine 200 may print a sticker for the player. The gaming machine 200 may also print a receipt or record of the credits/points transaction for the player. The tower light 212 may be provided to light up during game celebrations. This may attract the attention of spectators or the player. The tower light 212 may also be used for

highlighting technical issues, requesting assistance or service etc. The poster display portion 214 may be provided for e.g. game information to be displayed.

In the exemplary embodiment, the front panel 201 may be opened or detached in whole or in part from the gaming machine 200 body to allow, for example, maintenance on the circuits or components encased in the gaming machine 200.

FIG. 2B is a schematic front view diagram of the gaming apparatus/machine with the front panel opened in part from the gaming machine in the exemplary embodiment. As shown, the front panel 201 is opened from the gaming machine 200, and opened in part containing the main screen 204 and the player transactions panel 206, to reveal the internal portion of the gaming machine 200.

The gaming machine 200 comprises a power supply unit 224 for powering the various components of the gaming machine 200. The power supply unit 224 is coupled to a main board circuits cage 226. The main board circuits cage 226 is used to contain and protect a game processing module 228. The game processing module 228 implements the games on the gaming machine and also implements game functions such as points/awards calculations. The game processing module 228 also drives visual contents, for example of the games, on the main screen 204 and, for example, audio content from the gaming machine 200. Speakers (not shown) are provided to output audio. Thus, the game processing module 228 may be a processor or a processing module/unit of the gaming machine 200.

In the exemplary embodiment, the game processing module 228 is coupled to a player-usage tracking meter module 244 or a player-usage tracking meter. The player-usage tracking meter module 244 is provided to track an amount of player own credits being used as an input amount. In addition, the game processing module 228 is coupled to a random number generator 230 and a storage device 232. In an alternative exemplary embodiment, the storage device 232 may be external to the gaming machine 200. In such an instance, the connection between the game processing module 228 and the storage device 232 may be by wired and/or wireless connections.

In the exemplary embodiment, the storage device 232 may store a value accumulated or recorded or tracked by the player-usage tracking meter module 244 as one

or more databases. The storage device 232 may also store an amount of one or more player own credits deposited via the player transactions panel 206 as a player credits meter or database. The storage device 232 may also store one or more game win credits awarded by the game processing module 228 as a game win credits meter database. The storage
5 device 232 may alternatively or additionally store one or more game win points awarded by the game processing module 228 as a game win points meter database.

In the exemplary embodiment, the game processing module 228 is coupled to a deposit module 246 and to a player input module 234. The deposit module 246 is arranged
10 to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming machine 200. The player input module 234 is coupled to one or more input actuators or members such as buttons e.g. 220 of a player interaction panel 208, or a touch screen input member of the main screen 204 etc.

15 The modules 228, 230, 232, 234, 244, 246 may be in the form of printed circuit boards comprising application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC) that may perform specific functions with inputs from components coupled to these modules.

In the exemplary embodiment, the game processing module 228 facilitates
20 implementation of one or more main/side games of the gaming machine 200 and facilitates the display of the one or more games on a display means/member of the gaming machine 200 such as the main screen 204. The game processing module 228 is configured to generate/operate a game display area showing the game in play. The generation/operation may be graphical such as a game display area generated/operated
25 based on computer code or may be mechanical such as controlling mechanically rotatable reels, depending on implementation.

In the exemplary embodiment, the deposit module 246 is arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus/machine 200. For
30 example, the player own credits may be deposited via the player transactions panel 206 using e.g. gaming tokens. The player input module 234 is arranged to allow/accept an input amount to play a turn of a game of the gaming machine 200. Upon receipt of an input amount, the game processing module 228 is arranged to instruct the random number generator 230 to perform various functions, such as obtaining/outputting a game output
35 result. If the game output result is a win for the player, the game processing module 228

is arranged to award a reward value e.g. as one or more game win credits or as one or more game win points. It may also be provided that the award is not from a win of the game. In such an instance, even without a win of the game i.e. from the game output result, some reward value, e.g. as one or more game win credits, are still resultant from the game output result and awarded to the player as the reward value associated with the game output result.

In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter module 244 is provided to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount. The input amount may be input by the user, or automatically by the game processing module 228 or by both. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter module 244 is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins. For example, the game processing module 228 may be arranged to instruct the player-usage tracking meter module 244 to begin tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

In the exemplary embodiment, the game processing module 228 may be arranged to allow either the player own credits or the reward value(s), e.g. game win credits or game win points depending on the type of the award, to first be utilised for the input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine 200, before usage of the other. For example, the game processing module 228 may be arranged to allow the player own credits to be utilised first for the input amount until the player own credits are not sufficient for the input amount and thereafter, the game processing module 228 is then arranged to utilise existing game win credits or game win points. In another example, the game processing module 228 may be arranged to allow game win credits or game win points to be utilised first for the input amount until the game win credits or game win points are not sufficient for the input amount and thereafter, the game processing module 228 is then arranged to utilise the player own credits. The above examples may also be achieved even if at least a portion of the game win credits are added to the player own credits as a single unit of measure or currency. It will be appreciated that the exemplary embodiments are not limited as such and the player-usage tracking meter module 244 is able to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount.

In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter module 244 is able to differentiate between the player own credits and the game win credits even if, for example, at least a portion of the game win credits are added to the player own credits as a single unit

of measure or currency. For example, at least a portion of the game win credits may be added to the player own credits to become a consolidated amount of credits that is available for use at the gaming machine 200. In such an example, the main screen 204 may display a single credit meter that displays the consolidated amount of credits made up of at least a portion of awarded game win credits.

In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter module 244 is configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used in an accumulative manner from the start of a first turn of playing a game at the gaming machine 200 until the player ends play (or a last turn of playing a game) at the gaming machine 200. The player-usage tracking meter module 244 may also be configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used in an accumulative manner over an extended period of time, e.g. for different players or different rounds of playing at the gaming machine 200. For example, the player-usage tracking meter module 244 may be configured to track/record an amount of the player own credits being used at the gaming machine 200 over a taxation period, e.g. over a period of a number of months of a financial year.

Further, in the exemplary embodiment, the value/amount of the player own credits being used at the gaming machine 200 tracked/recorded in the player-usage tracking meter module 244 may be stored in the storage device 232 as one or more databases. The value of the player own credits being used at the gaming machine 200 tracked/recorded in the player-usage tracking meter module 244 may be communicated out of the gaming machine 200. For example, the value/amount of the player own credits recorded/tracked in the player-usage tracking meter module 244 may be transmitted via wireless or wired connections to e.g. an external server for record and/or taxation purposes.

The gaming machine 200 may optionally further comprise an interface circuit board 238 coupled to the game processing module 228, and a bill validator module 240 coupled to the game module 228. The bill validator module 240 comprises circuitry for implementing bill validation and counting. In such an example, the bill validator module 240 may be coupled to, or be comprised as part of, the deposit module 246. In the exemplary embodiment, if a printer outlet 210 is provided, a printer 242 is also comprised in the gaming machine 200 for performing the printing functions.

