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GAME DEVICE WITH VARIABLE PLAYING PATTERN

Filed Jan. 8, 1962

Fig. 1

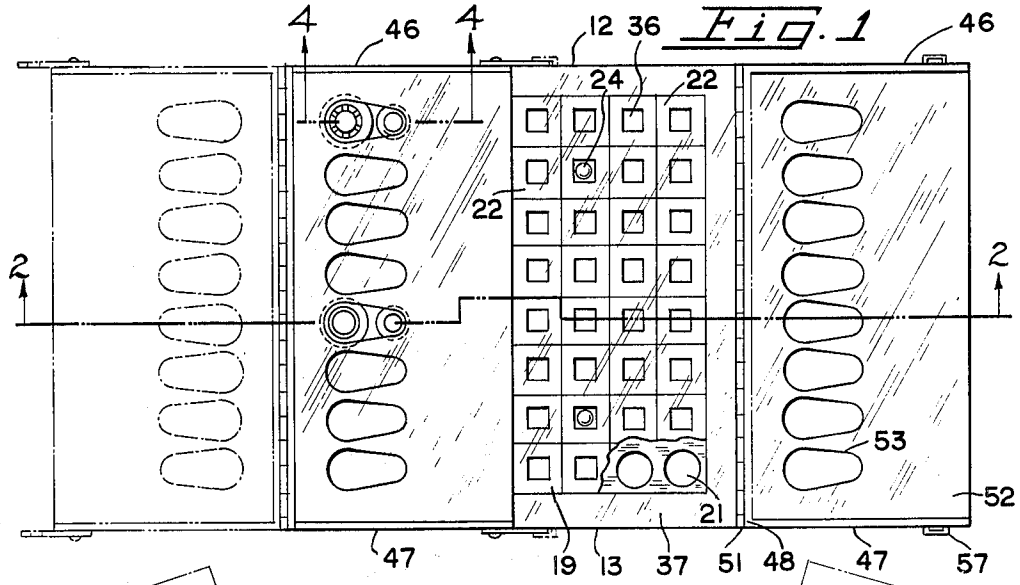


Fig. 2

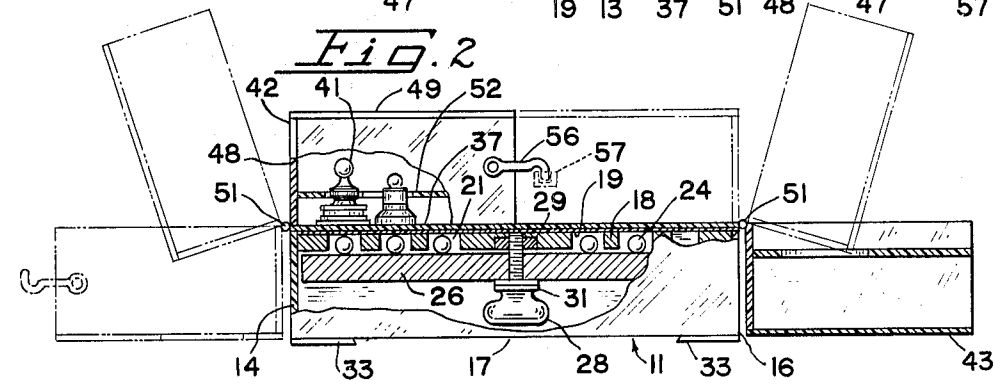


Fig. 3

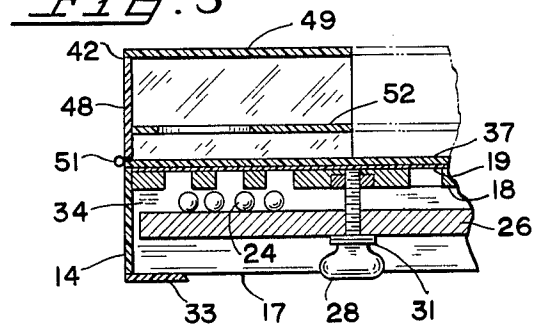
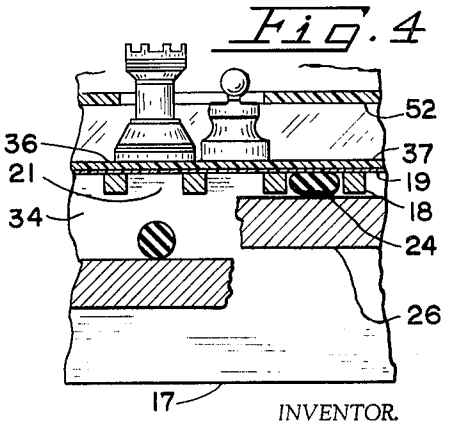


