



US 20050261048A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**

Evans

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0261048 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 24, 2005**

(54) **ENTERTAINMENT MACHINES**

(52) **U.S. Cl. 463/17**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A player-operable coin-operated entertainment machine for playing a roulette-type game with enhanced award opportunities has a symbol selector with a range of different symbols. The symbol selector has multiple selector elements for selecting multiple symbols. A betting means is provided for placing a number of stakes on one or more symbols during a game, by selecting a number of selector elements. Each selector element moves over the symbols, each one eventually coming to rest over a selected symbol. In the case of a selected symbol being one on which a stake has been placed, an award is made available to the player. Therefore, the stake value for each symbol can remain the same, whilst the stake value per game and the award for a win with one or more selector elements, is increased.

(21) **Appl. No.: 11/122,279**

(22) **Filed: May 4, 2005**

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

May 6, 2004 (GB) GB 0410086.3

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷ A63F 9/24**

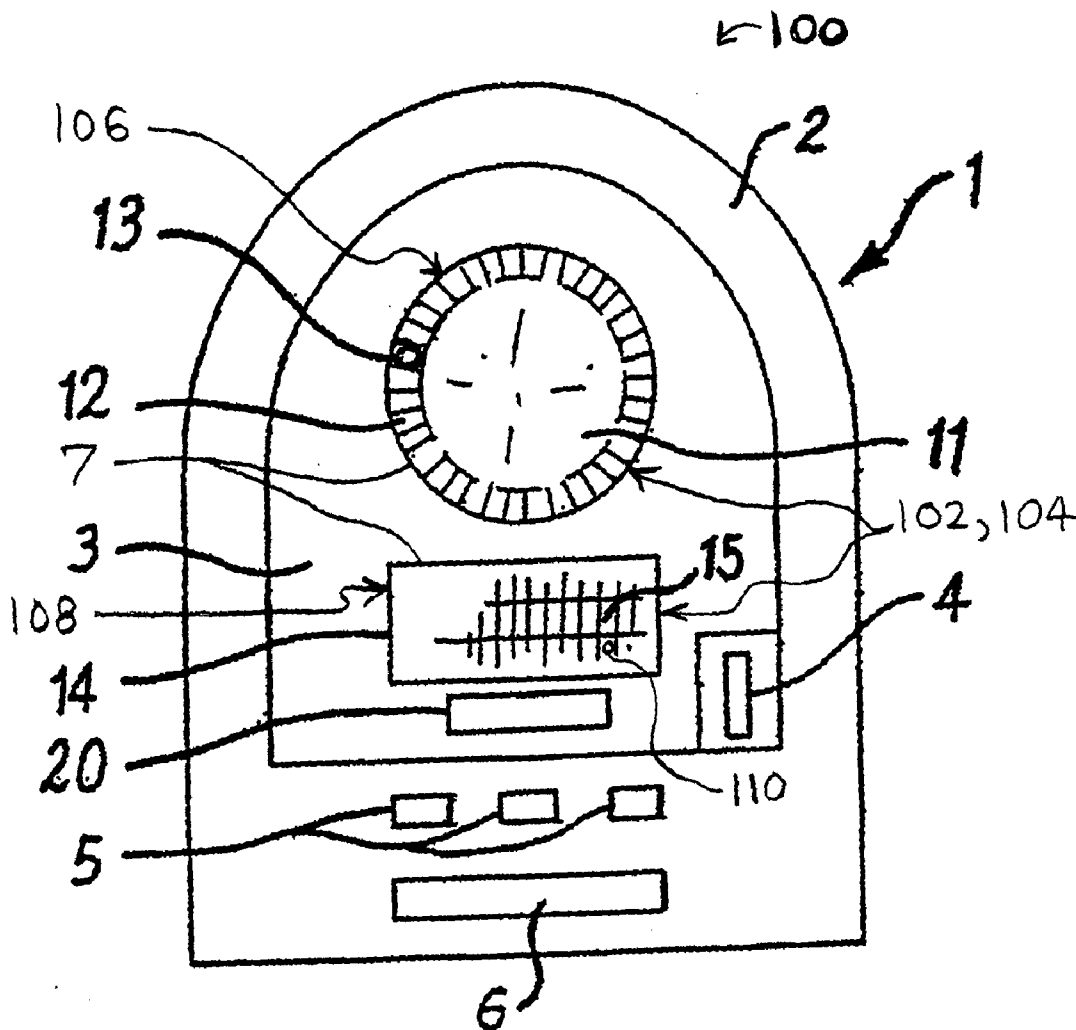
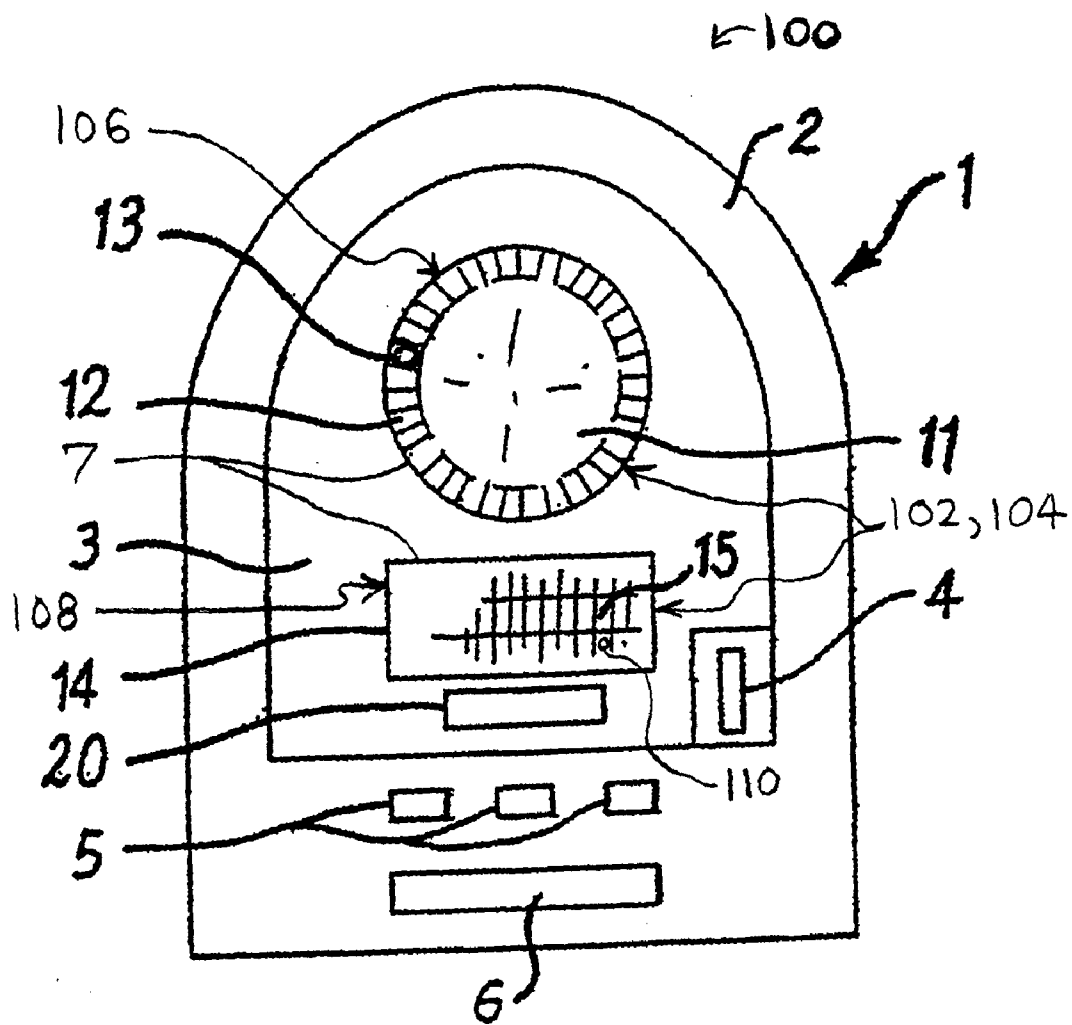