It will be appreciated that the gaming machine 200 may further comprise other components that are not described here for clarity of illustration of the exemplary embodiments.

5 The interface circuit board 238 may be optionally provided to communicate with a game control server (not shown) that may e.g. monitor the results of the games of the gaming machine 200, for example for logging results of main and/or side games of the gaming machine 200. For example, the value of the player own credits being used at the gaming machine 200 tracked/recorded in the player-usage tracking meter module 244 may
10 be stored in the game control server (not shown).

In such an exemplary embodiment, a main or side game win that is awarded may trigger the game module 228 to instruct or inform the interface circuit board 238 that a favourable result has been obtained. The game control server may be informed via the
15 interface circuit board 238.

In some exemplary embodiments, the game control server (not shown) may e.g. communicate with the gaming machine 200, for example for informing of a winning instance of pool prize corresponding to a multiplied game win at the gaming machine
20 200. The communication with the game control server may be over a wired or wireless network.

FIG. 3 is a schematic flowchart 300 illustrating a player-usage tracking meter operation of a gaming machine in an exemplary embodiment. This exemplary embodiment
25 utilizes a player credits meter and a game win credits meter. Compare e.g. storage device 116 (FIG.1) and storage device 232 (FIG. 2B). This exemplary embodiment allows player own credits to first be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine, before usage of game win credits.

30 In the exemplary embodiment, a processing module of the gaming machine is configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result, the award being as one or more game win credits. In the exemplary embodiment, the game win credits are stored in a game win credits meter. The game output result may be provided during each turn of a game.

At step 302, a player at a gaming machine deposits player credits (or the player own credits) to use the gaming machine. The deposit is via a deposit module of the gaming machine. The player own credits are stored in a player credits meter.

5 At step 304, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the player has selected to quit playing at the gaming machine. If it is determined that the player has selected to quit playing, the process goes to step 306. At step 306, the player own credits stored in the player credits meter, and any awarded game win credits stored in a game win credits meter, are returned/withdrawn to the player.

10 At step 308, if it is determined that the player is continuing to play at the gaming machine, an input module of the gaming machine processes an input amount to play a turn of a game. The input amount is termed a game play input value in the exemplary embodiment. The game play input value may be input by the player, or by automatically by
15 the game processing module or by both. In the exemplary embodiment, once a game play input value has been processed, i.e. step 308, it is taken that a turn of a game has begun. Thus, as described below, a player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence tracking/recording of an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount after a first turn of a game begins. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage
20 tracking meter may be termed as a Total Used Player Credits Meter.

The exemplary embodiment allows the player own credits to first be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine, before usage of game win credits. If the player own credits are not sufficient for the input amount, the remainder of the
25 input amount is supplemented by game win credits awarded by the game processing module. In the exemplary embodiment, a player-usage tracking meter tracks/records a value based on an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount.

The steps described below illustrate three branches of decision-making or
30 determination of the player-usage meter operation. For ease of illustration, the three branches of decision-making or determination are described prior to actualisation of the game play.

At step 310, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the
35 player credits meter has any player own credits remaining.

If it is determined that there are no player own credits remaining at step 310, the process goes to step 312. Otherwise, if it is determined that there are player own credits remaining at step 310, the process goes to step 314.

5

If it is determined that there are no player own credits remaining at step 310, at step 312, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the game win credits meter contains an amount of game win credits that is sufficient for the game play input value. If it is determined that the game win credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 312, the process goes to step 304 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine. If it is determined that the game win credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 312, at step 316, the processing module of the gaming machine deducts the game play input value from the game win credits stored in the game win credits meter. Steps 312 and 316 form the first decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation. The process proceeds to step 318 for actualisation of the game play.

If it is determined that there are player own credits remaining at step 310, at step 314, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the player credits meter contains an amount of player own credits that is sufficient for the game play input value.

If it is determined that the player own credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 314, the process goes to step 320. Otherwise, if it is determined that the player own credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 314, the process goes to step 322. These form the second and third decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation respectively.

At step 320, if it is determined that the player own credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 314, the player-usage tracking meter accumulates/tracks/records the game play input value. In this way, based on the game play input value, the player-usage tracking meter may determine the value or amount to track/record as the player own credits used. Step 320 forms the second decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation. The processing module of the gaming machine deducts the game play input value

from the player credits meter. The process proceeds to step 318 for actualisation of the game play.

At step 322, if it is determined that the player own credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 314, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the player own credits supplemented by any game win credits being stored or remaining in the game win credits meter are sufficient for the game play input value. If it is determined that the player own credits supplemented by game win credits being stored in the game win credits meter are not sufficient for the game play input value, the process goes to step 304 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

If it is determined that the player own credits supplemented by game win credits being stored in the game win credits meter are sufficient for the game play input value at step 322, at step 324, the processing module of the gaming machine deducts the amount of game win credits used to supplement the player own credits (i.e. to make up the game play input value) from the game win credits meter.

At step 326, the player-usage tracking meter accumulates/tracks/records the player own credits being stored or remaining in the player credits meter. In this way, based on the game play input value, the player-usage tracking meter may determine the value or amount to track/record as the player own credits used. Steps 322, 324, 326 form the third decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation. The processing module of the gaming machine deducts the player own credits from the player credits meter. Based on steps 322 and 324, the processing module of the gaming machine clears the player credits meter, i.e. there are no player own credits remaining in the player credits meter. The process proceeds to step 318 for actualisation of the game play.

At step 318, the processing module of the gaming machine implements the game play of the game. For example, the processing module may instruct a random number generator to provide an output and thereafter provide a game output result.

At step 328, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether to award a reward value associated with the game output result, the award being as one or

more game win credits. If there is no award, the process goes to step 304 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

5 If it is determined that the processing module is to award a reward value associated with the game output result at step 328, at step 330, the reward value as one or more game win credits is accumulated and stored in the game win credits meter. The process then goes to step 304 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

10 In the above exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter is provided to track an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

15 The above exemplary embodiment may be useful for a scenario whereby at least a portion of the game win credits are provided as a single unit of measure or currency as the player own credits. That is, for example, a single credit meter may be displayed to the player and the single credit meter accumulates both the player own credits and the at least a portion of the game win credits. The consolidated credits value shown in the single credit meter may be such that the player is not able to distinguish the proportion of the credits of
20 the single credit meter being made up of the player own credits and the at least a portion of the game win credits.

FIG. 3 above may also apply to an exemplary embodiment whereby the reward value associated with the game output result is in terms of one or more game win points, i.e. a
25 different type of award. The description of FIG. 3 above may then substitute the game win credits with game win points. In such an exemplary embodiment, the one or more game win points are accumulated and stored in a game win points meter. The game win points are also usable to be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine. The steps of determining the value accumulated in the player-usage tracking meter
30 as described also apply identically when the award type is as game win points. The game win points may be converted to game win credits during a game play stage e.g. during termination of game play at the gaming machine. The game win points accumulated in the game win points meter may be optionally displayed to the player.

