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(54) **Method of conducting an online competition**

for with real money and/or play money. The objective of the user is to obtain positive tournament results while competing with other users and the system's software which imitates user actions in accordance with a certain algorithm. A trading aspect of the game purports buying and selling players in accordance with the rules of the system. The system that is used in the inventive method is fitted with original animations and attributes enabling the users not only to take game actions, but also to give their own comments on events occurring in the course of the game, and to converse with other users in the community.



Description**TECHNICAL FIELD**

[0001] This invention relates to the methods of embodiment of network game programs and computer-based systems that can be used in local-area and global computer networks and are essentially a combination of a soccer manager, an Internet casino and an Internet exchange. The inventive system provides the users with a means for participation in virtual soccer tournaments on a commercial basis and generates unique statistics of the results of each competitor.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] Game and service multi-user systems simulating sporting events are widespread and in the generally accepted terminology are referred to as sporting (soccer) managers, simulators, etc. In the vast majority of cases, the formula of such systems consists in the creation of a virtual sports team and participation of the said team in a virtual tournament. The user, on a commercial or grant basis and by elementary manipulations, controls his/her team (chooses players, makes transfer transactions, manages his/her club infrastructure, etc.). As a rule, the user's activity is illustrated by an appropriate interface, and the system program outputs the result under user-defined conditions who, in such a way, has a passive part in the strategic tournament process.

[0003] A patent application US 2002/0115488 describes a network competition (specifically, a golf event) consisting of games, tournaments and seasons. Players score points depending on the game outcome and, depending on the score, advance towards the finals of a championship.

[0004] JP-2001-000749 describes a method of a network game in which the user creates a team and conditions his/her players, their physical and psychological capacity, athletic performance, elaborates the team tactics and strategy.

[0005] The closest prior art of the claimed invention can be deemed to be US patent 4,918,603, which describes an online soccer game based on real soccer competitions. A user selects players from a list and buys them, thus raising a team. Wins and losses of the team are determined based on the number of points of each soccer player included in the team, which are computed automatically using real weekly matches of the soccer league players. Thus, the system is related to real matches and the outcome of the game depends on the outcomes of such matches.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] It is an object of the invention to afford an opportunity to take part in a multi-user game for real money or play money, as well as to promote the game attractiveness and dynamism, to expand opportunities of users participating in the game.

[0007] Likewise the system described in US 4,918,603, the invention enables users to participate, on a commercial basis, in virtual soccer tournaments (FTBL LEAGUES) and to play by teams formed from soccer players offered by the system's database. The user is offered a wide range of game variants according to his/her commercial opportunities and tournament interests. The objective of the user is to obtain positive tournament results while competing with other users and the software of said system which imitates user actions in accordance with a certain algorithm.

[0008] As distinguished from the known systems, the unique gaming principle of the invention consists in the use of a graphic display of a modified roulette based on a random number generator. Apart from traditional tournament results, said system generates unique statistics of indicators (points), a positive balance of which also allows the user to qualify for a part of the prize fund in one form or another.

[0009] To attain the stated objective, the inventive method includes the following operations of the user and game server interaction:

[0010] Data exchange between the game server and computers of the users, which includes registration and authorization of the users on the game website. The users are enabled to purchase players from which teams are formed, and the team rating is determined based on the rating of individual players. Then, soccer championships are conducted among said teams with each event of a match determined by means of a hardware random number generator, which generates the results of a spin of a virtual roulette divided into fields corresponding to likely events of the match.

[0011] Within certain limits, the user can change the rating of his/her team before the beginning of each match, for example, increases it by taking up part of the rating from the next game or decreases the rating by passing on part of the rating to the next game.

[0012] The user also selects the number of game segments in each match with the participation of his/her team within the limits of the predetermined number of games in a championship for said team.

[0013] To determine a match event, the use is made of a roulette comprising fields with player numbers corresponding to the events: "goal scored", "goal conceded" and "zero".

[0014] The number of the "zero" fields is determined in a random manner before the beginning of each match.

[0015] The number of the "goal scored" and "goal conceded" fields is determined by the ratio of ratings of the playing teams.

[0016] Based on the outcome of a game, the user's team wins a certain position which determines the amount of the user's wins or losses. Statistics are generated as a match or tournament progresses and are stored in a special lobby. The rating required for enrolment in a tournament is calculated by using a unique methodology based on performance of real prototypes of the virtual soccer players and may increase or decrease with time depending on individual or team indicators registered in real matches. Attainment of maximum statistical indicators (points) by a player and/or a team presupposes that such points can be converted into system's money or trophies. Each game event has a particular value in points as determined by the system settings.

[0017] One of the embodiments of the inventive system is an opportunity to conduct online sports tournaments with the participation of user-created virtual teams with different initial ratings. In this case, before a game begins, the users place bets which are equal to the ratings of their teams, and payments are made based on the results of the tournament depending on the difference between the initial and final ratings of the teams.

[0018] In the course of the tournament, the users may be paid additional bonuses and/or penalties so as to ensure that the average wins of any team, regardless of its initial rating, are equal to zero, and that before the start of a championship all users are on a statistically equal footing.

[0019] Another embodiment of the invention provides for conducting online sports tournaments with the participation of user-created virtual teams with different initial ratings, characterized in that before the beginning of each match, bets of the users are taken and an amount of the bets is set before the tournament regardless of the ratings of the competing teams, single round tournaments are conducted among the teams and an outcome of each match is determined by means of a hardware random number generator, which generates the results of a spin of a virtual roulette divided into fields corresponding to likely events of the match; and based on the outcome of each match, payments are made to the winner in accordance with the ratios of the ratings.

[0020] Another embodiment of the invention provides for simulation of a soccer match by means of a roulette game in which the winner is determined based on the results of eleven minisegments of the game and some random number of standard positions that occur at random between game segments. In this case, every minisegment of the game is conducted by way of starting the roulette for each team. Standard positions (direct free kicks, penalty kicks) can score additional goals the probability of which is determined versus the ratio of ratings of the playing teams.

[0021] Before each game segment, the users place bets and the bets that win in the course of the game segments are summed up and the score is determined based on the sum received.

[0022] Concurrently with the conduct of a soccer tournament, there is also a possibility of playing a poker game in which cards are dealt based on the results of the roulette starts determining each event of a soccer match with separate prize funds formed in the soccer tournament and in the poker game.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0023]

Fig. 1 is a graphic display of a modified roulette that is used in the FTBL games for determination of match events.

Fig. 2 is a view of a game lobby comprising a graphic display of a modified roulette, a tournament table and the game control elements (a variant of the FTBL LEAGUES game).

Fig. 3 is a view of the MY TEAMS lobby comprising information about players and their ratings.

Fig. 4 is a view of the lobby comprising match and tournament statistics.

Fig. 5 is a control system of the FTBL MIX game.

Fig. 6 is a view of a gaming table for the FTBL ROULETTE game.

Fig. 7 is a view of a gaming table for the FTBL POKER game.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0024] The system making use of the inventive method is based on the activities of the users subject to registration in accordance with a form as claimed in the invention. For this purpose, in the course of starting, the game client of a user is connected with the game server and prompts the user to enter his/her identification data which are sent to the game server for verification.

[0025] During registration, the user specifies his/her details, which are not displayed on the game page and are inaccessible to other visitors.

[0026] Then, to play in a championship, the user needs to form a virtual team of soccer players, which he/she forms in the game client based on the soccer players data received from the game server. Upon completion of the team formation process, the team is saved on the game server. Each player has some rating which can change from time to

time. The cumulative rating of the players of the team determines the current rating of the user's team.

[0027] Every registered user has the discretion to make a decision on the variant and size of his/her game fund (rating) and on creation of his/her team(s). One team includes 23 players and is made up of any soccer players of the system database according to the following scheme: 3 keepers, 6 defenders, 8 midfielders and 6 forwards. The database includes all players of 23 real championships offered by the system and is updated depending on the changes in the line-up of the real teams. The system also commands a database of soccer players who are presently inactive but who participated in real championships of past years. The system makes it possible to enter "extra" soccer players in the books whom the user may dispose of (sell or buy at the system exchange) as the user thinks fit. Any sold player ceases to be on the team but can be subsequently acquired under purchase conditions established by the system. Furthermore, the user can himself/herself create any soccer player(s) and enter him (them) in the database in accordance with the scheme developed by the system. One and the same player may not belong to different teams of the user(s), may not be duplicated in any of them, but may be present in teams of different users.

[0028] The team rating is made up of ratings of engaged soccer players from the database of the system. The rating is calculated by using a special methodology based on performance of real prototypes of the soccer players and may increase or decrease with time depending on individual or team indicators registered in real matches. The main individual indicators include: the player's participation in the match, his play time, the difference of goals scored and conceded by the player's team while he was on the field, yellow and red cards, scored goals, own goals, unscored penalty kicks, parried penalty kicks (for keepers), shutout games (for keepers and defenders). The main team indicators are: the outcomes of the matches, goals scored and conceded by the player's team. The players' ratings differentiate depending on their positions. For example, for a forward, only goals scored by his team come into account, for a midfielder - the difference of scored and conceded goals, for a keeper and a defender - only goals conceded by the team. The rating also depends on the level of the tournament in which the real prototype of the user's team participates. National championships are divided into 5 levels with the coefficients between 1 and 5. For international tournaments, the coefficients vary in a wider range and depend on the tournament phase. The top level 10 is awarded to the World Cup final match.

[0029] To play in a championship of some league, the user has to have a team with the current rating at or above the minimum one and at or below the maximum one in that league. The maximum rating in a league is other than the rating of the first team. It is determined so that the rating of the first team is 20% less than the maximum one. The minimum rating in a league is equal to the rating of the last team. An exception is League A where there are no restrictions as to the maximum rating of a team.

[0030] Should the user attempt to check in a game in a championship, the game client sends a query to the server, and the game server checks whether there is any vacancy in the championship and whether the user's team qualify for the championship requirements, as well as whether there is a game fund of real money and (or) play money. In case of a favourable decision, the server sends a signal to the game client enabling the user to participate in the given virtual championship.

[0031] So long as the user has a right to have several own teams, the user is afforded an opportunity to apply for their participation in several tournaments in accordance with the rules of the system. Having formed a team with a particular rating, the user selects a tournament from those offered by the system and checks in, as well as lays a bet consistent with the rating of the user's position or with the maximum rating in that league.

