



## Description

[0001] The invention relates to an apparatus for playing a roulette style game of chance.

[0002] The game of roulette is well known. Apparatus for playing roulette comprises a bowl to the bottom of which a wheel is mounted by means of a low friction bearing. The bowl has a rim projecting inwardly towards its centre and a curved side. It is finished to a high degree of polish so that the rim, side and bottom form a low friction race within which a ball can run.

[0003] The wheel has a set of identical compartments arranged circumferentially around its edge, each compartment being marked with a numeral and a colour. The edge of the wheel is arranged to finish level with the bottom of the bowl.

[0004] The game is played by causing the wheel to rotate in the bowl and providing an impulse to the ball such that it rotates around the race in the opposite direction to the rotation of the wheel and has sufficient angular momentum that it continues rotating for some time.

[0005] During this time period, the players place chips on a table bearing markings corresponding to the markings of the compartments of the wheel, the chips being placed to indicate the compartment or combination of compartments the player wishes to bet on.

[0006] As the momentum of the ball decays to zero it rolls into one of the compartments of the wheel, the markings of the compartment identifying the winning bet or bets, if any.

[0007] US 3,819,186 describes apparatus for playing roulette where the wheel and table previously described are replaced by an electronic circuit, the rotation of the ball being simulated using lights controlled by an electronic oscillator. Electronic circuits are used to determine the stake bet by the players and to reward the players depending on the correspondence between the placed bets and the stopping position of the simulated ball.

[0008] There is a need to provide such a game with a new aspect so that it has fresh appeal.

[0009] In accordance with the present invention, a game playing apparatus is provided comprising a board bearing markings defining individual and/or combinations of indicia to enable players to make bets; and a set of stacking blocks, each bearing one or more of the indicia whereby the game is played by removing a block from the stack and rewarding players who have made bets corresponding to indicia on the removed block.

[0010] In general, the blocks will be divided into two sets, distinguished by different indicia. For example, the two sets may be finished in different colours. It will be clear to a man skilled in the art that the blocks may alternatively be divided in to more than two sets by the use of more than two colours or other indicia.

[0011] The blocks may also bear other indicia, for example, in the form of numerals, these indicia being in addition to or in place of the distinguishing indicia and being located such that they are hidden when the blocks are stacked.

[0012] Preferably the blocks are cuboid in shape and conveniently have a width dimension about one third that of their length. Hence, the blocks can be stacked in layers of three, each layer being turned in the horizontal plane such that it is perpendicular to its immediately preceding layer.

[0013] Of course, it is possible to use blocks with other shapes, for example, a prism with a hexagonal cross-section and furthermore, that it is not necessary for these blocks to tessellate.

[0014] The board bears markings corresponding to the indicia used to mark the blocks. Preferably, the markings are numbers arranged circumferentially around the edge of a circle in the same manner as for a roulette wheel. It is also desirable that the board carries markings for combinations of the indicia, for example a set of even or a set of odd numbers.

[0015] The board may also advantageously have a marking defining a region where the tower of blocks can be built and may also include regions marked with a tick, a cross and a representation of a collapsing tower.

[0016] A set of betting tokens is also provided so that the players can indicate where they wish to place their bet and the size of the stake. The tokens may designate pecuniary values, quantities of points or they may be marked with a series of icons, each one of the series of icons having a different value associated with it.

[0017] In a method of playing a game using the game playing apparatus according to the present invention is provided:

- 1) a stack of the blocks is built;
- 2) one or more players place bets on the board to indicate individual or combinations of indicia;
- 3) a player attempts to remove a block in the stack; and,
- 4a) if the stack remains in place, the indicia of the removed block are noted and players who have placed bets relating to the noted indicia are rewarded while the rest forfeit their stake, or
- 4b) if the stack collapses, the player removing the block pays a forfeit.

[0018] Normally, steps 2) to 4) would be repeated until the stack collapses.

[0019] Preferably, the removed block is placed on top of the remaining stack prior to step 4. In this way, the difficulty of removing a block without collapsing the tower is increased with each subsequent turn.