Fig. 4



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GAME DEVICE WITH VARIABLE PLAYING PATTERN

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This invention relates to a game device and more particularly to a game device of the type in which the game playing pattern can be readily selected and in which elements of the pattern are randomly variable.

In many games, there is a game playing surface provided which has a predetermined pattern for the playing surface. Normally, in such games, the pattern of this playing surface is fixed and cannot be changed. In order to provide more of a challenge and also to provide more interest in a game, there is a need for a game device in which different patterns can be selected and in which elements which provide a value or significance in the pattern can be randomly varied.

In general, it is an object of the present invention to provide a game device in which the pattern of the playing surface can be selected and in which elements of the pattern can be randomly varied.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game device of the above character which can be utilized with different types of patterns.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game device of the above character in which elements of the pattern of the game board can be readily varied or randomly changed.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game device of the above character which can be readily and economically constructed.

Additional objects and features of the invention will appear from the following description in which the preferred embodiments are set forth in detail in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Referring to the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of the game device shown in FIGURE 2 incorporating my invention.

FIGURE 2 is a side elevational view, partially in cross-section as taken along the line 2—2 of FIGURE 1, of my game device.

FIGURE 3 is a partial view similar to FIGURE 2 showing the randomizing chamber being used.

FIGURE 4 is a partial cross-sectional view of another embodiment of my invention.

In general, my game device consists of a board which has a mask removably mounted on the upper surface of the board. The mask has markings for the game to be played and the board is provided with holes or recesses in registration with the markings on the mask. One or more elements are adapted to be disposed in the holes or recesses and form portions of the pattern which are randomly variable. The mask is formed in such a manner that it permits viewing of the elements in the holes or recesses. Means are provided for retaining the elements in the holes or recesses. This retaining means is movable, e.g. away from the board, so that the elements can be released from the holes or recesses and be randomly mixed before they are re-positioned in the holes or recesses. This makes it possible to thereafter position the elements in the holes or recesses in a random fashion and to retain the same therein by securing the retaining means so that it is in a fixed position with respect to the board.

As shown in the drawings, this embodiment of my game device consists of a rectangular framework 11

which is provided with said walls 12 and 13, and end walls 14 and 16.

The board 18 is mounted in the upper portion of the framework 11 perpendicular to the side and end walls. Although the board 18 is shown mounted in a fixed position, it is readily apparent that the board can be mounted in the framework 11 in such a manner that it is removable and, therefore, can be varied by choice. A mask 19 is removably mounted on the upper surface of the board and has a playing surface in the form of a pattern disposed thereon in a suitable manner such as by printing. For example, as shown in the drawing, the mask 19 is provided with a checkerboard pattern which is of the type utilized in the game of checkers or chess. Since the mask is removable, masks having different patterns thereon can be provided so that the mask as well as the board 18 can be varied by choice.

As shown particularly in FIGURE 2, the board 18 has a substantial thickness and is provided with a plurality of vertical cylindrical holes 21 extending therethrough. The holes are formed so that they are in registration with the squares 22 forming the pattern on the mask 19 for a purpose hereinafter described.

One or more elements 24 are provided and are adapted to be disposed within the holes 21. The elements can be of one or more different types and for this purpose can take any suitable configuration or shape, size or color. For example, as shown in the drawings, the elements 24 can be spherical in shape and can be formed of two different colors such as red and black to provide elements of two types. The elements 24 are of such a size that they can readily fit in the holes 21 and lie adjacent the mask 19.