[0032] The user is afforded an opportunity to select any team from 23 leagues offered by the system, a national team, a real-based team the first eleven of which conform to the prototypes from that real-based team, and any fantasy team. The user may form more than one team in accordance with the rules of the system. Teams not taken by the users before the beginning of the championship are attended by robots throughout the championship. The teams of robots play by a fixed algorithm; they do not take up the rating from the following matches and always set, for their part, the number of the roulette starts equal to the mean (three).

[0033] A pool of exclusive competitions of the system includes tournaments created by the user, who invites competitors at his/her own discretion, as well as any fantasy championships, cup tournaments and retro-championships offered by the system. In addition, the system offers a pool of tournaments reproducing the format of 23 leading national championships of Europe and Latin America; international club tournaments and tournaments for national teams.

[0034] After the users have selected initial positions of their teams, the play for the championship begins in accordance with the double round system. The teams that remain unselected by the users by the beginning of the tournament are controlled by robots. The number of user teams in any game for real money should be at least two controlled by two different users. A total of N teams participate in any tournament; hence, each team should play $K = 2(N-1)$ games. The final tournament table takes shape proceeding from the premise that any team receives three points for every win and one point for a draw. If two or more teams score an equal number of points, the team positions are distributed as follows:

- according to the difference of scored and conceded goals;
- according to the number of scored goals (whoever scored the most);
- according to the outcomes of face-to-face matches (that team ranks higher which scores more points in the face-

- to-face matches);
- by lot.

[0035] The rules for filling in the final tournament table when playing for real money are the same as when playing for play money. The only difference is that the initial team ratings are not uniformly spaced, but are generated in the form of two groups: a group of teams in the upper part of the tournament table with equal ratings (teams of the users) and teams of robots whose ratings are lower and depend on which particular teams have been selected by the users and which remain for the robots.

[0036] In each match, the final score is determined based on the outcomes of t game segments. The total number of game segments in a game is essentially a number from two to ten and is determined by both users in the following manner: throughout the whole championship, $3K$ game segments in the aggregate are reserved for each team (K is the total number of games in the championship for each team). Each user distributes this reserve of game segments at his/her own discretion. If at the end of the championship the number of games remaining to the end of the championship comes up to the number of the remaining unexpended game segments or if, vice versa, the number of the remaining games becomes five times less than the number of the unexpended game segments, the user loses an opportunity to distribute the number of segments per game until the end of the championship. In this case, the number of segments in the remaining games is automatically set equal to the minimum (one) or maximum (five) number in the effect that the total number of game segments played by all teams in the championship is the same.

[0037] Each game segment appears in the form of a start of the roulette consisting of 36 fields (Fig. 1) divided by convention into three main sectors (plus the "captain" field) corresponding to three situations in segment t : goal scored; goal conceded; goal neither scored nor conceded (draw in segment t , the zero sector).

[0038] Numbers of 35 fields designate numbers of players of the opposite teams (from 1 to 22 with account of first eleven and substitute players), and one field (5) - the "captain" - is unnumbered.

[0039] The size of the "zero" sector (the number of the respective fields) is determined as follows: an even number of fields from six to thirty is selected in each game at random, but so that altogether approximately equal number of games with the fields of all permissible sizes come to hand in the championship. That is to say that the total number of games in which the "zero" sector makes up 6, 8, 10, etc., up to 30 fields is equal to $K/13$. If the result of the division is other than an integer number, the residue is added to the number of games with six and thirty fields so that an average size of the "zero" sector is approximately 18 fields, somewhat less (a one game too many residue is added to the case with the minimum size of the "zero" sector, 6). A choice of how many fields exactly will contain the "zero" sector in a particular game is made in a random manner with equal probability out of those variants that remain to the end of the championship.

[0040] The sizes of two other sectors ("goal scored" and "goal conceded") are determined according to the ratio of the ratings of the playing teams; more specifically, the integer part of the ratio determines the dimensional relationship of said sectors, and the fractional part commands the winning probability according to the rule for the special field "captain".

[0041] The ball drops in spins (game segments) of such roulette represent events occurring on the field, and the difference in integer parts of the ratings (class) of the opposite teams is equivalent to the number of the roulette fields corresponding thereto. Aside from that, the difference in the ratings (class) is inherent to the "captain" field, whose playing (when the ball lands therein) supposes an additional spin. Distribution of the fields on the roulette in that spin is equivalent to the difference in the fractional parts of the ratings. In such a way, the team with a higher rating (the favourite) always has a bigger number of "its" fields and, accordingly, enjoys a higher probability to win, which approximates the game to the real soccer. For even greater similarity to the match events, the fields of the playing teams differ in colours and are divided into active fields (1) and (2) representing a goal scored by the visiting team or by the host team and passive fields (3) and (4) representing any game situations, other than a goal scored by the visiting team or by the host team (Fig. 1). Such passive fields as the "zero" sector imply virtual weather conditions and their number is determined by the program of the system at random in synchrony with the beginning of the match. A larger number of passive fields asserts bad weather and a lower probability of goal attempts, and vice versa. Every match consists of several runs (spins) of the roulette being the sum of spins preset by the competitors before the match. The minimum and maximum number of the spins in the match is limited within the range from 2 to 10.

[0042] In the course of preparation for the matches, the user makes use of an indicator that controls the rating by an additional rating (game fund), thus strengthening its team or, vice versa, saving his/her means for the future. An average team rating in any tournament conforms to its rating before the start thereof. Furthermore, the user has the opportunity to make use of a bluff-rating indicator and to set its reading in such a way that to disorient his/her rival in the next tour. In such a way, the user can influence the tactics and strategy of its team as the tournament progresses.

[0043] The user can change the rating value for the current game by taking up part of the rating from the next game or by passing on part of the rating to the next game. The maximum part of the taken up/passed on rating is 90% of the initial one. Hence, if the user plays for a team whose rating at the time of the team selection was equal to r , then the maximum rating value in a game can be $1.9r$, and the minimum one - $0.1r$. In this case, the current rating in the next

game will be reduced or increased depending on whether the user took up or passed on part of the rating in the previous game. The final rating for a game should be calculated as the current rating plus the amount of the rating passed on from the previous game or minus the amount of the rating taken up for the previous game. In the last game of the championship, the user is unable to change the rating of his/her team.

[0044] The user may not change the team rating or the number of game segments in a match if the opposite teams are checked in on behalf of one and the same user.

[0045] Thus, the outcome of each match depends both on the user actions (he/she selects the number of game segments and takes up/passes on part of the rating) and on the random number generator (one random number determines the size of the "zero" sector for the match and several more random numbers determine the results of the roulette spins in each game segment). Additional random numbers can determine nuances related to the team's line-up for the match and its presentation on the roulette. However, they have an ancillary character and have no effect on the match outcome.

[0046] The most important action of the user in the process of any game is control of his/her team(s). Knowing the movement of the ratings assigned to real-based prototypes of the soccer players, the user can change the line-up of his/her team, for example sell players whose ratings have declined (with the net negative effect on the team's rating), and buy better players. The ratings of real-life soccer players from 23 leagues offered by the system are published in the information lobby of the system (Fig. 3), and available to all visitors regardless of whether they have registered in the system. Interactive displays of the playing lobby ensure not only direct participation of the user in the game process, but also his/her comments and chatting with other users in the community. As the tournament progresses, the user has the opportunity to observe and analyze both the traditional soccer statistics and those offered by the system in the form of bonus points. Statistical information is generated in a specially lobby (Fig. 4) which the user can access at any time from the playing lobby by using navigation buttons. Upon completion of each tournament, the system program determines how each team performed, and notifies the users of their game fund balances, awarded bonuses and unique prizes in individual and team nominations instituted by the system.

[0047] An exclusive feature of the playing lobby is a graphic display therein of a modified roulette of the system (Fig. 2).

[0048] The playing lobby is provided with a game segment down counter. A special window informs the user about the virtual weather conditions during the match, and a counting down stopwatch tells the time before the match starts. To control the team in the course of any tournament, indicators are introduced that are used to control the ratings (including the bluff ratings) and the number of spins set by the user before the match. Aside from that, the playing lobby displays technical and statistical options accompanying traditional soccer matches and tournaments: a competition calendar with the outcomes of played matches, the tournament table with the indexation of the teams movement therein and with the teams of the user and of the nearest competitors highlighted, a display showing the score of the current match with the host team and visiting team highlighted, the teams line-up. By analogy with the real soccer matches, a special indicator shows the virtual minute in which the event occurred (the ball fell in on the roulette). For the purpose of sensory acuity and liveliness of the game, a window is introduced with online comments of standard situations in the current match preset by the system program with graphic elements and a chat forum for online chatting of the community. The playing lobby is furnished with navigation buttons to access other lobbies of the system (statistics, players database, information menu, etc.).

[0049] The user has the discretion to withdraw from the game at any time in accordance with the rules. Having checked in and given a team(s) and a game fund, the user is enrolled in the tournament(s) he/she selects. His/her team(s), having a particular rating, assumes an appropriate starting position in the table compiled as follows: the first position is taken by the team with the highest rating, the last position - by the team with the lowest rating. The objective of the user is to improve his/her position and to score as many bonus points as possible or, as a minimum, to retain his/her starting position in the tournament table when it comes to an end. The championships and leagues play in accordance with the double round system (all-play-all), the play for the traditional (retro) championships is carried out in accordance with the formulae of the championships, cup series are knockout competitions. The winner is considered to be the outscoring team of the tournament. The runner-up is the team that comes next to the winner according to the score sum in descending order. Likewise, all other standings are computed.

Determination of Payout

[0050] The final standing in the tournament table sets a new value of the rating of the team selected by the user. After the championship is over, the users' payout is determined as follows: the computed difference between the new and initial ratings of each team is increased/decreased by the bonus/penalty points. After the tournament, the user receives his/her bet with the amount of the payout added thereto (with account of the sign). For teams with a negative payout (the upper part of the rating table), provision is made for bonuses for ranking among the first three in the tournament table based on the results of the championship; and for teams with a positive payout (the lower part of the rating table), there are penalties for coming among the last four. The sizes of bonuses and penalties are determined by means of a

special program on the assumption that all teams provide for identical, on the average, zero payout for a player regardless of the initial rating. In this case, different teams feature different dispersion of the payout (the game toughness).

[0051] The bonuses and penalties are computed using the following formulae.