FIG. 1



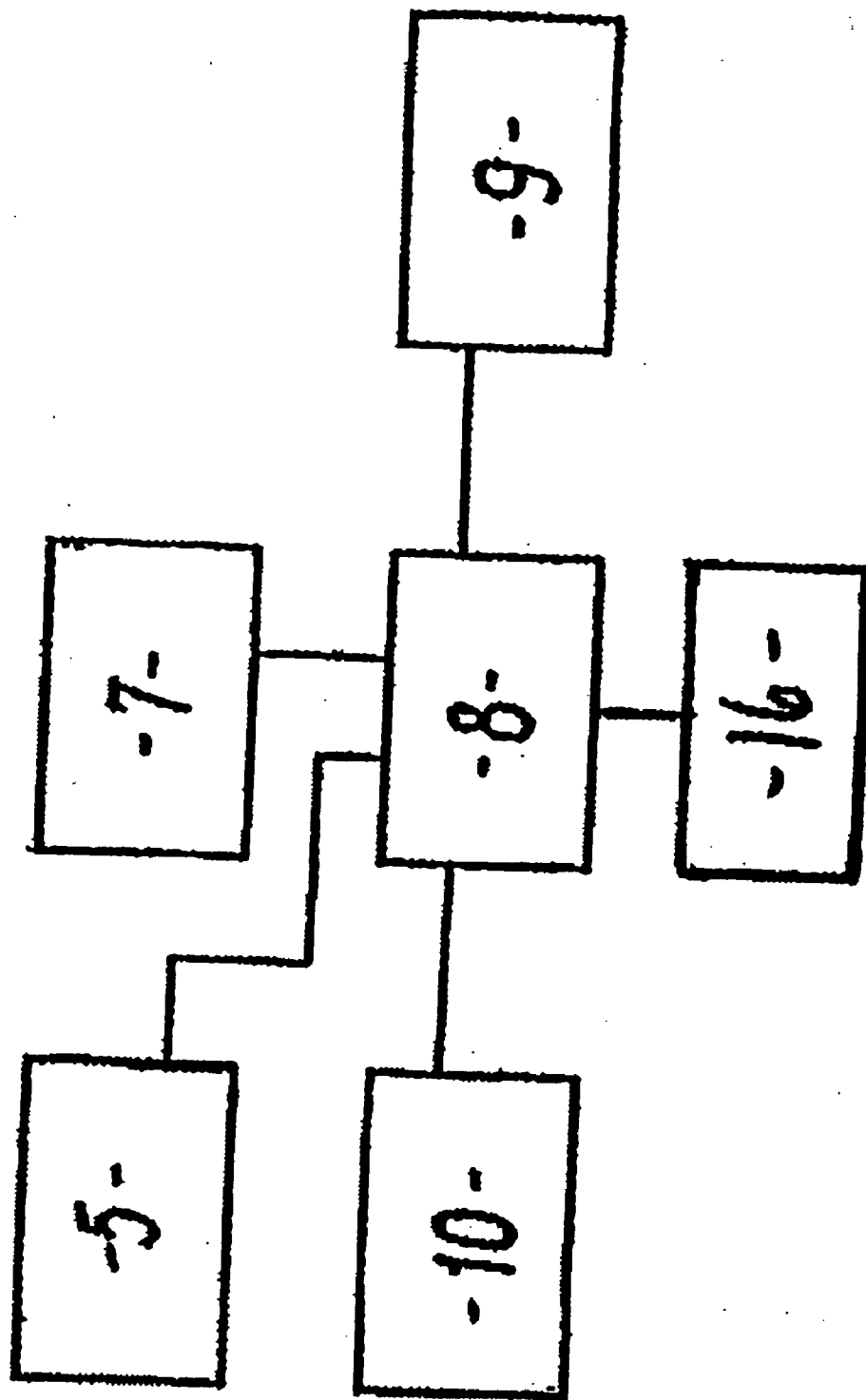