FIG. 4 is a schematic flowchart 400 illustrating a player-usage tracking meter operation of a gaming machine in another exemplary embodiment. This exemplary embodiment utilizes a player credits meter and a game win credits meter. Compare e.g. storage device 116 (FIG.1) and storage device 232 (FIG. 2B). This exemplary embodiment
5 allows game win credits to first be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine, before usage of player own credits.

In the exemplary embodiment, a processing module of the gaming machine is configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result, the award being
10 as one or more game win credits. In the exemplary embodiment, the game win credits are stored in a game win credits meter. The game output result may be provided during each turn of a game.

At step 402, a player at a gaming machine deposits player credits (or the player own
15 credits) to use the gaming machine. The deposit is via a deposit module of the gaming machine. The player own credits are stored in a player credits meter.

At step 404, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the player has selected to quit playing at the gaming machine. If it is determined that the player
20 has selected to quit playing, the process goes to step 406. At step 406, the player own credits stored in the player credits meter, and any awarded game win credits stored in a game win credits meter, are returned/withdrawn to the player.

At step 408, if it is determined that the player is continuing to play at the gaming
25 machine, an input module of the gaming machine processes an input amount to play a turn of a game. The input amount is termed a game play input value in the exemplary embodiment. The game play input value may be input by the player, or by automatically by the game processing module or by both. In the exemplary embodiment, once a game play input value has been processed, i.e. step 408, it is taken that a turn of a game has begun.
30 Thus, as described below, a player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence tracking/recording of an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount after a first turn of a game begins. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter may be termed as a Total Used Player Credits Meter.

The exemplary embodiment allows game win credits to first be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine, before usage of the player own credits. If the game win credits are not sufficient for the input amount, the remainder of the input amount is supplemented by the player own credits. In the exemplary embodiment, a
5 player-usage tracking meter tracks/records a value based on an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount.

The steps described below illustrate three branches of decision-making or determination of the player-usage meter operation. For ease of illustration, the three
10 branches of decision-making or determination are described prior to actualisation of the game play.

At step 410, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the game win credits meter has any game win credits remaining.
15

If it is determined that there are no game win credits remaining at step 410, the process goes to step 412. Otherwise, if it is determined that there are game win credits remaining at step 410, the process goes to step 414.

If it is determined that there are no game win credits remaining at step 410, at step
20 412, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the player credits meter contains an amount of player own credits that is sufficient for the game play input value. If it is determined that the player own credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 412, the process goes to step 404 to poll for whether the player decides to quit
25 playing at the gaming machine. If it is determined that the player own credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 412, at step 416, the player-usage tracking meter accumulates/tracks/records the game play input value. In this way, based on the game play input value, the player-usage tracking meter may determine the value or amount to track/record as the player own credits used. The processing module of the gaming machine
30 deducts the game play input value from the player credits meter. Steps 412 and 416 form the first decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation. The process proceeds to step 418 for actualisation of the game play.

If it is determined that there are game win credits remaining at step 410, at step 414, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the game win credits meter contains an amount of game win credits that is sufficient for the game play input value.

5 If it is determined that the game win credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 414, the process goes to step 420. Otherwise, if it is determined that the game win credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 414, the process goes to step 422. These form the second and third decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation respectively.

10

At step 420, if it is determined that the game win credits are sufficient for the game play input value at step 414, the processing module of the gaming machine deducts the game play input value from the game win credits stored in the game win credits meter. Step 420 forms the second decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation.

15 The process proceeds to step 418 for actualisation of the game play.

At step 422, if it is determined that the game win credits are not sufficient for the game play input value at step 414, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether the game win credits supplemented by the player own credits being stored or remaining in the player credits meter are sufficient for the game play input value. If it is determined that the game win credits supplemented by the player own credits being stored in the player credits meter are not sufficient for the game play input value, the process goes to step 404 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

25

If it is determined that the game win credits supplemented by the player own credits being stored in the player credits meter are sufficient for the game play input value at step 422, at step 424, the processing module of the gaming machine determines the amount of player own credits used to supplement the game win credits (i.e. to make up the game play input value). This may be termed as the supplemented amount of the player own credits. For example, the supplemented amount of the player own credits is a deduction of the game win credits from the game play input value. The player-usage tracking meter accumulates/tracks/records the supplemented amount of the player own credits. In this way, based on the game play input value, the player-usage tracking meter may determine the value or amount to track/record as the player own credits used. The processing module of

35

the gaming machine deducts the supplemented amount of the player own credits from the player credits meter.

At step 426, the processing module of the gaming machine clears the game win credits meter, i.e. there are no game win credits remaining in the game win credits meter. Steps 422, 424, 426 form the third decision-making branch of the player-usage tracking meter operation. The process proceeds to step 418 for actualisation of the game play.

At step 418, the processing module of the gaming machine implements the game play of the game. For example, the processing module may instruct a random number generator to provide an output and thereafter provide a game output result.

At step 428, the processing module of the gaming machine determines whether to award a reward value associated with the game output result, the award being as one or more game win credits. If there is no award, the process goes to step 404 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

If it is determined that the processing module is to award a reward value associated with the game output result at step 428, at step 430, the reward value as one or more game win credits is accumulated and stored in the game win credits meter. The process then goes to step 404 to poll for whether the player decides to quit playing at the gaming machine.

In the above exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter is provided to track an amount of the player own credits being used based on the input amount. In the exemplary embodiment, the player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

The above exemplary embodiment may be useful for a scenario whereby at least a portion of the game win credits are provided as a single unit of measure or currency as the player own credits. That is, for example, a single credit meter may be displayed to the player and the single credit meter accumulates both the player own credits and the at least a portion of the game win credits. The consolidated credits value shown in the single credit meter may be such that the player is not able to distinguish the proportion of the credits of the single credit meter being made up of the player own credits and the at least a portion of the game win credits.

FIG. 4 above may also apply to an exemplary embodiment whereby the reward value associated with the game output result is in terms of one or more game win points. The description of FIG. 4 above may then substitute the game win credits with game win points.

5 In such an exemplary embodiment, the one or more game win points are accumulated and stored in a game win points meter. The game win points are also usable to be utilised for an input amount to play a turn of a game at the gaming machine. The steps of determining the value accumulated in the player-usage tracking meter as described also apply identically when the award type is as game win points. The game win points may be converted to game

10 win credits during a game play stage e.g. during termination of game play at the gaming machine. The game win points accumulated in the game win points meter may be optionally displayed to the player.

FIG. 5 is a schematic drawing illustrating a screenshot 500 of an exemplary main game output result in an exemplary embodiment. The main game may be implemented on a gaming machine substantially identical to the gaming machines 100, 200 respectively of FIGs. 1, 2A and 2B.

In the screenshot 500, the main game output result is displayed at a main game display portion 502. In the exemplary embodiment, a game play input value is displayed at an input display portion 506. A credits meter 508 is also displayed.

In exemplary embodiment, the player may input an amount of credits to be deducted from the credits meter 508 to play the main game. The input amount is then displayed at the input display portion 506. The player input may be input via an input module (compare e.g.

25 input module 106 of Fig. 1). In alternative embodiments, the input may be automatically instructed by a processing module of the gaming machine.

