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(54) **CONFIGURATION FOR ITERATIVE BONUS GAME WITH SYMBOL TRANSFORMATION**

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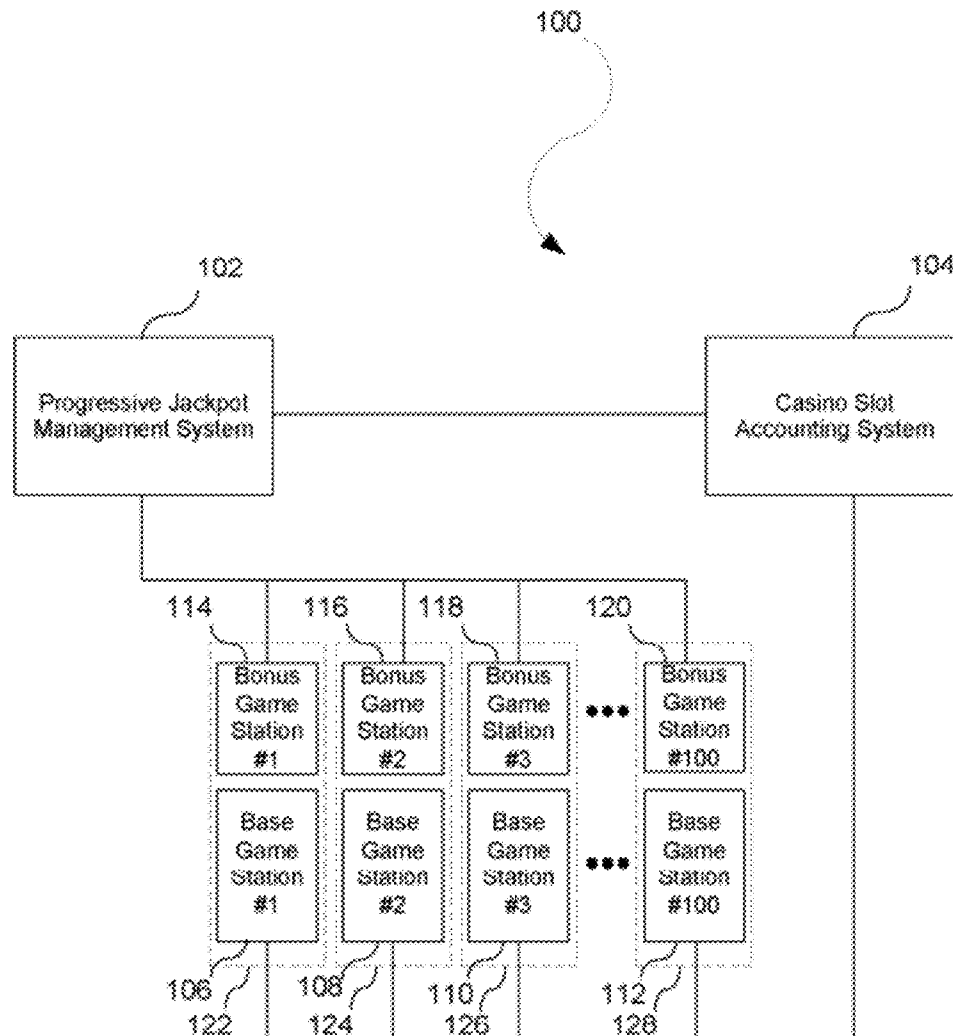
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met is established. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met is received at a bonus game controller. In addition, a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations is established.



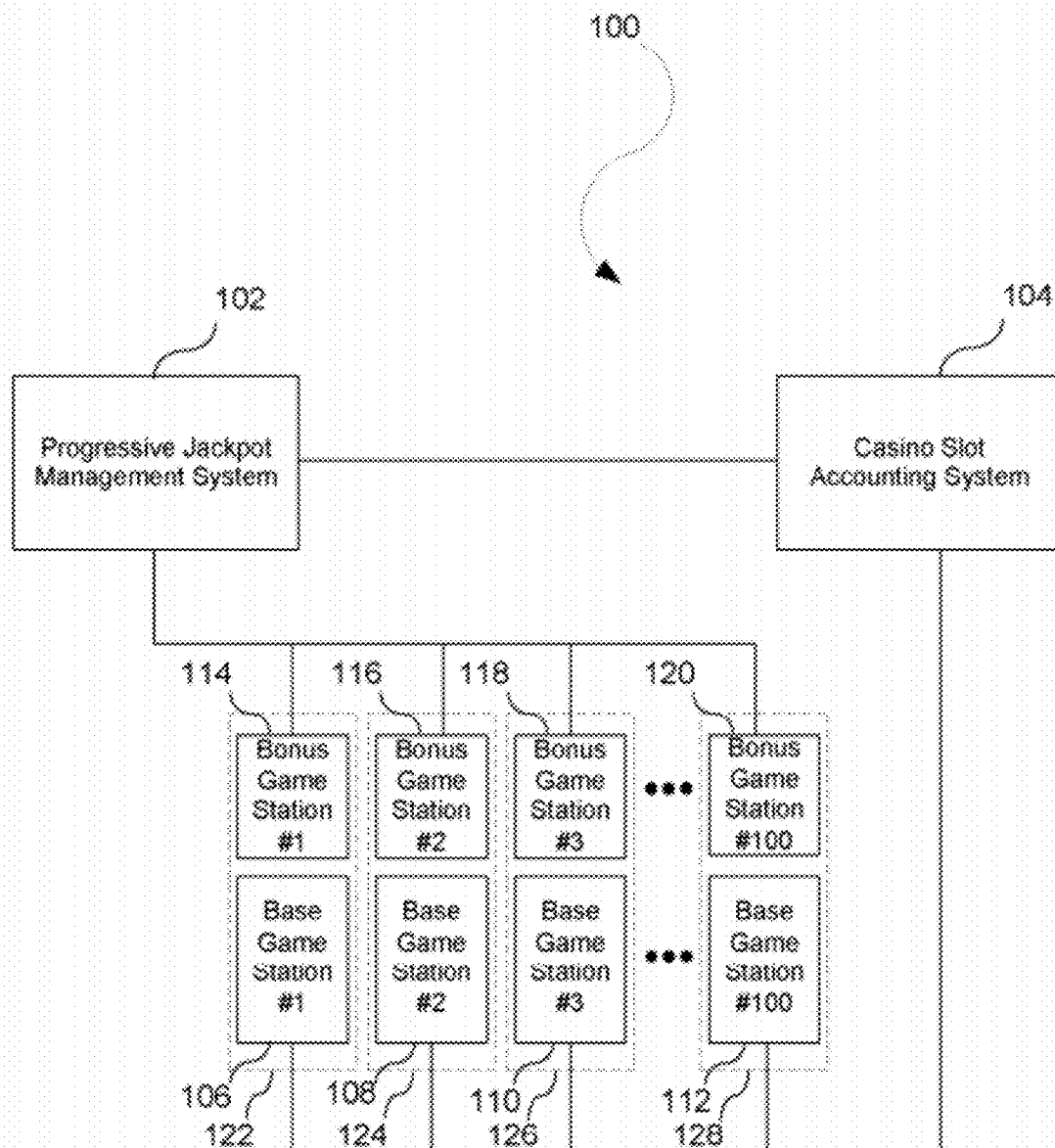


Figure 1

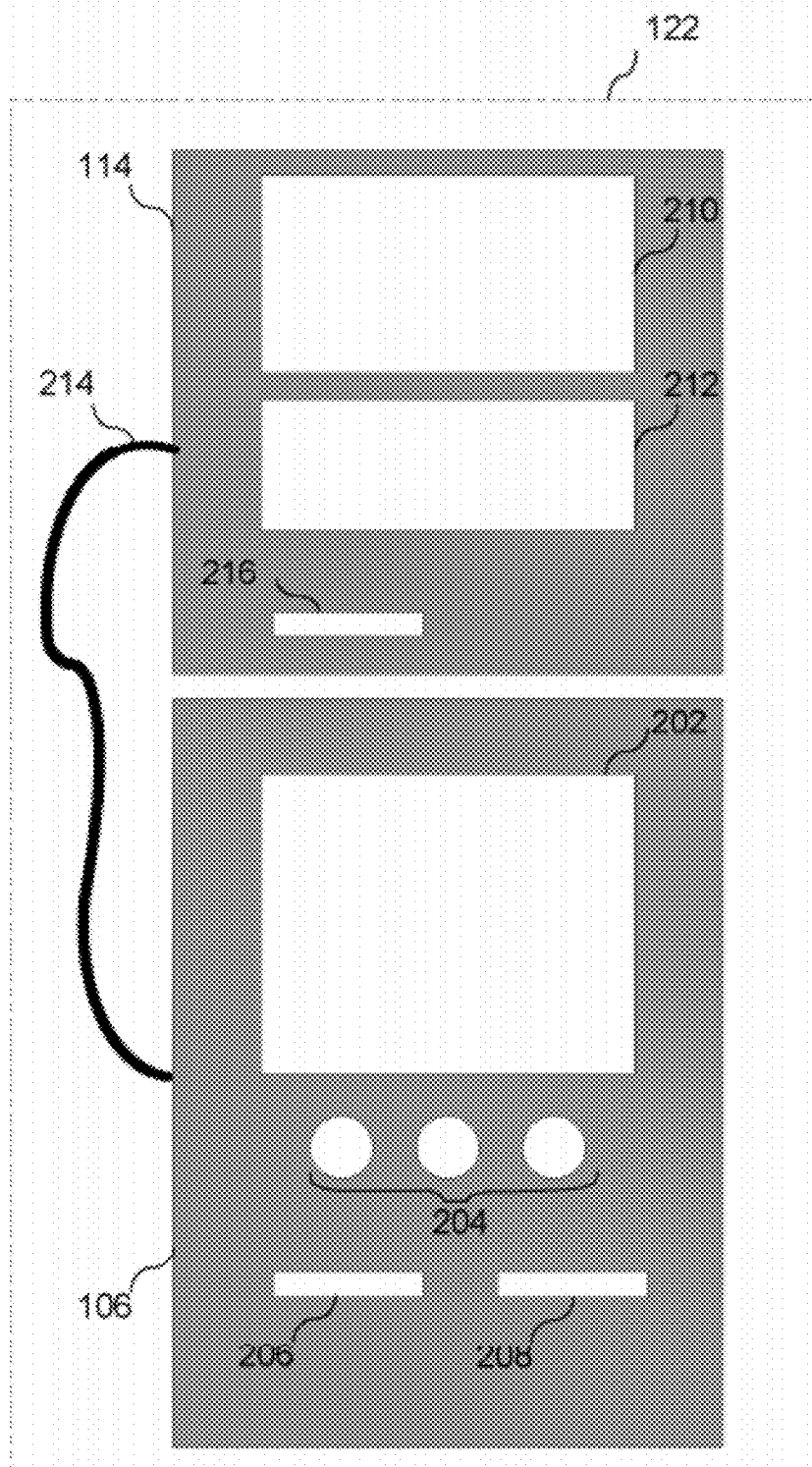
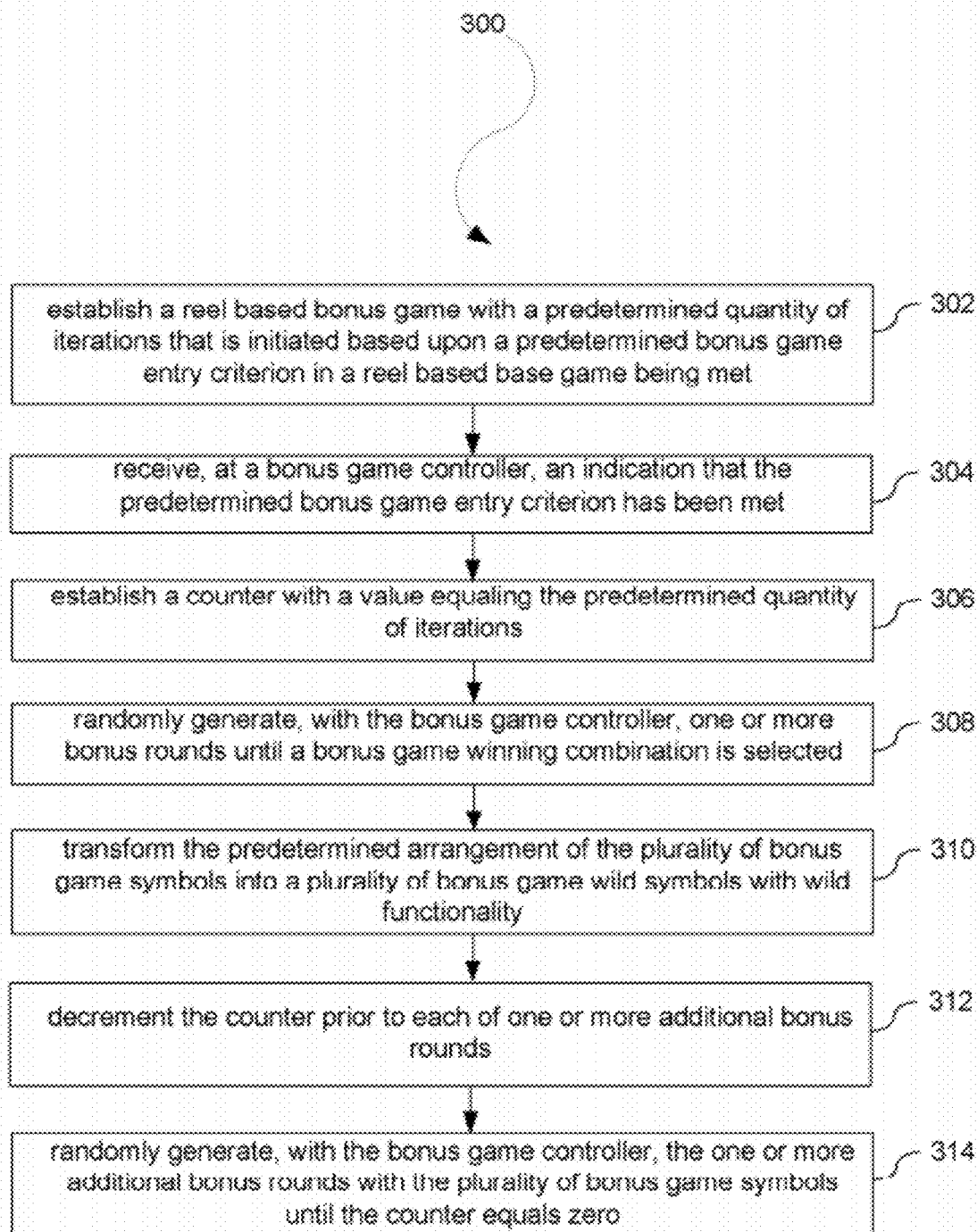