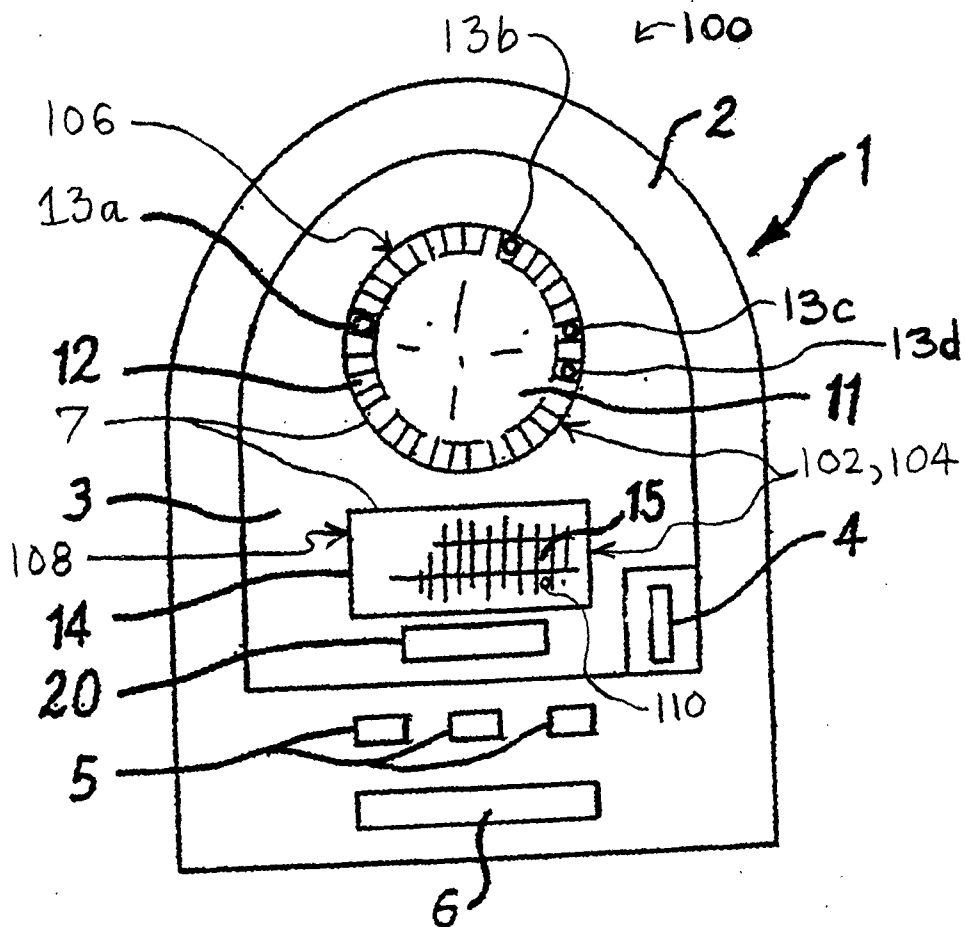