[0052] Bonuses for the top three places:

$$\text{prize}[i,1] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i] k_1}{p[i,1]k_1 + p[i,2](1-k_1)/2 + p[i,3](1-k_1)/5};$$

$$\text{prize}[i,2] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i](1-k_1)/2}{p[i,1]k_1 + p[i,2](1-k_1)/2 + p[i,3](1-k_1)/5};$$

$$\text{prize}[i,3] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i](1-k_1)/5}{p[i,1]k_1 + p[i,2](1-k_1)/2 + p[i,3](1-k_1)/5}.$$

where i is the sequence number of the team on the initial rating list,

$\text{pay}[i]$ is the average payout for that team,

$p[i,j]$ is the probability for the i -th team to gain the j -th place,

k_1 is a setup variable taking the value within the range from 0 to 1 (approximately from 0.5 to 1 in order to observe the principle of sportsmanship) and determining which part of the payout is compensated by the bonus for the top position ($k_1=1$, the entire bonus is given only for the top position, $k_1=0.5$ - for the results, see Appendix 2).

[0053] Bonuses are given only to those teams which have a negative payout.

[0054] Penalties for the last four places:

$$\text{penalty}[i, n-3] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i](1-k_2)}{p[i, n-3](1-k_2) + p[i, n-2](1-k_2) + p[i, n-1](1-k_2) + p[i, n]k_2};$$

$$\text{penalty}[i, n-2] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i](1-k_2)}{p[i, n-3](1-k_2) + p[i, n-2](1-k_2) + p[i, n-1](1-k_2) + p[i, n]k_2};$$

$$\text{penalty}[i, n-1] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i](1-k_2)}{p[i, n-3](1-k_2) + p[i, n-2](1-k_2) + p[i, n-1](1-k_2) + p[i, n]k_2};$$

$$\text{penalty}[i, n] = \frac{-\text{pay}[i]k_2}{p[i, n-3](1-k_2) + p[i, n-2](1-k_2) + p[i, n-1](1-k_2) + p[i, n]k_2}.$$

where i is the sequence number of the team on the initial rating list,

$\text{pay}[i]$ is the average payout for that team,

$p[i,j]$ is the probability for the i -th team to gain the j -th place,

k_2 is a setup variable taking the value within the range from 0 to 1 (approximately from 0.5 to 1 in order to observe the principle of sportsmanship) and determining which part of the payout is compensated by the bonus for the top position ($k_2=1$, the entire penalty is given only to the last team, $k_2=0.5$ - for the results, see Appendix 2).

[0055] Penalties are given only to those teams which have a positive payout. In each particular tournament for play money, the amount of bets of all teams not necessarily coincides with the amount of the payout. On the average, the difference between all bets and payouts summarily for all teams in the championship converge to zero, but during the

final series of the championships it oscillates with some dispersion, and an average deviation from zero for losses is greater than for winnings (large terminal payouts take place less frequently than losses). Accordingly, the game requires some reserve fund of play money, which will be spent and replenished as required.

[0056] When playing for real money, the payout is paid fully from the prize fund (PF) formed from all bets of the players. Distribution of the payout depends only on the relative position of the users' teams in the final tournament table and is independent of their positions relative to the robot teams. The payout in real money is formed as a percentage of the PF in real money according to the following table:

Table 1. Payout Formation when Playing for Real Money Versus the Prize Fund in Real Money.

Number of users' teams	1 place	2 place	3 place	4 place	5 place	6 place	7 place	8 place	9 place	10 place	11-20 place
2	100%	0	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
3-4	75%	25%	0	0	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
5-8	50%	30%	20%	0	0	0	0	0	----	----	----
9-10	48%	23%	17%	12%	0	0	0	0	0	0	----
11-13 3	42%	20%	16%	12%	10%	0	0	00	0	0	0
14-20	35%	20%	15%	12%	10%	8%	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Tournament Points

[0057] In the course of the championship, players of the user team accrue special points which, after each championship, are summed up for each team individually. The points are added for

- (a) each goal scored (playing of forwards);
- (b) each goal unscored by the opposite team (playing of defenders);
- (c) good playing (affiliation).

[0058] Event (a) "scored goal" for the selected team occurs when the next start of the roulette brings the ball in the sector proportional to the rating of the selected team (goal sector). The "scored goal" event also occurs when winning in drawing the "captain" sector.

[0059] Event (b) "goal unscored by the opposite team" for the selected team occurs when the next start of the roulette brings the ball in the sector corresponding to a half of the "zero" sector allocated to the given team.

[0060] Event (c) "affiliation" occurs in each match. This event in each game segment brings either ten points, if the goal sector of the given team consists of more than ten fields, or as many points as there are fields in the goal sector for the given team.

[0061] If N teams play for the championship in accordance with the double round system, then a total of $M=N(N-1)$ matches are played (380 for 20 teams) and, accordingly, the roulette is started $6N(N-1)$ (2280 times for 20 teams). In this case, according to the algorithm for calculation from scratch, the number of goals scored throughout the championship must amount, on the average, to

$$p1=39[M/13]+6[\{M/13\}/2]+5\{\{M/13\}/2\}.$$

[0062] Here, square brackets mean an integer part of the division, and squiggle brackets mean an integer-valued residue of the division. For Championship A with the participation of 20 teams, the average number of scored goals will be 1142. The number of scored goals during such championship average from 71 for the winning team to 43 for the last team.

[0063] The average number of unscored goals throughout the championship is

$$p2=39[M/13]+6[\{M/13\}/2]+\{\{M/13\}/2\}.$$

For Championship A with the participation of 20 teams, the average number of unscored goals will be 1138. The number

of goals unscored by all teams is approximately equal (it does not depend on the rating and averages 57 for such championship).

[0064] The number of points for good playing for League A of 20 teams average from 323 for the best team to 247 for the worst team. The total number of points for the championship can be roughly estimated as

$$p_3 = 15.3M.$$

[0065] The total number of points accrued for good playing in Championship A with the participation of 20 teams is 5818 on the average (based on the results of a million championships).

Accumulating Statistics

[0066] Based on the results of each championship, the following statistics are accumulated:

- a list of teams with ratings.
- a list of the users (no more than two teams per user throughout the championship).
- a table of the games schedule and outcomes (score, number of rounds, ratings for the given game).
- the final tournament table with statistics of the teams.
- bets of all users.
- payouts of all users.
- distribution of points among the teams and users.

[0067] The invention is based on a system of unique statistics of the system tournaments in the form of bonus points. Statistics are generated as a match or tournament progresses and are stored in a special lobby (Fig. 4). Positive statistics of a player and (or) a team of any user win money or trophies of the system.

[0068] Each event has a particular value in points, which is preset in the system settings. There are the following kinds of events in the tournaments of the system for which points are accrued: goal, non-goal save (assist), non-goal keeper's play, good play, beautiful goal. Individual and team achievements also have a particular value in points preset in the system settings. Individual nominations: 23 best players of the championship, the best goal scorer, the best in his position, the most attacking defender, the player who scored the most beautiful goal in the tournament. Team trophies: the Spectators choice trophy, the trophy for the largest number of smashing wins, the Will-to-Win trophy, the Giant-killer trophy.

[0069] The best forward of the championship is determined according to the following rule: the program computes the sum of all goals scored by the player in the "attack" position and multiplies it by the applicable coefficients of the goal attractiveness. The best midfielder of the championship is determined according to the following rule: the program computes the sum of all goals scored by the player in the "midfield" position and multiplies it by the applicable coefficients of the goal attractiveness, + the sum of all games played in the defence multiplied by the applicable coefficients of the performance in the defence. The best defender of the championship is determined according to the following rule: the program computes the sum of all games the defender played in the defence and multiplies it by the applicable coefficients of the performance in the defence. The best keeper of the championship is determined according to the following rule: the program computes the number of saves (i.e. the number of times the roulette ball fell in the field with the keeper's number). The most attacking defender of the championship is determined according to the following rule: the program computes the sum of all goals scored by the player in the "defence" position without regard to the coefficients of the goal attractiveness. The player who scored the most beautiful goal in the tournament is determined according to the following rule: the program selects the goal with the highest coefficient irrespective of the player's position.

[0070] The Spectators choice trophy in the championship is determined according to the following rule: for each team, the program computes the sum of coefficients of the goal attractiveness and coefficients of games in the defence according to the tournament results. The smashing win trophy is determined according to the following rule: for each team, the program determines the result with a wide score: the difference in goals is 3 and more. The Will-to-Win trophy is determined according to the following rule: for each team, the program determines the number of wins in cases when the team was initially losing in the course of the match. The Giant-killer trophy is determined according to the following rule: by the number of points which the team took in matches with the medal winners, i.e. those teams who came in 1st, 2nd and 3rd according to the tournament results.

[0071] The picked team of the tournament is formed from the best players in their positions: 3 keepers, 6 defenders, 8 midfielders and 6 forwards. To determine the best players in each position, the following indicators are taken into account: the sum of all goals multiplied by 2 and multiplied by the applicable coefficients of the goal attractiveness, the sum of all games played in the defence multiplied by the applicable coefficients of the performance in the defence.

[0072] In the team's line-up, the players take up the following first lines on the roster with the following numbers: the best forward - 11, the best midfielder - 8, the best defender - 2, the best keeper - 1.

[0073] The list of best players is updated in the statistics lobby of the system after each tour. The list screen offers a chart of the best players.

Collection of the Championship Participation Commission

[0074] When playing for the championship for play money, the user pays the commission after each championship in which his/her team participates has come to an end. The commission rate is equal to a fixed percentage of the final earnings of each team (earnings = difference in the ratings + bonus - penalty). The user pays the commission for those teams of his/her, which yielded a positive final outcome according to the results of the championship. If a team's final yield after a championship is negative, no commission is charged to such team.

[0075] When playing for real money, the commission is charged in real money and play money simultaneously before the beginning of the championship, and the users pay an equal for all teams percentage of the pot in both variants as fixed in the tournament settings. The rate per cent is set in the game settings and can be edited by the administrator within the range from 0% to 20%.

FTBL MIX GAME

[0076] One of the variants of the system according to the invention is a variety of the game, FTBL MIX. Admitted into tournaments of the FTBL MIX game can be teams with arbitrary ratings within some range. The range of ratings is preset before the championship in the form of an indication of the league category to which the championship conforms. To play in a FTBL MIX tournament, the user must: have a team with a rating within the limits of the range preset for the championship; pay a flat amount of the commission; place his/her bet on the tournament. The amount of the bet is set before the tournament and it does not depend on the team rating. For low-rating teams, a part of the bet will be returned to the player after the end of the tournament. The users can place bets in real money or in play money at the established rate, if any, or only in play money or only in real money (then all users place equal bets in one and the same money) if the conversion rate has not been established. If different users place bets in different money, the user receives part of the bet in the same money in which it was placed.

