United States Patent [19]

Heller

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[54] **UPRIGHT GAME BOARD HAVING ROTATABLY MOUNTED INDICIA-BEARING BALLS**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/130 B**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 3/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/130 R, 130 A, 130 AB, 273/130 C, 130 AC, 130 B, 130 D, 130 E, 131 R, 131 AB, 131 B, 131 D, 131 E, 131 G, 134 AB, 134 AD, 134 G, 135 AC, 135 B, 135 D, 136 E, 136 F, 136 BC, 136 W; 35/31 R, 31 A, 31 B, 31 C, 31 D, 35 D, 35 C, 35 H, 77; 40/68, 77.4, 77.6

[56] **References Cited**

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3,506,267	4/1970	Toillie	273/130 B
2,892,267	6/1959	Harvey	35/31 D
2,017,473	10/1935	Reimert	273/136 F
2,967,714	1/1961	Calabrese	273/130 B
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FOREIGN PATENTS OR APPLICATIONS

374,474	4/1923	Germany	273/136 F
452,420	5/1968	Switzerland	273/136 F

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A game device comprising a game board positioned upright between two playing stations and having a plurality of openings arranged in a series of rows and columns extending through the board between the two playing stations. A plurality of indicia bearing balls are rotatably mounted within the board in the plurality of openings so that each ball may be independently rotated from either side of the board to display certain indicia, such as color spots, marked thereon. In playing the game, each player tries to align spots of the same color in any one row or column, or along a diagonal. The indicia on each ball are arranged in pairs with the indicia of each pair being different from each other and in diametrically opposed relation to one another. Also, and considering a common indicia or color spot on every two next adjacent balls (whether in a row, column or diagonal), the color spot diametrically opposed to the common color spot is different on one ball from that on the next adjacent ball. Thus, the pattern of indicia or color spots being formed on one side of the board by one player is different from the pattern being formed on the other side of the board by the other player. A transparent overlay is preferably removably mounted on the game board spaced from the balls and extending thereover for purposes of checking the alignment of the color spots of the alleged winner of the game.

7 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures

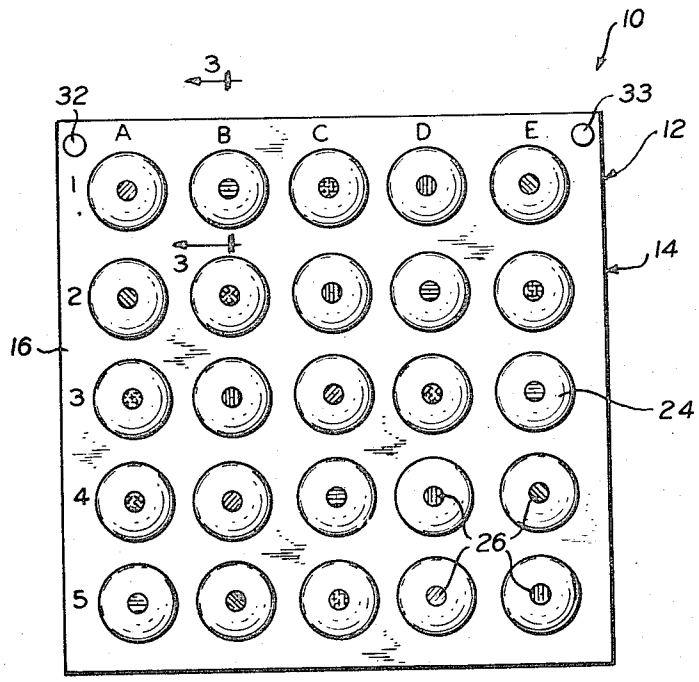


FIG. 1.