**[0020]** The current player is prohibited from placing a bet during their turn unless they choose to attempt to remove a nominated block from the stack bearing a specific combination of indicia.

**[0021]** In the latter case, the return on the bet of a player whose turn it is, may be limited to an amount that is smaller than it would be if he had no control over the removed block and the other players may place their bets on tick, cross or collapsing tower markings to indicate whether or not they believe the player whose turn it is will successfully remove the nominated block or whether it will cause the tower to collapse.

**[0022]** An example of a roulette style game using a tower of blocks and a board according to the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a plan view of the game board;  
Figure 2 is a perspective view of one of the stacking blocks;  
Figure 3 is a perspective view of a tower constructed from the stacking blocks; and,  
Figure 4 shows a plan view of the betting chips used in the game.

**[0023]** Figure 1 shows a plan view of the game board 1, which is square in shape and manufactured from card. A square marking 10 in the centre of the game board 1 defines a region on which the blocks can be stacked. The length of the sides of the square marking 10 are equal to the length of the blocks. The square marking 10 is divided into three regions 10a, 10b and 10c by two lines drawn parallel to two opposite sides of the square marking 10. These three regions 10a, 10b and 10c have the same width as the blocks.

**[0024]** Three concentric circles 2, 3 and 4 are arranged around this square marking 10. These define an inner ring 5 and an outer ring 17.

**[0025]** The inner ring 5 is divided into six equal sectors 11-16. One of the sectors 11 is marked with the set of even numbers from two to twenty six. The diametrically opposite sector 12 contains markings of the set of odd numbers from one to twenty seven. These two sectors 11 and 12 are coloured green in order to distinguish them from the red and black markings. A third sector 13 is black in colour and marked with the range of numerals from one to thirteen, whilst the diametrically opposite sector 14 is identical other than it is coloured red. The final pair of diametrically opposing sectors 15 and 16 both define the range of numerals from fourteen to twenty seven, the sector 15 being coloured black and the sector 16 being coloured red.

**[0026]** The outer ring 17 is divided into fifty four equal sectors. Each sector is either red or black in colour, the colour alternating between adjacent sectors. The sectors are further marked with the range of numbers from one to twenty seven, such that each numeral appears twice, once in a red coloured sector and once in a black coloured sector. For example, the sector labelled 43 is red in colour and marked with the number 1 whilst the sector labelled 44 is also marked with the number 1 but is coloured black.

**[0027]** There are square markings 18-20 in three corners of the board. The first square 18 bears a marking of a tick. The diagonally opposite square 19 bears a marking of a cross. The third square 20 has a marking which represents a tower constructed from the stacking blocks that is in the process of collapsing.

**[0028]** Figure 2 shows a perspective view of a stacking block 35. Each block is coloured either red or black and is marked with a numeral 42 ("7" in the case of the block shown in Figure 2).

**[0029]** It can be seen that the width 40 of the block is one third of the length 41. Thus, three blocks placed so that the plane perpendicular to their height dimension is parallel to the surface on which they are laid and so that their lengths are touching, form a square layer.

**[0030]** This feature can be used to construct a tower 36 of the stacking blocks as shown in the perspective view of Figure 3. In this arrangement, the tower is constructed by placing layers 37A-37L of three blocks 35 one upon the other, with the lengths of the blocks of each layer being oriented perpendicular to the lengths of the blocks of the immediately preceding layer.

**[0031]** As a result of this construction, each block is supported by all three blocks of the layer immediately beneath it. Hence, a maximum of two of the blocks in any layer are redundant. For example, in the layer 37F either the centre block 35A can be removed or both the outer blocks 35B,35C can be removed without the tower collapsing.

**[0032]** The layers are constructed such that on one layer the outer blocks are both black and the centre block is red and on the adjacent layers the outer blocks are red and the centre block is black. This is illustrated in Figure 3 by shading the black blocks (eg blocks 35B,35C).

**[0033]** Figure 4 shows three types of betting chips used in the game. These comprise chips with values of \$1000 30, \$500 31 and \$100 32.