Figure 2

**Figure 3**

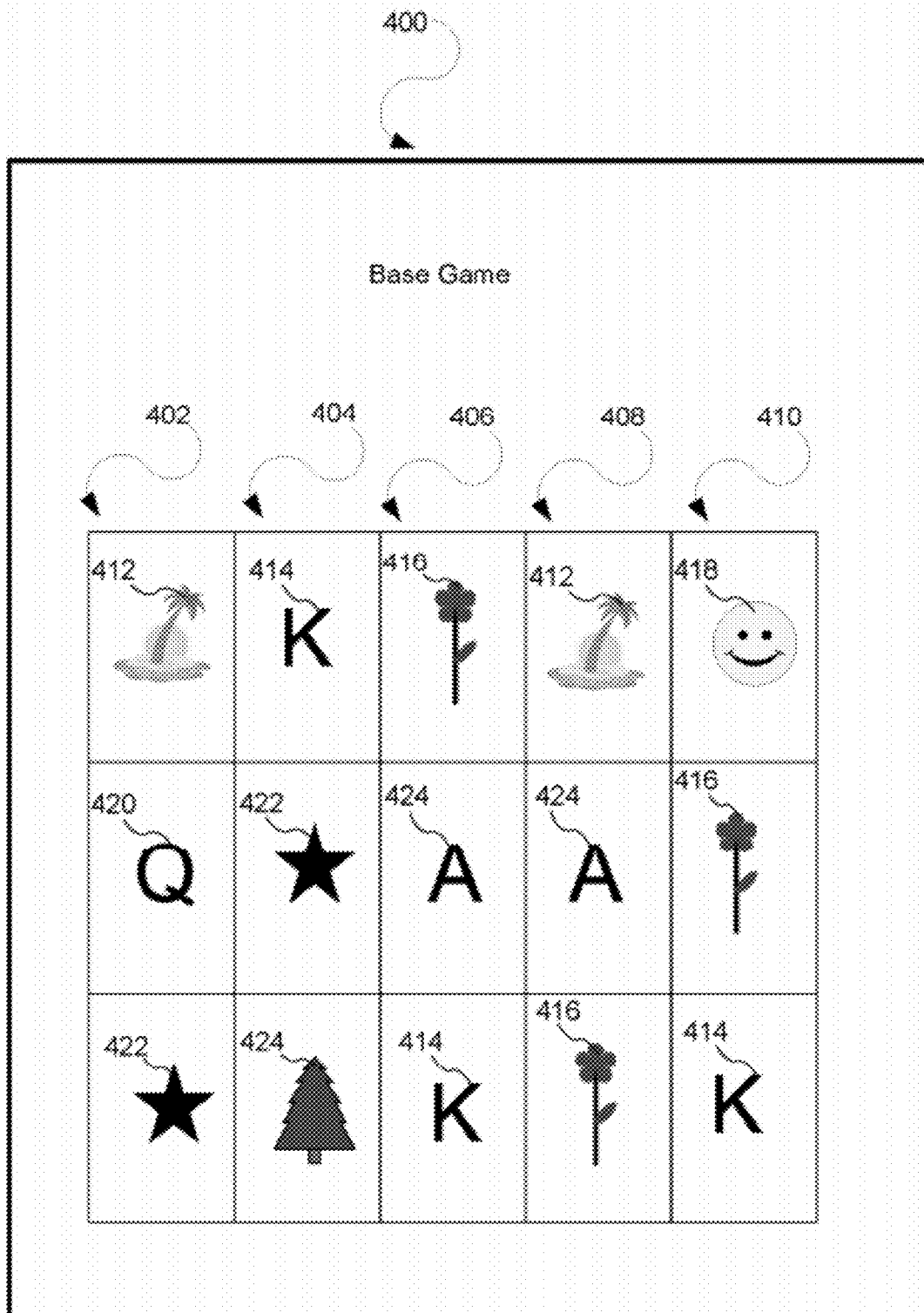


Figure 4A

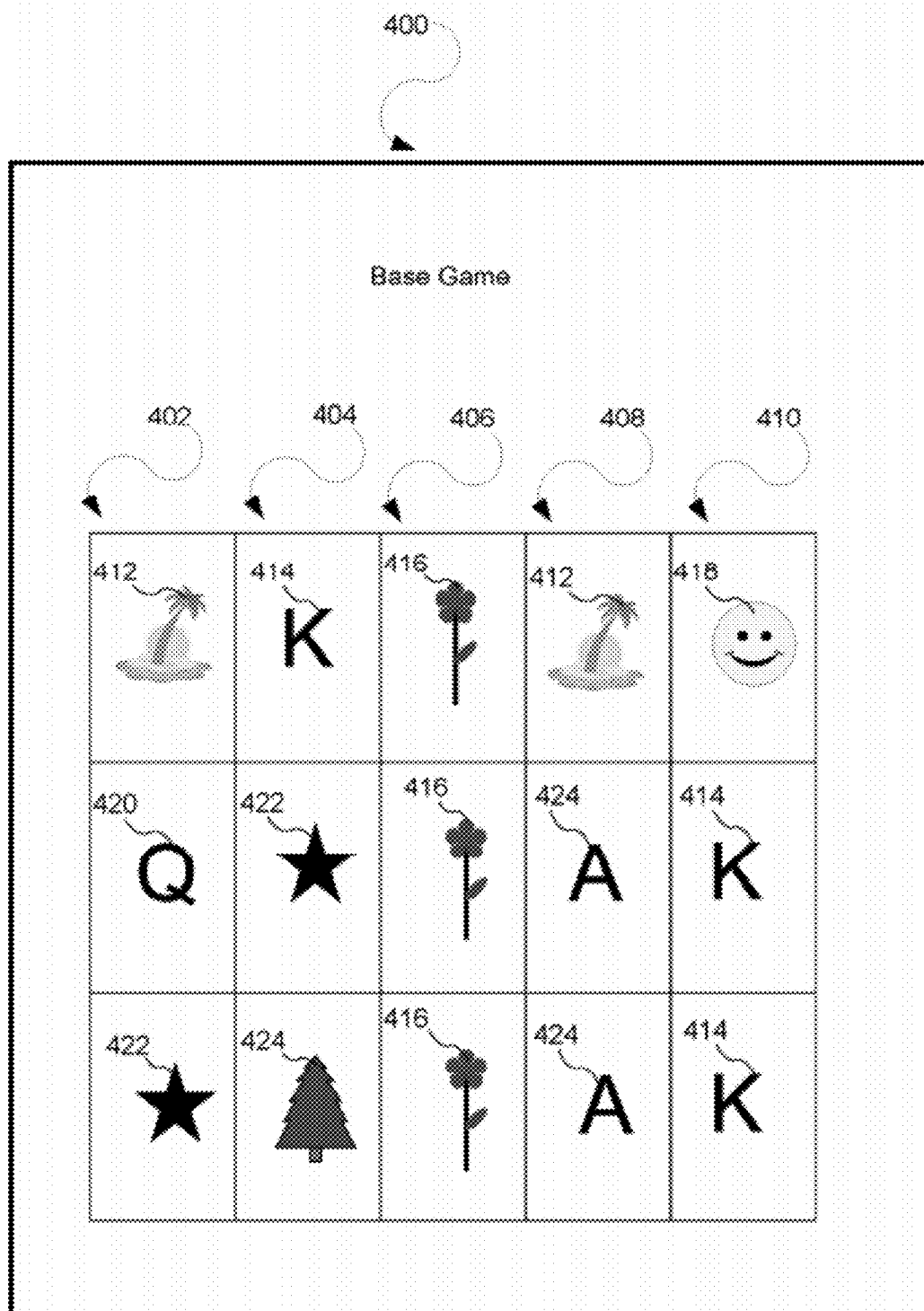


Figure 4B

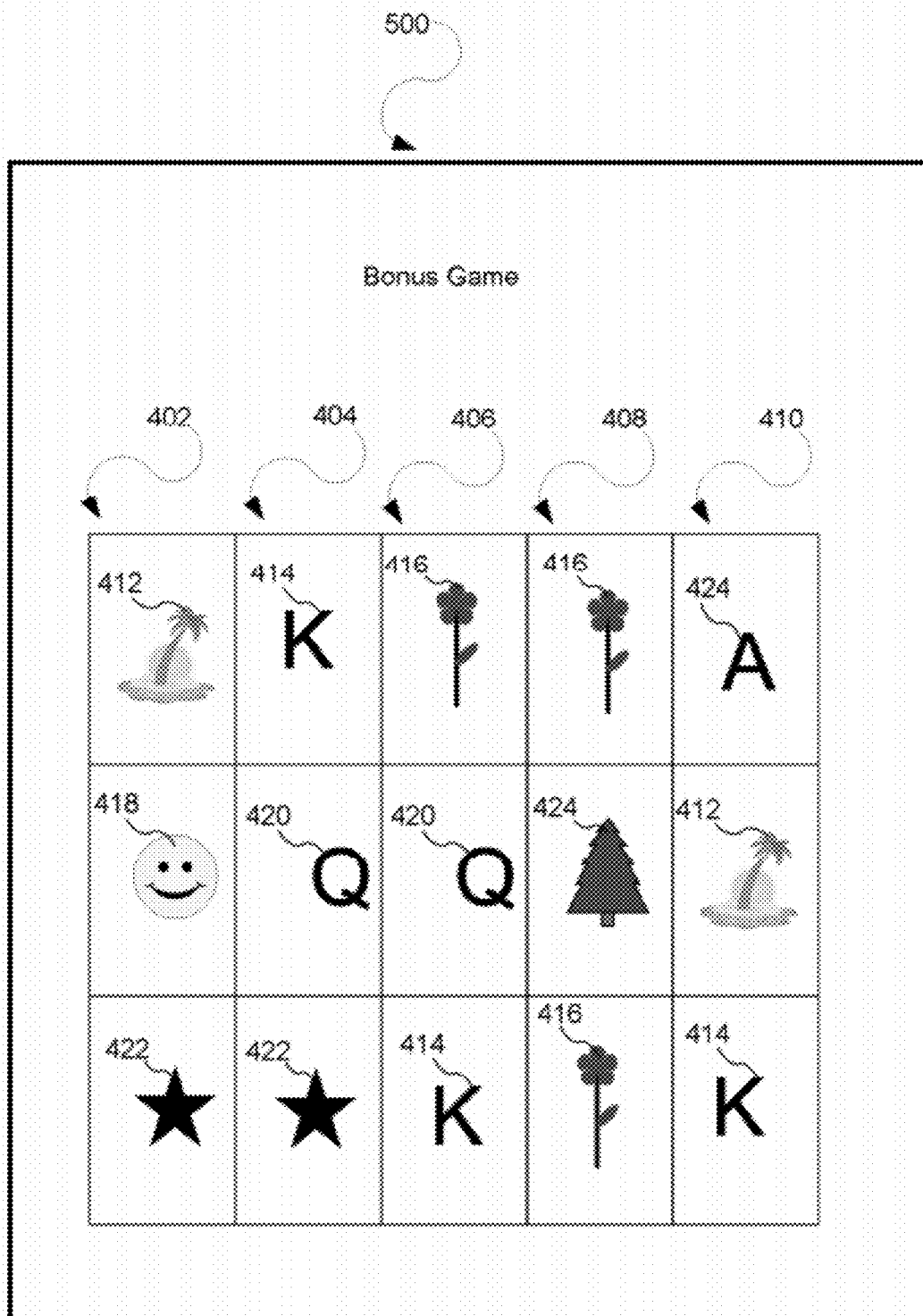