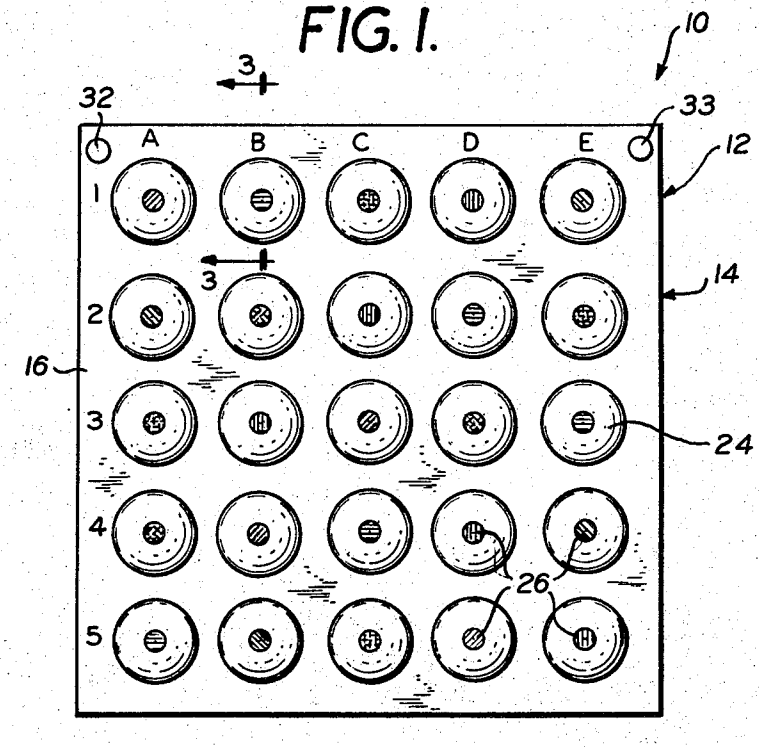


FIG. 2.

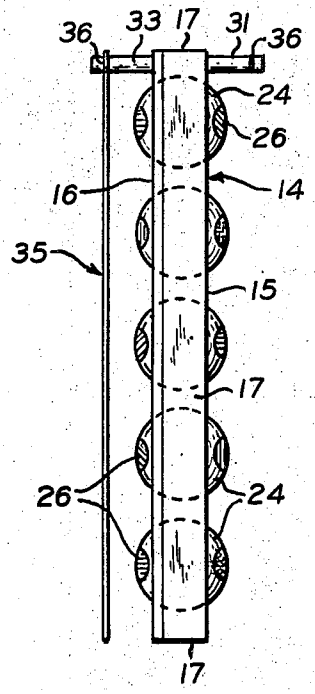


FIG. 3.

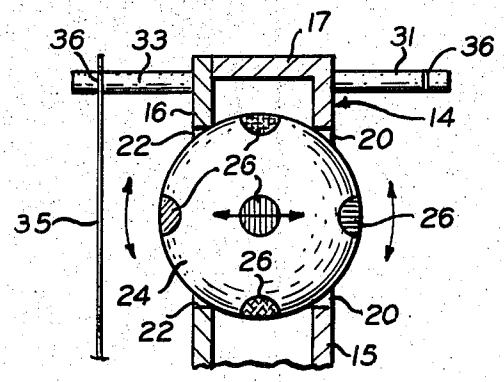
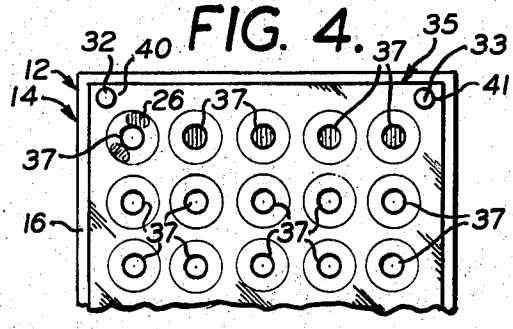


FIG. 4.



UPRIGHT GAME BOARD HAVING ROTATABLY MOUNTED INDICIA-BEARING BALLS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to game devices and, more particularly, to game devices utilizing a game board having one or more indicia bearing members rotatably mounted therein.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Game devices utilizing a game board having one or more indicia bearing members rotatably mounted therein are known in the art. For example, such a game device is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 2,967,714 issued on Jan. 10, 1961 to R. J. Calabrese. The game device of Calabrese contains a plurality of indicia bearing balls which are rotatably mounted within a closed container. The cover of the container or game board contains openings therein arranged in a series of rows and columns for playing the game of "tic-tac-toe." Each ball partly protrudes through one of the openings in the cover whereby each ball may be independently rotated to display certain indicia thereon, such as "X's" and "O's" to the players who are both located on the same side of the game board. This game device is, therefore, limited to a game, such as "tic-tac-toe," requiring the display of indicia on only one side of the game board. Other such similar game devices for playing other games employing indicia on rotary indicia bearing members which are displayed through only one surface of the game board or the like are disclosed, by way of example, in U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,444,810 and 3,113,778 and German Pat. No. 374,474.

