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(54) **Device for playing a game**

(57) A device for playing a game, comprising determining means for determining qualities of prizes to be won by playing the game, and display means for displaying, each time a game session has ended, the quality of the prize that has been won as determined by said determining means, wherein the determining means are arranged for determining the respective qualities of prizes to be won for playing the game a number of times in succession, and that before the game is played one or more times, until a quality thus determined by the determining means meets a predetermined criterion, so that the number of times the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality that meets said predetermined criterion is fixed, and in that said display means are arranged for displaying the quality of the prize to be won after playing the games the predetermined number of times that meets said predetermined criterion.

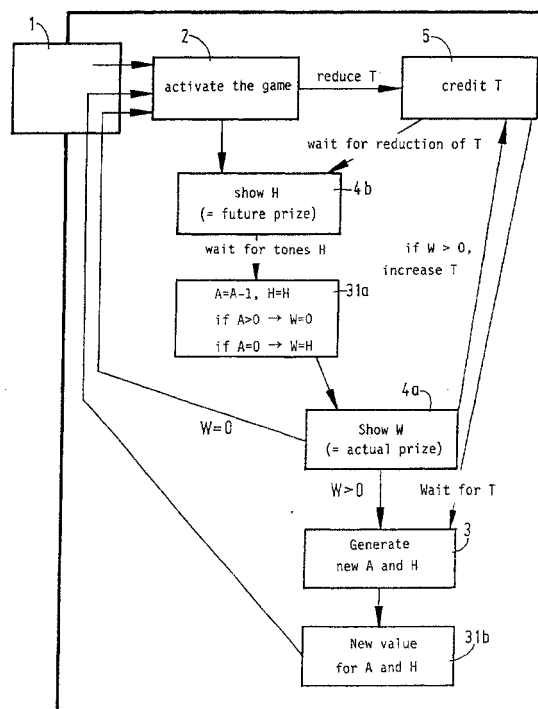


FIG. 1

Description

[0001] The invention relates to a device for playing a game, comprising determining means for determining qualities of prizes to be won by playing the game, and display means for displaying, each time a game session has ended, the quality of the prize that has been won as determined by said determining means.

[0002] Such a device is generally known, for example in the form of a fruit machine comprising a control unit including a random number generator and stepping motors for driving and stopping the fruit rolls on the basis of the number delivered by said random number generator. The determining means comprise the random number generator, and the display means comprise the fruit rolls in combination with a winning plan. The prior art device furthermore comprises starting means including a start button for starting a single session of the game, after which the determining means determine the number of points to be won by playing said single session of the game, and the display means display the number of points as determined by the determining means of the prize that has been won after said single session. When the player presses the start button again, the above procedure is repeated, etc. The prior art device may furthermore include players' credit storage means for storing the player's credit, for example in the form of a player's total number of points, which can be increased by inserting money and which can be decreased or increased by playing respective single sessions of the game. When the player's credit reaches value zero, money will have to be inserted first before the game can be played again one or more times.

[0003] With the prior art device, the determining means are therefore arranged for determining per single session the quality of the prize to be won for playing said single session of the game, and the display means are arranged for displaying, after said single session, the quality as determined by the determining means of the prize that has been won.

[0004] The object of the present invention is to enhance the versatility of the prior art device to such an extent that a user of the device, or, in other words, the player, is informed in advance that a prize having a quality that meets a predetermined criterion is certain to be won after the game has been played an unknown but fixed number of times.

[0005] In order to accomplish that objective, the invention provides a device of the kind referred to in the introduction, which is characterized in that said determining means are arranged for determining the respective qualities of prizes to be won for playing the game a number of times in succession, and that before the game is played one or more times, until a quality thus determined by the determining means meets a predetermined criterion, so that the number of times the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality that meets said predetermined criterion is fixed, and in

that said display means are arranged for displaying the quality of the prize to be won after playing the games the predetermined number of times that meets said predetermined criterion.

5 **[0006]** As a result of the above aspects, a player is informed in advance what prize is in store for him or her, but it remains a surprise how many times the game is to be played before said prize is won. This enhances the attraction and the amusement level of the game and creates new possibilities for organizing the game.