Suitable means are provided for releasably retaining the elements 24 within the holes 21 and consist of a flat member 26 which is mounted within the rectangular framework 11 beneath the board 18. The member 26 is slidably mounted on the framework 11 and is movable into engagement with the board 18 or away from the board 18 within the confines of the rectangular framework 11. Suitable means are provided for releasably retaining the member 26 in engagement with the board 18 and, in the embodiment shown, consist of a thumb screw 28 which is rotatably mounted in the board and adapted to be threaded into a nut 29 carried in the lower surface of the board 18. Washers 31 are provided between the head of the thumb screw 28 and the member 26.

When the thumb screw is unthreaded from the nut 29, the member 26 can drop out of engagement with the board 18 to permit the elements 24 to drop out of the holes 21. If desired, means can be provided on the framework 11 to prevent removal of the member 26 and, in the embodiment shown, consist of stops 33 which are secured across the lower corners of the rectangular framework. Thus, when the member 26 has been moved to a position in engagement with these stops, a compartment 34 is formed between the retaining member 26 and the board 18 which serves as a mixing or randomizing compartment to permit the mixing of the elements 24 in a random fashion. As soon as the elements have been mixed in a random fashion, they can again be positioned in the various openings 21 by moving the retaining member 26 toward the board 18 and again fastening it in place against the board 18 by use of the thumb screw 28.

The mask 19 is formed in such a manner that the elements 24 positioned in the holes 21 can be viewed through the mask. To this end, the mask has been provided with small cut-outs 36 which can have any desired configuration such as square as shown. Means are provided for protecting the mask and to form a playing surface and consist of a transparent member 37 which lies over the

mask and is affixed to the rectangular framework 11. It is readily apparent that, if desired, the mask could be formed in such a manner that the mask itself forms the playing surface. In such a case, the viewing apertures 36 would take the form of transparent portions of the mask. In the embodiment shown, the mask can be formed of plastic, paper or other suitable material and can be mounted in such a manner that it can be removed from between the transparent member 37 and the board 18 to thereby permit the use of masks having different patterns within the rectangular framework 11.

Alternatively, if desired, magnetic means can be utilized for attracting elements after they have been randomized or electrical contacts can be utilized for energizing lights in a random fashion all in acordance with well understood principles.

My game device, shown in FIGURES 1 to 3, is also provided with means for retaining the playing pieces 41 on the playing surface and consists of hinged covers 42 and 43. Each of the covers consists of a pair of side walls 46 and 47, end wall 48, and a top wall 49 to provide a substantially rectangular box-like cover as shown in the drawings. The covers 42 and 43 are hinged to the bottom framework 11 by suitable means such as piano hinges 51. A retaining plate 52 is provided within each of the covers and its secured to the end wall 48 and the side walls 46 and 47 so that it lies in a plane parallel to the plane of the top wall 49. The retaining member 52 is provided with a plurality of oval-like openings 53 which are arranged in a row substantially parallel to the end wall 48. It will be noted that the retaining member 52 is mounted in such a manner that it is spaced a substantial distance from the lower extremities of the end and side walls of the cover so that the openings 53 are disposed in a position so that they can receive the upper portions of game pieces 41 and retain them in a predetermined position on the game board. In the drawings, chessmen comprise the game pieces. These chessmen are mounted in such a manner that play can be commenced after the covers are raised and dropped to an out-of-the-way position as shown in full lines in the right-hand side of FIGURES 1 and 2.

Suitable means are provided for locking the covers 42 and 43 in place and, in this embodiment, consist of hooks 56 mounted on the side walls 46 and 47 of the cover 42 and adapted to engage eyelets 57 provided on the side walls 46 and 47 of the cover 43.