[0077] In the FTBL MIX game, tournaments are conducted in accordance with the single round system, each team plays with another team only once, and there is no concept of "home game" or "away game" here. All teams are controlled by the real users and the number of teams is equal to or less than the number of teams in the respective league. Before each game, the users determine for their teams one of the five possible tactical schemes: neutral, offensive, defensive, ultra offensive and ultra defensive. The selected tactical scheme determines the number of "passive" fields on the roulette; it remains fixed throughout the game and is computed as the arithmetic mean of the parameters suggested by the users before the game. Then, the program automatically (irrespective of the users) determines the amount of the players' bets on that match. The bets are taken from the total bet placed by the user on the whole championship. In this case, in contrast to other variants of the games, it is prohibited to borrow rating here. The winner of each game receives both his/her bet and the bet of his/her rival, and if the game ends in a draw, the user recovers his/her bets on the given match. The exact score in any game is of no consequence for distribution of prize money, it only works upon accrual of bonus points computed by the system. If the user plays other than for the strongest team of the tournament, then his/her bet on the tournament will not be exhausted by the end of the tournament. After the tournament, the balance of the bet is returned to the user. The average payout for all teams in such case will be equal to zero.

[0078] The FTBL MIX game is provided with the playing lobby differing from the playing lobbies of other game varieties offered by the system (Fig. 5). Its base, as in all other variants, is a screen display of a modified roulette of the system. All other graphic elements enabling the user to take bearings in the current match situation and in the tournament in general are also displayed in the playing lobby of the FTBL MIX game. The playing lobby is also furnished with interactive displays for commenting and chatting, as well as with navigation buttons to access other lobbies of the system.

[0079] The fundamental distinction is existence of a selector for selection of a team's tactical scheme in the playing lobby of the FTBL MIX game, which is essential for the user actions in that game. The selector is provided with buttons of five tactical schemes offered by the system and a graphic display of the soccer field with the symbols of players representing that tactics (see Fig. 5).

FTBL ROULETTE GAME

General Principles

[0080] One of the variants of the system according to the invention is a variety of the game, FTBL ROULETTE (Fig.

6). The FTBL ROULETTE game is essentially a simulator of a soccer game between two teams, in which the winner is determined based on the results of eleven minisegments of the game and some random number of standard positions. Every minisegment of the game is conducted by way of two starts of a European roulette modified in a special way, one for each team. Before every game segment, the users place bets in accordance with some rules, the bets that win in the course of the game segments are summed up and the score is determined based on the sum received. Additional goals can be scored from standard positions that occur at random between the game segments. A probability to score a goal in a standard position is determined as a function of the ratio of ratings of the playing teams.

[0081] The ratio of ratings of the playing teams should be no less than 0.306208, which approximately conforms to the ratio of the ratings of the last and top team of League A20. The team, scoring in the aggregate the greatest number of goals through the game, is declared the winner. If the teams score an equal number of goals, a draw is declared. The game can be organized as in the mode of a face-to-face match, so within the framework of a tournament. In case of a face-to-face match, the players' bets on the match are determined in proportion to the ratings of the playing teams.

[0082] The game offers as typical cup series (knockout competitions), so group tournaments. In cup tournaments, bets of the users' teams are equal to their ratings. In group tournaments, the users place bets proportional to the probability of their teams to reach the playoff phase. At the next stage, the team ratings and bets are equalized.

Selection of Teams and Determination of the Amount of Bets and Commission

[0083] Before the game begins, the users have to select their teams in such a way that their ratings lie within some fixed range of ratings, for example, within the framework of a single league (see the league table of the soccer championships). It is essential that the rating of one of the teams playing the second game is no more than five times as high as the rating of its rival. Each team must consist of 23 players playing at the following positions: 3 keepers, 6 defenders, 8 midfielders, 6 forwards. Players can be purchased through the players database which specifies what players are currently available for purchase by the user. Each player has some rating which can change from time to time. The cumulative rating of the players on the team determines the current rating of the user's team.

[0084] Having selected their teams, the users place bets. The bet of the user S_1 having the team with the highest rating r_1 is designated by the system administrator (by default, it is equal to the rating in terms of play money). The bet of the user S_2 having a lower rating r_2 is determined in proportion to the ratings ratio:

$$S_2 = S_1 * (r_2 / r_1)$$

[0085] The amount of commission in the game is equal for both players and is fixed at the level between 0 and 10 % of the maximum bet S_1 . The commission is invariant with the outcome of the match, is collected before the game and can be treated as the game participation commission.

Rules of Playing in Minisegments of the Game

[0086] Before the game begins, the users are given an equal number of gambling chips:

- 15 large chips each,
- 18 small chips (15 "statistical" chips and 3 keeper's chips) each, and
- 3 special, the "captain," chips each.

[0087] The value of the large chip is equal to the value of three small chips, the nominal value of the "captain" chip is equal to the nominal value of the small chip whose nominal value is counted as unity. All in all, every user has 66 points worth of chips. Bets are placed according to the standard rules of the European roulette with the following peculiarities:

- 1) The roulette has no zero field (a total of 36 sectors).
- 2) In each of the 11 minisegments, the user has to bet at least one chip on a number (the bet with a probability of 1/36).
- 3) The cumulative winning probability per user in each minisegment is less than or equal to 0.5 (bets cover no more than half of the field).
- 4) In each minisegment, the sum of chips betted by each player must give a number between 1 and 11.
- 5) In each minisegment, the sum of chips betted by each player must be different (as compared with the player's bets in the previous minisegments).
- 6) Types of bets:

Table 2. Description of the Types of Bets in the FTBL ROULETTE Game

name	description	probability
straight up	bet on any number	1/36
split	bet on two different neighbouring numbers (other than pairs including at least one of the fields 9b, 10r, 11r)	2/36
column	bet on any vertical line of three numbers	3/36
square	bet on four neighbouring fields (other than squares including at least one of the fields 9b, 10r, 11r)	4/36
sixline	bet on any two neighbouring vertical lines (other than a six-line bet including one field 9b)	6/36
dozen	bet on one of the three dozens	12/36
street	bet on a horizontal row	12/36
colour	bet on all fields of one colour	18/36
half-field	bet on the left half of the table, on the right half of the table, on the central area of the table of 18 fields	18/36
wingers	(Nos 10b, 10b, 9b, 9b, 11r); (Nos 11r, 11r, 11b, 9r, 10r).	5/36
midfield	(Nos 5r, 5r, 6r, 6r, 7r, 7r, 8r, 8r).	8/36
attack	(Nos 10r, 10r, 10r, 9r, 9r, 9r, 11r, 11r, 11r).	9/36
field players	(Nos 2r, 3r, 4r, 5r, 6r, 7r, 8r, 9r, 10r, 11r).	10/36
corners	red colour (Nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 11); black colour (Nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9, 10, 10, 11).	12/36
5 lines	(Nos 13, 12, 4, 3, R, 4, 6, 6, 16, 7, 7, 17, 19, 20, 21)	15/36
5 lines + captain	captain (Nos 1, 1, 22, 2, 3, 14, 5, 5, 15, 8, 8, 18, 11r, 9r, 10r, R).	16/36

[0088] Both users place bets simultaneously, without seeing each other's bets until all bets have been placed, and the system automatically blocks bets that fail to meet the requirements 2 to 6.

[0089] If the user fails to place a bet in a definite time, the system sets them at its own discretion (a default bet): a chip with a unitary nominal value is placed on the maximum number, and the minimum possible quantity of the remaining chips are placed on the colour of that number.

[0090] After both users have placed their bets, the result is shown to both users and the play for the minisegment begins. The roulette is started twice: initially, for one user (with the higher rating), and then for the other one (with the lower rating). The users are unable to influence that process anyhow, they only observe both spins of the roulette.

[0091] The winning bet credits to the user's account the number of points equal to the nominal value of the winning chips divided by the winning probability. The winnings on the account are summed up for all minisegments and the sum obtained determines the number of scored goals:

every 50 gained points score one goal; for example, 120 points correspond to two goals, 150 points correspond to three goals, etc.

Standard Positions

[0092] The game provides for two kinds of standard positions, conventionally called a direct free kick and a penalty kick. Each team can take from zero to four direct free kicks and from zero to one penalty kick over any match. The time of occurrence of the standard positions and their number is determined in a random manner for each team independently in accordance with the following algorithm:

1) Before the game, an integer random number q1 from 1 to 10 is generated with equal probability for each team to show the number of the intermission between the minisegments in which the given team can take a penalty kick.

2) In each odd intermission, other than q1 if q1 is an odd number and other than q1-1 if q1 is an even number, a random number q2 is generated which takes the value of 0 or 1 with equal probability. If q2 is equal to 0, nothing happens (no

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standard position occurs in the nearest two intermissions, i.e. in the current or in the next one); if q2 is equal to 1, the team takes a direct free kick in the current or next intermission (with equal probability, another random number q3 determines in which particular intermission, in the current or in the next one).