10 **[0007]** The quality of a prize may relate to the height or the nature thereof.

[0008] The prize may consist of money or points, and it may amount to zero.

15 **[0009]** Alternatively, or in addition thereto, the prize may consist of a feature (part of a game) or a physical product.

20 **[0010]** Said criterion may be the exceeding of a minimum, including zero, or being a feature or a physical product.

[0011] The display means may briefly display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

25 **[0012]** Alternatively, the display means may permanently display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion, until the display means display said quality as the quality as determined by the determining means of the prize that has been won.

30 **[0013]** The device may comprise starting means for starting the game, and the display means may display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion before the starting means start a first session of the fixed number of times the game is to be played. Alternatively, the display means may display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion after the starting means have started a first session of the fixed number of times the game is to be played.

35 **[0014]** The display means may display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion as a quality of a prize that has been won in a previous game.

40 **[0015]** The device may comprise buffer means for storing the number of times to be played as determined by the determining means and the associated quality as determined by the determining means that meets the predetermined criterion, as well as count-down means for reducing the stored number by one each time a session is started until the stored number equals zero, after which the display means display the stored quality of the prize that has been won once the final session of the game has been played, and the determining means again determine the number of times the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

45 **[0016]** The device may comprise players' credit storage means for storing the player's credit in the form of a player's total amount of money or total number of points, and when the player's credit that is stored in the players' credit storage means equals zero, the number and the quality stored in the buffer means can be reset,

and when subsequently the stored player's credit reaches a value higher than zero, the determining means can determine the fixed number and the associated quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

[0017] The device may be a slot machine, in particular a gambling machine.

[0018] The term "game" is understood to include a part of a game, or, in other words, a feature.

[0019] The determining means, the starting means, the buffer means and the players' credit storage means may be implemented in the form of hardware or in the form of software.

[0020] The starting means may comprise a button, a switch, a handle or a touch screen, or they may respond to the insertion of money, or to combinations thereof.

[0021] The display means may comprise display screens, rolls, lamps, counters, gauges, monitors and LCD screens.

[0022] The determining means may comprise a random number generator, possibly in combination with a regulating mechanism and/or a table, for example.

[0023] The invention will now be explained in more detail with reference to the drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 shows a diagram of an example of a game to be played with the device according to the invention; and

Figure 2 is a schematic, strongly simplified view of an example of an embodiment of the device according to the invention as implemented in a gambling machine.

[0024] Figure 1 schematically shows a player 1, starting means 2, determining means 3, display means 4a, 4b, buffer means 31a, 31b and players' credit storage means 5.

[0025] With reference to Figure 1, the device according to the invention for playing a game comprises determining means 3 for determining qualities W of prizes to be won by playing the game, and display means 4a for displaying the quality W as determined by determining means 3 of the prize that has been won each time a game has been played. More in particular, said determining means 3 are arranged for determining the respective qualities W of the prizes to be won for playing the games a number of times in succession, and that before the game is played one or more times, until 1 a quality H thus determined by the determining means meets a predetermined criterion (for example $H \neq 0$), so that the number of times A the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality H that meets said predetermined criterion is fixed, and the display means 4b are arranged for displaying the quality H of the prize to be won after playing the games the predetermined number of times A that meets the predetermined criterion.

[0026] Player 1 starts a first session of the game, which may also take place automatically. Usually, player

1 will play either for money or for points. The player's credit T that is stored in the players' credit storage means 5 will decrease in that case. The quality H in buffer means 31 is presented to player 1 by the display means 4b. Display means 4a then present the actual quality W associated with this session of the game. In the present embodiment, $W = 0$ if $A > 0$, or $W = H$ if $A = 0$. $W = H$ is added to T and stored in players' credit storage means 5. The players' credit display means 4c that are shown in Figure 2 display the player's credit T.

[0027] If $A > 0$ and $H > 0$, A and H will remain stored in buffer means 31a. Each time the game is started, A is reduced by one. Once A equals zero, the display means 4a will present the quality H of the prize of that session to the player 1 as the actual quality W. Now it obtains that $A = H = 0$. Determining means 3 will now generate new values for H and A. This may take place directly, that is, before another session of the game is started, or not until another session of the game is started. Furthermore, values H and A may be reset if $T = 0$. As soon as $T > 0$, for example when player 1 inserts money, determining means 3 will directly generate new values for H and A.