In recent years, games requiring two players viewing indicia bearing members from opposite sides of a game board have grown in popularity. In one such game, such as the game "RSVP" manufactured by Selchow and Richter, the game board is in the form of an open lattice-work having a plurality of through apertures extending between opposing side thereof. The game is played by having each player alternately place a particular indicia bearing member, in this instance a letter cube, in an aperture so as to display a desired set of indicia on both sides of the board. The indicia are letters and the game is played by placing the indicia bearing members or cubes in the apertures in the board to form words which are displayed to the players on opposite sides of the board. However, these letter cubes are not permanently mounted within the board nor may the indicia displayed to both players be changed without first removing the cube from the game board aperture in which it has been placed. Thus, the indicia employed in the game, as it is designed, cannot be dynamically varied so as to employ dynamic strategy by both players in an attempt to win. Accordingly, to applicant's knowledge no such dynamic game employing the principle of rotatably mounting a set of indicia bearing members in a game board so that they may be each independently rotated from either side of the board to display a distinct set of indicia on each side of the board has been accomplished.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Generally speaking, this invention relates to a game device comprising a game board having opposing sides and a plurality of openings extending through the board between said opposing sides; and a plurality of indicia bearing members each being rotatably mounted within the board in said plurality of openings so as to be accessible from either side of the board for rotation thereof to simultaneously display indicia thereon to a player located on opposite sides of the board.

In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the indicia bearing members are balls each having indicia marked on the outer surface thereof. Preferably, the indicia on each ball are arranged in pairs with the indicia of each pair being in diametrically opposed relation to one another. Further, and in accordance with the preferred embodiment of this invention, the openings, and thus balls, are arranged in a series of rows and columns wherein the indicia marked on each ball are a plurality of differently colored spots.

So defined, a "BINGO" type game, by way of example, may be played with two players rotating the balls from opposite sides of the game board. More specifically, each player tries to establish the same color pattern in any one row or column, or along a diagonal. The players take turns in rotating one ball at a time for a limited circumferential extent sufficient only to bring the next closest color spot into view along the direction of rotation.

Of course, the color spots of each pair (diametrically opposed) are different with respect to each other. Also, and considering a common color spot on every two closely adjacent balls (whether in a row, column or diagonal), the color spot diametrically opposed to the common color spot is different on one ball from that on the closest adjacent ball, such as, for example, a red dot being diametrically opposed to a blue dot on one ball whereas a red dot on the adjacent ball is diametrically opposed to a yellow dot. Thus, the pattern of colored spots being formed on one side of the board by one player is different from the pattern being formed on the other side of the board by the other player. In this manner, one player cannot anticipate his opponent's plan and moves.

A transparent overlay, such as a clear acetate overlay is preferably removably mounted on the game board spaced from the balls and extending thereover for purposes of checking the alignment of the color spots of the alleged winner of the game. The overlay includes a grid of transparent target circles which are arranged in an identical array with the balls so as to mask the respective centers thereof. The balls are properly aligned in a win position when the proper color spots are contained within the appropriate target circle areas. This overlay is only utilized at the completion of the game when it is removably mounted on the board, such as on posts, to verify the alignment accuracy of the alleged winner's game balls.

