LABYRINTH GAME WITH CHANGEABLE PATTERN

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ABSTRACT

An amusement device providing a changeable labyrinth or maze pattern comprising a plurality of elongated movable elements arranged in side-by-side relationship in a tray. Each of the elements has indicia thereon and the indicia on the elements collectively form a maze pattern which, in almost all arrangements of the elements has at least one unobstructed pathway from one side edge of the elements to the other. The elements may have additional indicia which score successful completion of a transit through the maze.

1 Claim, 9 Drawing Figures
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LABYRINTH GAME WITH CHANGEABLE PATTERN

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an amusement device, and more particularly to a labyrinth or maze amusement device.

Labyrinth or maze games wherein the object is to trace an unobstructed pathway from a starting point to a finish point through a maze of obstructions and pathways are well-known, popular forms of amusement. However, the problem with most of these maze games is that they comprise a fixed maze which is of little challenge to the player after the first few successful plays, i.e., the arrangement of the labyrinth is static.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to the present invention, there is provided a labyrinth or maze amusement device, the maze pattern of which can be easily changed repeatedly to yield each time a new and untried maze. The device comprises a plurality of elongated movable elements arranged in side-by-side relationship to form a group of such elements. Each element has indicia thereon with the indicia of one element cooperating with the indicia of adjacent elements to collectively form a maze pattern which, in almost all arrangements of the elements, has at least one unobstructed pathway from one side edge of the group of elements to the other. Preferably, a tray is provided to receive and support the elements and may have indicia for restricting the points of entry into the maze pattern and has indicia at the exit side edge of the maze pattern to indicate the score value of the pathway traced through the maze. Also, the preferred maze pattern comprises the same base maze pattern indicia design repeated on each element but being offset lengthwise to a different degree on each element so that a different overall maze pattern indicia design appears on each individual element.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a plan view of the amusement device of the present invention, with a portion of the maze pattern shown;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the tray of the amusement device;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of one of the elements of the amusement device;

FIG. 4 is a side, cross-sectional view of the amusement device taken along the line IV—IV of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a plan view of a portion of the amusement device with the elements offset lengthwise from each other to illustrate the repetitive nature of the preferred base maze pattern indicia design;

FIG. 6 is a plan view of the lower portion of the amusement device with the first two elements of the device shown in FIG. 1 being switched in position;

FIG. 7 is a plan view of the lower portion of the amusement device with the first and third elements of the device shown in FIG. 1 being switched in position;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged fragmentary view showing one unit of the maze indicia pattern; and

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary, enlarged perspective view of a modified form of the invention.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

As shown in FIG. 1, the amusement device comprises a tray 10 and a plurality of narrow, elongated, slit-like movable elements 20 seated side by side in tray 10. Each of the elements 20 has geometric indicia 25 thereon which cooperate with the indicia on the next adjacent element to collectively form a maze pattern which, in almost all possible arrangements of the elements, has at least one unobstructed pathway from the lower side edge of the first element 20a to the upper side edge of the last element 20d.

Tray 10 is more clearly shown in FIG. 2 which is a perspective view thereof. As shown, tray 10 comprises a base platform 11 and raised border strips 12, 12a and 12b around three sides thereof so that as the elements 20 are received in tray 10, the top surfaces thereof are flush with the top surfaces of border strips 12. No border strip is provided on the fourth side of tray 10 to facilitate easy removal and interchangeability of elements 20 in tray 10. The border strip 12b on the side opposite such fourth side serves as a stop member or rail for aligning the ends of the elements. It will be recognized that the fourth side may also be equipped with a border strip and that the surfaces of the elements may be raised above or recessed with respect to the border strips without departing from my invention. On the lower border strip 12b, there is provided indicia 13 for restricting the points of entry into the maze pattern. On the opposite border strip 12a, there is provided a series of numerical indicia 14 to indicate the score value of the particular pathway traced through the maze. The indicia 13 and 14 may be omitted if desired.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the first element 20a removed from tray 10. FIG. 4 is a side, cross-sectional view of the amusement device taken along the lines IV—IV of FIG. 1 showing elements 20 positioned in tray 10 with the top surfaces thereof being flush with the top surfaces of border strips 12a and 12b and the ends abutting the opposite border strip or stop rail 12.

The geometric indicia on each of the elements 20 which cooperate with the other elements to form a maze pattern is a matter of choice as long as at least one unobstructed pathway is possible with most of the possible arrangements of the elements. Preferably, the arrangement of the strips is such that there are several alternative paths through the maze for reasons which will be explained subsequently. The advantage of having elements 20 movable is so that the elements can be rearranged to form a completely new maze pattern to provide a continuing challenge to the player.