[0028] Buffer means 31 include count-down means (not shown as such), with buffer means 31a, 31b forming part of the determining means 3.

[0029] Figure 2 shows an actual example of the device according to the invention in the form of a gambling machine. The hardware is controlled by means of a control unit. Said unit also processes the inputs of, for example, start button 20. The control software, among which the buffer means (31a, 31b in Figure 1) runs on said unit. The gambling machine 2 that is shown in Figure 2 comprises a money slot 6, pay-button 7, start button 20 and display means 4a-d for displaying W, in this case by means of three rolls 4a1, 4a2, 4a3, wherein the winning line is indicated at 4a4, displaying H, displaying T and displaying a winning plan with the prizes to be won, respectively.

[0030] The player's credit T that is displayed on display means 4c increases when money is inserted into money slot 6. A game session is started by pressing start button 20. Player's credit T decreases. Rolls 4a1-4a3 of the display means 4a start to rotate. Display means 4b show the first prize H that may be won, which has quality $\neq 0$ as generated by the determining means (indicated at 3 in Figure 1). Rolls 4a1-4a3 stop and show a losing combination ($A > 0$, $W = 0$), or a winning combination ($A = 0$, $W = 0$), in which latter case the prize will light up on the winning plan 4d and will be added to T, whilst the new total for T is displayed by display means 4c.

[0031] The quality of a prize may be the height of the prize, for example the amount of money of the number of points, including zero, or the nature of the prize, for example a feature or a physical product. The criterion may be the exceeding of a minimum, including zero, or being a feature or a physical product. The display means

4b may briefly display the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion.

[0032] The display means 4b may permanently display the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion until the display means 4b display said quality as the quality W as determined by the determining means of the prize that has been won.

[0033] The display means 4b may display the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion before the starting means 2 start a first session of the fixed number of times A the game is to be played.

[0034] The display means 4b may display the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion after the starting means 2 have started a first session of the fixed number of times A the game is to be played.

[0035] The display means 4b may display the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion as a quality W of a prize that has been won in a previous game, which game may not be a game different from the game that is to be played next (once again, the term game is understood to include a part of a game).

[0036] The device may comprise buffer means 31a, 31b for storing the number of times A the game is to be played as determined by the determining means 3, and the associated quality H as determined by the determining means that meets the predetermined criterion, as well as count-down means (in 31a) for reducing the stored number A by one each time a session is started, until the stored number equals zero, after which the display means 4a display the stored quality H of the prize that has been won once the final session of the game has been played, and the determining means 3 again determine the number of times A the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality H that meets the predetermined criterion.

[0037] The device may comprise players' credit storage means 5 for storing the player's credit T in the form of the total amount of money or the total number of points of a player 1, and when the player's credit T that is stored in the players' credit storage means 5 equals zero, the number A and the quality H stored in the buffer means 31a can be reset, and when subsequently the stored player's credit T reaches a value higher than zero, the determining means 3 can determine the fixed number A and the associated quality H that meets the predetermined criterion.

Claims

1. A device for playing a game, comprising determining means for determining qualities of prizes to be won by playing the game, and display means for displaying, each time a game session has ended, the quality of the prize that has been won as determined by said determining means, **characterized in that** said determining means are arranged for determining the respective qualities of prizes to be

won for playing the game a number of times in succession, and that before the game is played one or more times, until a quality thus determined by the determining means meets a predetermined criterion, so that the number of times the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality that meets said predetermined criterion is fixed, and **in that** said display means are arranged for displaying the quality of the prize to be won after playing the games the predetermined number of times that meets said predetermined criterion.

2. A device according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the quality of a prize is the height or the nature of said prize.

3. A device according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** said prize consists of money or points, and it may amount to zero.

4. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said prize consists of a feature or a physical product.

5. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said criterion is the exceeding of a minimum, including zero, or being a feature or a physical product.

6. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said display means briefly display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

7. A device according to any one of the claims 1 - 5, **characterized in that** said display means permanently display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion, until the display means display said quality as the quality as determined by the determining means of the prize that has been won.

8. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, comprising starting means for starting the game, **characterized in that** said display means display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion before the starting means start a first session of the fixed number of times the game is to be played.

9. A device according to any one of the claims 1 - 7, comprising starting means for starting the game, **characterized in that** said display means display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion after the starting means have started a first session of the fixed number of times the game is to be played.

10. A device according to any one of the preceding

claims, **characterized in that** said display means display the quality that meets the predetermined criterion as the quality of a prize that has been won in a previous game.

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11. A device according to any one of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** the device comprises buffer means for storing the number of times to be played as determined by the determining means and the associated quality as determined by the determining means that meets the predetermined criterion, as well as count-down means for reducing the stored number by one each time a session is started until the stored number equals zero, after which the display means display the stored quality of the prize that has been won once the final session of the game has been played, and the determining means again determine the number of times the game is to be played in order to win a prize having the quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

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12. A device according to claim 11, comprising players' credit storage means for storing the player's credit in the form of a player's total amount of money or total number of points, **characterized in that** when the player's credit that is stored in the players' credit storage means equals zero, the number and the quality stored in the buffer means are reset, and when subsequently the stored player's credit reaches a value higher than zero, the determining means can determine the fixed number and the associated quality that meets the predetermined criterion.

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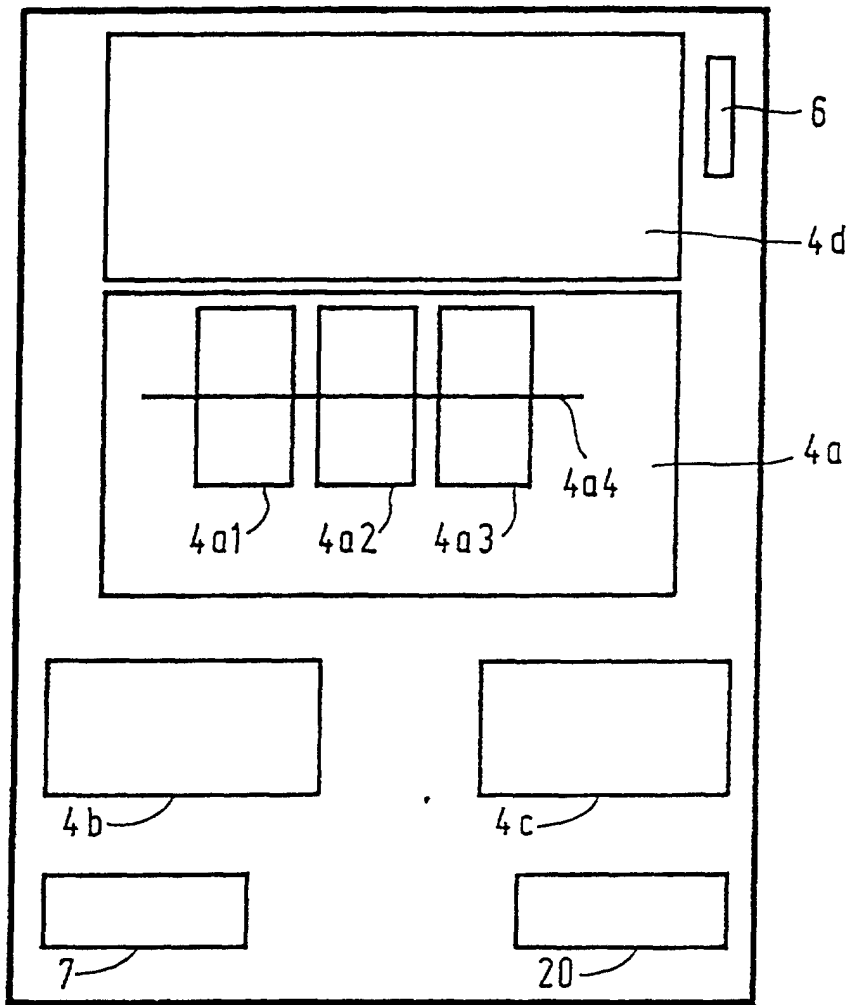


FIG. 2



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 01 20 1592

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Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 28 August 2001	Examiner Neville, D
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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