**[0034]** In order to play the game, the blocks 35 are first placed on a flat surface with the face bearing the numerals 42 placed against the surface. The blocks are now shuffled. The tower 36 is built on the square region 10 of the game board 1, according to the arrangement shown in Figure 3, the numerals being hidden from view and the game board 1 being placed on a level surface. The blocks 35 are arranged within the tower 36 such that the layers alternate between having a black block in the centre with two red blocks on the outside and a red block in the centre with two black blocks

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on the outside.

**[0035]** The players are now dealt five \$100 and one \$500 chips. The remainder of the chips are used to form a bank for paying the return on winning bets. One player is nominated to be the croupier whose task it is to administer the funds in the bank.

**[0036]** Game play now proceeds according to the following method. The game commences with the player to the immediate left of the croupier. At the beginning of the turn, the player must choose one of the following two options:

1. Before trying to remove one of the blocks from the tower, the player must decide whether he is going to remove a black or a red block and inform the other players of his decision.

All the players, with the exception of the player whose turn it is, then bet on the value of the block being removed by placing an appropriate quantity of their chips in the regions marked on the game board 1 according to their bet.

2. The player nominates an individual block, for example the red block marked with the numeral five, and places his bet appropriately in the outer ring of numbers 17 on the game board 1.

**[0037]** The other players now bet on the outcome of this turn by placing their chips in any of the regions marked with:

a. the tick marking 18 indicating that they believe that the current player will succeed in removing the nominated block;

b. the cross marking 19 indicating that they believe that the current player will fail to remove the nominated block; or

c. the marking of the representation of a collapsing tower 20 indicating that they believe the current player will cause the tower to collapse whilst removing the block.

**[0038]** Irrespective of which of the two options is chosen, the maximum bet that can be placed by any player is \$1000 in each turn.

**[0039]** In both cases the game proceeds by the player whose turn it is attempting to remove the chosen block from the tower using only one hand. On removal, the markings on this block are shown to the other players. The block is now placed on top of the tower with the side marked with a numeral facing downwards and the croupier settles all bets. The players whose bets are successful retain their stake and receive, in addition, a return from the bank according to where the bet was placed, as shown in the following list:

BET PLACED IN:	RETURN:
Even Numbers (11)	1 x Stake
Odd Numbers (12)	1 x Stake
Black Numbers 1 to 13 (13)	2 x Stake
Red Numbers 1 to 13 (14)	2 x Stake
Black Numbers 14 to 27 (15)	2 x Stake
Red Numbers 14 to 27 (16)	2 x Stake
Colour and Number (any sector in outer ring 17)	3 x Stake
Tick (18)	1 x Stake
Cross (19)	1 x Stake
Collapsing Tower (20)	3 x Stake

**[0040]** If a player bets incorrectly their stake is lost to the bank. If the tower collapses, the croupier pays out only to those who have bet on the collapsing tower or cross markings.

**[0041]** If a player loses all their money, they are deemed bankrupt and take no further part in the game. A player is

also deemed bankrupt if they collapse the tower on their turn. In this event, all their money is returned to the bank.

**[0042]** The turn of the current player is now complete and the player to the immediate left of the current player takes the next turn. The next turn and all subsequent turns proceed as described above until a player causes the tower to collapse. This event marks the end of the game. The winner is that player who has the greatest value of tokens when the tower collapses.

## Claims

1. Game playing apparatus comprising a board (1) bearing markings defining individual and/or combinations of indicia to enable players to make bets; and a number of stacking blocks (35), each bearing one or more of the indicia whereby the game is played by creating a stack (36) of the blocks (35), removing a block from the stack, and rewarding players who have made bets corresponding to indicia on the removed block.
2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the blocks (35) are stackable so that at least some of the indicia on the blocks are not visible.
3. Apparatus according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the indicia include markings to define two distinguishable sets of blocks.
4. Apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the markings comprise different colours.
5. Apparatus according to claim 3 or claim 4, wherein the blocks include further indicia (42), each member of a set bearing different ones of the further indicia, the members of one set having the same further indicia as members of the other set.
6. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the indicia include numerals.
7. Apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the board markings include regions defining ranges of numerals.
8. Apparatus according to claim 6 or claim 7, wherein the board markings include regions defining odd and/or even numerals.
9. Apparatus according to any of claims 3 to 5, wherein the board markings include regions corresponding to the indicia used to distinguish the two sets of blocks.
10. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the board markings define a roulette-style surface.
11. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the board markings define a region (10) on which the blocks (35) can be stacked.
12. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the board markings include regions marked with a tick, a cross and a representation of a collapsing tower.
13. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the blocks (35) comprise cuboids.
14. Apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising a set of betting tokens (30-32) which can be selectively placed on the board by players.