These and other aspects and advantages of this invention are more clearly described below with reference to the accompanying drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of a game device of this invention;

FIG. 2 is an end view of the game device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary sectional view, partly in elevation, of the game device of FIG. 1 taken along lines 3—3 of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary front elevation view of the overlay shown in FIG. 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIGS. 1–3 of the drawing, the preferred game device of this invention is shown. The game device **10** includes a game board **12** preferably comprised of a hollow box-like casing **14** having a bottom **15** (FIG. 2) surrounding peripheral walls **17** and a top **16** preferably substantially uniformly spaced apart from the bottom **15.** Preferably, board **12** is fabricated of plastic, although metal, wood, cardboard, or any other construction material may be used as well. Further, playing board **12** is preferably placed on one end or wall **17** during the playing of the game with the top **16** and bottom **15** of the board **12** upstanding so that the top and bottom of the board may both be simultaneously utilized in the playing of the game. For purposes of explanation, it can be said that the top **16** and bottom **15** form a pair of opposing sides of playing board **12.** In addition, the bottom **15** and top **16** portions of game board **12** preferably each have a pair of spaced apart upstanding mounting posts **30–31,** and **32–33,** respectively, extending therefrom for purposes of removably mounting a transparent overlay thereon as will be explained in greater detail hereinafter.

In accordance with this invention, playing board **12** includes a plurality of openings extending therethrough between these opposing sides **15** and **16.** Each opening is defined by a pair of aligned holes **20** and **22** in the bottom **15** and top **16,** respectively, so as to form a through hole extending from a hole **20** in bottom **15,** through the space between bottom **15** and cover plate **16,** to a similar aligned hole **22** in the top **16.** Holes **20** and **22** are each preferably circular and each have the same diameter.

As shown and preferred, a plurality of indicia bearing members, which are most preferably balls **24,** are each rotatably mounted within an opening of game board **12** in a manner more completely described below. Each ball **24** includes indicia marked thereon at various circumferential locations about the outer surface thereof. Preferably, the indicia are in the form of colored spots **26** arranged into unique pairs with the spots of each pair being diametrically opposed to one another. The significance of this relationship will also be described in more detail below.

Preferably, the rotatable balls **24** are all equal in diameter and greater in diameter than holes **20** and **22.** Further, the thickness or spacing of board **12,** as measured between bottom **15** and top **16,** is preferably less than the diameter of balls **24** so that each ball preferably protrudes through both the top **16** and bottom **15** of the board **12.** The game device **10** is preferably assembled by positioning the balls **24** in casing **14** with each ball preferably partly protruding through a hole **20** in the bottom **15.** The top **16** is then preferably placed over the balls **24** with the corresponding holes **22** therein aligned with the holes **20** in the bottom **15** in which the balls **24** have previously been placed. The top **16** is then secured to the side walls **17** to close the casing **14** and complete the hollow enclosure for the balls **24.** As shown and preferred in FIG. **2,** the balls **24** partially protrude through top **16** as well as bottom **15** and are rotatably mounted in the collar formed by the bottom **15** and top **16** and aligned hole pairs **20–22,** respectively, therein. In this manner, each rotatably mounted ball **24** may be rotated from either side of the board **12** during the playing of the game when the board is as shown in FIG. **1.**

It should be noted that, if desired, the balls **24** need not actually protrude from opposite sides of the playing board **12,** although such is preferred, as long as each ball **24** is rotatably mounted in the game board **12** and is rotatable from both sides of the playing board during the playing of the game so as to enable a player on each side of the board to bring into display different indicia on the rotated ball **24** through an associated hole **20** or **22** on his side of the board.

Preferably, the game played with game device **10** is a modified "Bingo" type game. For example, there are preferably 25 openings through board **12,** each opening, as will be recalled, being defined by an aligned pair of holes **20** and **22.** Holes **20** and **22** are each arranged in an identical series of five columns and five rows, although any other array may be utilized if desired.

As mentioned above, each ball **24** preferably contains a series of colored spots thereon with the spots lying along a common radial path and arranged in pairs with the spots of each pair being diametrically opposed to one another along the radial path. Further, it is preferred that the spots of each pair be different in color. Additionally, it is preferred that each closely adjacent pair of balls, in any row, column or diagonal path, have a different colored spot diametrically opposed to a common spot of each. In other words, if one ball **24** has a red spot diametrically opposite a yellow spot, then the yellow spot of each closely adjacent ball (whether in a row, column or along a diagonal) has a colored spot other than red, such as blue, diametrically opposed thereto.