Figure 5A

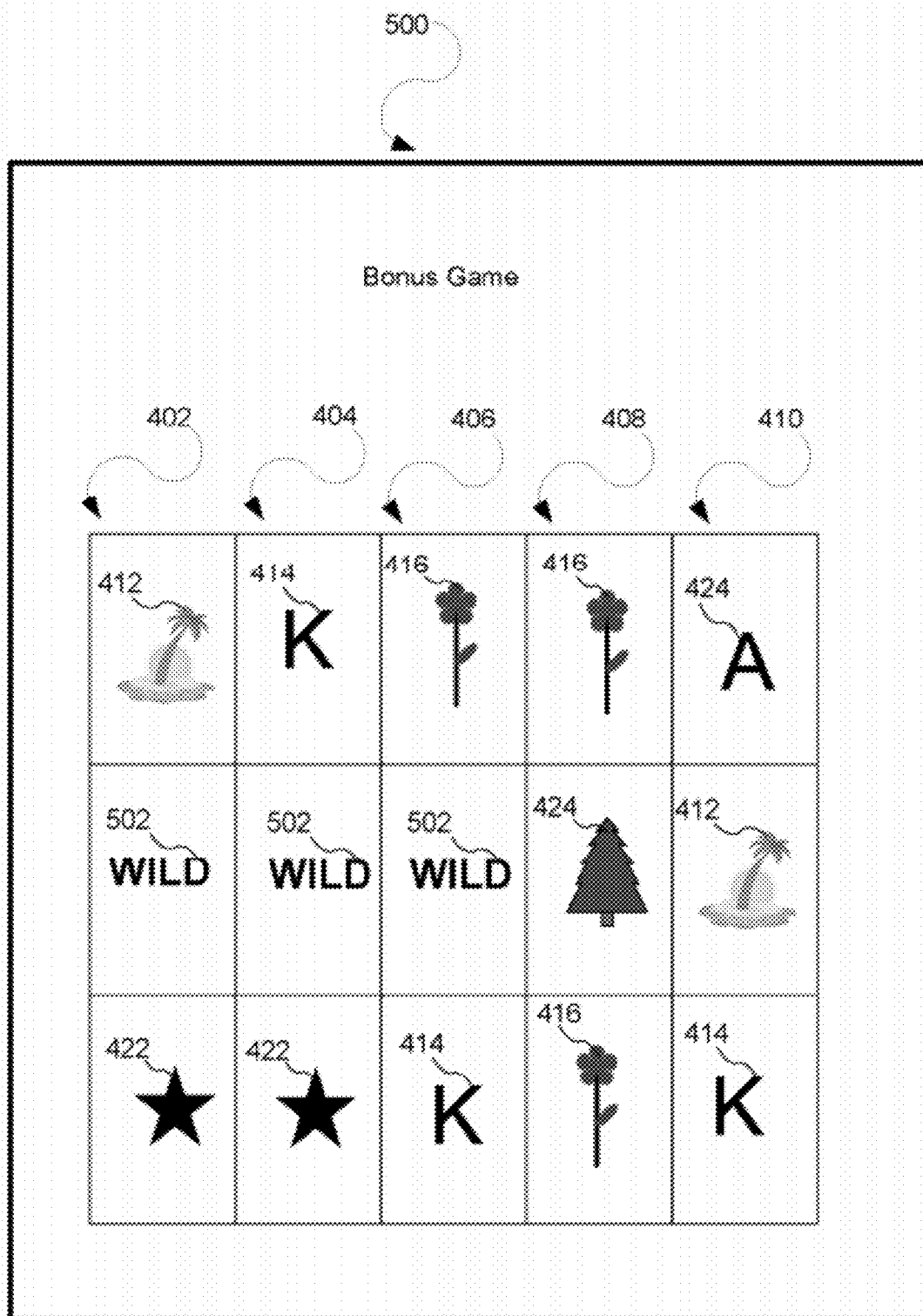


Figure 5B

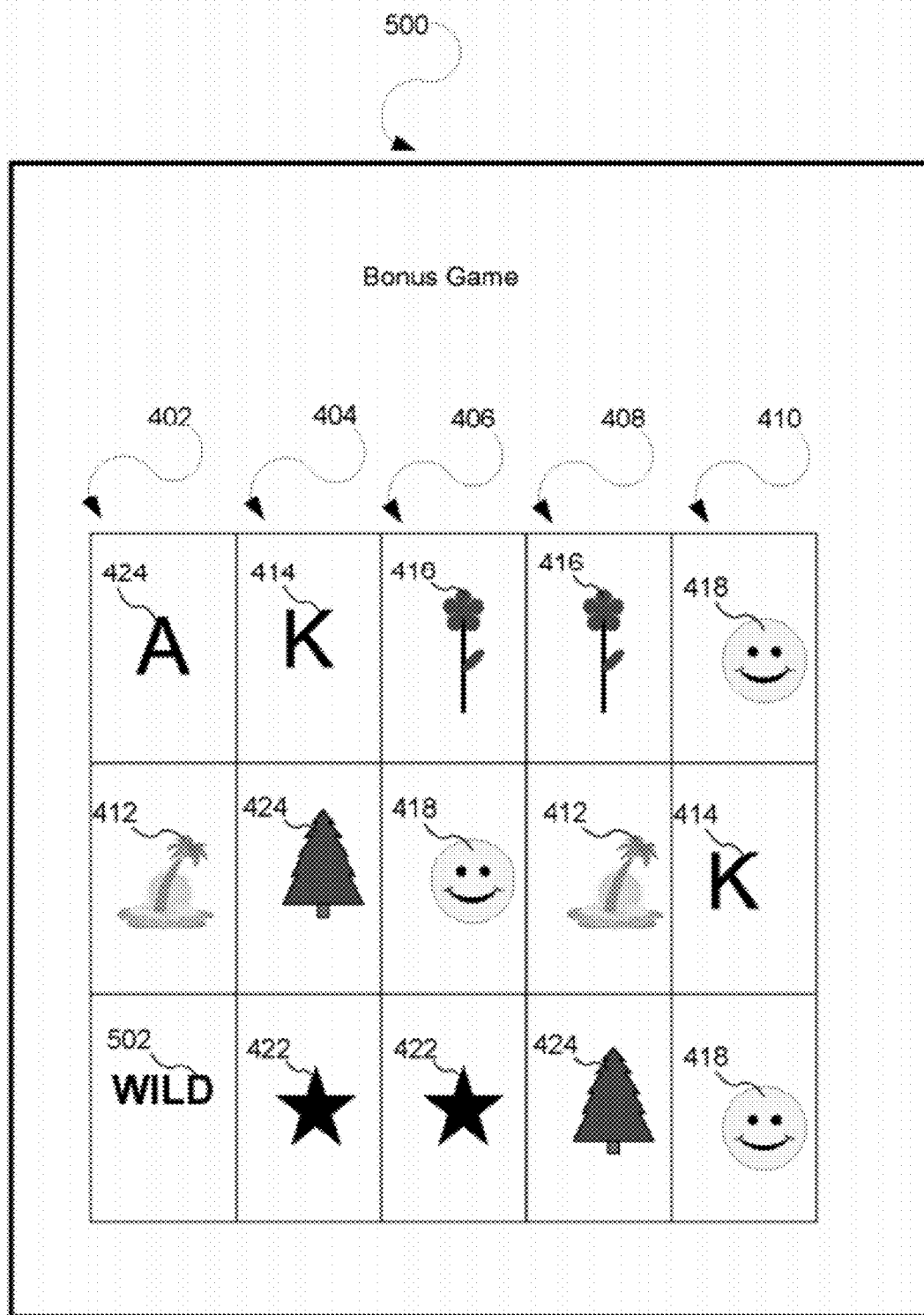


Figure 5C

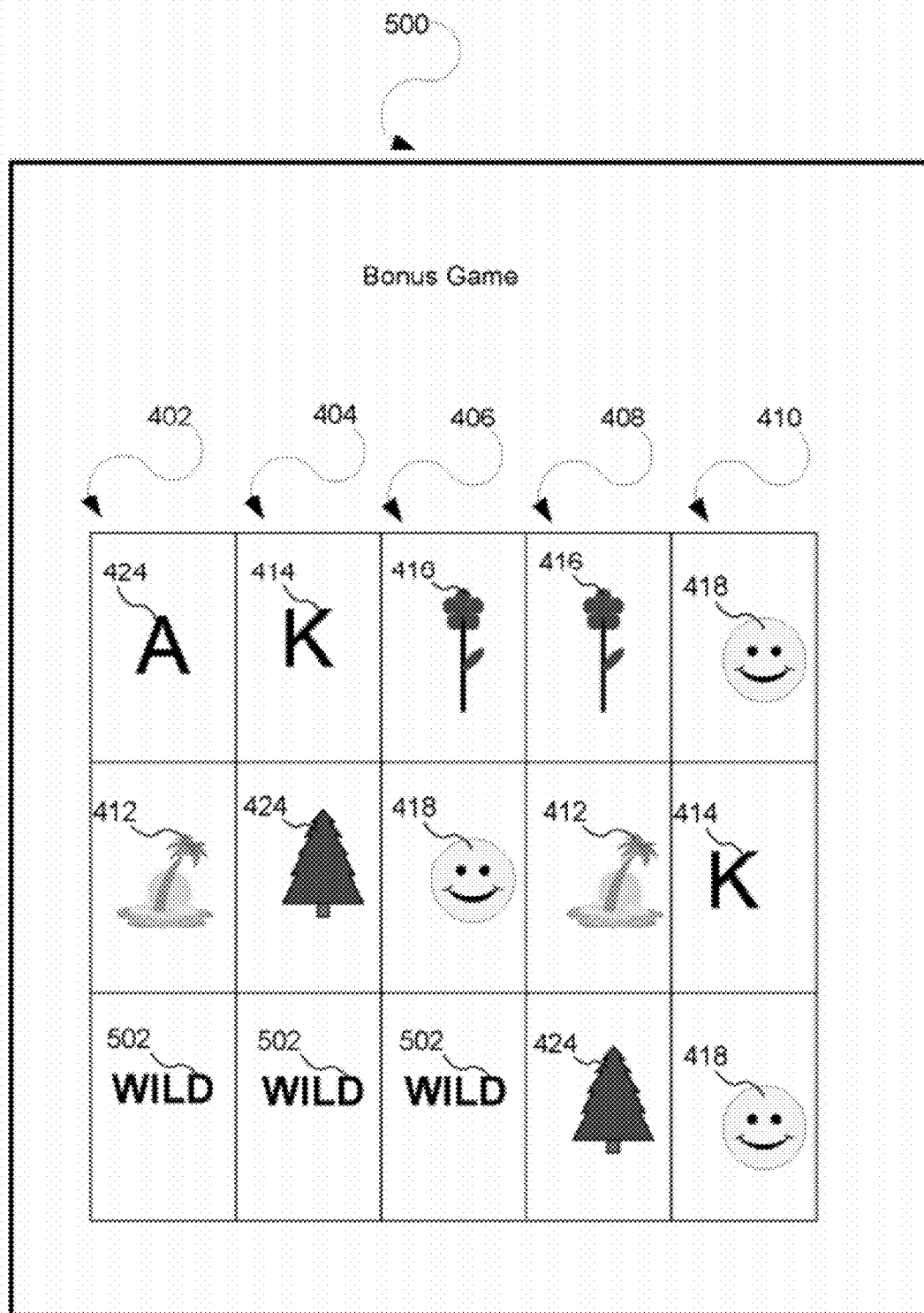