FIG. 2

FIG. 3



ENTERTAINMENT MACHINES

PRIORITY CLAIM

[0001] This application claims priority to United Kingdom Patent Application No. GB 0410086.3, filed on May 6, 2004, entitled "Entertainment Machines," the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein.

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TECHNICAL FIELD

[0003] This invention relates to a player-operable coin-operated entertainment machine for playing a roulette-type game. As used herein the term coin is used to cover actual coins and also any other means of supplying credit or monetary value. By roulette-type game is meant a game having a symbol selector operable to provide a display in which a selector element moves across a range of different symbols and then comes to rest in predetermined relationship with a selected said symbol, an award being made available to a player in the event that the selected symbol is one on which the player has placed a stake.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In the conventional mechanical game of roulette, the symbols are the numbers 1 to 36, half in red and half in black, usually also with a blank or the number zero; stakes are bet by placing marker chips on a table surface printed with the numbers; and the selector element is a ball which runs around the periphery of a counter-rotating wheel having compartments bearing the respective numbers.

[0005] Coin-operated gaming machines which use video simulations of the conventional mechanical game of roulette are also known, as described for example in our application GB 0300524.6.

[0006] In the conventional mechanical game a maximum winning bet, on an individual number, has to give a pay back of less than 37 to 1 as a multiple of the stake placed on that number, so as to be less than the likelihood of the individual number being selected.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] With the video simulation gaming machine of the above mentioned prior application, the player can bet on the overall outcome of multiple successive games whereby a much higher multiple of an initial stake can be awarded for a successful bet. Accordingly, higher awards can be made available to the player without requiring increase in stake value per play. By way of example, the likelihood of four individual numbers being selected consecutively from a sequence of 37 numbers is 1,874,161 to 1, whereby a stake multiple of say 1,500,000 or higher could be awarded for a bet committed for four individual numbers in four consecutive games.

[0008] An object of the present invention is to provide further or alternative opportunities for making higher awards available in a roulette-type game without requiring increase in stake value per play.

[0009] According to the invention therefore there is provided a player-operable coin-operated entertainment machine for playing a roulette-type game, said machine having a symbol selector operable in play of a game to provide a display in which a selector element moves across a range of different symbols and then comes to rest in predetermined relationship with a selected said symbol, betting means for placing one or more stakes on one or more said symbols at the start of the game, and award means to make an award available to the player at the end of the game in the event that said selected symbol is one on which a stake has been placed, characterised in that the symbol selector has multiple said selector elements operable for multiple symbol selections in the same game.

[0010] With this arrangement, there can be enhanced award opportunities in a game without requiring increased stake value per play, due to the increased range of possible symbol selections.

[0011] Thus, the player can increase the value of placed stakes in correspondence with increased number of selector elements whereby the stake value per selector element (i.e. per symbol selection) is not necessarily increased relative to a single selector element game, yet the maximum award value for a successful bet can be increased.

[0012] By way of example, with four selector elements, the stake value per game can be increased by four, and the maximum award, e.g. for a win with all four selector elements, can similarly be increased by four, whilst the stake value per play (i.e. per symbol selection with each selector element) is not necessarily increased.

[0013] Moreover, the use of multiple selector elements gives rise to game outcomes constituting combinations of selected symbols, whereby opportunities arise for bets with higher odds than is the case with a single selector element.

[0014] By way of example, in the case of 37 different symbols, the odds of an individual symbol being selected in the same game with four selector elements is 50653 times greater than the likelihood of that symbol being selected with one selector element (37 to 1). Thus, an award of say 1,500,000 (or higher) times a placed stake could be made available, compared with an award of less than 37 times for a single selector element.

[0015] The arrangement may be such that a bet can be made selectively in relation to the outcome of the maximum number of multiple selections, as an alternative to fewer or no multiple selections. Thus, for example, in the case of four selector elements, the player may have the option, at the start of the game, of betting on the outcome of one selection with one selector element, or the maximum four selections with four selector elements, or perhaps an intermediate two or three selections, depending on the risk which the player wishes to take.

[0016] The bet for multiple selections may be of the kind constituting a separate stake placed on each selection, or it may be of a kind wherein a stake is placed on a combination of selections, e.g. multiple selections of the same individual

symbol, or selections of consecutive symbols of the displayed range, or otherwise. The bet always may be of a predetermined kind or may be selectable by the player e.g. such that he can choose which kind of bet is to be placed.