In one example, the player may first deposit 20 player own credits. The credits meter 508 then displays 20 credits. The player may activate the input module to provide a player input amount of 5 credits from the 20 credits to play a turn of the game. The input amount of 5 credits is displayed at the input display portion 506. Thus, with the input amount, the credits meter 508 then displays 15 credits.

In the exemplary embodiment, a player-usage tracking meter tracks/records/accumulates a value of 5 credits being used from the player own credits based on the input amount.

5 A random number generator (not shown) is arranged to output a game output result as the main game output result. The main game output result is displayed at the main game display portion 502.

10 In the example, the processing module (not shown) of the gaming machine determines whether there is any award associated with the main game output result. The determination may be based on, but is not limited to, winning symbol combinations appearing in the main game output result. If the processing module determines that there is to be an award associated with the main game output result, the processing module awards a reward value associated with a game output result. For example, the reward value may be
15 10 game win credits.

In the exemplary embodiment, it is provided that all the game win credits are accumulated into the single credits meter 508. Thus, the credits meter 508 displays 25 credits, i.e. made up of 15 player own credits and 10 game win credits.

20

For a next (second) turn of the game, it may be provided that the gaming machine deducts game win credits from the credits meter 508 first before usage of the player own credits. Thus, for a next (second) turn of the game, with an input amount of 5 credits, the credits meter 508 displays 20 credits. The 5 credits for the input amount is deducted from
25 the game win credits. This is not distinguishable or discernable from the display or from the credits meter 508.

According to the above arrangement, the player-usage tracking meter is not adding new credits to its record. That is, the player-usage tracking meter is still tracking/recording a
30 value of 5 credits being used from the player own credits based on the input amount (from the first turn).

If the reward value for the second turn of the game is also 10 game win credits, the credits meter 508 displays 30 credits, i.e. made up of 15 player own credits and 15 game win
35 credits.

For a next (third) turn of the game, it may be provided that the gaming machine deducts game win credits from the credits meter 508 first before usage of the player own credits. Thus, for a next (third) turn of the game, with an input amount of 5 credits, the credits meter 508 displays 25 credits. The 5 credits for the input amount is deducted from the game win credits. This is not distinguishable or discernable from the display or from the credits meter 508.

According to the above arrangement, again, the player-usage tracking meter is not adding new credits to its record. That is, the player-usage tracking meter is still tracking/recording a value of 5 credits being used from the player own credits based on the input amount (from the first turn).

In the exemplary embodiment, if the player decides to stop playing at the gaming machine, the credits reflected in the credits meter 508 is returned to the player. The returned credits may comprise any remaining player own credits and/or any remaining game win credits.

In alternative embodiments, it may be provided that only a portion (not all) of the game win credits is added to the player own credits for display with the credits meter 508. In such an example, a points meter 510 may be provided to display e.g. player points. For example, for a reward value of 10 game win credits, 5 game win credits may be added to the player own credits and the credits meter 508 displays 20 credits (after the first turn) while the remaining 5 game win credits become converted and displayed as 5 player points at the points meter 510.

In another exemplary embodiment, it may be provided that a processing module of a gaming machine/apparatus is configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result as one or more game win points. In such an embodiment, the game win points are distinguished from credits (e.g. game win credits). The game win points may be maintained at a display to a player as a number of points "scored" or won from a game. The game win points are usable for playing the one or more games of the gaming machine/apparatus, e.g. substantially identically to the way game win credits may be used for playing the one or more games of the gaming machine/apparatus. Compare e.g. FIGs. 3 and 4. In such an embodiment, conversion of the game win points to one or more game win

credits may occur during a predetermined game play stage e.g. during termination/end of game play at the gaming apparatus. The converted game win credits may then be added to any remainder of the player own credits e.g. during withdrawal of remaining credits.

5 In the described exemplary embodiments, the selection of whether to utilize player own credits before utilizing game win credits or game win points depending on a type of the award, or vice versa, for the input amount to play a turn of a game may be selectable by a player of a gaming machine, or may be determined by a processing module of a gaming machine, or both, i.e. a player allowing the processing module to make the selection.

10 In exemplary embodiments, e.g. as described with reference to FIGs. 3, 4 and 5, there may be provided two separate accounting meters (player credits meter and game win credits meter) to support or operate behind a single credits meter (e.g. the credits meter 508 which is used to show a player's credit balance in a gaming machine). The player credit
15 balance comprises the player own credits with accumulation of at least a portion of game win credits awarded by the gaming machine. The player credits meter stores only the player own credits e.g. bought and deposited by the player, whereas the game win credits meter stores game win credits awarded by the gaming machine. In some exemplary embodiments as described, the game win credits meter may be populated after game win points are
20 converted to game win credits during a predetermined game play stage e.g. during termination/end of game play at the gaming machine/apparatus. Both the player credits meter and the game win credits meter may be used for accounting and audit purposes, and it may be provided that the player credits meter and the game win credits meter are not used for user interface displays like the displayed consolidated credits meter.

25 In the exemplary embodiments, credits used/deducted from the player credits meter (i.e. player own credits) are recorded/tracked/accumulated in a player-usage tracking meter. The player-usage tracking meter may also be an accounting meter that may be used for accounting and audit purposes. The player-usage tracking meter thus contains only a
30 record/track of player own credits being used based on an input amount for a game at a gaming machine.

35 With the described exemplary embodiments, tax may be levied only based on the player-usage tracking meter, i.e. based on actual player own credits used and not based on rewarded credits/points being usable by players. The player-usage tracking meter may

therefore be regarded as a total turnover of a gaming machine. As such, operators may maintain, and may not lower, a Return-To-Player (RTP) rate of gaming apparatus/machines, which may otherwise be done to avoid incurring tax. By not lowering the RTP rate, players may be attracted to play the gaming apparatus/machines.

5

In addition, with the described exemplary embodiments, as the player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins, a situation may be avoided whereby tax may be unnecessarily levied (under a total input tax system) due to players who deposit credits but yet withdraw those credits without any playing at a gaming machine.

10

FIG. 6 is a schematic flowchart 600 illustrating a method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus in an exemplary embodiment. At step 602, a player is allowed to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus. At step 604, an input amount to play a turn of a game is accepted. At step 606, an amount of the player own credits used is tracked based on the input amount using a player-usage tracking meter. At step 608, a processing module configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result is used. At step 610, the player-usage tracking meter commences the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

15

20

In one exemplary embodiment, the award may be as one or more game win credits or as one or more game win points. That is, the award may be of a different type, e.g. game win credits or game win points.

25

In one exemplary embodiment, if the award is as one or more game win points, the processing module may be used to convert the one or more game win points to game win credits during a predetermined game play stage. For example, the one or more game win points may be converted to game win credits during termination/end of game play at the gaming apparatus. The converted game win credits may then be added to any remainder of the player own credits e.g. during withdrawal of remaining credits.

30

In one exemplary embodiment, if the award is as one or more game win credits, a credits meter may be used to accumulate the one or more player own credits and at least a portion of the one or more game win credits (compare e.g. credits meter 508 of FIG. 5). The

player-usage tracking meter may still differentiate between the one or more player own credits and the at least a portion of the one or more game win credits.