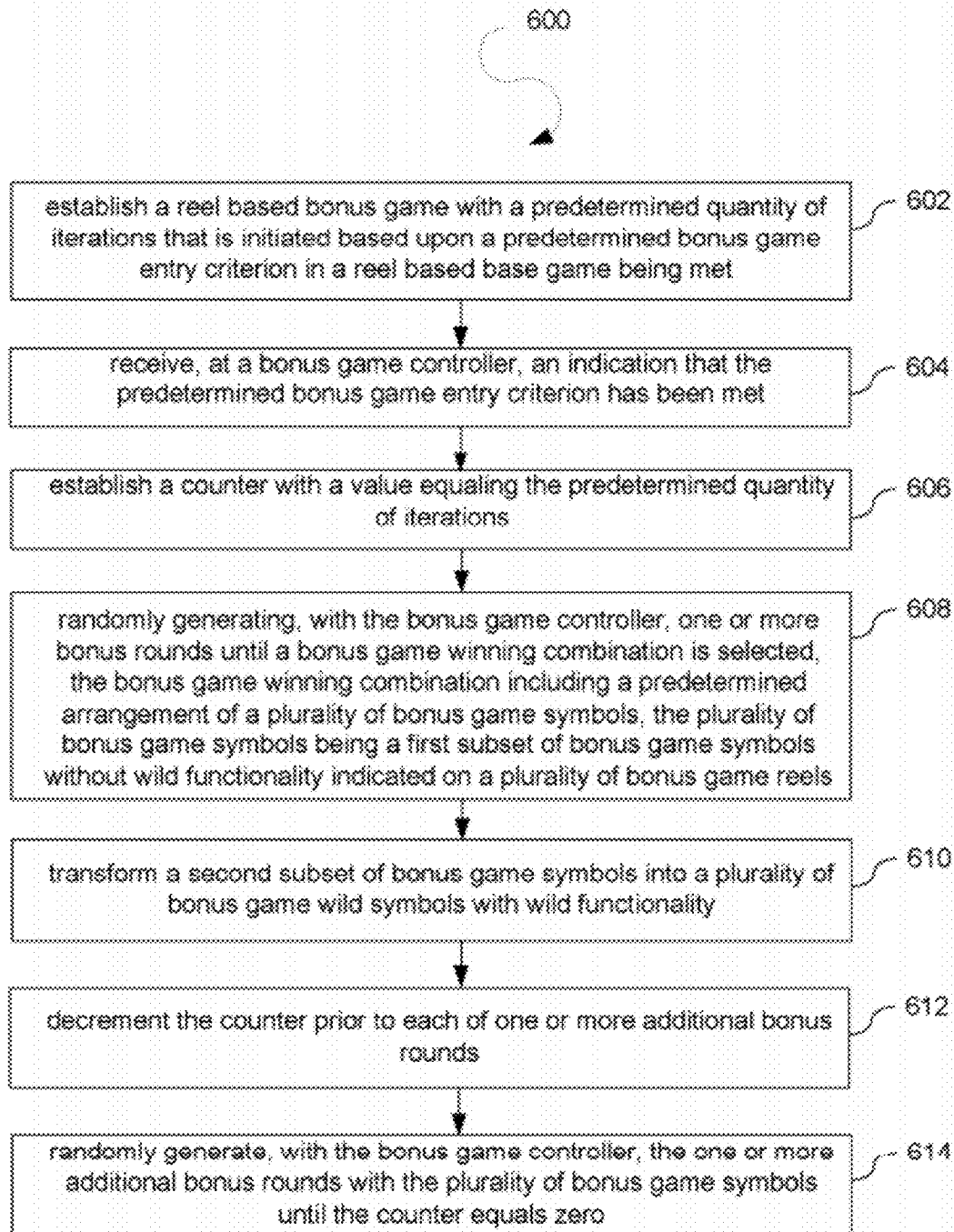


Figure 5D

**Figure 6**

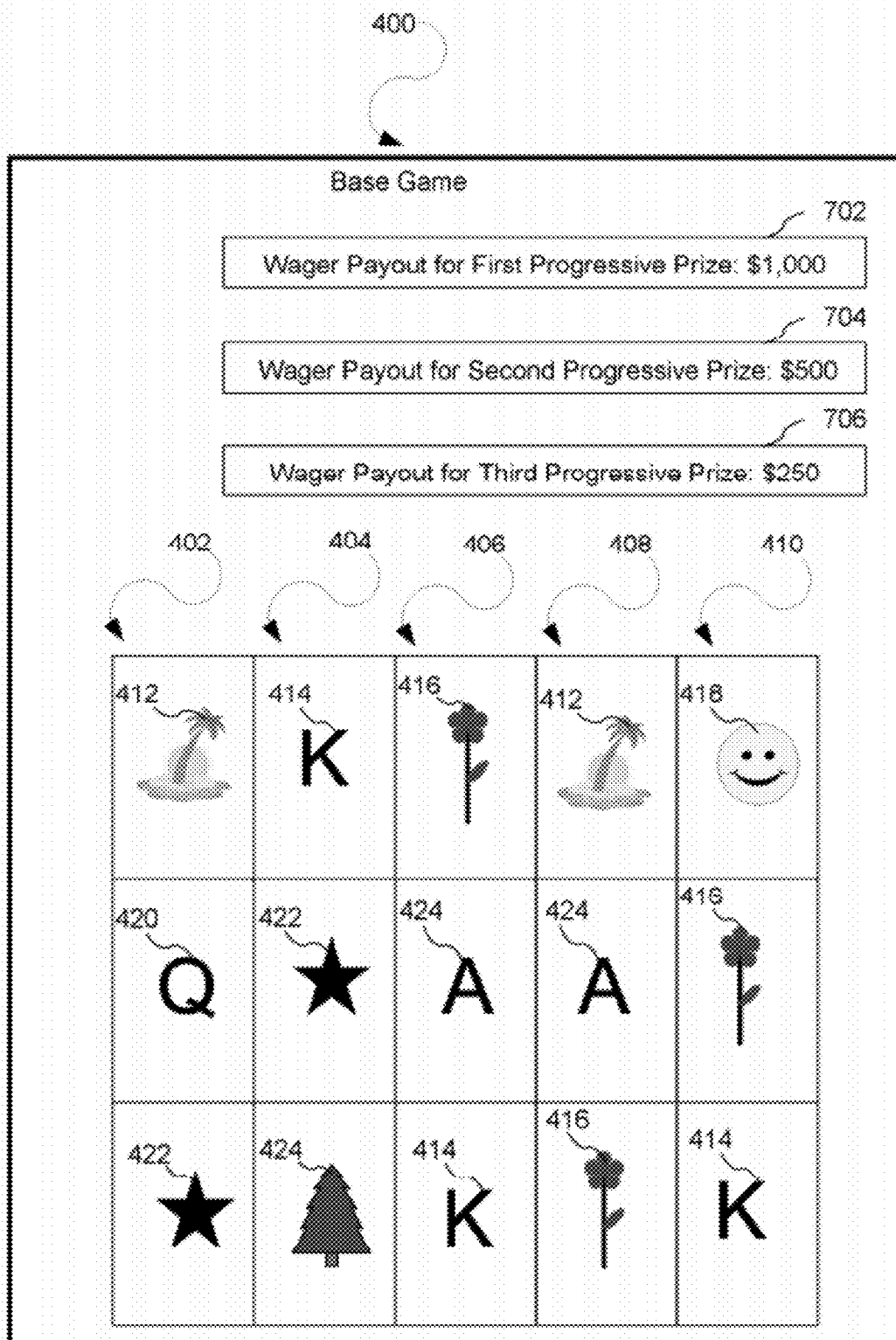
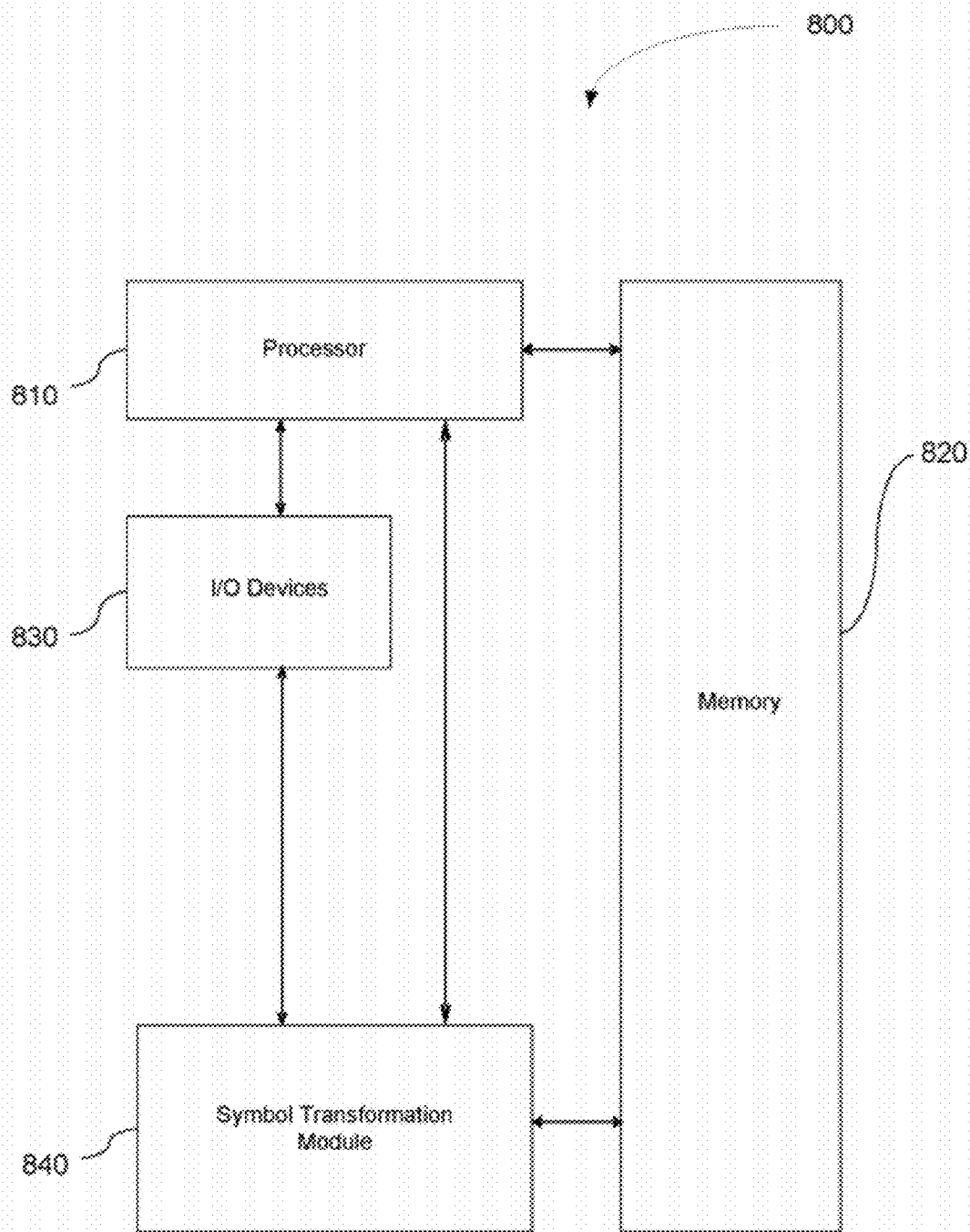