[0017] The betting means may be operable to place a single stake on one or more individual symbols such that an award is made available only when the or each such symbol is selected.

[0018] Alternatively or additionally, the betting means may permit placing of a stake on a group of symbols such that an award can be made available if any one 20 symbol of the group is selected.

[0019] The betting means may be adapted for single player use, or for multiple player use. In the latter case the betting means may itself be operable by different players. Alternatively there may be multiple separate linked betting means, respectively for the different players.

[0020] The symbols may be numbers and these may be distinguished by colours, or otherwise. Thus, they may comprise the integers 1 to 36 half red and half black, in like manner to conventional roulette, if desired also with the number zero.

[0021] The symbol selector may comprise a rotatable wheel with circumferentially distributed symbol-bearing compartments, and the selector elements may comprise balls which run around the periphery of the wheel over the compartments and then come to rest by dropping into one or more respective compartments corresponding to selection of the symbol or symbols which correspond thereto.

[0022] The betting means may comprise a betting zone marked with the symbols in conjunction with markers placeable at one or more locations on said zone to indicate a stake bet on one or more said symbols. There may be multiple individual areas of the betting zone containing the symbols and the markers may be placeable on individual areas and/or such as to straddle two or more areas. Additionally, there may be one or more peripheral areas related to groups of said symbol-bearing areas and the markers may be placeable on individual such peripheral areas and/or such as to straddle two or more adjacent such areas.

[0023] The markers may be placeable in stacks or other combinations such that the stake value is determined by the number of markers in the stack. Alternatively or additionally the markers may be selectable from different kinds, indicated by different colours or otherwise to represent different stake values.

[0024] The machine of the invention may be a video gaming machine whereby the symbol selector display may be provided by a video display particularly simulating a mechanical roulette game.

[0025] The machine may have touch screen controls, and/or press button controls. The invention will now be described further by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0026] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic front elevation of one form of an entertainment machine according to the invention.

[0027] FIG. 2 is a block circuit diagram of the machine.

[0028] FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic front elevation of the entertainment machine having an example multi-ball game in one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0029] Referring now to the Figures, FIG. 1 shows betting equipment in the form of an entertainment machine 100 having a housing 1 with a front wall 2 having a main display panel 3, a coin slot 4, operating buttons 5, and a pay-out opening 6.

[0030] The main display panel 3 defines a window 102 through which the screen 104 of a video display device 7 is visible.

[0031] The video display device 7 is connected to a microprocessor-based control unit 8 within the housing 1. The microprocessor-based control unit 8 is also connected to a coin mechanism 9 linked to the slot 4, a payout mechanism 10 leading to the opening 6, and the operating buttons 5.

[0032] The video display 7 is operable to provide a display which simulates plan views of a roulette wheel 106 and the surface of a roulette table 108 including a betting zone.

[0033] More specifically, the display 7 includes at an upper region a circular centrally pivoted wheel display or wheel 11 with 37 equally spaced circumferentially disposed compartments 12 bearing the numbers 1 to 36 and a zero or blank. A simulated ball 13 is movable around the wheel 11.

[0034] Beneath the wheel display 11 there is the betting zone display comprising a rectangular region 14 divided into 36 like rectangular areas 15 in three side by side columns respectively bearing the numbers 1 to 36. Half of the numbers are in red, and half in black, as also is the case with the numbers on the wheel 11.

[0035] The rectangular region 14 is accompanied by peripheral areas which relate to conventional roulette bets which can be placed on groups of numbers namely one or more columns; the numbers 1 to 12, 13 to 24, or 25 to 36; the numbers 1 to 18 or 19 to 36; odd numbers, even numbers, red numbers, black numbers, the zero.

[0036] The betting zone display region 14 incorporates touch screen controls 16 connected to the control unit 8. Beneath the betting zone display 14, there is an alphanumeric display 20.