Fig.1.

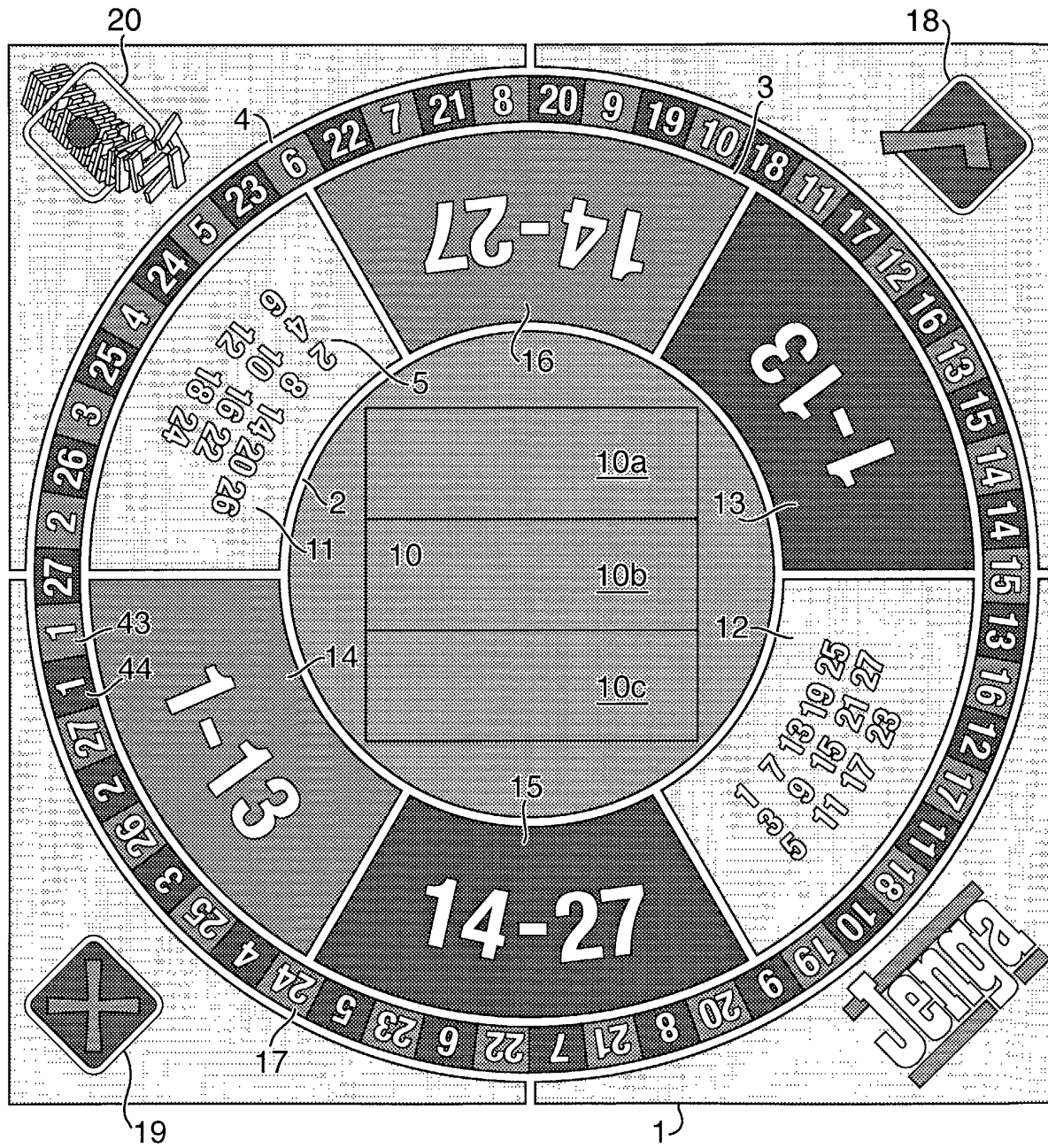


Fig.2.