5 In one exemplary embodiment, said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount may be tracked using the player-usage tracking meter from a start of a first turn of the game to a last turn of the game in an accumulative manner until the player ends play at the gaming apparatus.

10 In one exemplary embodiment, said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount may be tracked using the player-usage tracking meter in an accumulative manner over a pre-determined period of time.

15 In one exemplary embodiment, said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount may be tracked using the player-usage tracking meter in an accumulative manner until a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus.

In one exemplary embodiment, a random number generator (compare e.g. RNG 114 of FIG. 1) may be used to output the game output result.

20 In one exemplary embodiment, if the award type is as one or more game win credits, the one or more player own credits may be stored using a player credits meter and the one or more game win credits may be stored using a game wins credit meter.

25 In one exemplary embodiment, if the award type is as one or more game win points, the one or more player own credits may be stored using a player credits meter and the one or more game win points may be stored using a game wins points meter.

30 In one exemplary embodiment, the processing module may deduct the one or more player own credits for the input amount before deducting the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points, i.e. depending on the type of the award. For example, if the one or more player own credits is sufficient for the input amount, the processing module may accumulate the input amount into the player-usage tracking meter, and if the one or more player own credits is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is sufficient to supplement the one or more

player own credits for the input amount, the processing module may accumulate the one or more player own credits into the player-usage tracking meter.

5 In one exemplary embodiment, the processing module may deduct the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points, i.e. depending on the type of the award for the input amount before deducting the one or more player own credits. For example, if the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more player own credits is sufficient to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points for the
10 input amount, the processing module may accumulate the one or more player own credits used to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points into the player-usage tracking meter.

15 In one exemplary embodiment, if the award is as one or more game win credits, the processing module may assign one or more tags to the one or more game win credits and may instruct the player-usage tracking meter to distinguish against the one or more game win credits based on the one or more tags.

FIG. 7 is a schematic diagram illustrating a plurality of gaming apparati in a network
20 in an exemplary embodiment. The network 702 comprises a plurality of gaming apparati e.g. 704, 706 network-linked to a network server 708. The network links or communication links may be wired or wireless. The gaming apparati e.g. 704, 706 may each function substantially similarly to the gaming apparati as described with reference to any of FIGs. 1, 2A and 2B. The network server 708 implements server functions for the gaming apparati e.g. 704, 706.
25 For example, the network server 708 carries out logging functions for the games performed at the gaming apparati e.g. 704, 706.

The network 702 further comprises a storage server 710 connected to the network server 708. The storage server 710 is coupled via a communication link to the network
30 server 708.

In the exemplary embodiment, the storage server 710 stores one or more player-usage tracking meter information communicated from the gaming apparati e.g. 704, 706.

In the exemplary embodiment, the storage server 710 may additionally also function as a pool server. In such a function, the storage server 710 accumulates a pool of prizes for awarding of prizes for players at the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706 who have a related extended event awarded. The accumulation of the pool may be based on points collected from the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706 or prizes contributed by sponsors. When an extended event is executed at the respective gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706, a portion, or the whole, of the prizes stored in the pool server 710 is discharged to the respective gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706. For example, 50% of the prizes may be awarded to the respective gaming apparatus.

Thus, additional entertainment may be provided to the players at the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706 via additional prizes awarded by the pool server 710, regardless of the progress or results of the main games being played at the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706.

In the exemplary embodiment, the prizes may include, but are not limited to, gaming points, loyalty points, bonus points, bonus items etc. Awarding of the prizes may be via a number of methods. For example, in one method, the network server 708 transmits the ID numbers of the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706 that have players winning their side games to an operator and the operator presents the respective prizes to the players at the respective gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706. Alternatively, bonus points may be respectively awarded electronically by the network server 708 to the players at the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706.

In the above exemplary embodiment, the one or more player-usage tracking meter information are described as being stored in a storage server 710 communicable by the gaming apparatus e.g. 704, 706. It will be appreciated that the described exemplary embodiments are not limited as such and the one or more player-usage tracking meter information may be stored stand-alone, for example in a storage device 232 of a gaming machine 200 described with reference to FIG. 2B.

In the above exemplary embodiments, the gaming apparatus are described as being in the form of arcade machines. However, it will be appreciated that the gaming apparatus may include other electronic devices or virtual devices.

FIG. 8 shows a schematic drawing of a game system 800 according to an exemplary embodiment. The system 800 comprises a plurality of gaming apparatus 802, 804, 806, each

coupled to an game network server or unit 808. The gaming apparati 802, 804, 806 and the game unit 808 communicate via respective network interfaces provided on the gaming apparati and the game unit. The gaming apparati 802, 804, 806 may be implemented in a variety of different ways. For example, one or more of the gaming apparati 802 are
 5 implemented as physical gaming machines such as arcade gaming machines, slot machines, electronic gaming tables or the like. One or more other gaming gaming apparati 804 are implemented as virtual gaming machines on desktop or tablet computing devices. One or more other gaming apparati 806 are implemented as virtual gaming machines on portable handheld devices such as mobile phones, Personnel Digital Assistants (PDAs) or
 10 the like. The virtual gaming machines 804, 806 may be implemented via Wi-Fi, the Internet, interactive TV or other service networks. The coupling between the game unit 808 and the respective gaming apparati 802, 804, 806 may be implemented in a variety of different ways, including via Wi-Fi, the Internet, or via other wired or wireless networks.

15 The game unit 808 comprises a database 810 for storing data for conducting one or more main games and other information such as information identifying the respective gaming apparati 802, 804, 806. The database 810 also stores a player-usage tracking meter, a player credits meter and a game win credits meter. In some exemplary embodiments, the database 810 may also store a game win points meter.

20 Further, the game unit 808 comprises a processor unit/module 812 coupled to the database 810. The processor module 812 is capable of awarding prizes to players on the respective gaming apparati 802, 804, 806. The processor module 812 is coupled to a pool database 814 comprising a prize pool.

25 The processing module 812 is also configured to award a reward value associated with the game output result at each gaming apparati 802, 804, 806, the reward value being e.g. one or more game win credits or one or more game win points. The processing module 812 is also configured to instruct the player-usage tracking meter to track an amount of the
 30 player own credits used as an input amount to play a turn of a game. The player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

During execution of the one or more main games, the processor module 812 is capable of instructing play of the main games at the plurality of gaming apparati 802, 804,
 35 806. In addition, the processor module 812 is capable of awarding a portion, or a whole, of

the prize pool from the pool database 814 to players at respective gaming apparatus 802, 804, 806.

The processor module 812 awards the pool prizes based on results of e.g. extended game events and independent of the main games implemented on the respective gaming apparatus 802, 804, 806. It will be appreciated that the game system 800 thus provides a distributed gaming environment with a centralized game database for awarding prizes to players on the respective gaming apparatus 802, 804, 806.

Different exemplary embodiments can be implemented in the context of data structure, program modules, program and computer instructions executed in a computer implemented environment. A general purpose computing environment is briefly disclosed herein. One or more exemplary embodiments may be embodied in one or more computer systems, such as is schematically illustrated in FIG. 9.