[0037] In use, the player provides stake credit by insertion of coins into the coin slot 4. A predetermined unit of stake credit may be required to be inserted, such as £1, or, alternatively the player may be able to insert any amount of credit, or an amount within a predetermined range, from which a stake value may be selected by the player e.g. by operation of one of the player controls 5. The stake value is shown on the display 20.

[0038] The player now operates one of the controls 5, in conjunction with information on the display 20, to select single ball play, or simple multi-ball play, or special-bet multi-ball play. If multi-ball play is selected, the player then has to select a desired number of balls from a predetermined range, say from one to five balls using the controls 5.

[0039] Assuming that the player has selected one ball, the player now makes bets by operating the touch screen control 16. This causes one or more simulated markers 110 (e.g. circular video symbols), to be placed at locations on the betting zone in like manner to the placing of chips on a roulette table. The markers may be placed on individual numbers or on one of the peripheral areas or such as to straddle two or more areas in accordance with usual roulette practice.

[0040] The bets placed are deducted from the player's accumulated credit at a predetermined stake unit per bet, say 50 per bet. A maximum may be imposed on the number of bets, or the total bet stake value in any one game.

[0041] The player now presses a start button 5. This causes the video-simulated wheel 11 to rotate and the simulated ball 13 is propelled in the opposite direction around the periphery of the wheel 11. On a random basis, as controlled by the unit 8, the wheel 11 slows and comes to rest, as also does the ball 13 whereby the ball 13 is then located in one of the compartments 12 and the number for such compartment 12 is thereby selected.

[0042] The control unit 8 assesses whether there has been a successful outcome. If so, a payout is computed which is equal to a multiple of the player's winning stake at the appropriate odds, plus return of such stake, which is credited to the player and can be obtained as cash payout at the opening 6, when desired, by operation of a payout button 5.

[0043] The odds are applied in accordance with usual roulette practice.

[0044] Referring to FIG. 3, in the event that the player selects the simple multi-ball game, multiple balls (for example, balls 13a through 13d) move around the wheel 11, in the opposite direction to rotation of the wheel 11, and come to rest in randomly selected compartments 12. The balls 13a through 13d may come to rest all in separate compartments 12 or with two or more in the same compartment 12.

[0045] Movement of the balls 13a through 13d may be effected one after the other so that only one moving ball appears at a time, the next ball being propelled around the rotating wheel 11 only after the wheel 11 and previous ball have first come to rest to select a number. Alternatively, all balls 13a through 13d may move one after the other at the same time whereby they all come to rest at the same time or shortly after each other.

[0046] With this simple multi-ball game the player has to bet an appropriately higher stake value, which may be a corresponding multiple of the single ball game stake value i.e. such that four times the stake value is required to play a four ball game. The increased stake value may be applied as four separate single ball game stake units or as a single unit of four times the value of the single ball game stake unit.

[0047] In either case, the result is that the player has been able to place an increased value bet, and thereby seek to obtain a higher award payout, without increasing the averaged stake value per ball.

[0048] With the simple multi-ball game, if two or more balls come to rest on the same number which is a number on which the player has placed a stake, the award payout is correspondingly two or more times the payout if a single ball had selected that symbol.

[0049] In the event that the player selects the special bet multi-ball game, higher payouts can be obtained.

[0050] Thus, with the special bet multi-ball game, the player is given the opportunity, by operating a selector control 5 or 16, to select a special bet which may be all balls coming to rest on the same compartment 12, or coming to rest in successive adjacent compartments 12, or otherwise.

[0051] The odds for such outcomes are high whereby it is feasible to make available high awards.

[0052] That is, the odds for selection of an individual number with one ball are 37 to 1, so the award for this has to be less than 37 times the stake placed on the number. However, the odds for four balls selecting the same individual number are $37 \times 37 \times 37 \times 37$ to 1 whereby a high multiple of stake value, e.g. as high as 1,500,000, can be awarded.