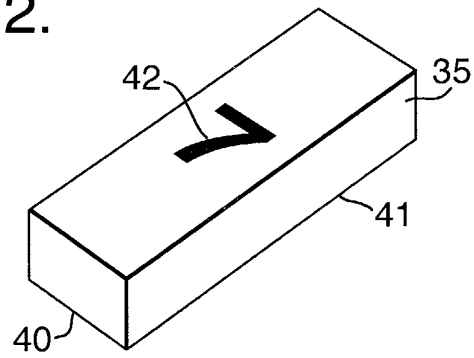


Fig.3.

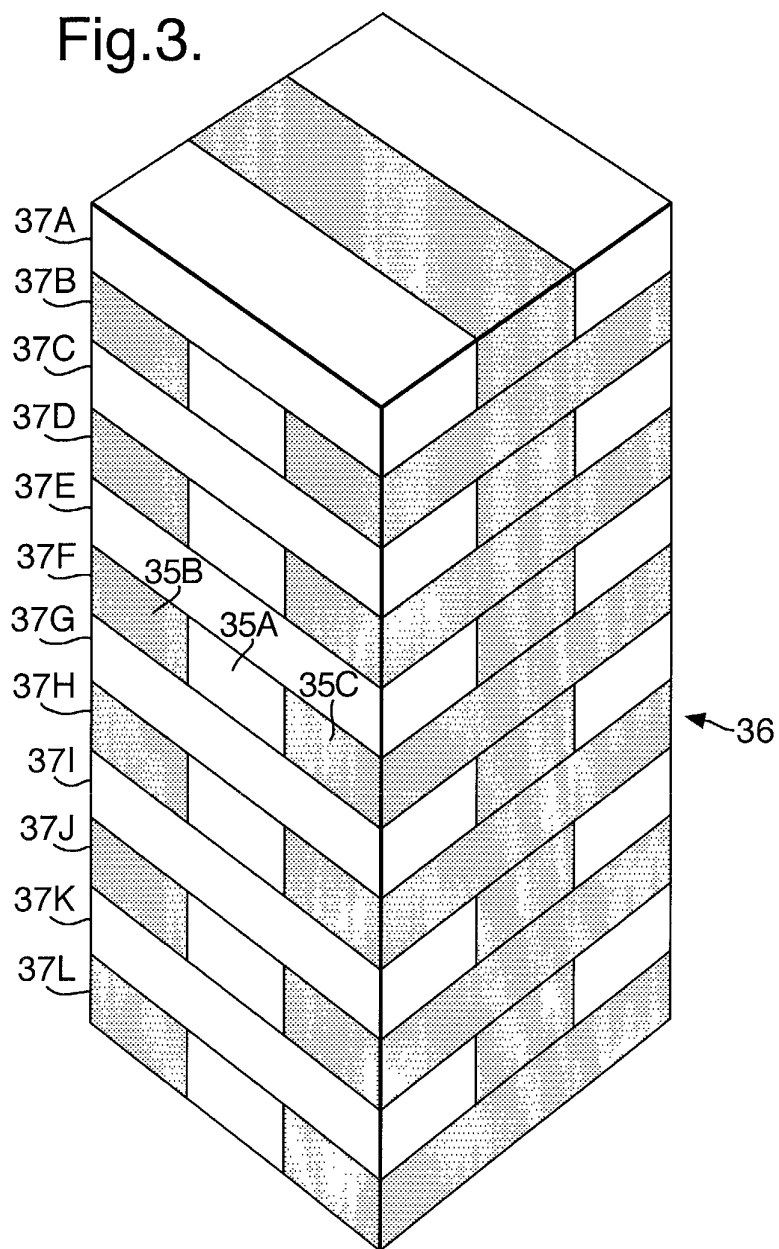


Fig.4.