Use of my game device may now be briefly described as follows. Let it be assumed that two individuals wish to utilize a game device constructed in accordance with the embodiment illustrated in FIGURES 1–3 for playing the game of chess. Before commencing the game, the thumb screw 28 is unscrewed from the nut 29 to release the retaining member 26. The retaining member 26 is lowered to permit the colored spheres or elements 24 to drop out of the holes 21. The entire game device is then shifted to cause a random mixing of the spheres in the mixing compartment. After the mixing has been completed, the game device is tipped so that the elements 24 drop or roll into the holes 21 in the board. The retaining member 26 is then moved toward the board to hold the elements 24 in place. Alternatively, the member 26 can be used for pushing the elements 24 upwardly into the holes 21 without tipping the game device. As soon as the member 26 is in position, the thumb screw 28 is again threaded into place to retain the elements 24 within the holes 21. As shown in FIGURE 1 of the drawings, only relatively small numbers of the elements or spheres are provided so that only a certain proportion of the total number of holes available are filled with the elements or spheres. However, it should be readily apparent that, if desired, the number or lesser number of spheres or spheres of different colors may be provided. It should also be readily apparent that, if desired, any area of the pattern can be made independent of the random variation by providing plugs (not shown) which would prevent elements from entering the holes in the area in which it was desired to have a predetermined value.

After this has been accomplished, the game can be played in a more or less conventional manner by removing the covers 42 and 43 by tipping them to the open position. This exposes the chess pieces and permits play of the chess pieces in the conventional manner. However, it will be noted that only a portion of the random pattern, i.e., that not covered by the chess pieces, is exposed. The other portions only become visible after the pieces are moved. Rules of a suitable type can be adopted before commencing the game which takes into account the elements 24 which have been positioned randomly in the holes 21. For example, one rule which could be adopted is that a pawn cannot move forward over any one of the elements or any one of the elements of a certain color. The other pieces would be moved in a conventional manner.

The primary purpose of providing such randomly positoned elements in the pattern is to add interest to the game and to make it virtually impossible to standardize the moves which are to be utilized or to memorize patterns of moves since the elements 24 provide a value or significance in the pattern which is randomly variable. It is also believed that this will add considerable interest to the game and also will make it more difficult.

After the game has been completed, the playing pieces can be placed in their proper starting positions and the covers 42 and 43 again can be closed over the pieces to hold the pieces in place. If, thereafter, it is desired to play another game, the position of the elements 24 within the holes 21 can again be shifted by again releasing the retaining member 26 and permitting random mixing of the elements and thereafter re-positioning the elements in the holes as hereinbefore described.

Another embodiment of my invention is shown in FIGURE 4 in which holes 21 are provided of any shape desired, and in which the elements 24 are spheres of a suitable resilient material such as rubber which have a size smaller than the holes 21. The board 18 is of such a thickness that the resilient balls or elements 24, when urged into the holes 21, are compressed and substantially fill the holes 21 so that the cut-outs 36 are filled to thereby provide a better pattern upon which to play. When the member 26 is released, the resilient elements 24 will resume their original shape and, being smaller than the holes, will drop out of the holes so that they can be randomly mixed.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that in my game device, it is possible to change the board 18 and the mask 19 by choice and to randomly vary elements of the pattern on the mask. That is, it is possible to randomly vary elements in the pattern from one game to another or from one playing session to another playing session of the same game. From the foregoing, it can be seen that the size, shape and pattern of the playing surface can take any suitable form and that the elements 24 which provide the randomness in the pattern also can have any desired distinguishing characteristics. Color has been chosen as a distinguishing characteristic in the embodiment of my invention shown in the drawings because it is particularly easy to provide elements having different colors. However, if desired, only one type of element or only one element can be used with certain rules and games. The providing of elements with colors makes it possible to make greater variations in the rules for playing the game.

The entire game device can be formed of suitable material such as plastic. For example, the rectangular framework 11 can be provided of an opaque material so that the mixing of the elements 24 within randomizing compartment 34 cannot be viewed. The top walls 49

of the covers 42 and 43 can be formed of transparent material as is the member 37 forming the playing surface.

The elements or spheres within the mixing compartment 34 can be changed through an access opening (not shown) in the mixing compartment. Thus, a player could, if desired, change the number of colors or the number of elements, or both, in accordance with the game being played.