3) The outcome of every direct free kick is determined as follows:

- 5 the team with the higher rating scores with a probability of 0.4, and the team with the lower rating scores with a probability determined versus the ratio of the ratings in accordance with the Table below:

Table 3. Probability of Scoring Goal in Direct Free Kick Versus the Ratio of the Team Ratings in the FTBL ROULETTE Game

	Rating ratio (lower to higher)	Scoring probability in direct free kick	Rating ratio (lower to higher)	Scoring probability in direct free kick	Rating ratio (lower to higher)	Scoring probability in direct free kick
10	0.306208	0.0001	0.464972	0.124	0.691614	0.26
	0.306659	0.0005	0.47079	0.128	0.699265	0.264
15	0.307223	0.001	0.476656	0.132	0.706978	0.268
	0.308353	0.002	0.482569	0.136	0.714753	0.272
	0.310619	0.004	0.48853	0.14	0.722592	0.276
	0.31518	0.008	0.494539	0.144	0.730494	0.28
20	0.319779	0.012	0.500597	0.148	0.73846	0.284
	0.324415	0.016	0.506704	0.152	0.746491	0.288
	0.329089	0.02	0.51286	0.156	0.754587	0.292
	0.333802	0.024	0.519065	0.16	0.762748	0.296
	0.338554	0.028	0.525321	0.164	0.770977	0.3
25	0.343344	0.032	0.531628	0.168	0.779272	0.304
	0.348174	0.036	0.537985	0.172	0.787634	0.308
	0.353043	0.04	0.544394	0.176	0.796064	0.312
	0.357952	0.044	0.550855	0.18	0.804563	0.316
30	0.362901	0.048	0.557368	0.184	0.813132	0.32
	0.36789	0.052	0.563933	0.188	0.82177	0.324
	0.37292	0.056	0.570552	0.192	0.830478	0.328
	0.377991	0.06	0.577224	0.196	0.839258	0.332
	0.383104	0.064	0.583949	0.2	0.848109	0.336
35	0.388258	0.068	0.59073	0.204	0.857032	0.34
	0.393454	0.072	0.597565	0.208	0.866029	0.344
	0.398693	0.076	0.604455	0.212	0.875099	0.348
	0.403974	0.08	0.611401	0.216	0.884243	0.352
40	0.409297	0.084	0.618403	0.22	0.893461	0.356
	0.414665	0.088	0.625461	0.224	0.902756	0.36
	0.420075	0.092	0.632577	0.228	0.912126	0.364
	0.42553	0.096	0.63975	0.232	0.921573	0.368
	0.431029	0.1	0.646981	0.236	0.931098	0.372
45	0.436573	0.104	0.654271	0.24	0.940701	0.376
	0.442161	0.108	0.66162	0.244	0.950383	0.38
	0.447795	0.112	0.669028	0.248	0.960144	0.384
	0.453474	0.116	0.676496	0.252	0.969986	0.388
50	0.4592	0.12	0.684024	0.256	0.979909	0.392
					0.989913	0.396
					1.	0.4

- 55 4) During intermission number q1, the team may take a penalty kick. For this purpose, the program initially generates a uniform random real number q4 in the interval between 0 and 1; if it is greater than 0.75 (a ¼ probability), the penalty kick is taken, otherwise nothing changes. As a result of taking the penalty kick, a goal is scored with a probability of 0.8 for the team with the higher rating and with a double probability to score a direct free kick for the team with the lower rating.

[0093] Both users are simultaneously informed about any direct free kick/penalty kick immediately before it is taken, and then receive information about its outcome. The users can exert no influence on the standard positions.

[0094] The outcome of the match is determined by the cumulative result of 11 minisegments and all standard positions.

5 **Computation of the Number of Points**

[0095] Based on the results of each minisegment, the team scores some hypothetical points, which are distributed among the players in a special way. If the team fails to score a goal in a given minisegment, the total number of the team's hypothetical points is increased by the number of points gained as a result of the roulette game in the given minisegment. In this case, the hypothetical points are distributed in equal proportion among the players with the following numbers:

- 1) the number of the pocket the ball falls in on the roulette (if the bet wins),
- 2) the numbers of the chips placed (only those chips that were placed on the winning bet),
- 3) the number of the assistant on the playing field.

[0096] If the outcome of a minisegment is a scored goal, then in addition to the hypothetical points already gained for the scored points, the team gains another 75 hypothetical points per goal, of which 50 receives the number of the scoring player and 25 the number of the assistant on the roulette ("two-way midfielder").

[0097] If a goal is scored as a result taking a standard position, the team also receives additional 50 hypothetical points. For personal distribution of points for the goals scored from the standard positions, as well as for the rules of determination of the player who scored the goal from the field and his assistant, see Appendix.

[0098] In such a way, having 66 points worth of chips in hand and scoring on the average one goal from the field and one from a standard position, the team with the higher rating will receive $66+50+75=201$ hypothetical points per game on the average, and the team with the lower rating (if the rating is more than twice as low) - on the order of $66+75=141$ hypothetical points.

[0099] In the belief that while playing in the League A championship of Game 1, an average team gains 580 points (according to the 3-2-1 system) and considering that approximately three FTBL ROULETTE games take place over the FTBL LEAGUES championship, it may be deduced that the nominal value of points in the FTBL LEAGUES game is approximately equal to the nominal value of the hypothetical points in the game.

Rules for Organization of Extra Time and Penalty Shootouts

[0100] In the event that the tournament rules make no provision for tying and in case of a tied score by the time the regulation game is over (after 11 minisegments), two additional minisegments are given; and if still there is no winner, the penalty shootout is taken.

[0101] The additional minisegments are arranged as follows: The roulette consisting of 36 fields is divided into three sectors: blue-green, black and red. The size of the blue-green sector is $z=12$ fields (an adjustable parameter), the sizes of the red and black sectors are derived from the formulae:

$$S_{\text{red}} = \frac{(36 - z)r_1}{r_1 + r_2}, S_{\text{black}} = \frac{(36 - z)r_2}{r_1 + r_2}$$

where r_1 is the rating of the red team, r_2 is the rating of the black team.

[0102] The user places no bets, all happens automatically.

[0103] Each minisegment of the extra time consists only of one run of the roulette.

[0104] If the ball lands in the blue-green sector, the score in the game remains unchanged; the black or red sector scores a goal for the team with the respective rating. There is no sudden death, that is to say that the game in the extra time always consists of two minisegments.

[0105] If after two such minisegments the score remains tied, a series of five penalty kicks follows (each team takes five penalty kicks). The scoring probability in a penalty kick for the team with the higher rating is equal to 0.8, whereas that for the team with the lower rating is found from the Table:

Table 4. Probability of Scoring Goal in Penalty Kick Versus the Ratio of the Team Ratings in the FTBL ROULETTE Game

	Rating ratio (lower to higher)	Scoring probability in penalty kick	Rating ratio (lower to higher)	Scoring probability in penalty kick
5	0.301391	0.644	0.541001	0.724
	0.31011	0.648	0.557722	0.728
	0.319097	0.652	0.575051	0.732
	0.328362	0.656	0.593018	0.736
10	0.337915	0.66	0.611652	0.74
	0.347767	0.664	0.630988	0.744
	0.35793	0.668	0.65106	0.748
	0.368416	0.672	0.671905	0.752
	0.379238	0.676	0.693563	0.756
15	0.390409	0.68	0.716076	0.76
	0.401944	0.684	0.73949	0.764
	0.413858	0.688	0.763852	0.768
	0.426165	0.692	0.789214	0.772
20	0.438883	0.696	0.815633	0.776
	0.452029	0.7	0.843167	0.78
	0.465622	0.704	0.871882	0.784
	0.47968	0.708	0.901845	0.788
	0.494225	0.712	0.933131	0.792
25	0.509278	0.716	0.96582	0.796
	0.524862	0.72	1.	0.8

[0106] If the score remains even just the same, another, sixth, penalty kick is actualized in the form of drawing lots: the roulette wheel is divided into two sectors the area of which is proportional to the team ratings, and that team is deemed to be the winner in which sector the ball stops after one spin of the roulette.

Peculiarities of Group Tournaments in the FTBL ROULETTE Game

[0107] The group tournament is played by four teams in each group.

[0108] Before the tournament begins, the team ratings are fixed and the teams are listed in descending order of their ratings. According to the initial ratings of the teams in the group, the program computes the probability of reaching the playoff phase and sets the amount of bets for each team.

[0109] The tournament is played in one round and consists of six matches. The matches are played either according to the rules of the FTBL MIX matches, or according to the rules of the FTBL ROULETTE matches; it is essential that there is a prior capability of estimating the probability of wins, losses and draws in all six matches of the group tournament. It is possible to play two kinds of group tournaments: in one the win gains two points, and in another - three points.

[0110] Two teams scoring the most enter the playoff phase. A team ranking third can also reach the playoff phase if it is included in the permissible number of teams who came in third in their groups and has the highest number of points among them.

[0111] If, based on the results of the group tournament, two or more teams score an equal number of points, the team with the superior additional indicators has priority. The list and relative priority of the additional indicators are set before every tournament, and by default the winner is determined as follows:

- according to the difference of scored and conceded goals;
- according to the number of scored goals (whoever scored the most);
- according to the outcomes of face-to-face matches (that team ranks higher which scores more points in the face-to-face matches);
- by lot.

[0112] The team's objective is to reach the playoff phase. The ratings of all teams reaching the playoff phase are equalized (become equal to the maximum one on the initial list of the teams), and the game is played in accordance with the cup (elimination) system. The probability to win in such a competition (group tournament + playoff games), as

well as the probability to win a medal, is directly proportional to the probability of reaching the playoff phase. For different teams, the probability of reaching the playoff phase is different (as a nonlinear function of the initial rating). For this reason, bets of different teams on a game must also be proportional to the probability of their reaching the playoff phase.
[0113] The proportionality coefficient is determined proceeding from the required size of the prize fund by formula:

$$k = \frac{S/n}{2 + t/n}$$

where S is the required overall size of the prize fund, n is the total number of the groups, t is the number of the third-ranking teams qualifying for the playoff. Then, the bet of each team is determined as the product of the k value by the team's probability of reaching the playoff phase. In this case, each player pays a commission ranging from zero to 20 percent of the bet; the percentage for all teams in the tournament is the same. The probability of reaching the playoff phase for each team is computed before the championship according to the following procedure.

Procedure for Calculation of the Probability of Reaching the Playoff Phase

[0114] Suppose, four teams are playing in a group tournament with the following ratings

$$r_1 \geq r_2 \geq r_3 \geq r_4.$$

[0115] The tournament is played in one round, two teams scoring the maximum number of points enter the playoff phase plus the third-ranking team with some probability $P_0 = t/n$. If the teams score an equal number of points, then as a first approximation it is sensible to believe that their reaching the playoff phase is equally probable.

[0116] A total of six matches are played in each group, and the results of individual matches are determined with the following probabilities:

Table 5. Probability of Outcomes of Individual Matches in Group Tournaments Versus Team Ratings.

	r1	r2	r3	r4
r1		$pw_{12}, pd_{12}, pl_{12}$	$pw_{13}, pd_{13}, pl_{13}$	$pw_{14}, pd_{14}, pl_{14}$
r2			$pw_{23}, pd_{23}, pl_{23}$	$pw_{24}, pd_{24}, pl_{24}$
r3				$pw_{34}, pd_{34}, pl_{34}$
r4				

where r_i is the rating of the i-th team

pw_{ij} is the probability of the i-th team winning from the j-th team,
 pd_{ij} is the probability of a draw in the i-th team vs. j-th team match,
 pl_{ij} is the probability of the i-th team losing to the j-th team.