Figure 7

**Figure 8**

CONFIGURATION FOR ITERATIVE BONUS GAME WITH SYMBOL TRANSFORMATION

BACKGROUND

[0001] 1. Field

[0002] This disclosure generally relates to the field of gaming. More particularly, the disclosure relates to reel based games.

[0003] 2. General Background

[0004] Various reel based games provide some of the most popular forms of gaming. In particular, some reel based machines offer a bonus game that is played after the base game. The use of the bonus game provides an added level of excitement for reel based machine game players and potential reel based machine game players. The bonus game typically offers game play either different from or enhanced upon the base game. Further, the bonus game is typically played for no additional wager to that of the base game. As such, players accumulate winnings in the bonus game with no risk. Further, the bonus game can offer a progressive jackpot prize, which can accumulate to be quite large, in order to further incentivize play at the slot machine. However, maintaining excitement and suspense during a bonus game is difficult.

SUMMARY

[0005] In one aspect of the disclosure, a process is provided. The process establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, the process receives, in memory, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, the process establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. The process also randomly generates, in memory, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. In addition, the process transforms the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality. The process also decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. Further, the process randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0006] In another aspect of the disclosure, a computer program product is provided. The computer program product has a computer useable storage medium having a computer readable program. The computer readable program when executed on a computer causes the computer to establish a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus

game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to receive, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to establish a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. The computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. In addition, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to transform the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality. The computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to decrement the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. Further, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0007] In yet another aspect of the disclosure, an apparatus is provided. The apparatus includes a reel based bonus game establishment module that establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. The apparatus also includes a bonus game controller that receives an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. Further, the apparatus includes a counter module that establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations and decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. In addition, the apparatus includes a random generation module that randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected and one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game

reels. In addition, the apparatus includes a transformation module that transforms the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality.

[0008] In another aspect of the disclosure, a process is provided. The process establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, the process receives, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, the process establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. The process also randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. The process also transforms a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality. Further, the process decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. In addition, the process randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0009] In yet another aspect of the disclosure, a computer program product is provided. The computer program product has a computer useable storage medium having a computer readable program. The computer readable program when executed on a computer causes the computer to receive, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. Further, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to establish a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. In addition, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols being a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. The computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to transform a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality. Further, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to decrement the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. In addition, the computer readable program when executed on the computer causes the computer to randomly generate, with the bonus game con-

troller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0010] In another aspect of the disclosure, an apparatus is provided. The apparatus includes a reel based bonus game establishment module that establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, the apparatus includes a bonus game controller that receives an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, the apparatus includes a counter module that establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations and decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. The apparatus also includes a random generation module that randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected and one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. The apparatus also includes a transformation module that transforms a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The above-mentioned features of the present disclosure will become more apparent with reference to the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference numerals denote like elements and in which:

[0012] FIG. 1 illustrates progressive slot system that can be utilized to implement the base game and the bonus game.

[0013] FIG. 2 illustrates an expanded view of the first base game-bonus game station shown in FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 3 illustrates a process that may be utilized to implement the iterative bonus game with symbol transition.

[0015] FIG. 4A illustrates an example of a base game screen display with a scatter predetermined arrangement utilized for the bonus game entry criterion.

[0016] FIG. 4B illustrates an example of a base game screen display with a position predetermined arrangement utilized for the bonus game entry criterion.

[0017] FIG. 5A illustrates an example an initial winning combination in the bonus game.

[0018] FIG. 5B illustrates the transformation of symbols in the winning payline in the bonus game into symbols with wild functionality.

[0019] FIG. 5C illustrates a next iteration that results after the initial winning combination in the bonus game.

[0020] FIG. 5D illustrates the subsequent iteration with the transformed symbols.

[0021] FIG. 6 illustrates a process that may also be utilized.

[0022] FIG. 7 illustrates the base game screen display of FIG. 4 with a plurality of progressive prizes that are funded from a single source.

[0023] FIG. 8 illustrates a block diagram of a station or system that composes and provides a display of one or more symbol transformations.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0024] A configuration for an iterative bonus game with symbol transformation is provided. In one embodiment, a gaming apparatus has a plurality of reel strips. Each of the reel strips may display a plurality of predetermined symbols. A reel strip may be a row, column, diagonal, etc. of predetermined symbols. The reel strips may be implemented in a mechanical machine or in a video format.

[0025] The method, apparatus, and computer program product described herein may be utilized with a variety of games. The base game and bonus game can be selected from games such as slots, poker, blackjack, bingo, etc. Further, the base game and the bonus game can be selected from games considered Class II or Class III. In one embodiment, the same type of game is utilized for both the base game and the bonus game. In another embodiment, different types of games are utilized for the base game and the bonus game. A class III game can even be utilized for the base game while a class II game is utilized for the bonus game.

[0026] Further, the method and apparatus can be provided by a game provider in a variety of contexts. For example, the method and apparatus are utilized in a casino. The method and apparatus can also be utilized in locations, other than casinos, in which games are provided and wagers are received. The method and apparatus can even be provided virtually through a network, such as the Internet.

[0027] A win in either the base game or the bonus game is generally determined by a matching of some combination of symbols. Further, a winning combination of symbols is the combination of symbol that yields a win in the base game or the bonus game. The winning combination of symbols is pre-established via a payable.

[0028] FIG. 1 illustrates progressive slot system 100 that can be utilized to implement the base game and the bonus game. The casino implementation is provided merely as an example and is not intended to limit use of the method, apparatus, and computer program product to that context as the method, apparatus, and computer program product may be utilized in any context in which a game provider provides games electronically, mechanically, virtually, or the like. Further, a progressive jackpot is utilized merely as an example of a type of prize structure that may be implemented, but a variety of other types of prize structures may be utilized. Mechanical slot machines, stations displaying electronic slot games, video lottery terminals ("VLTs"), computers accessing electronic versions of the game through the Internet, etc., may be utilized to play the base game in conjunction with the bonus game according to the method and apparatus described herein.

[0029] The casino may have a plurality of base game stations, e.g., a first base game station 106, a second base game station 108, a third base game station 110, . . . , a one hundredth base game station 112. These base game stations may be utilized to provide players with the base game. In a casino setting, the base game can be any of the conventional casino games. The base game can even be a non-conventional casino

game. In one embodiment, a casino slot accounting system 104 is utilized to monitor the activities of the plurality of base game stations.

[0030] Further, the casino may have a plurality of bonus game stations, e.g., a first bonus game station 114, a second bonus game station 116, a third bonus game station 118, . . . , a one hundredth bonus game station 120. These bonus game stations may be utilized to provide players with the bonus game. In a casino setting, the bonus game can be any of the conventional casino games or potentially a non-conventional casino game that is utilized for play with the conventional casino base game. Alternatively, both the bonus game and the base game can be non-conventional casino games. In one embodiment, the prize for the bonus game is a progressive jackpot, which accumulates in size based on wagers from players of the base game. A progressive jackpot management system 102 may be utilized to manage the bonus game stations.

[0031] In one embodiment, a bonus game station is operably connected to a base game station to allow for play of the base game and the bonus game. The connection may be through cable, wireless communication, network connection, or the like. In one embodiment, casinos or other game providers can utilize existing base game stations and attach the bonus game station without having to reconfigure the bonus game station. Further, each of the bonus game stations can even be attached to different types of base game stations. For example, the first bonus game station 114 and the second bonus game station 116 may both provide a bingo game and provide a prize from the same progressive jackpot, but the first bonus game station 114 may be attached to the first base game station 106, which provides a video poker game, and the second bonus game station 116 may be attached to the second base game station 108, which provides a spinning reels game. Even though the base games are different, the wagers from both of these base games are contributed to the progressive jackpot of the bonus game. In one embodiment, a separate printer is implemented in the bonus game station to allow a winner of the bonus game to cash out separately from any potential winnings in the base game. This configuration helps provide compatibility of the bonus game station with different types of base game stations.

[0032] In another embodiment, the bonus game station and the base game station can be implemented on one device. For example, a machine with a single monitor can be utilized to play electronic versions of both games. The same type of game with different prizes may even be utilized.

[0033] Irrespective of the type of configuration or connection that is utilized, a plurality of base game-bonus game stations may be utilized by a casino or other game provider to provide the combination of the base game and the bonus game. For example, a first base game-bonus game station 122 includes the first base game station 106 and the first bonus game station 114, a second base game-bonus game station 124 includes the second base game station 108 and the second bonus game station 116, a third base game-bonus game station 126 includes the third base game station 110 and the third bonus game station 118, . . . , a one hundredth base game-bonus game station 128 includes the one hundredth base game station 112 and the one hundredth bonus game station 120.

