The present invention provides a pinball game that simulates a professional or collegiate sport, such as, for example, football and basketball. The games have playing surfaces containing indicia of the regulation game as well as targets that correspond to events that would take place during the game, such as, field goals and 3-points shots. Similarly, scoring would be along regulation sport scoring.
FIG. 1
PINBALL GAME SPORT SIMULATIONS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to pinball games and, more particularly, to pinball games that more accurately simulate professional or collegiate sports.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Pinball arcade games have been popular for sometime. Most of these games include bumpers, lights, rebounders, and the like. Players use paddles to cause a pinball to move around the playing field to hit the bumpers, lights, rebounders, and the like to score points in some arbitrary manner.

[0003] Certain professional and collegiate sports also have been popular for sometime. Many of these games include special features and scoring, such as passing and field goals in football, 3-point shots and 2-point shots in basketball, and the like.

[0004] Frequently, pinball games title themselves after particular sports, including professional and collegiate sports. But other than the titles, these games have little resemblance to the actual sport being simulated. Moreover, the score and special effects of the game are based largely on conventional pinball score systems and conventional pinball designs rather than the simulated sport.

[0005] Two sport games that have been reasonably well simulated by pinball games include baseball simulations and golf simulations, such as those developed by Old Century Classics, Inc. These games include fields of play similar to the sport being simulated in a pinball setting. However, even these sport pinball games use classic holes or ball drops to simulate the game and do not sport specific types of targets, such as, for example, foul poles in baseball, golf hole cups and flags, basketball hoops and backboards, and the like.

[0006] Thus, it would be desirable to produce a pinball game having visual effects, targets, and scoring that simulated the visual effects, targets, and scoring of the simulated sport.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] To attain the advantages and in accordance with the purpose of the invention, as embodied and broadly described herein, a pinball game simulation of football is provided. The simulation comprises a pinball game having a pinball surface, a goal post, ramps, and targets. The ramps simulate passes and kicks (kickoffs, field goals, and punts). The targets represent yardage and touchdowns obtained by running and passing. Some of the targets are penalty targets, such as interception, and holding.

[0008] The present invention further provides a pinball game simulation of basketball. The basketball simulation contains a pinball surface, ramps, and targets. The ramps may simulate shots or possibly a tip off, the target may represent a basketball hoop, offensive plays, defensive plays, or penalties.

[0009] The foregoing and other features, utilities and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of a preferred embodiment of the invention as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0010] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the present invention, and together with the description, serve to explain the principles thereof. Like items in the drawings are referred to using the same numerical reference.

[0011] FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of a pinball football game consistent with the present invention; and

[0012] FIG. 2 shows a perspective view of a pinball basketball game consistent with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] The present invention will be further explained with reference to FIGS. 1 and 2. Referring first to FIG. 1, a football simulation pinball game 100 is shown. Pinball game 100 includes a playing surface 102 surrounded by a sidewall 104. As pinball game 100 exemplifies a football simulation, playing surface 102 incorporates traditional football markings, including yard lines 120, an end zone 130 with goal posts 132, sidelines 140 (which in this example are simply where the playing surface 102 and sidewall 104 abut), and a generic stadium 150. Generic stadium 150 could be team specific, such as, for example, a stadium indicative of the football stadium for the Washington Redskins or the like. Stadium 150 could be removed, but provides a catch for aerial targets that are missed during game play, aerial targets are explained further below.

[0014] Sidelines 140 could include figure representative of football players, coaches, and cheerleaders (not shown). Sidelines 140 also could include a yardage marker 142. Possible uses for yardage marker 142 are explained below, including a use for scoring.

[0015] Strategically placed about playing surface 102 are a plurality of targets 106, 108, 110, and 112. While targets can be a number of devices, in this example, targets 106 includes holes or bumpers representative of offensive events that take place in the game, such as, targets 106r may be a running play, target 106r is a passing play, target 106s is a score, target 106p may be a penalty, such as holding or pass interference, target 106c may be a change of possession, and the like. Targets may have multiple functions, for example target 106r also indicates a score. Targets 106 may indicate yardage gains or losses, such as, for example, a +5 yard running play, a −10 yard holding penalty, or the like.

[0016] Targets 108 include ramps 108r to simulate the aerial action of the ball, including for example, a passing play to touchdown reception in target 134 or a field goal through goal posts 132.

[0017] Targets 110 may be defensive plays, such as tackles, sacks, pass defenses, and interceptions. Targets 110 may include yardage gains or losses, such as, for example, a −12 yard sack, a ±10 yard pass defense, or the like.