[0117] Individual probabilities are determined proceeding from the strategy selected by the player, in which case for simple estimation, probability $pd=0.2$ can be taken for all matches, then

$$pw_{ij} = \frac{r_i}{r_i + r_j} (1 - pd_{ij})$$

$$pl_{ij} = \frac{r_j}{r_i + r_j} (1 - pd_{ij}).$$

FTBL POKER GAME***General Principles***

[0118] The invention of the system is a variety of the game FTBL POKER (Fig. 7). Said variety of the game may be used to determine the outcome of the match in virtual tournaments which are played in accordance with the cup system. In this case, teams enter the tournament with identical ratings and the players place identical bets. The commission in the competitions of this type of tournament poker is calculated and charged at a fixed amount. The bet in the tournament and the initial stack during the tournament are fixed for the first rounds (prize money stage not reached) and are raised in a certain progression upon reaching the prize money stage. All rounds of the tournament are played with chips; each player's initial stack amounts to 1,000 chips; the initial blind is 25/50; the 'exchange rate' of chips to real money depends on the value of the tournament, the number of players and the round of the tournament and is displayed in a special field in the game interface.

[0119] If the number of players does not comply with the complete tournament grid, part of players is qualified from one match based on the rate equal to the main tournament buy-in, and the player winning the soccer match gets a place in the main grid and the gain is credited to the player's account. The result of the poker match does not influence the tournament. The prize fund put in play consists only of the buy-ins of the players of the complete grid.

[0120] The FTBL POKER game is essentially a combination of a roulette tournament and a heads up poker match.

[0121] The players start the game with equal stacks. Before play each player has a stack of 20 big blinds. The blind bets increase every three turns of dealing. The poker game goes by the rules of Texas Holdem No limit (a subsequent raise in every round of betting must not be below the amount of the previous raise). If during the play one of the players makes a bet exceeding his opponent's stack size, the opponent may make an all-in bet, that is to say place the remainder of his chips into the pot, then he gets the unmatched part of the first player's bet, the pot thus created is played without additional bets. If during the play an all-in bet was made, the opponent having the lowest stack after this play (not necessarily a zero stack), is allowed to make a rebuy (buy chips) in the amount to make equal the stack sizes (or less).

[0122] Before each deal, every player posts a forced bet (blind) and gets two hole cards. Then, acting in turn, they make their bets. At any moment during the play, if one player does not want to match the opponent's bet, he/she checks; after that, the pot goes to the opponent and a new deal begins. If the bet was called, three community cards are faced up (flop) and the next round of betting begins. The first player to post his/her bet in every round of betting is the opener whoever made the matching bet. If the bet was called, the roulette is spun, and a soccer event is played in accordance with the result, and the community card corresponding to the pocket on the wheel where the ball stopped is faced up (turn), then the next betting round starts. If at the turn stage the bet was called, the roulette is spun, and a soccer event is played in accordance with the result, and the community card corresponding to the pocket on the wheel where the ball stopped is faced up (river), then the final betting round begins. If at the river stage the bet was called, a showdown takes place (both players expose their cards) when the hands are compared. The pot is awarded to the player with the superior hand.

[0123] Soccer events are played by way of the roulette spins in accordance with the rules for playing the soccer events in Game 2. In every deal the roulette is spun at the turn and river stage (when the fourth and fifth community cards are turned face up). If one of the opponents folds before the turn stage, the roulette is not spun.

[0124] The FTBL POKER game ends after six (or seven) soccer events have been played.

[0125] An interim result of the soccer match does not affect the result of the poker match. If a player loses at some stage during the poker match, it reduces his/her chances of having soccer events favourable to him/her, but does not influence the final result of the poker match. The match ends when the required number of the soccer events has been played, and the winner in the soccer match enters the next round of the competition whatever the final result of the poker match.

Dealing of the First Two Pocket Cards

[0126] Each player is dealt two pocket cards from the deck. The deck for the dealing of two pocket cards is as follows: 44 cards, 11 card ranks from one to 11 of each of the four colours (red, black, green, blue).

Dealing a Flop

[0127] Three community cards are dealt to both players. The deck consists of 32 cards. Distribution of combinations of suits (colours) and ranks in a flop deck is determined according to the following table:

Table 6. Distribution of Combinations of Suits and Ranks in the FTBL POKER Game

No.	Number of pockets		Corresponding card
	red	black	
1	0	0	1
2	1	0	2
3	1	1	3
4	1	1	4
5	1	1	5
6	1	1	6
7	1	1	7
8	1	1	8
9	1	2	9
10	1	2	10
11	2	1	11
12	1	0	2
13	0	1	3
14	0	1	4
15	0	1	5
16	1	0	6
17	1	0	7
18	0	1	8
19	0	1	9
20	1	0	10
21	1	0	11
22	0	0	1
C	0	0	C (joker)

[0128] When flop cards are dealt, the roulette structure to be used to determine the turn and river cards is adjusted. During the adjustment three roulette pockets which won during the dealing of the flop (other than 1, 1, 22 and C) become additional pockets 1, 1, 22.

[0129] Distribution of suits (colours) and ranks in a turn/river deck (the roulette structure) is determined in a random manner subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The (red+black)/(blue+green) ratio depends on the "weather" factor computed in a random way. This factor may fluctuate between 30/6 (excellent weather - goal-rich game) and 6/36 (abominable weather - goalless game).
- 2) The red/black ratio depends on the opponents' stack ratio by the start of the deal. If one of the players continues the game with a zero stack, there will be no pockets of his/her team's colour on the roulette, and he/she may only count on a draw game or on retaining his/her winning score, if he/she is leading in the soccer match by the time the deal begins.
- 3) The blue/green ratio equals to unity.

[0130] By the time the betting in this round begins, the player already sees the roulette structure and can estimate the probability of favourable/unfavourable result of the soccer event and poker hand.

Dealing of the Turn Card

[0131] Dealing of the turn card is visualized through the roulette spin. The spin determines a soccer event (a goal scored/unscored by one of the players) and also the card corresponding to the winning roulette pocket. Distribution of the suits (colours) and ranks of the cards in the turn/river deck (the roulette structure) is determined at random at the flop stage.

[0132] If one of the players checks when the turn card is dealt, the soccer event is registered in the match protocol, and the new deal begins. If the bet is called, the river card is dealt.

Dealing of the River Card

[0133] Dealing of the river card is similar to that of the turn card (the roulette structure undergoes no changes between these procedures). If one of the players checks when the turn card is dealt, the soccer event is registered in the match protocol, and the new deal begins. If the bet is called, the players expose their cards, and the highest-ranking hand is determined on the basis of the best hand of five cards out of seven possible (two private and five community cards for each player).

Table 7. Seniority of Hands in the FTBL POKER Game

Hand	Description	Remarks
Poker	Five cards of one rank	The captain (joker) may be used to form the hand.
Straight flush	Five cards of sequential rank of one suit.	A card with a rank of "1" may be used in a straight as 12.
Quads (four of a kind)	Four cards of one rank	
All blue	Four cards of the blue or green colour.	
Full house	Three cards of one rank and two cards of another rank.	
Straight	Five cards of different sequential ranks, e. g. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.	
All red	Five cards of the red or five cards of the black suit.	
Trips or set (three of a kind)	Three cards of the same rank.	
Two pairs	Two cards of the same rank and two cards of another rank.	
One pair	Two cards of the same rank.	
High card	The highest-ranking card in the player's hand.	

[0134] If both players have identical hands, the winner is determined in the following way:

Table 8. Criteria for Determining Winner in the FTBL POKER Game

Hand	Criterion 1	Criterion 2
Poker	Rank of the cards making up the poker.	
Straight flush	Rank of the highest-ranking card of the five cards in the straight flush.	
Quads (four of a kind)	Rank of the cards in the quads.	The highest-ranking card in the player's hand beyond the quads.
Full house	Rank of the set.	Rank of the pair.

(continued)

Hand	Criterion 1	Criterion 2
Flush	Rank of the highest-ranking card out of the five flush cards.	Rank of the second-highest ranking card out of the five flush cards.
Straight	Rank of the highest-ranking card out of the five straight cards.	
Trips or set (three of a kind)	Rank of the set.	The highest-ranking card in the player's hand beyond the set.
Two pairs	Rank of the highest pair.	Rank of the lowest pair.
Pair	Rank of the pair.	The highest-ranking card in the player's hand beyond the pair.
High card	The highest-ranking card in the player's hand.	The second-highest ranking card in the player's hand.
<i>Cards ranking: the highest-ranking card is "1", followed by "2", then "3" and so on.</i>		

[0135] If the players have hands that are identical by all the criteria, then they equally split the pot.

[0136] Thus, the invention (the FTBL computer game) is essentially a method for actualization of a new-generation computer game (playmaker) and not only accumulates the opportunities of standard soccer simulators, but also affords a unique range of the gaming, interactive and commercial services of sports Internet exchange and Internet casino. From the viewpoint of tournament stimuli, the user controls his/her team not only strategically (throughout the tournament), but also tactically exerting influence on the outcome of a particular match. Another distinction of the invention is an opportunity to play in its exclusive competitions, including in the user-created tournaments. Furthermore, irrespective of playing in any tournaments, the user may concentrate on an exchange trade process (possessing a pool of players and making transfer transactions).

[0137] The system that is used in the inventive method is fitted with original animations and attributes enabling the users not only to take game actions, but also to give their own comments on events occurring in the course of the game, and to converse with other users in the community. In view of vast online opportunities (blogs, fan clubs, chat), the system has an important social aspect by attracting numerous votaries of soccer to intercourse by interests and to exchange information. The information menu of the system offers a newslines of hot soccer news, own comments, statistical calculations and diagrams, as well as illustrations which also distinguish the invention from common family of soccer simulators.

Claims

1. A method for conducting a network game providing for data exchange between the game server and computers of the users, which includes registration and authorization of the users on the game website, purchase of players by the users, creation of teams by the users, determination of the ratings of said teams based on the ratings of the players, conduct of championships among said teams **characterized in that** each event of a game determined by means of a hardware random number generator, which generates the results of a spin of a virtual roulette divided into fields corresponding to likely events of the match.
2. The method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the user can change the rating of his/her team within certain limits before the beginning of each match.
3. The method according to claim 3, **characterized in that** the user increases the rating by taking up part of the rating from the next game.
4. The method according to claim 3, **characterized in that** the user decreases the rating by passing on part of the rating to the next game.
5. The method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the user selects the number of game segments in each match with the participation of his/her team within the limits of the predetermined number of games in a championship for said team.