One or more exemplary embodiments may be implemented as software, such as a computer program being executed within a computer system 900, and instructing the computer system 900 to conduct a method of an exemplary embodiment.

The computer system 900 comprises a computer unit 902, input modules such as a keyboard 904 and a pointing device 906 and a plurality of output devices such as a display 908, and printer 910. A user can interact with the computer unit 902 using the above devices. The pointing device can be implemented with a mouse, track ball, pen device or any similar device. One or more other input devices (not shown) such as a joystick, game pad, satellite dish, scanner, touch sensitive screen or the like can also be connected to the computer unit 902. Such input devices may function as player input devices/modules arranged to accept a player input. The display 908 may include a cathode ray tube (CRT), liquid crystal display (LCD), field emission display (FED), plasma display or any other device that produces an image that is viewable by the user.

The computer unit 902 can be connected to a computer network 912 via a suitable transceiver device 914, to enable access to e.g. the Internet or other network systems such as Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) or a personal network. The network 912 can comprise a server, a router, a network personal computer, a peer device or other common network node, a wireless telephone or wireless personal digital assistant.

Networking environments may be found in offices, enterprise-wide computer networks and home computer systems etc. The transceiver device 914 can be a modem/router unit located within or external to the computer unit 902, and may be any type of modem/router such as a cable modem or a satellite modem.

5

It will be appreciated that network connections shown are exemplary and other ways of establishing a communications link between computers can be used. The existence of any of various protocols, such as TCP/IP, Frame Relay, Ethernet, FTP, HTTP and the like, is presumed, and the computer unit 902 can be operated in a client-server configuration to permit a user to retrieve web pages from a web-based server. Furthermore, any of various web browsers can be used to display and manipulate data on web pages.

10

The computer unit 902 in the example comprises a processor 918, a Random Access Memory (RAM) 920 and a Read Only Memory (ROM) 922. The ROM 922 can be a system memory storing basic input/ output system (BIOS) information. The RAM 920 can store one or more program modules such as operating systems, application programs and program data.

15

The processor 918 may function as a processing module to instruct a player-usage tracking meter to track an amount of player own credits used as an input amount to play a turn of a game. The processor 918 may function to instruct the player-usage tracking meter to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins. The processor 918 may also perform as, or instruct functions, of a random number generator to output a game output result. The processor 918 may also award a reward value associated with a game output result, the award being e.g. as one or more game win credits or one or more game win points. In addition, the RAM 920 may store the player-usage tracking meter as one or more databases. The RAM 920 may also store the one or more player own credits as a player credits meter or database. The RAM 920 may also store the one or more game win credits awarded by the processor 918 as a game win credits meter or database. The RAM 920 may also store the one or more game win points awarded by the processor 918 as a game win points meter or database.

25

30

The computer unit 902 further comprises a number of Input/Output (I/O) interface units, for example I/O interface unit 924 to the display 908, and I/O interface unit 926 to the keyboard 904. The I/O interface units may also comprise a deposit module arranged to allow

35

a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the computer system 900. The I/O interface units may also comprise an input module arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game.

5 The components of the computer unit 902 typically communicate and interface/couple connectedly via an interconnected system bus 928 and in a manner known to the person skilled in the relevant art. The bus 928 can be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures.

10 It will be appreciated that other devices can also be connected to the system bus 928. For example, a universal serial bus (USB) interface can be used for coupling a video or digital camera to the system bus 928. An IEEE 1394 interface may be used to couple additional devices to the computer unit 902. Other manufacturer interfaces are also possible
15 such as FireWire developed by Apple Computer and i.Link developed by Sony. Coupling of devices to the system bus 928 can also be via a parallel port, a game port, a PCI board or any other interface used to couple an input device to a computer. It will also be appreciated that, while the components are not shown in the figure, sound/audio can be recorded and reproduced with a microphone and a speaker. A sound card may be used to couple a
20 microphone and a speaker to the system bus 928. It will be appreciated that several peripheral devices can be coupled to the system bus 928 via alternative interfaces simultaneously.

 An application program can be supplied to the user of the computer system 900
25 being encoded/stored on a data storage medium such as a CD-ROM or flash memory carrier. The application program can be read using a corresponding data storage medium drive of a data storage device 930. The data storage medium is not limited to being portable and can include instances of being embedded in the computer unit 902. The data storage device 930 can comprise a hard disk interface unit and/or a removable memory interface unit
30 (both not shown in detail) respectively coupling a hard disk drive and/or a removable memory drive to the system bus 928. This can enable reading/writing of data. Examples of removable memory drives include magnetic disk drives and optical disk drives. The drives and their associated computer-readable media, such as a floppy disk provide nonvolatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules and other data
35 for the computer unit 902. It will be appreciated that the computer unit 902 may include

several of such drives. Furthermore, the computer unit 902 may include drives for interfacing with other types of computer readable media.

The application program is read and controlled in its execution by the processor 918.
5 Intermediate storage of program data may be accomplished using RAM 920. The method(s) of the exemplary embodiments can be implemented as computer readable instructions, computer executable components, or software modules. One or more software modules may alternatively be used. These can include an executable program, a data link library, a configuration file, a database, a graphical image, a binary data file, a text data file, an object
10 file, a source code file, or the like. When one or more computer processors execute one or more of the software modules, the software modules interact to cause one or more computer systems to perform according to the teachings herein.

The operation of the computer unit 902 can be controlled by a variety of different
15 program modules. Examples of program modules are routines, programs, objects, components, data structures, libraries, etc. that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. The exemplary embodiments may also be practiced with other computer system configurations, including handheld devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs,
20 minicomputers, mainframe computers, personal digital assistants, mobile telephones and the like. Furthermore, the exemplary embodiments may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a wireless or wired communications network. In a distributed computing environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage
25 devices.

Further to the above, different exemplary embodiments can be implemented in the context of data structure, program modules, program and computer instructions executed in a communication device. An exemplary communication device is briefly disclosed herein.
30 One or more exemplary embodiments may be embodied in one or more communication devices e.g. 1000, such as is schematically illustrated in FIG. 10.

One or more exemplary embodiments may be implemented as software, such as a computer program being executed within a communication device 1000, and instructing the
35 communication device 1000 to conduct a method of an exemplary embodiment.

The communication device 1000 comprises a processor module 1002, an input module such as a touchscreen interface or a keypad 1004 and an output module such as a display 1006 on a touchscreen.

5

The processor module 1002 is coupled to a first communication unit 1008 for communication with a cellular network 1010. The first communication unit 1008 can include, but is not limited to, a subscriber identity module (SIM) card loading bay. The cellular network 1010 can, for example, be a 3G or 4G network.

10

The processor module 1002 is further coupled to a second communication unit 1012 for connection to a network 1014. For example, the second communication unit 1012 can enable access to e.g. the Internet or other network systems such as Local Area Network (LAN) or Wide Area Network (WAN) or a personal network. The network 1014 can comprise
15 a server, a router, a network personal computer, a peer device or other common network node, a wireless telephone or wireless personal digital assistant. Networking environments may be found in offices, enterprise-wide computer networks and home computer systems etc. The second communication unit 1012 can include, but is not limited to, a wireless network card or an ethernet network cable port. The second communication unit 1012 can
20 also be a modem/router unit and may be any type of modem/router such as a cable-type modem or a satellite-type modem.