[0053] The embodiment described above thereby gives increased opportunities for enhanced awards without necessarily changing the value of stake unit per player ball.

[0054] It is of course to be understood that the invention is not intended to be restricted to the above embodiment which is described by way of example only.

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A player-operable coin-operated entertainment machine for playing a roulette-type game, said machine comprising:

a symbol selector operable in play of a game, the symbol selector providing a display in which a plurality of selector elements moves across a range of different symbols, each one of the selector elements then coming to rest in predetermined relationship with a selected one of said symbols;

betting means for placing a bet including one or more stakes on one or more of said symbols at a start of the game; and

award means for making an award available to a player at an end of the game in the event that one or more of the selected symbols is one on which a stake has been placed.

2. The entertainment machine of claim 1, which includes a processor in control of the display, the processor enabling the bet to be made selectively in relation to an outcome of a maximum number of the selected symbols.

3. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the bet is placed for a plurality of the selector elements resting in predetermined relationship with a single one of the symbols, said bet constituting a single stake placed on said symbol.

4. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the bet is placed for a plurality of the selector elements resting in predetermined relationship with a plurality of the symbols, said bet constituting a stake placed on a combination of the symbols.

5. The entertainment machine of claim 2, wherein the bet is of a predetermined kind.

6. The entertainment machine of claim 2, wherein the bet is selectable by the player.

7. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the betting means is operable to place a single stake on one or more individual symbols such that an award is made available only when said one or more individual symbols is selected.

8. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the betting means permits placing of a stake on a group of the symbols such that an award can be made available if any one symbol of the group is selected.

9. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the betting means is adapted for multiple player use, and the betting means is operable by different players.

10. The entertainment machine of claim 1, which includes multiple separate betting means for placing bets, each said bet including one or more stakes on one or more of said symbols at a start of the game, said multiple separate betting means being operatively coupled to one another, each one of the betting means operable by a different player.

11. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the symbols comprise numbers which are distinguished by colors.

12. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein: (a) the symbol selector comprises a rotatable wheel with circumferentially distributed symbol-bearing compartments; and (b) each one of the selector elements comprises a ball which runs around the periphery of the wheel over the compartments and then comes to rest by dropping into one or more respective compartments corresponding to selection of the symbol or symbols which correspond thereto.

13. The entertainment machine of claim 1, wherein the betting means comprises a betting zone having multiple individual areas marked with the symbols, in conjunction with markers placeable on one or more areas on said zone to indicate a stake bet on one or more of said symbols.

14. The entertainment machine of claim 13, which includes one or more peripheral areas on the betting zone related to groups of said symbol-bearing areas, wherein the markers are placeable on individual one of said peripheral areas.

15. The entertainment machine of claim 13, wherein the markers are placeable such as to straddle two or more adjacent ones of the areas.

16. The entertainment machine of claim 13, wherein the markers are placeable in stacks such that the stake value is determined by a quantity of markers in the stack.

17. The entertainment machine of claim 1, which includes a video display device operable to provide the display, the video display device simulating a mechanical roulette game.

18. The entertainment machine of claim 17, which includes: (a) at least one touch screen control operatively coupled to the video display device; and (b) at least one press button control operatively coupled to the video display device.

19. A gaming device comprising:

a game;

a display device operable to display a series of symbols and a plurality of selector elements;

a processor in control of the display device, the processor operable to:

(a) receive a bet that is based on at least one of the symbols being indicated by at least one of the selection elements;

(b) cause the display device to cause each one of the selector elements to move across a range of the symbols and then come to rest on or adjacent to at least one of the symbols so as to indicate said at least one symbol; and

(c) provide an award that varies with how many of the selector elements indicate said at least one symbol.

20. The gaming device of claim 19, wherein: (a) the game includes a game based upon roulette; and (b) the processor is operable to cause the display device to cause a plurality of the selector elements to move across a range of the symbols and then come to rest on or adjacent to a single one of the symbols so as to indicate said single symbol.

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