[0034] FIG. 2 illustrates an expanded view of the first base game-bonus game station 122 shown in FIG. 1. The first base game station 106 includes a display 202 in which play of the

base game can be viewed. The display **202** may be an electronic display, an assortment of mechanical reels, etc. Further, the first base game station **106** has a plurality of buttons **204** that may be utilized to select a wager category, select a payline, initiate play of the base game and/or bonus game, etc. Further, the first base game station **106** has a wager acceptor **206**, e.g., a money acceptor, bill acceptor, coin acceptor, promotional voucher acceptor, credit card acceptor, debit card acceptor, electronic wallet such as a smart card, etc., that accepts a wager from the player. In addition, the first base game station **106** has a ticket printer **208** that may be utilized to print a ticket to redeem a prize. In one embodiment, the ticket is solely for a prize won in the base game. In another embodiment, the ticket may be for a prize won in the base game and/or a prize won in the bonus game.

[0035] The display **202** may be utilized to perform functions in addition to play of the bonus game. For instance, the display **202** may display a plurality of distinct wager categories prior to play of the base game. The distinct wager categories may be multiples of a minimum wager, which may also be displayed on the display **202**. For example, the wager categories may be “one x”, “two x”, “three x”, “four x”, and “five x” of a minimum wager of one dollar. The actual wager is then determined by the wager category selected by the player. For example, a wager of three dollars is made if the player selects the wager category “three x”. The wager categories may also be denominations, i.e., fractions, of a maximum wager. For example, the wager categories may be “one-fifth”, “two-fifths”, “three-fifths”, “four-fifths”, and “five-fifths” of a maximum wager of five dollars. For example, a wager of two dollars is made if a player selects the wager category “two-fifths”. The wager categories may also state the wagers directly. For example, the wager categories may be “one dollar”, “two dollars”, “three dollars”, “four dollars”, and “five dollars.” A variety of other wager displays may be utilized to provide the wager categories.

[0036] Further, the display **202** may also indicate the known jackpot prize for the bonus game. The selection of the wager category not only has an impact on the base game, but also the bonus game. The wager category corresponds to a known portion of the progressive jackpot prize that can be potentially won. The portion can be a percentage, numerical amount, etc. For instance, a wager category of “one x” may correspond to the possibility of winning twenty percent of the jackpot prize in the bonus game, a wager category of “two x” may correspond to the possibility of winning forty percent of the jackpot prize in the bonus game, a wager category of “three x” may correspond to the possibility of winning sixty percent of the jackpot prize in the bonus game, a wager category of “four x” may correspond to the possibility of winning eighty percent of the jackpot prize in the bonus game, and a wager category of “five x” may correspond to the possibility of winning one hundred percent of the jackpot prize in the bonus game. If the player becomes eligible for the bonus round, the known portion of the progressive jackpot prize associated with the wager category can be displayed.

[0037] In one embodiment, the base game offers a variety of prizes such as fixed odds prizes that depend on obtaining a predetermined arrangement of symbols. Accordingly, a set of paylines is provided upon which the prizes may be won. Another function that may be performed by the display **202** is providing a display of paylines. A player may select a particular payline, some of the paylines, or all of the paylines for play in the base game. In one embodiment, the number of

paylines multiplied by the wager determined by the selection of the wager categories is utilized to determine the known distinct portion of the progressive jackpot prize that can be won in the bonus game.

[0038] Functions such as the display of the plurality of distinct wager categories or display of the paylines can also be provided through other components of the first base game-bonus game station **122**. For instance, a printed game glass can be positioned at or on the first base game-bonus game station **122** to display this information. Alternatively, a display **210** that is utilized by the bonus game station **114** to display play of the bonus game may be utilized to display this information. In yet another alternative, a display **212**, which is utilized to display jackpot prize information for the bonus game, may display this information. The display **210** and the display **212** may be provided on the same display screen or separate display screens.

[0039] In one embodiment, play of the bonus game is wager independent. In other words, eligibility for play in the bonus round is based on factors other than the wager amount. The wager amount has an impact on the known portion of the jackpot prize that can be won in the bonus round, but does not impact the entry into the bonus game. For example, a criterion can be established to provide that play of the bonus game is dependent on a display of particular symbols in the base game, whether or not there is a win in the base game. For instance, the criterion may be a display pattern such as two consecutive cherries displayed anywhere during play of the base game. The criterion may be a game count. In other words, every fiftieth play of the base game, randomly on average, at a particular base game station provides eligibility into the bonus game.

[0040] If the player is eligible to enter the bonus game, the bonus game is displayed for play on the display **210**. This configuration is provided as an example as the base game and bonus game could be played on the same display. In this configuration, the first bonus game station **114** is operably connected to the first base game station **106** through a cable **214**. Accordingly, data from the base game, e.g., wager category selected by the player, can be provided to the first bonus game station **114**. In one embodiment, the cable (or other communication medium) provides two-way communication between the first bonus game station **114** and the first base game station **106** such that the bonus game station **114** can provide information regarding the progressive jackpot to be displayed by the first base game station **106** and the first base game station **106** can provide information regarding the wager categories to the first game bonus station **114** to be displayed by the first game bonus station **114**. However, in another embodiment, the one-way communication can be established such that the first bonus game station **114** only receives information from the first base game station **106**. For instance, the first bonus game station **114** can receive information regarding the wager categories. Further, the first bonus game station **114** can display the progressive jackpot on the display **212** along with the wager categories. Therefore, a player can view a top display of the potential portions of the jackpot prize corresponding to wager categories that are applicable to play in the base game and the bonus game.

[0041] After play of the bonus game is initiated, the display **212** can also display the wager categories and corresponding levels of the jackpot prize that can be won with each wager category. In addition, the display **212** can indicate the level of the jackpot prize that the player can potentially win. This

indication may be provided as a percentage of the jackpot prize, the numerical amount that would be received, etc. Alternatively, only the actual level of the jackpot prize that can be potentially won, without the other levels of the jackpot prize that are no longer applicable, is displayed play of the bonus game is initiated.

[0042] The first bonus game station **116** does not need to have a wager acceptor as the wager acceptor utilized in the first base game station **106** receives a wager that is applicable to both the base game and the bonus game. In one embodiment, the first bonus game station **116** includes a ticket printer **216** to print a ticket so that the portion of the progressive jackpot prize that is won can be redeemed. In another embodiment, the ticket printer **206** utilized by the first base game station **106** may be utilized to print tickets for prize redemption in both the base game and the bonus game.

[0043] In one embodiment, one or more controllers may be utilized to perform functions such as initiating play of the games. For instance, the first base game station **106** may have a controller for initiating play of the base game, and the first bonus game station **116** may have a controller for initiating play of the bonus game.

[0044] FIG. 3 illustrates a process **300** that may be utilized to implement the iterative bonus game with symbol transformation. At a first process block **302**, the process **300** establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. In one embodiment, the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols may be a predetermined order of specific base game symbols. In another embodiment, the predetermined arrangement may be a specific quantity of specific base game symbols that may be scattered throughout the reels. In yet another embodiment, the predetermined arrangement may be a predetermined quantity of specific base game symbols on specific reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. In one embodiment, the predetermined quantity of iterations equals the quantity of base symbols in the predetermined arrangement. In another embodiment, the predetermined quantity of iterations does not equal the quantity of base game symbols in the predetermined arrangement. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, at a process block **304**, the process **300** receives, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, at a process block **306**, the process establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. At a process block **308**, the process **300** also randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. In addition, at a process block **310**, the process **300** transforms the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild func-

tionality. At a process block **312**, the process **300** also decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. Further, at a process block **314**, the process **300** randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0045] In one embodiment, the base game has a video format with a five by three arrangement, i.e., five reels and three active symbol locations per reel. Further, the base game may have thirty paylines that each has a wager up to ten credits per line for a three hundred credit maximum wager. These quantities are provided only as examples. Various numbers of reels, active, symbol locations per reel, and/or paylines may be utilized.

[0046] FIG. 4A illustrates an example of a base game screen display **400** with a scatter predetermined arrangement utilized for the bonus game entry criterion. The base game screen display **400** displays a plurality of reels. As an example, the base game screen display **400** displays a first reel **402**, a second reel **404**, a third reel **406**, a fourth reel **408**, and a fifth reel **410**. Each of the reels may be electronic, mechanical, or the like. The first reel **402** displays a palm tree **412**, a letter Q **420**, and a star **422**. Further, the second reel **404** displays a letter K **414**, a star **422**, and a tree **424**. In addition, the third reel **406** displays a flower **416**, the letter A **424**, and the letter K **414**. The fourth reel **408** displays the palm tree **412**, the letter A **424**, and the flower **416**. Finally, the fifth reel display a smiley face **418**, the flower **416**, and the letter K **414**. As an example, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of the flower **416**. For instance, the predetermined arrangement may be at least three flowers **416** on any reels. In the illustrated example, the third reel **406** displays the flower **416** in the first row, the fourth reel **416** displays the flower **416** in the third row, and the fifth reel **410** displays the flower **416** in the second row.

[0047] An example of the paylines is as follows denoted left to right from the first reel **402** to the fifth reel **410** with Top indicated as "T", Middle indicated as "M", and "Bottom" indicated as "B" per reel.

[0048] 1—M, M, M, M, M
[0049] 2—T, T, T, T, T
[0050] 3—B, B, B, B, B
[0051] 4—T, M, B, M, T
[0052] 5—B, M, T, M, B
[0053] 6—T, T, M, B, B
[0054] 7—B, B, M, T, T
[0055] 8—M, T, M, B, M
[0056] 9—M, B, M, T, M
[0057] 10—M, T, T, T, M
[0058] 11—M, B, B, B, M
[0059] 12—T, M, T, M, T
[0060] 13—B, M, B, M, B
[0061] 14—M, T, M, T, M
[0062] 15—M, B, M, B, M
[0063] 16—M, M, T, M, M
[0064] 17—M, M, B, M, M
[0065] 18—T, B, T, B, T
[0066] 19—B, T, B, T, B
[0067] 20—T, M, M, M, T
[0068] 21—B, M, M, M, B
[0069] 22—T, T, B, T, T
[0070] 23—B, B, T, B, B
[0071] 24—M, T, B, T, M
[0072] 25—M, B, T, B, M

[0073] 26—T, B, M, B, T

[0074] 27—B, T, M, T, B

[0075] 28—T, B, B, B, T

[0076] 29—B, T, T, T, B

[0077] 30—T, M, B, B, M

The paylines indicate which symbols are utilized to form winning combinations in the base game. In one embodiment, the paylines are distinct from the bonus game criterion. In other words, a player that obtains the predetermined arrangement of symbols in the base game to enter the bonus game may not necessarily also obtain a prize from the base game. In another embodiment, the predetermined arrangement of symbols in the base game utilized to initiate the bonus game appears on one of the paylines or part of one of the paylines.

[0078] FIG. 4B illustrates an example of a base game screen display 400 with a position predetermined arrangement utilized for the bonus game entry criterion. As an example, the third reel 406 displays a column of flowers 416. The position predetermined arrangement may be a row, column, diagonal, corners, or any other predetermined positions. The position predetermined positions may be consecutive or non-consecutive. As an example, the position predetermined positions may be a triangle shape configuration. As another example, the position predetermined positions may be a horizontal row with two symbols and a third symbol diagonally to the right of the second symbol in the horizontal row from left to right. Alternatively, the bonus game criterion may be an intermediate bonus game.