It is apparent from the foregoing that I have provided a new and improved game device which makes feasible many game variations because it is possible to vary components of the game device by choice and to randomly vary elements of the pattern on which the game is played. The randomly positioned elements add interest to the game and make the number of possible moves so great as to make memorizations very difficult or impossible. The randomness features, therefore, increases the amount of skill required to play the game successfully. The game device is constructed in such a manner that it can be economically and expeditiously mnaufactured. It is also apparent from the foregoing that I have provided a game device which can be utilized as a gaming or chance device in which it is possible to obtain random distribution of an element or elements within a defined area.

I claim:

1. In a game device, a board, a transparent member mounted over the upper surface of said board, a mask disposed between the upper surface of the board and the transparent member, the mask having markings thereon for the game to be played, the board having holes therein in registration with the markings, at least one element of a size so that at least a portion thereof can fit into one of said holes, said mask having viewing apertures through which the element in the hole can be viewed, and means releasably secured to said board for retaining said element in one of said holes so that element can be viewed from above the board through the viewing apertures in the mask, said means releasably secured to said board being movable away from and toward said board to permit said element to be released from the board to thereafter permit random positioning of the element and subsequent repositioning in one of the holes in said board.

2. In a game device, an impervious grid, means for assigning values to portions of the grid, said means being in the form of elements associated with said grid and removable from said grid, means including said impervious grid forming a chamber for randomizing said elements after they have been removed from the grid, and means in the chamber for restoring the randomized elements to the grid to assign new values to portions of the grid.

3. A game device as in claim 2 wherein said elements are normally positioned below the grid to provide an open playing surface above the grid and wherein the grid is formed with transparent viewing apertures for viewing the elements.

4. A game device as in claim 3 wherein the grid is mounted on a member so that it overlies the member, the member having holes therein in registration with the grid, said elements being in the form of spheres having at least portions thereof positioned in the holes below the upper surface of the grid.

5. In a game device, a board, means mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon for the game to be played, the board having arbitrarily selected holes therein in registration with the grid, means forming a chamber in which said board forms one wall of the chamber, a plurality of elements disposed in said chamber symbolically representing the grid values of portions of the pattern of the grid, said elements being formed of a material and being of such a size so at least portions thereof can fit into said holes, the means mounted on the upper surface of the board being fromed to permit viewing of the elements in the holes and means mounted in said chamber releasably secured to said board for retainnig said elements in said holes during the time that a game is being played, said means releasably secured to said board being movable away from and toward said board to permit the elements to be released from the holes in the board and to permit random mixing of the elements and subsequent repositioning of the elements in the holes to assign values to portions of the pattern of the grid and to thereby give a random significance to the arbitrary pattern of portions of the grid.

6. In a game device, a board having an upper planar playing surface, removable means mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon to provide a pattern for the game to be played, said removable means having markings being one of a plurality of such means so that the means having markings thereon can be selected and changed by choice, the board having holes therein in registration with the grid markings, at least one element symbolically representing the value of at least one portion of the pattern, said element being of a size so that at least a portion thereof can fit into one of said holes, the means mounted on the upper surface of the board being formed to permit viewing of the element in one of said holes, and means releasably secured to said board for retaining said element in one of said holes so the same can be viewed from above the board, said means releasably secured to said board being movable away from and toward said board to permit said element to be released from the board to thereafter permit random positioning of the element and subsequent repositioning in one of the holes.

7. In a game device, a removable board having an upper planar playing surface, means mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon to provide a pattern for the game to be played, the board having holes therein in registration with the grid markings, said removable board being one of a plurality of boards having different types and numbers of holes so that the board to be used can be selected and changed by choice, at least one element symbolically representing the value of at least one portion of the pattern, said element being of a size so that at least a portion thereof can fit into one of said holes, the means mounted on the upper surface of the board being formed to permit viewing of the element in one of said holes, and means releasably secured to said board for retaining said element in one of said holes so the same can be viewed from above the board, said means releasably secured to said board being movable away from and toward said board to permit said element to be released from the board to thereafter permit random positioning of the element and subsequent repositioning in one of the holes.