A preferred design of maze pattern indicia is shown in FIGS. 1, 3 and 5. This design of the maze pattern or geometric indicia is based on a gridwork of sub-squares, (FIG. 8), each of the elements 20 having two rows of such unit sub-squares, wherein one or more sides of each of the sub-squares has a pathway obstructing line. The sub-squares are arranged in square units 31 each having four unit sub-squares, each square unit forming a subpattern. In the preferred design of maze pattern indicia, there are 28 elements 20, each element having two rows of 28 sub-squares each. The preferred base maze pattern indicia design in 28 sub-squares long and two rows of sub-squares wide, with each element having the complete base design thereon. However, the
overall maze pattern indicia on each element is different from every other element by offsetting the entire base design on each element lengthwise one sub-square to the right from the pattern on the preceding element. This offsetting of the base design is exemplified in FIG. 5 wherein the first five elements 20 have each been shifted one sub-square to the right to show that the maze pattern indicia design on each element is the same except for the one subsquare design offset to the right. By this arrangement, when all of elements 20 are in position in tray 10 as shown in FIG. 1, no two elements will have the same maze pattern indicia design thereon. Of course, this initial positioning of elements 20 so that the maze pattern indicia design on each element is offset to the right one sub-square from the preceding element occurs only when the elements are lined up in the initial position as shown in FIGS. 1 and 5. As elements 20 are rearranged to produce different series of pathways, the offset of the indicia design on each element from the preceding element will be random but will always yield at least one unobstructed pathway through the group of elements from the entry point 13 to the exit point 14. For example, in FIG. 6, the first two elements 20a and 20b of FIG. 1 have been switched to yield a new overall maze pattern. Similarly, in FIG. 7, elements 20a and 20c have been switched to yield another new overall maze pattern.

It will be recognized that the invention includes a maze or labyrinth in which the pattern of each element is offset as has already been explained. It is also possible to make the elements with a square cross section as suggested in FIG. 9 (element 200) with each of the faces 201, 201a, 201b and 201c having geometric indicia 25 and the geometric indicia on each face having a different offset from the end which abuts the border strip or rail 12. As illustrated in FIG. 9, the geometric indicia on face 201a are offset two square units from that of face 201. The indicia on face 201b could be offset four square units and that on face 201c offset six square units. Other multiples of offset could be used. For purposes of identification, each of the faces could be of a different color.

Finally, some of the open sides of the subsquares of the maze pattern have numeral indicia 21 to indicate penalty points for passing through an opening having such a numeral as part of the pathway selected for travelling through the maze pattern. In one form of playing a game with the device of the present invention, any of the penalty points accrued while travelling a pathway from the entry point to the exit point are subtracted from the exit score which is indicated at 14 on the border 12 at the exit side of the maze. It will be recognized that these penalty indicia may be omitted.

As is readily apparent, numerous variations of games and game rules can be utilized in using the device of the present invention, being limited only by the ingenuity of the player. For example, one, or two or more competing players can measure levels of performance by keeping numerical scores and/or timing the length of time consumed in travelling through the maze. Because of the interchangeability of the elements to yield a great number of maze variations, the competitive nature of the game is not diminished by being able to trace the most direct, highest point path from memory, since each element change produces new pathways. Thus, while a preferred embodiment of the device of the present invention has been described and illustrated, including a preferred maze pattern, obvious variations and modifications of the device are deemed to fall within the spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention is deemed to be limited only by the appended claims.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An amusement device having a tray, said tray having a pair of ends, a projecting stop member extending along one end thereof; a plurality of movable, narrow, elongated elements seated in side-by-side relationship to form a group, one end of each of said elements adapted to abut said stop member for aligning said ends of said elements, the exposed face of said elements bearing geometric indicia in the form of pathway defining lines, said elements being interchangeable with one another; said lines on each element being arranged in square sub-patterns of unit sub-squares with the unit sub-squares of said sub-pattern arranged in tandem along the element; said lines on the face of one element being identical to said lines on the faces of others of said elements but being offset a multiple of said unit sub-squares from said one end of said element with respect to said lines on the faces of others of said elements; said lines on each of said elements extending both lengthwise and transverse of the element whereby interchanging said elements within the group in most instances creates a new completed maze pathway from one side of said group of elements to the other.

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