[0079] After the bonus game criterion has been met, the bonus game is initiated. In one embodiment, the bonus game is initiated with a counter that equals the predetermined quantity of iterations. Utilizing the example illustrated in FIG. 4A, a player may receive a predetermined number of iterations of seven that is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. For example, the player may receive seven iterations as a result of having three flowers 416 appear in the base game. The bonus game may have the same or a different background than the base game. Further, the bonus game may have none of, some or, or all of the symbols from the base game. The symbols may be the same in the bonus game as the base game, but may appear with different colors. Further, the payable in the bonus game may be the same in or different from the base game.

[0080] In one embodiment, the reels in the bonus game spin automatically until a player reaches the first win. In other words, the counter is not decremented until the player has achieved a win. For example, the bonus game may spin ten times until the player achieves a win. After the tenth time, the counter is decremented from seven to six.

[0081] FIG. 5A illustrates an example an initial winning combination in the bonus game. For illustrative purposes, the same symbols and background are displayed for the bonus game as the base game, but distinct configurations may be utilized. As an example, one of the winning combinations in the bonus game may be one smiley face 418 and two of the letter Q 420. A bonus game display 500 displays the smiley face 418 in the second row on the first reel, the letter Q 420 on the second reel 404, and the letter Q 420 on the third reel 406. Accordingly, the counter would be decremented and the player would win the prize associated with that payline. In addition, those winning symbols are transformed into a symbol with wild functionality.

[0082] FIG. 5B illustrates the transformation of symbols in the winning payline in the bonus game into symbols with wild

functionality. For illustrative purposes, the symbols are transformed into the symbol 502 denoted "WILD." However, a variety of other shapes and symbols that do not specifically include the term "WILD" may be utilized for the transformed symbols with wild functionality.

[0083] In one embodiment, the free spins reel speed is slightly slower than that of the base game, with an extended length before each successive reel stop, to visually reinforce the number of wild symbols to the player, and to increase suspense with each reel. For example, the total reel spin length may be approximately five to six seconds. Further, in one embodiment, the length of time between successive reels stopping is a function of the number of prior winning spins in the bonus round.

[0084] Further, in one embodiment, the symbols with wild functionality remain wild for the remainder of the predetermined iterations.

[0085] FIG. 5C illustrates a next iteration that results after the initial winning combination in the bonus game. As an example, one of the paylines in the bonus game may be three stars. The bonus game display 500 displays the symbol 502 with wild functionality on the first reel, the star 422 on the second reel 404, and the star 422 on the third reel 406. In one embodiment, prior to the next iteration, the star 422 on the second reel 404 and the star 422 on the third reel 406 are transformed into the symbol 502 with wild functionality. In another embodiment, the star symbols are not transformed if the winning combination utilizes a symbol with wild functionality, e.g., the winning combination in FIG. 5C includes a symbol with wild functionality. In one embodiment, irrespective of whether this iteration resulted in a win or not, the counter is decremented, as the counter begins decrementing after a first winning spin and thereafter decrements after every iteration.

[0086] FIG. 5D illustrates the subsequent iteration with the transformed symbols. In one embodiment, the iterations continue until the counter is decremented to zero. Further, different quantities of iterations may be provided based on the quantity of symbols displayed in the predetermined arrangement of base game symbols in the base game. For example, three scattered base game symbols may be associated with seven iterations, four scatter base game symbols may be associated with ten iterations, and five base game symbols may be associated with fifteen iterations.

[0087] As another illustration, an example of the placement and transformation of symbols on the reel strips is provided herein. The numbers refer to symbols (e.g., 6 refers to Symbol 6), and W refers to a symbol with wild functionality which may substitute for any of the symbols 2 through 11. The instant example therefore includes a symbol with wild functionality in the initial round of the bonus game. However, in another embodiment, an initial configuration may be utilized with no symbols having wild functionality in the initial round of the bonus game.

[0088] In this example, the bonus game pay table is as follows with each pay entry being depicted as symbol, number of a kind, and payoff, e.g., four of Symbol 2 pays 150, 3 of symbol 3 pays 25, etc.:

W	5	2000
W	4	250
W	3	50

-continued

W	2	15
2	5	1000
2	4	150
2	3	30
3	5	500
3	4	125
3	3	25
4	5	300
4	4	100
4	3	20
5	5	200
5	4	75
5	3	20
6	5	150
6	4	45
6	3	20
7	5	125
7	4	35
7	3	10
8	5	125
8	4	35
8	3	10
9	5	100
9	4	20
9	3	5
10	5	100
10	4	20
10	3	5
11	5	100
11	4	20
11	3	5

[0089] In this example, the reel strips are as follows:

[0090] Reel 1: 6 11 9 2 11 7 10 11 9 4 3 11 10 7 5 W 11 8 5 11 6 4 11 8 2 3

[0091] Reel 2: 11 10 6 9 11 27 11 9 W 5 8 9 2 6 4 10 5 3 9 6 8 10 7 9 4 7 9 3

[0092] Reel 3: 5 9 10 3 7 10 6 W 10 5 11 10 39 10 4 7 8 2 10 11 4 7 8 6 10 8

[0093] Reel 4: 8 2 9 W 7 10 6 11 10 5 11 9 10 8 11 5 4 6 3 7 9

[0094] Reel 5: 3 6 10 7 4 11 9 11 6 10 11 7 8 9 11 8 1 0 9 5 3 8 W 5 7 4 2 6 4 8 5 9 10

[0095] The reels spin in the bonus game until a win is achieved. The first spin yields the following results:

9	6	10	3	7
11	9	7	6	11
6	3	3	4	10

[0096] On the first reel, the symbols 6, 11 and 9 correspond to reel stop positions 1, 2 and 3. On the second reel, the symbols 3, 9 and 6 correspond to positions 19, 20 and 21, and so forth. Since the first spin is a non-winner, the reels are respun again:

11	5	7	6	4
W	10	4	10	6
5	4	10	7	2

[0097] The three 4 symbols on payline 9 (i.e., W-4-4) pay 20. The three 4 symbols on payline 15 pay 20. The four 10 symbols on payline 17 pay 20. Thereafter, the symbols in a

winning combination that are not already wild are modified to become wild making the modified reel strips as follows:

[0098] Reel 1: 6 11 9 2 11 7 10 11 9 4 3 11 10 7 5 W 11 8 5 11 6 4 11 8 2 3

[0099] Reel 2: 11 10 6 9 11 2 7 11 9 W 5 8 9 2 6 W W 5 3 9 6 8 10 7 9 4 7 9 3

[0100] Reel 3: 5 9 10 3 7 10 6 W 10 5 11 10 39 W W 7 8 2 10 11 4 7 8 6 10 8

[0101] Reel 4: 8 2 9 W 7 W 6 11 10 5 11 9 10 8 11 54 6 3 7 9

[0102] Reel 5: 3 6 10 7 4 11 9 11 6 10 11 7 8 9 11 8 10 9 5 3 8 W 5 7 4 2 6 4 8 5 9 10

[0103] On reel 2, positions 16 and 17 are now symbols with wild functionality. These two positions corresponded to the original 4 and 10 symbols that comprised wins. Similarly, on reel 3, positions 15 and 16 are now symbols with wild functionality, corresponding to the original 10 and 4 symbols. On reel 4, position 6 is now wild, formerly corresponding to symbol 10. On reel 1, the wild symbol at position 16 remains wild.

[0104] As a win has now occurred, the counter is decremented from seven to six, and six additional iterations are provided. With each subsequent spin, the counter is decremented. The next spin yields:

3	9	4	8	5
4	6	11	10	8
9	10	10	9	4

[0105] As there is no win for this spin, the number of iterations now remaining is five.

[0106] The next spin yields:

10	8	6	11	9
11	6	8	5	11
3	9	7	10	4

[0107] As there is no win for this spin, the number of free spins remaining is now four. The next spin yields:

11	8	10	9	9
10	5	6	2	8
7	W	8	8	7

[0108] Payline 25, with three 10 symbols, pays 5. Except for the symbol that already has wild functionality, these symbols transform to have wild functionality. The modified reel strips are now:

[0109] Reel 1: 6 11 9 2 11 7 W 11 9 4 3 11 10 7 5 W 11 8 5 11 6 4 11 8 2 3

[0110] Reel 2: 11 10 6 9 11 2 7 11 9 W 5 8 9 2 6 W W 5 3 9 6 8 10 7 9 4 7 9 3

[0111] Reel 3: 5 9 10 3 7 10 6 W 10 5 11 10 3 9 W W 7 8 2 10 11 4 7 8 6 W 8

[0112] Reel 4: 8 2 9 W 7 W 6 11 10 5 11 9 10 8 11 5 4 6 3 7 9

[0113] Reel 5: 3 6 10 7 4 11 9 11 6 10 11 7 8 9 11 8 10 9 5 3 8 W 5 7 4 2 6 4 8 5 9 10

[0114] The number of free spins remaining is now three, and the next spin yields:

W	3	3	6	7
5	5	10	4	10
7	W	11	5	6

[0115] Payline 2 with three 3 symbols pays 25. Payline 18 with three 3 symbols pays 25. Payline 26 and payline 28, with two W symbols, pay 15 each. The modified reel strips are now:

[0116] Reel 1: **6 11 9 2 11 7 W** 11 9 4 3 11 10 75 W 11 8 5 11 6 4 11 8 2 3

[0117] Reel 2: **11 10 6 9 11 2 7 11 9 W** 5 8 9 2 6 W W 5 W 9 6 8 10 7 9 4 7 9 3

[0118] Reel 3: **59 10 3 7 10 6 W** 10 5 11 10 W 9 W W 7 8 2 10 11 4 7 8 6 W 8

[0119] Reel 4: **8 2 9 W 7 W** 6 11 10 5 11 9 10 8 11 5 4 6 3 7 9

[0120] Reel 5: **36 10 7 4 11 9 11 6 10 11 7 8 9 11 8 10 9 5 3 8 W** 5 7 4 2 6 4 8 5 9 10

[0121] The number of free spins remaining is now two, and the next spin yields:

5	2	10	9	4
7	11	7	11	7
10	9	3	5	5

[0122] No winning combination results, and the number of free spins is now one. The next spin yields:

11	9	7	3	2
3	7	W	6	4
4	4	W	4	7

[0123] Payline 3 with four 4 symbols pays 100. Payline 7 with three 4 symbols pays 20. In one embodiment, at the conclusion of the free spins, the final symbols contributing to a win are not transformed to wild as there are no free spins remaining. The total win to the player is two hundred sixty five.