[0018] Targets 112 may, for example, be more traditional pinball targets. For example targets 112 may be, as shown, bumpers or rebounders.
Scoring would be similar to traditional football games as well. For example, if a player hits ramp 108r such that the pinball goes through goal posts 132, 3 points maybe awarded. If the player hits ramp 114 with the pinball such that the pinball goes through end zone target 134, 7 points maybe awarded. If the player hits targets (for passing, running, and penalties) to accumulate sufficient yardage on yardage marker 142 to score a touchdown, 7 points maybe awarded. Plays having yardage gains and losses (such as from targets 106 and 110) could be automatically or manually tracked by yardage marker 142, which is shown as an analog slide, but could be digital.

Playing pinball game would be similar to playing a conventional pinball game, but with the added benefit of football specific activities. Such activities include passing, penalties, change of possession, touchdowns, and field goals.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a basketball simulation pinball game 200 is shown. Basketball simulation pinball game 200 include a court 202 and stands 204 surround the court 202. A number of ramps 206, basketball hoops 208, and backboards 210 are strategically positioned around the court to simulate various types of shots. For example, ramp 200m which projects a pinball towards basketball hoop 208m (being the middle ramp and hoop) may simulate a two point shot, while side ramps 206s which projects a pinball towards basketball hoops 206s may simulate a three point shot. Other features of a basketball game, including shot clock violations, backcourt violations, penalties and the like would be represented by traditional pinball targets such as holes, bumpers, rebounders, and the like similar to those described in accordance with FIG. 1.

Court 202 further would have indicia indicative of regulation basketball. For example, court 202 may have a key 212, a three point shot line 214, and a foul line 216.

One aspect of basketball not captured by pinball games is the unique one on one play potential. To capture this feature, basketball pinball game 200 is designed as a two player version, thus another court 250 is attached to the first court 202. Court 250 includes stands, which may be separate or a continuation of stands 204 as desired, and would have ramps 254, basketball hoops 256, and backboards 258 similar to court 202. Moreover, other traditional basketball features could be simulated by traditional pinball devices.

Using the one on one aspect, the player on court 202 may miss a basket or other target causing his ball to land in court 250. This would provide the player on court 250 an extra ball to use for scooting and scoring. This feature would be akin to a steal leading to an extra score for a regulation basketball game.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to particular embodiment(s) thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various other changes in the form and details may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

We claim:

1. A pinball game that simulates a football game, comprising:
   - a playing surface;
   - a sidewall surrounding at least a portion of the playing surface;
   - the playing surface comprising a field with indicia to indicate yardage and an end zone with indicia to indicate end zone markings in accordance with a regulation football field;
   - the playing surface further comprising a plurality of targets, a plurality of bumpers, and at least one ramp; and
   - the end zone further comprising at least one goal post representative of a regulation goal post.

2. The pinball game according to claim 1, wherein the at least one ramp is substantially aligned with the at least one goal posts such that when the pinball travels the at least one ramp, the pinball will simulate a field goal kick.

3. The pinball game according to claim 2, wherein the at least one ramp includes at least a second ramp and the second ramp is aligned with the at least one end zone target to simulate a touchdown pass.

4. The pinball game according to claim 3, wherein scoring for the pinball game is in accordance with regulation football scoring including awarding touchdown points for a touchdown and field goal points for a field goal.

5. The pinball game according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of targets comprises at least one of a defensive playing indication, an offensive play indication, and a penalty.

6. The pinball game according to claim 5, further comprising a yardage marker such yardage changes indicated by the plurality of targets may be recorded and such that points may be awarded when the yardage indicates a touchdown was scored.

7. The pinball game according to claim 1, further comprising a stadium coupled to the sidewalk.

8. The pinball game according to claim 7, wherein the stadium is representative of at least one of a professional and collegiate football team and the indicia in the endzone is indicative of at least one of a professional and collegiate football team.

9. A pinball game that simulates a basketball game, comprising:
   - a playing surface;
   - a sidewall surrounding at least a portion of the playing surface;
   - the playing surface comprising a court with indicia representative of a regulation basketball court including sideline markings, a key, a three-point line, and a free throw line;
   - the key comprising at least one basketball hoop and backboard mounted towards the sideline;
   - the playing surface further comprising a plurality of targets; a plurality of bumpers, and at least one ramp; and
the at least one ramp aligned such that a pinball traveling over the at least one ramp will have a trajectory generally aligned with the basketball hoop.

10. The pinball game according to claim 9, wherein the at least one ramp comprises a plurality of ramps and the plurality of ramps are indicative of at least one of a 3-point shot and a 2-point shot.

11. The pinball game according to claim 9, wherein the plurality of targets comprises at least one of a defensive play indication, an offensive play indication, and a penalty.

12. The pinball game according to claim 9, further comprising a stadium coupled to sidewall and surrounding at least a portion of the playing surface indicative of a basketball crowd.

13. The pinball game according to claim 12, wherein the stadium comprises indicia representative of at least one of a professional and collegiate team.