It will be appreciated that network connections shown are exemplary and other ways of establishing a communications link between computers can be used. The existence of any
25 of various protocols, such as TCP/IP, Frame Relay, Ethernet, FTP, HTTP and the like, is presumed, and the communication device 1000 can be operated in a client-server configuration to permit a user to retrieve web pages from a web-based server. Furthermore, any of various web browsers can be used to display and manipulate data on web pages.

The processor module 1002 in the example includes a processor 1016, a Random Access Memory (RAM) 1018 and a Read Only Memory (ROM) 1020. The ROM 1020 can be a system memory storing basic input/ output system (BIOS) information. The RAM 1018 can store one or more program modules such as operating systems, application programs and program data.

30

35

The processor 1016 may function as a processing module to instruct a player-usage tracking meter to track an amount of player own credits used as an input amount to play a turn of a game. The processor 1016 may function to instruct the player-usage tracking meter to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins. The processor 1016 may also perform as, or instruct functions, of a random number generator to output a game output result. The processor 1016 may also award a reward value associated with a game output result, the award being as e.g. one or more game win credits or one or more game win points. In addition, the RAM 1018 may store the player-usage tracking meter as one or more databases. The RAM 1018 may also store the one or more player own credits as a player credits meter or database. The RAM 1018 may also store the one or more game win credits awarded by the processor 1016 as a game win credits meter or database. The RAM 1018 may also store the one or more game win points awarded by the processor 1016 as a game win points meter or database.

The processor module 1002 also includes a number of Input/Output (I/O) interfaces, for example I/O interface 1022 to the display 1006, and I/O interface 1024 to the keypad 1004. The I/O interface units may also comprise a deposit module arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the computer system 1000. The I/O interface units may also comprise an input module arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game.

The components of the processor module 1002 typically communicate and interface/couple connectedly via an interconnected bus 1026 and in a manner known to the person skilled in the relevant art. The bus 1026 can be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures.

It will be appreciated that other devices can also be connected to the system bus 1026. For example, a universal serial bus (USB) interface can be used for coupling an accessory of the communication device, such as a card reader, to the system bus 1026.

The application program is typically supplied to the user of the communication device 1000 encoded on a data storage medium such as a flash memory module or memory card/stick and read utilising a corresponding memory reader-writer of a data storage device

1028. The data storage medium is not limited to being portable and can include instances of being embedded in the communication device 1000.

5 The application program is read and controlled in its execution by the processor
1016. Intermediate storage of program data may be accomplished using RAM 1018. The
method(s) of the exemplary embodiments can be implemented as computer readable
instructions, computer executable components, or software modules. One or more software
modules may alternatively be used. These can include an executable program, a data link
library, a configuration file, a database, a graphical image, a binary data file, a text data file,
10 an object file, a source code file, or the like. When one or more processor modules execute
one or more of the software modules, the software modules interact to cause one or more
processor modules to perform according to the teachings herein.

The operation of the communication device 1000 can be controlled by a variety of
15 different program modules. Examples of program modules are routines, programs, objects,
components, data structures, libraries, etc. that perform particular tasks or implement
particular abstract data types.

The exemplary embodiments may also be practiced with other computer system
20 configurations, including handheld devices, multiprocessor systems/servers,
microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs,
minicomputers, mainframe computers, personal digital assistants, mobile telephones and the
like. Furthermore, the exemplary embodiments may also be practiced in distributed
computing environments where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are
25 linked through a wireless or wired communications network. In a distributed computing
environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage
devices.

The terms "coupled" or "connected" as used in this description are intended to cover
30 both directly connected or connected through one or more intermediate means, unless
otherwise stated.

The description herein may be, in certain portions, explicitly or implicitly described as
algorithms and/or functional operations that operate on data within a computer memory or an
35 electronic circuit. These algorithmic descriptions and/or functional operations are usually

used by those skilled in the information/data processing arts for efficient description. An algorithm is generally relating to a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The algorithmic steps can include physical manipulations of physical quantities, such as electrical, magnetic or optical signals capable of being stored, transmitted, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated.

Further, unless specifically stated otherwise, and would ordinarily be apparent from the following, a person skilled in the art will appreciate that throughout the present specification, discussions utilizing terms such as "scanning", "calculating", "determining", "replacing", "generating", "initializing", "outputting", and the like, refer to action and processes of an instructing processor/computer system, or similar electronic circuit/device/component, that manipulates/processes and transforms data represented as physical quantities within the described system into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the system or other information storage, transmission or display devices etc.

The description also discloses relevant device/apparatus for performing the steps of the described methods. Such apparatus may be specifically constructed for the purposes of the methods, or may comprise a general purpose computer/processor or other device selectively activated or reconfigured by a computer program stored in a storage member. The algorithms and displays described herein are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus. It is understood that general purpose devices/machines may be used in accordance with the teachings herein. Alternatively, the construction of a specialized device/apparatus to perform the method steps may be desired.

In addition, it is submitted that the description also implicitly covers a computer program, in that it would be clear that the steps of the methods described herein may be put into effect by computer code. It will be appreciated that a large variety of programming languages and coding can be used to implement the teachings of the description herein. Moreover, the computer program if applicable is not limited to any particular control flow and can use different control flows without departing from the scope of the invention.

Furthermore, one or more of the steps of the computer program if applicable may be performed in parallel and/or sequentially. Such a computer program if applicable may be stored on any computer readable medium. The computer readable medium may include storage devices such as magnetic or optical disks, memory chips, or other storage devices

suitable for interfacing with a suitable reader/general purpose computer. In such instances, the computer readable storage medium is non-transitory. Such storage medium also covers all computer-readable media e.g. medium that stores data only for short periods of time and/or only in the presence of power, such as register memory, processor cache and Random Access Memory (RAM) and the like. The computer readable medium may even include a wired medium such as exemplified in the Internet system, or wireless medium such as exemplified in bluetooth technology. The computer program when loaded and executed on a suitable reader effectively results in an apparatus that can implement the steps of the described methods.

The exemplary embodiments may also be implemented as hardware modules. A module is a functional hardware unit designed for use with other components or modules. For example, a module may be implemented using digital or discrete electronic components, or it can form a portion of an entire electronic circuit such as an Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC). A person skilled in the art will understand that the exemplary embodiments can also be implemented as a combination of hardware and software modules.

Additionally, when describing some embodiments, the disclosure may have disclosed a method and/or process as a particular sequence of steps. However, unless otherwise required, it will be appreciated the method or process should not be limited to the particular sequence of steps disclosed. Other sequences of steps may be possible. The particular order of the steps disclosed herein should not be construed as undue limitations. Unless otherwise required, a method and/or process disclosed herein should not be limited to the steps being carried out in the order written. The sequence of steps may be varied and still remain within the scope of the disclosure.