[0124] In another embodiment, the symbols that are transformed in the bonus iterations do not have to be from winning combinations in the bonus round. FIG. 6 illustrates a process 600 that may also be utilized. At a process block 602, the process 600 establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met. The predetermined bonus game entry criterion is a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels. The predetermined quantity of iterations is associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols. The plurality of base game symbols is a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels. Further, at a process block 604, the process 600 receives, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met. In addition, at a

process block 606, the process 600 establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations. At a process block 608, the process 600 also randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected. The bonus game winning combination includes a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols. The plurality of bonus game symbols is a first subset of bonus game symbols. The bonus game symbols may be indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels. In one embodiment, the first subset of bonus game symbols is without wild functionality. In another embodiment, the first subset of bonus game symbols may include wild functionality. Further, at a process block 610, the process transforms a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality. In one embodiment, the second set of symbols is randomly determined. In other words, the second set of symbols does not have to be part or all of winning combination in the bonus game. In another embodiment, the second subset of bonus game symbols is randomly determined only from visible symbols. In yet another embodiment, the second subset of bonus game symbols excludes the first subset of bonus game symbols. In another embodiment, a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second set of bonus game symbols is determined by the predetermined quantity of iterations. In yet another embodiment, a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second set of bonus game symbols is determined by an amount wagered per payline. In another embodiment, a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second subset of bonus game symbols and reel location are determined by an amount wagered per payline. Further, at a process block 612, the process 600 decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds. In addition, at a process block 614 the process 600 randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

[0125] FIG. 7 illustrates the base game screen display 400 of FIG. 4 with a plurality of progressive prizes that are funded from a single source. The player may adjust his or her potential prize by varying his or her wager and/or number of paylines. For example, in a 1 cent game, players are able to wager the maximum of ten cents per each payline for a total of three dollars, i.e., three hundred credits. Accordingly, the player wagered one cent for each of thirty lines. The amount wagered was thirty cents. Therefore, the player may win ten percent for each progressive prize. If the player wagers ten cents per payline, the player may win the full progressive prize for the highest progressive prize. As examples, the first progressive prize 702 may be one thousand dollars, the second progressive prize 704 may be five hundred dollars, and the third progressive prize 706 may be two hundred fifty dollars. These numerical values are utilized only as examples.

[0126] With any of the configurations provided herein, the counter begins decrementing on the initial bonus game iteration irrespective of a win by the player. Further, the counter may decrement only when a player loses rather than wins.

[0127] In one embodiment, a symbol that has already been transformed into a symbol with wild functionality is animated at the same time that the remaining symbols that are transformed undergo the transformation process. Alternatively, highlighting, different colors, or any mechanism for emphasis may be utilized. In another embodiment, the bonus game itself may have a predetermined arrangement of sym-

bols for additional iterations in the bonus game or entry into a different game, e.g., an additional bonus game, the base game, or the like.

[0128] In one embodiment, winning symbols that do not have wild functionality are transformed to have wild functionality irrespective of location. In one embodiment, the transformation may take place for all the symbols of that type that are visible. For example, a cherry may be part of a winning combination. The remaining visible cherries that are not part of the winning combination would be transformed in addition to the cherry that is part of the winning combination to have wild functionality unless previously transformed. In another embodiment, the transformation may take place for symbols that are visible and that are not visible, i.e., symbols that are on the reel strips that are not currently being displayed. Utilizing the instant example, if a cherry is part of a winning combination, then all cherries on the reel strips will be transformed to have wild functionality unless previously transformed. In one embodiment, one or more transformations may be based on symbols on a particular reel. Utilizing the example with cherries, all visible cherries on a particular reel, e.g., the second reel, may be transformed to have wild functionality without cherries on one or more other reels being transformed. In one configuration, the transformation is performed for visible symbols on the particular reel. In another configuration, the transformation is performed for visible symbols and symbols that are not visible on the particular reel strip. Further, one or more particular reels may be utilized.

[0129] In another embodiment, random symbols are transformed to have wild functionality on a winning outcome. The winning outcome may or may not include wild symbols. In yet another embodiment, random symbols may be transformed on each spin regardless of whether or not a winning outcome results. As an example, if the bonus game has five reels, one symbol may be randomly chosen for each of the five reels. This example is provided only for illustrative purposes and is not intended to be limiting in any way. In another embodiment, the random symbols are specifically chosen from among those symbols not contributing to a winning outcome.

[0130] In yet another embodiment, the number of symbols randomly selected to have wild functionality may be a function of how many free spins and/or previous wins in the set of free spins have taken place. In another embodiment, the number of symbols randomly selected to have wild functionality may be a function of how many reels are allowed to provide symbols for the opportunity to have wild functionality. As an example, three triggers may only allow wild symbols from three reels, four triggers may only allow wild symbols from four reels, five triggers may only allow wild symbols from five reels, etc.

[0131] The base game and/or bonus game may be any type of game. For example, a game may be mechanical, video, etc. Further, in one embodiment, the winning odds are maintained as constant or a near constant through the base game and/or bonus game session.

[0132] The processes described herein may be utilized with a base game, a bonus game, or both. The processes described herein may be implemented in a general, multi-purpose or single purpose processor. Such a processor will execute instructions, either at the assembly, compiled or machine-level, to perform the processes. Those instructions can be written by one of ordinary skill in the art following the

description of the figures corresponding to the processes and stored or transmitted on a computer readable medium. The instructions may also be created using source code or any other known computer-aided design tool. A computer readable medium may be any medium capable of carrying those instructions and include a CD-ROM, DVD, magnetic or other optical disc, tape, silicon memory (e.g., removable, non-removable, volatile or non-volatile), packetized or non-packetized data through wireline or wireless transmissions locally or remotely through a network.

[0133] A computer is herein intended to include any device that has a general, multi-purpose or single purpose processor as described above. For example, a computer may be a lottery terminal, a slot machine, a kiosk, a vending machine, a set top box ("STB"), cell phone, portable media player, or the like.

[0134] FIG. 8 illustrates a block diagram of a station or system **800** that composes and provides a display of one or more symbol transformations. In one embodiment, the station or system **810** is implemented utilizing a general purpose computer or any other hardware equivalents. Thus, the station or system **800** comprises a processor **810**, a memory **820**, e.g., random access memory ("RAM") and/or read only memory (ROM), a symbol transformation module **840**, and various input/output devices **830**, (e.g., audio/video outputs and audio/video inputs, storage devices, including but not limited to, a tape drive, a floppy drive, a hard disk drive or a compact disk drive, a receiver, a transmitter, a speaker, a display, an image capturing sensor, e.g., those used in a digital still camera or digital video camera, a clock, an output port, a user input device (such as a keyboard, a keypad, a mouse, and the like, or a microphone for capturing speech commands)).

[0135] It should be understood that the symbol transformation module **840** may be implemented as one or more physical devices that are coupled to the processor **810**. For example, the symbol transformation module **840** may include a plurality of modules. Alternatively, the symbol transformation module **840** may be represented by one or more software applications (or even a combination of software and hardware, e.g., using application specific integrated circuits (ASIC)), where the software is loaded from a storage medium, (e.g., a magnetic or optical drive, diskette, or non-volatile memory) and operated by the processor in the memory **820** of the computer. As such, the symbol transformation module **840** (including associated data structures) of the present disclosure may be stored on a computer readable medium, e.g., RAM memory, magnetic or optical drive or diskette and the like.

[0136] It is understood that the method and apparatus described herein may also be applied in other types of systems. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the various adaptations and modifications of the embodiments of this method and apparatus may be configured without departing from the scope and spirit of the present method and system. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the present method and apparatus may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

We claim:

1. A method comprising:

establishing a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion being a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random

generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols, the plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels;

receiving, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met;

establishing a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations;

randomly generating, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels;

transforming the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality;

decrementing the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds; and

randomly generating, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising transforming the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising transforming one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the reel based base game includes a plurality of video reels.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the reel based bonus game includes a plurality of video reels.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the reel based base game includes a plurality of mechanical reels.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the reel based bonus game includes a plurality of mechanical reels.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols is a payline combination.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols is a scattered combination.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols is a payline combination.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols is a scattered combination.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a prize distribution to the player based upon a number of a total quantity of credits won in the base game and the bonus game.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the bonus game has a progressive prize associated therewith.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein a bonus game prize distribution is based on a product of a prize category selected from a plurality of prize categories and one or more credit values associated with one or more paylines.

16. A computer program product comprising a computer useable storage medium having a computer readable program, wherein the computer readable program when executed on a computer causes the computer to:

establish a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion being a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols, the plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels;

receive, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met;

establish a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations;

randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels;

transform the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality;

decrement the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds; and

randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

17. The computer program product of claim 16, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the computer is caused to transform the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the computer is further caused to transform one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into

wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

20. An apparatus comprising:

a reel based bonus game establishment module that establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion being a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols, the plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels;

a bonus game controller that receives an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met;

a counter module that establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations and decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds;

a random generation module that randomly generates, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected and one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels; and

a transformation module that transforms the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality.

21. The apparatus of claim **20**, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

22. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising transforming the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

23. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising transforming one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

24. A method comprising:

establishing a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a pre-

determined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion being a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols, the plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels;

receiving, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met;

establishing a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations;

randomly generating, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels;

transforming a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality;

decrementing the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds; and

randomly generating, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

25. The method of claim **24**, wherein the second subset of bonus game symbols is randomly determined.

26. The method of claim **24**, wherein the second subset of bonus game symbols is randomly determined only from visible symbols.

27. The method of claim **24**, wherein the second subset of bonus game symbols excludes bonus game symbols from the first subset of bonus game symbols.

28. The method of claim **24**, wherein the second subset of bonus game symbols includes at least one bonus game symbol from the first subset of bonus game symbols.

29. The method of claim **24**, wherein the second subset of bonus game symbols is determined in the one or more bonus rounds generated prior to that of the bonus game winning combination.

30. The method of claim **24**, wherein a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second subset of bonus game symbols is determined by the predetermined quantity of iterations.

31. The method of claim **24**, wherein a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second subset of bonus game symbols is determined by an amount wagered per payline.

32. The method of claim **24**, wherein a quantity of bonus game symbols in the second subset of bonus game symbols and reel location are determined by an amount wagered per payline.

33. The method of claim **24**, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

34. The method of claim **25**, further comprising transforming the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement

of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

35. The method of claim **25**, further comprising transforming one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

36. A computer program product comprising a computer useable storage medium having a computer readable program, wherein the computer readable program when executed on a computer causes the computer to:

receive, at a bonus game controller, an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met; establish a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations;

randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels;

transform a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality;

decrement the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds; and

randomly generate, with the bonus game controller, the one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero.

37. The computer program product of claim **36**, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

38. The computer program product of claim **37**, wherein the computer is further caused to transform the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

39. The computer program product of claim **37**, wherein the computer is further caused to transform one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plu-

rality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

40. An apparatus comprising:

a reel based bonus game establishment module that establishes a reel based bonus game with a predetermined quantity of iterations that is initiated based upon a predetermined bonus game entry criterion in a reel based base game being met, the predetermined bonus game entry criterion being a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of base game symbols resulting from a random generation of a plurality of base game reels, the predetermined quantity of iterations being associated with the predetermined arrangement of the plurality of base game symbols, the plurality of base game symbols being a subset of base game symbols without wild functionality indicated on the plurality of base game reels;

a bonus game controller that receives an indication that the predetermined bonus game entry criterion has been met;

a counter module that establishes a counter with a value equaling the predetermined quantity of iterations and decrements the counter prior to each of one or more additional bonus rounds;

a random generation module that randomly generates, with the bonus game controller and one or more additional bonus rounds with the plurality of bonus game symbols until the counter equals zero, one or more bonus rounds until a bonus game winning combination is selected, the bonus game winning combination including a predetermined arrangement of a plurality of bonus game symbols, the plurality of bonus game symbols being a first subset of bonus game symbols without wild functionality indicated on a plurality of bonus game reels; and

a transformation module that transforms a second subset of bonus game symbols into a plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality.

41. The apparatus of claim **40**, wherein the bonus game winning combination also includes an additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols.

42. The apparatus of claim **41**, further comprising transforming the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols without any symbols with wild functionality into the plurality of bonus game wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds.

43. The apparatus of claim **41**, further comprising transforming one or more symbols not previously transformed in the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols into wild symbols with wild functionality upon the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols being randomly selected in the one or more additional bonus rounds, the additional predetermined arrangement of the plurality of bonus symbols including at least one symbol that was previously transformed into a wild symbol with wild functionality.

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