6. The method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** to determine a match event, the use is made of a roulette comprising fields with player numbers corresponding to the events: "goal scored", "goal conceded" and "zero".
- 5 7. The method according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the number of the "zero" fields is determined in a random manner before the beginning of each match.
8. The method according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the number of the "goal scored" and "goal conceded" fields is determined by the ratio of ratings of the playing teams.
- 10 9. The method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** based on the outcome of a game the user accrues bonuses, penalties and points which determine the amount of the user's payout and the current rating of the team.
- 15 10. The method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** ratings of the teams playing for the championship are updated based on the results of each match.
- 20 11. A method of conducting online sports tournaments with the participation of user-created virtual teams with different initial ratings, **characterized in that** before a game begins, bets of the users are taken which are equal to the ratings of their teams, each event of the match is determined by means of a hardware random number generator which generates the results of a spin of a virtual roulette divided into fields corresponding to likely events of the match, and payments are made based on the results of the tournament depending on the difference between the initial and final ratings of the teams.
- 25 12. The method according to claim 11, **characterized in that** the users are paid additional bonuses and/or penalties so as to ensure that the average wins of any team, regardless of its initial rating, are equal to zero, and that before the start of a championship all users are on a statistically equal footing.
- 30 13. A method of conducting online sports tournaments with the participation of user-created virtual teams with different initial ratings, **characterized in that** before the beginning of each match, bets of the users are taken and an amount of the bets is set before the tournament regardless of the ratings of the competing teams, single round tournaments are conducted among the teams and an outcome of each match is determined by means of a hardware random number generator, which generates the results of a spin of a virtual roulette divided into fields corresponding to likely events of the match, and based on the outcome of each match, payments are made to the winner in accordance with the ratios of the ratings.
- 35 14. A method of simulation of a game with the use of a virtual roulette, **characterized in that** the winner is determined based on the results of eleven minisegments of the game and some random number of standard positions that occur between game segments and correspond to direct free kicks or penalty kicks with every minisegment of the game conducted by way of starting the roulette for each team, and the probability of additional goals in the standard positions is determined versus the ratio of ratings of the playing teams.
- 40 15. The method according to claim 14, **characterized in that** before each game segment the users place bets and the bets that win in the course of the game segments are summed up and the score is determined based on the sum received.
- 45 16. The method according to claim 14 or claim 15, **characterized in that** concurrently with the conduct of a soccer tournament a poker game is played in which cards are dealt based on the results of the roulette starts determining each event of a soccer match.
- 50 17. The method according to claim 16, **characterized in that** separate prize funds formed in the soccer tournament and in the poker game.

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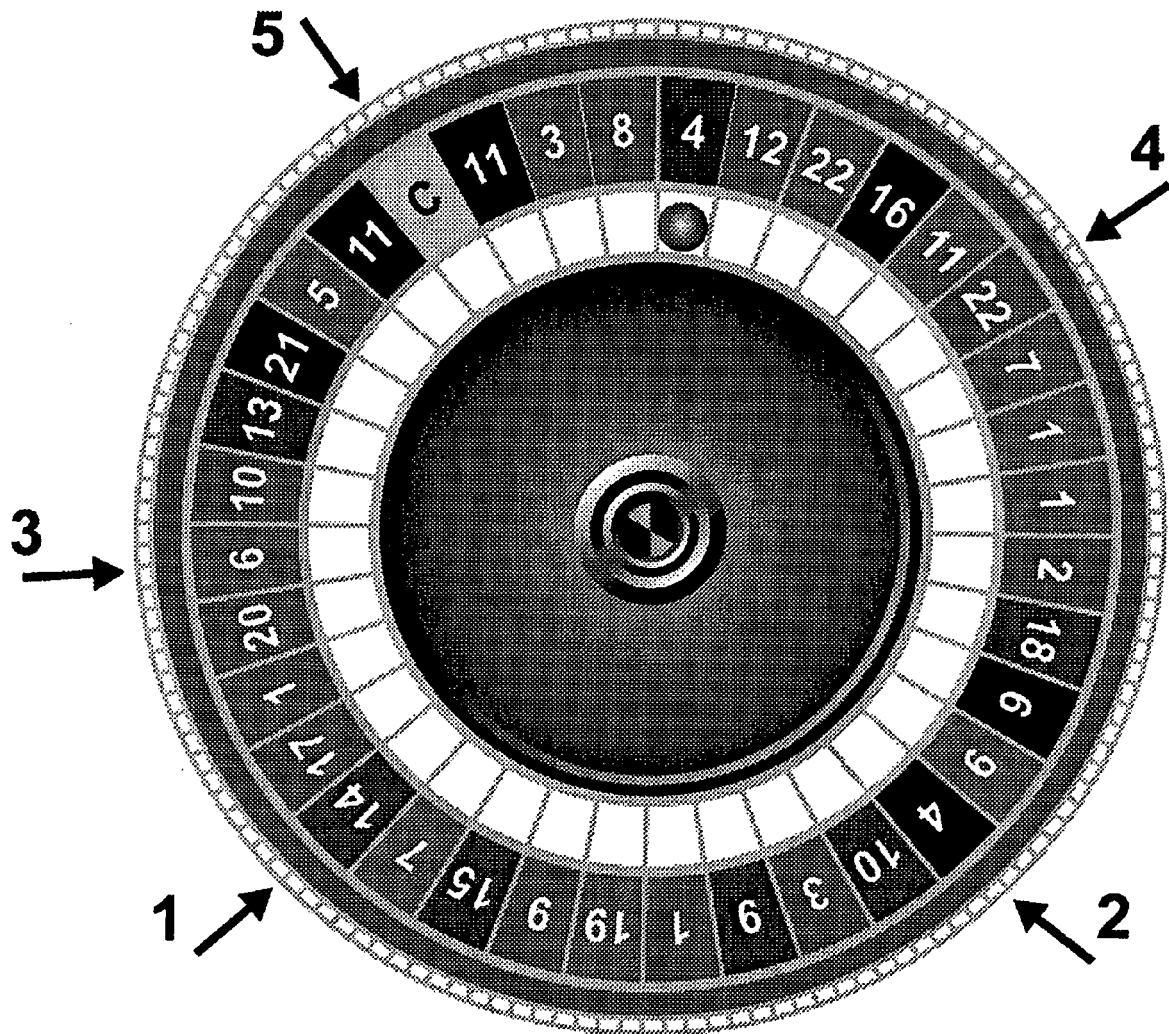