Further, in the description herein, the word "substantially" whenever used is understood to include, but not restricted to, "entirely" or "completely" and the like. In addition, terms such as "comprising", "comprise", and the like whenever used, are intended to be non-restricting descriptive language in that they broadly include elements/components recited after such terms, in addition to other components not explicitly recited. Further, terms such as "about", "approximately" and the like whenever used, typically means a reasonable variation, for example a variation of +/- 5% of the disclosed value, or a variance of 4% of the

disclosed value, or a variance of 3% of the disclosed value, a variance of 2% of the disclosed value or a variance of 1% of the disclosed value.

Furthermore, in the description herein, certain values may be disclosed in a range.

5 The values showing the end points of a range are intended to illustrate a preferred range. Whenever a range has been described, it is intended that the range covers and teaches all possible sub-ranges as well as individual numerical values within that range. That is, the end points of a range should not be interpreted as inflexible limitations. For example, a description of a range of 1% to 5% is intended to have specifically disclosed sub-ranges 1%
10 to 2%, 1% to 3%, 1% to 4%, 2% to 3% etc., as well as individually, values within that range such as 1%, 2%, 3%, 4% and 5%. The intention of the above specific disclosure is applicable to any depth/breadth of a range.

In the exemplary embodiments, the player-usage tracking meter may differentiate
15 between the player own credits and the game win credits awarded by a processing module of a gaming machine/apparatus. The player-usage tracking meter tracks/records/accumulates an amount of the player own credits used based on an input amount to play a turn of a game. A number of ways of the differentiation for the tracking/record are illustrated in the description, e.g. with reference to FIGs. 3 and 4. It will
20 be appreciated that the exemplary embodiments are not limited as such. That is, other ways of the player-usage tracking meter differentiating and tracking/recording/accumulating an amount of the player own credits used based on an input amount to play a turn of a game may also be implemented. For example, it is possible to attach electronic tags or flags to game win credits such that, even if a portion or all of the game win credits are added to the
25 player own credits to form a single accumulated credits meter, the player-usage tracking meter may still differentiate between the player own credits and the game win credits based on such tags. In such scenarios, it may even be provided that the player credits meter and the game win credits meter described in the exemplary embodiments may be optional.

30 It will be appreciated that the gaming apparatus/machine described in the exemplary embodiments are not limited to the form as illustrated in the description. The exemplary embodiments may also be implemented with gaming machines such as slot machines or electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

It will be appreciated by a person skilled in the art that other variations and/or modifications may be made to the specific embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects to be illustrative and not restrictive.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming apparatus with a player-usage tracking meter, the gaming apparatus comprising,

5 a deposit module arranged to allow a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus;

a input module arranged to accept an input amount to play a turn of a game;

a processing module configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result;

10 a player-usage tracking meter to track an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount; and

wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to commence the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

15 2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win points, the processing module is configured to convert the one or more game win points to one or more game win credits during a predetermined game play stage.

20 3. The apparatus as claimed in claims 1 or 2, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win credits, a usable credits meter configured to accumulate the one or more player own credits and at least a portion of the one or more game win credits, wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to differentiate between the one or more player own credits and the at least a portion of the one or more game win credits.

25 4. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 to 3, further comprising the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount from a start of a first turn of the game to a last turn of the game whereby the player ends play at the gaming apparatus.

30 5. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount over a pre-determined period of time.

6. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, further comprising the player-usage tracking meter being configured to perform the tracking of said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount until a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus.

5

7. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, further comprising a random number generator arranged for output of the game output result.

8. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, further comprising, if
10 the award is as one or more game win credits, a player credits meter to store the one or more player own credits and a game wins credit meter to store the one or more game win credits.

9. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, further comprising, if
15 the award is as one or more game win points, a player credits meter to store the one or more player own credits and a game wins points meter to store the one or more game win points.

10. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 8 to 9, further comprising the processing module configured to deduct the one or more player own credits for the input
20 amount before deducting the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award.

11. The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein if the one or more player own credits is sufficient for the input amount, the input amount is accumulated into the player-
25 usage tracking meter, and wherein if the one or more player own credits is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is sufficient to supplement the one or more player own credits for the input amount, the one or more player own credits is accumulated into the player-usage tracking meter.

30 12. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 8 to 9, further comprising the processing module configured to deduct the one or more game win credits, or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award, for the input amount before deducting the one or more player own credits.

13. The apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein if the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more player own credits is sufficient to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points for the input amount, the one or more player own credits used to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is accumulated into the player-usage tracking meter.

14. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win credits, the processing module configured to assign one or more tags to the one or more game win credits and wherein the player-usage tracking meter is configured to distinguish against the one or more game win credits based on the one or more tags.

15. A method for tracking a player-usage at a gaming apparatus, the method comprising,

allowing a player to deposit one or more player own credits to use the gaming apparatus;

accepting an input amount to play a turn of a game;

tracking an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using a player-usage tracking meter;

using a processing module configured to award a reward value associated with a game output result; and

wherein the player-usage tracking meter commences the tracking after a first turn of a game begins.

16. The method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win points, using the processing module to convert the one or more game win points to one or more game win credits during a predetermined game play stage.

17. The method as claimed in claims 15 or 16, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win credits, using a credits meter to accumulate the one or more player own credits and at least a portion of the one or more game win credits, and differentiating between the one or more player own credits and the at least a portion of the one or more game win credits using the player-usage tracking meter.

18. The method as claimed in claims 15 or 17, further comprising tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter from a start of a first turn of the game to a last turn of the game whereby the player ends play at the gaming apparatus.

5

19. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 18, further comprising tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter over a pre-determined period of time.

10

20. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 19, further comprising tracking said an amount of the player own credits used based on the input amount using the player-usage tracking meter until a reset/reboot operation is performed on the gaming apparatus.

15

21. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 20, further comprising using a random number generator to output the game output result.

20

22. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 21, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win credits, storing the one or more player own credits using a player credits meter and storing the one or more game win credits using a game wins credit meter.

25

23. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 21, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win points, storing the one or more player own credits using a player credits meter and storing the one or more game win points using a game wins points meter.

30

24. The method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 23, further comprising using the processing module to deduct the one or more player own credits for the input amount before deducting the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award.

35

25. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising wherein if the one or more player own credits is sufficient for the input amount, accumulating the input amount into the player-usage tracking meter, and wherein if the one or more player own credits is

not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is sufficient to supplement the one or more player own credits for the input amount, accumulating the one or more player own credits into the player-usage tracking meter.

5

26. The method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 23, further comprising using the processing module to deduct the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points depending on a type of the award for the input amount before deducting the one or more player own credits.

10

27. The method as claimed in claim 26, further comprising wherein if the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points is not sufficient for the input amount and the one or more player own credits is sufficient to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points for the input amount, accumulating the one or more player own credits used to supplement the one or more game win credits or the one or more game win points into the player-usage tracking meter.

15

28. The method as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 27, further comprising, if the award is as one or more game win points, assigning one or more tags to the one or more game win credits and using the player-usage tracking meter to distinguish against the one or more game win credits based on the one or more tags.

20