8. In a game device using game playing pieces, a rectangular framework having sides and end walls, a board secured in the upper portion of said framework, a mask mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon for the game to be played, a transparent covering mounted over the mask to provide a smooth planar playing surface, the board having holes therein in registration with the markings on the mask, a plurality of elements of at least two types having portions thereof disposable in said holes and symbolically representing at least two grid values, the mask being formed to permit viewing of the elements in the holes, and retaining means movably mounted within the gramework in the lower portion thereof, and means for releasably securing the retaining means to the board so that the retaining means serves to retain the elements in the holes in the board, the retaining means being movable in the framework to a position away from the board to form a randomizing chamber between the retaining means and the board within the rectangular framework for the elements released from the holes in the board.

9. In a game device, a board, removable means on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon for the game to be played, said means having markings being one of a plurality of said means having different patterns thereon so that the patterns can be changed and selected by choice, the board having arbitrarily selected holes therein in registration with the grid, means forming a chamber in which said board forms one wall of the chamber, a plurality of elements disposed in said chamber symbolically representing the grid values of portions of the pattern of the grid, said elements being formed of a material and being of such a size so at least portions thereof can fit into said holes, the means mounted on the upper surface of the board being formed to permit viewing of the elements in the holes and means mounted in said chamber releasably secured to said board for retaining said elements in said holes during the time that a game is being played, said means releasably secured to said board being movable away from and toward said board to permit the elements to be released from the holes in the board and to permit random mixing of the elements and subsequent repositioning of the elements in the holes to assign values to portions of the pattern of the grid and to thereby give a random significance to the arbitrary pattern of portions of the grid.

10. In a game device, a board having an upper planar playing surface, means mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon to provide a pattern for the game to be played, the board having holes therein in registration with the grid markings, at least one element symbolically representing the value of at least one portion of the pattern, said element being disposed below the upper surface of the board and being of a size so that at least a portion thereof can fit into one of said holes, the means mounted on the upper surface of the board being formed to permit viewing of the element in one of said holes, and a clamping member releasably secured to said board for retaining said element in one of said holes so the same can be viewed from above the board, said clamping member being movable away from said board to form an area below the board so that random movement of said element can occur and to thereafter permit subsequent repositioning in one of the holes in said board.

11. A game device as in claim 10 wherein said element is formed of a resilient deformable material.

12. A game device as in claim 10 wherein there is a plurality of said elements and wherein said elements are of two types to symbolically represent at least two grid values.

13. In a game device, means forming an upper horizontal planar playing surface and having arbitrary grid markings thereon, means forming a chamber below said means forming an upper horizontal planar playing surface and using said means forming the upper horizontal planar playing surface as one wall of the chamber, means disposed in the chamber and having a plurality of holes below the upper surface in registration with said markings, at least one element disposed in said chamber and having a size so that a portion thereof can fit into one of said holes, said means forming an upper horizontal planar playing surface being formed with means permitting viewing of the element, said element being movable in a random fashion in said chamber, and means for retaining said element in engagement with one of said holes after random movement of said element in said chamber.

14. A game device as in claim 13 wherein said means disposed in said chamber and having a plurality of holes in registration with the markings consists of a board contiguous to said means forming an upper surface.

15. In a game device using game playing pieces, a rectangular framework having side and end walls, a board secured in the upper portion of said framework, a mask mounted on the upper surface of the board and having arbitrary grid markings thereon for the game to be played, the board having holes therein in registration with the markings on the mask, a plurality of elements of at least two types having portions thereof disposable in said holes, said elements being positioned below the board, retaining means movably mounted within the framework in the lower portion thereof, and means releasably securing the retaining means to the board so that the retaining means serves to retain the elements in the holes in the board, the retaining means being movable in the framework to a position away from the board to form a randomizing chamber between the retaining means and the board so that after the elements have been randomized, they can be releasably clamped in said holes.

16. A game device as in claim 15 together with means mounted on said framework to prevent removal of the retaining means.

17. A game device as in claim 15 together with a pair of cover members secured to the framework and movable between a position adapted to retain game playing pieces on the board and an out-of-the-way position, said game playing pieces being substantially opaque to prevent viewing of any elements which may be below the game playing pieces.

18. A game device as in claim 17 wherein said cover members are formed with recesses adapted to receive portions of the game playing pieces.

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