Fig. 1

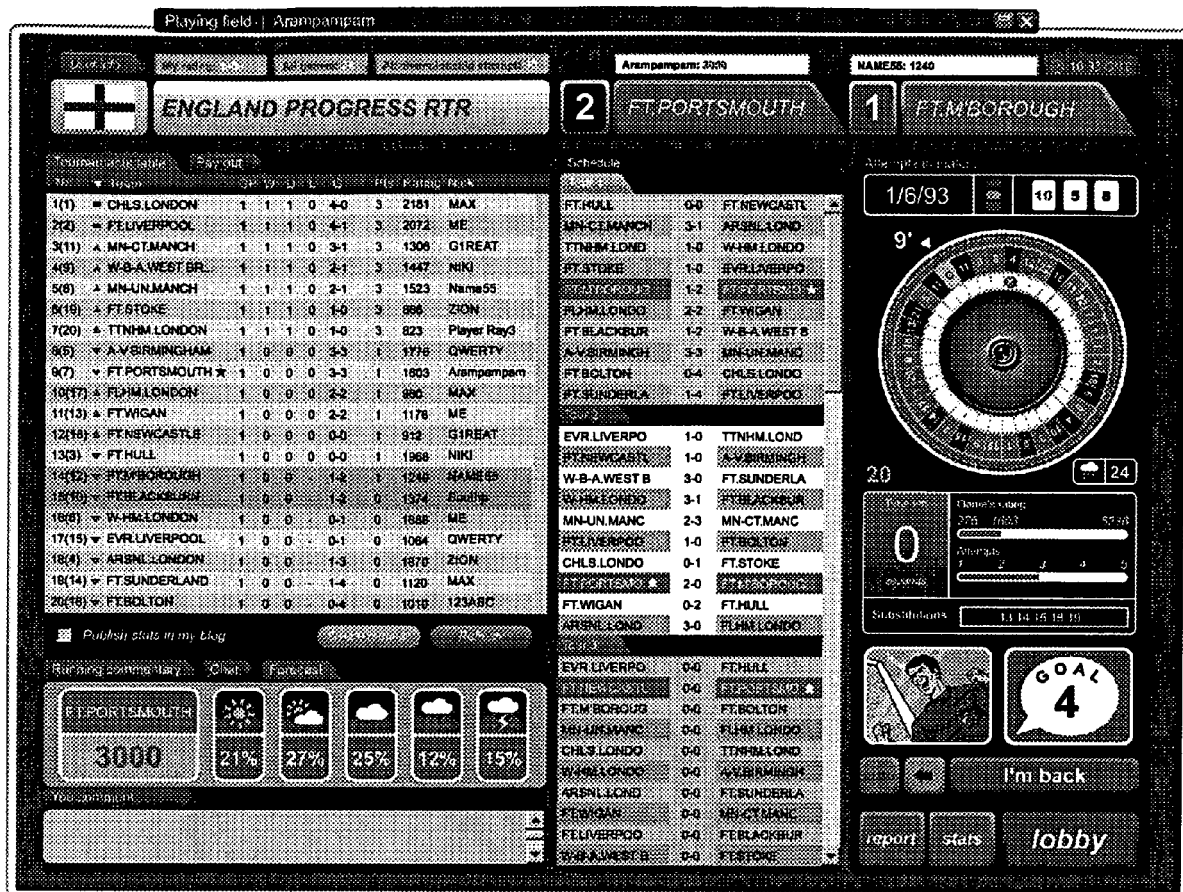


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

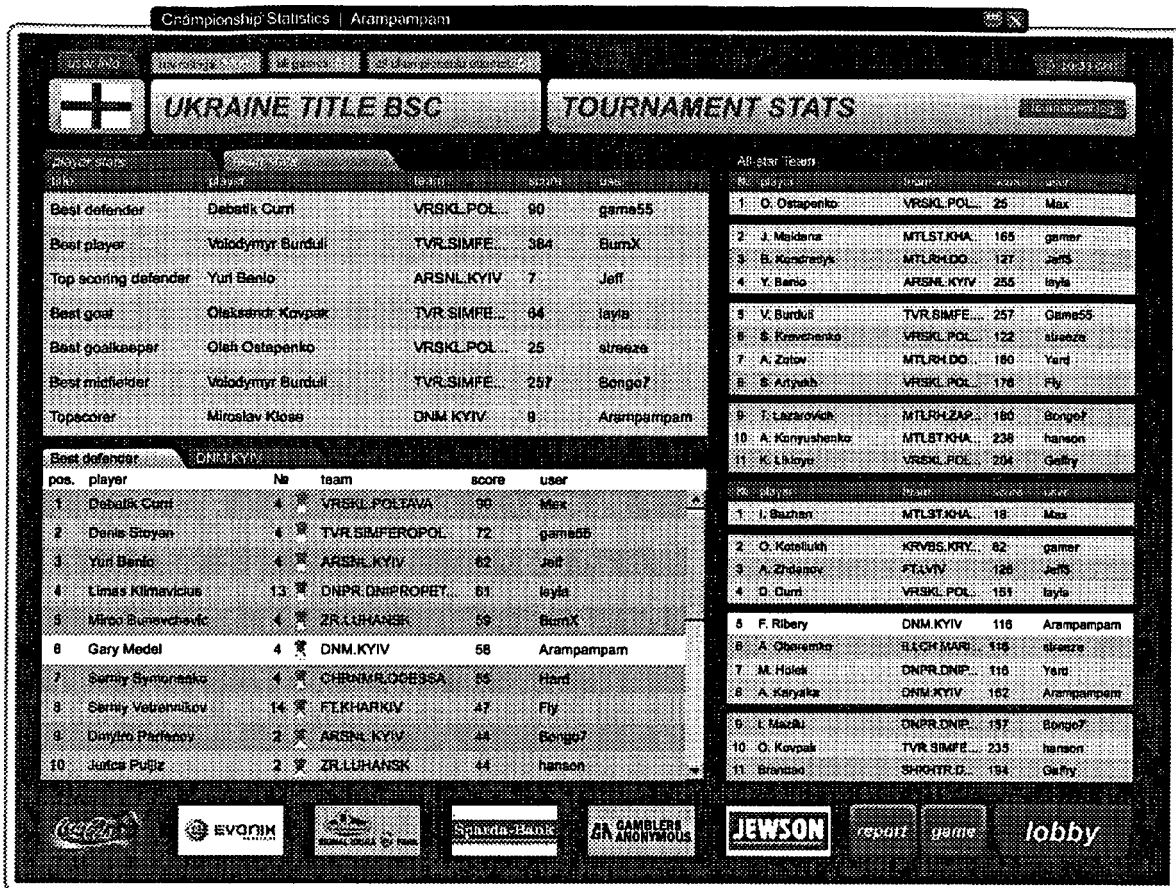


Fig. 4

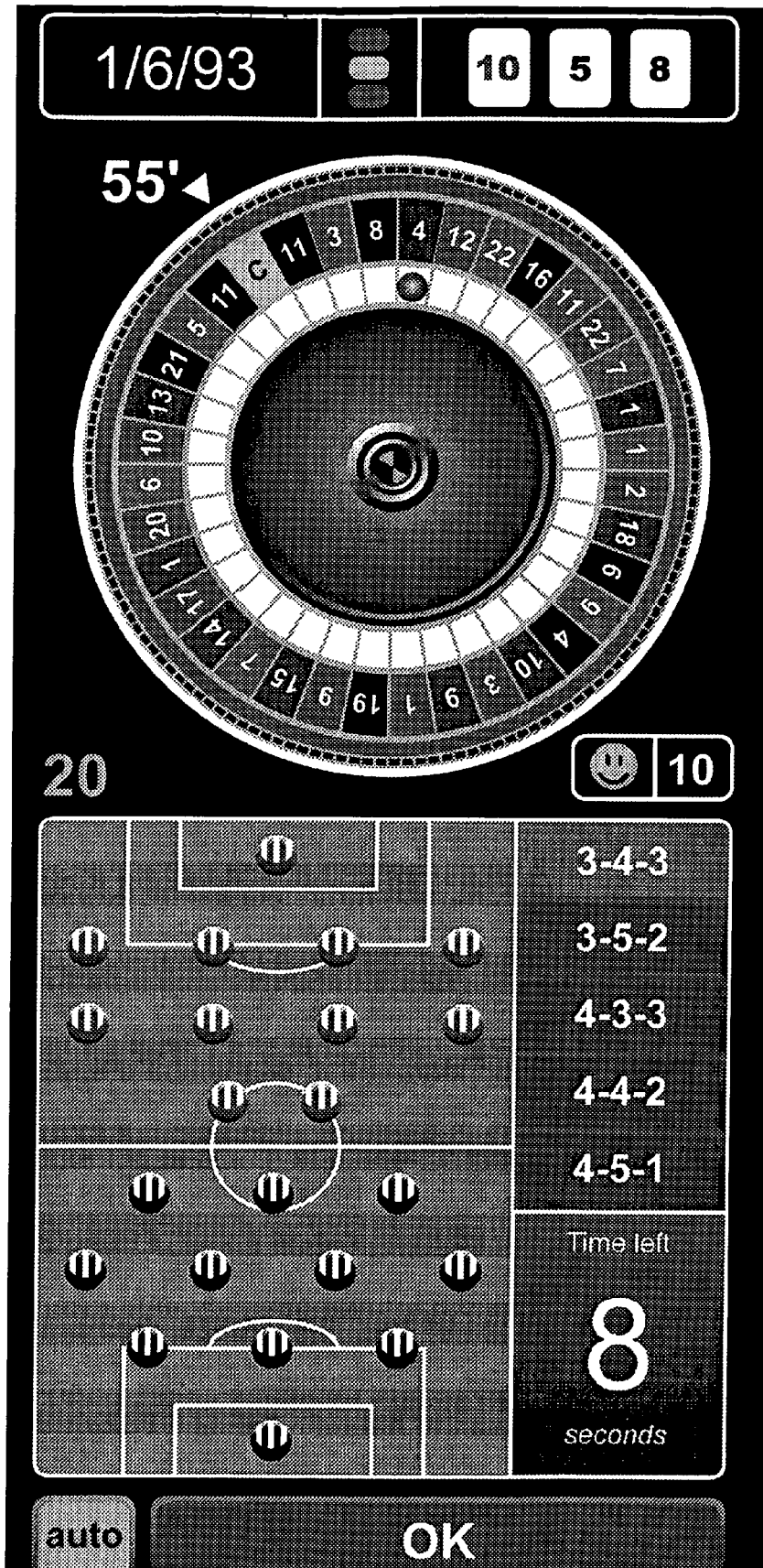


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

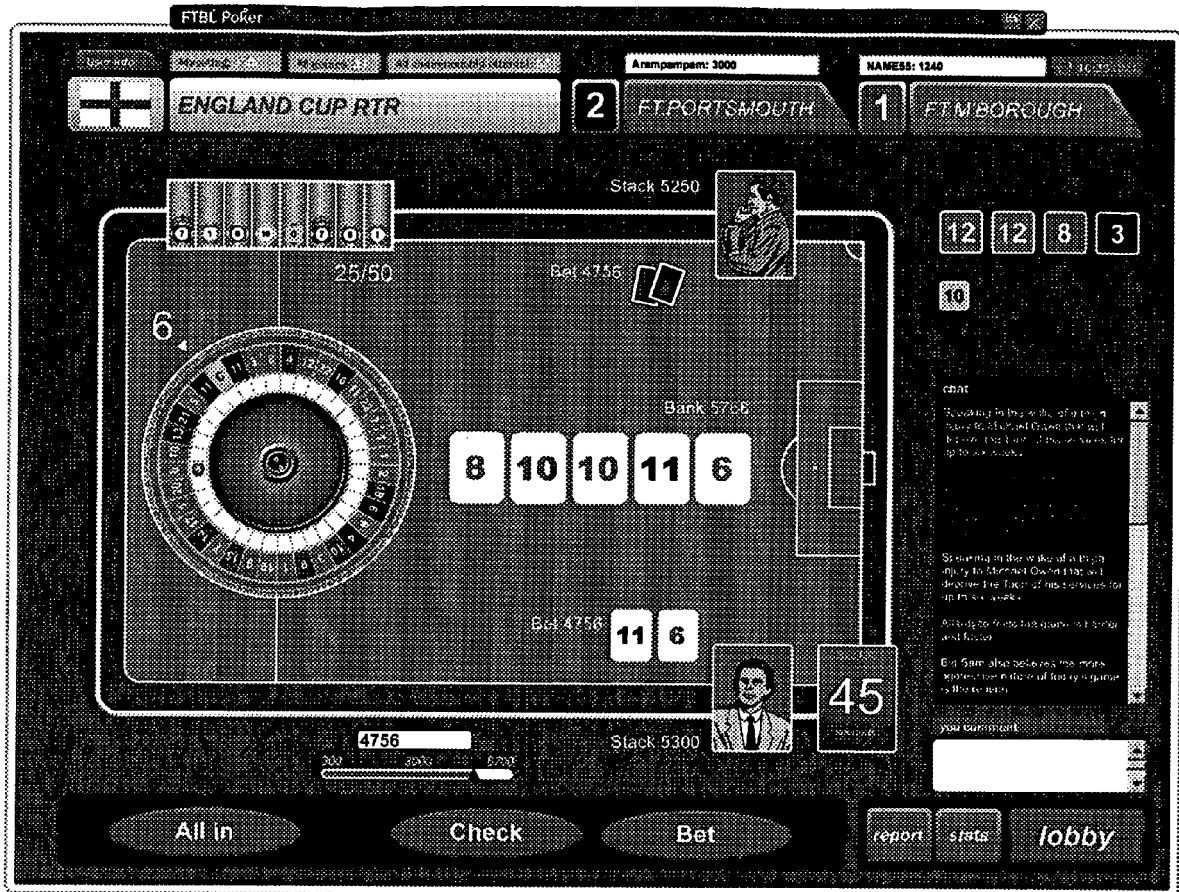


Fig. 7



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 01 5562

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
L	The technical aspects identified in the present application (Art. 92 EPC) are considered part of common general knowledge. Due to their notoriety no documentary evidence is found to be required. For further details see the accompanying Opinion and the reference below. XP002456252 -----	1-17	INV. G07F17/32 A63F13/00
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC) G07F A63F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 6 March 2009	Examiner Heselius, Per
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