The above alluded to "Bingo" type game of this invention is preferably played as follows. Two players are required, one on each side of playing board **12,** i.e., one player adjacent top **16** and another player adjacent bottom **15.** Before playing the game, the balls **24** in the board are all manually rotated to display a haphazard arrangement of colored spots on each side of the board.

Looking at top **16,** it may be seen that, for purposes of explanation only, each ball **24** is assigned a specific letter/number combination. Suppose, after all balls **24** are initially rotated, balls **A–1, B–1,** and **E–1** display yellow spots and balls **C–1** and **D–1** display red and green spots, respectively, from the top side **16** of the board; whereas the spots displayed on the bottom side **15** of the board for balls **A–1, B–1, C–1, D–1** and **E–1** are red, blue, blue, blue and green, respectively.

Assume it is the turn of the player adjacent top **16.** He may try to complete the "1" row in all yellow spots by rotating either ball **C–1** or **E–1** to the next closest colored spot along the path of rotation of the ball, until such spot is displayed. He may or may not succeed in rotating the ball to a yellow spot on his first turn. On the other side, however, he would hinder his opponent in rotating either balls **C–1** or **D–1** by removing a blue spot from display on the bottom side **15** of board **12** and by simultaneously replacing it with a differently colored spot. Each player alternately takes turns in rotating a single ball at a time until one player succeeds in establishing a row, column or diagonal of a single color with the appropriate spots **26** in the center. When this is done, that player has won. Then, the balls may

all be again rotated into a new haphazard pattern and the game repeated.

As shown and preferred in FIG. 4, when a player declares he has won, a transparent overlay 35, such as a clear acetate overlay is then preferably utilized to check the alignment of the alleged winner's colored spots. The overlay 35 is preferably removably mountable on the posts 30–31 of game board 12 in notches 36 therein in conventional fashion. The overlay 35 preferably includes a grid of transparent target circles 37 which are arranged in an identical array with the balls 24 so as to mask the respective centers thereof and are the size of a color spot 26. The overlay 35 is placed on the mounting posts via apertures 40 and 41, respectively, on the alleged winner's side of the board, for example on posts 32–33 on top 16. The overlay 35 is suspended above the top 16 in the mounted position as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 by way of example. By way of example, an alleged horizontal win attempt is shown. As can be seen, however, ball A–1 is not properly aligned with balls B–1, C–1, D–1 and E–1 in row 1 as the appropriate color spot 26 in the A-1 position is not completely enclosed with the target circle 37 at this position. Therefore, there is no winner for this play of the game. Thereafter, the overlay 35 is removed from the posts 32–33 and the balls may all be again rotated into a new haphazard pattern and the game repeated. If desired, however, the overlay 35 need not be utilized, and thus mounting posts 30–31 and 32–33 need not be required, however, the use of the overlay 35 to verify the alignment accuracy of the alleged winner's game balls minimizes argument.

Although this invention has been described with regard to a presently preferred embodiment and game, the invention is not to be so limited. Rather the invention is deemed to include obvious modifications and changes to the above described embodiment including any other games utilizing rotatably mounted members which may be rotated from opposite sides of the game board during the playing of the game. For example, the indicia on the indicia bearing members need not be colored spots, although such is preferred to play the "BINGO" type game above described. Thus, the game device of this invention may be employed in other games, such as word games, wherein the indicia are letters, or arithmetic games, wherein the indicia are numbers or arithmetic symbols. Furthermore, the indicia bearing members need not be arranged in a series of columns or rows, although such is preferred in the above described "BINGO" type game. Thus, when the game device of this invention is used to play certain word games or number games, different arrangements may be utilized.

Other modifications and changes within the skill of the art are contemplated in this invention. The precise scope of this invention is to be defined by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A game device comprising (a) a game board having opposing sides and a plurality of adjacent openings extending through the board between said opposing sides; and (b) a plurality of adjacent indicia bearing members rotatably mounted within the board in said plurality of adjacent openings and being accessible from both of said sides of the board for rotation thereof to simultaneously display indicia thereon on said opposing sides, said indicia bearing members being balls with the indicia thereon being arranged in pairs of different indicia markings spaced about the periphery of each of the balls, the markings of each pair being diametrically opposed to one another, each of said pairs comprising a common indicia marking and an indicia marking which is different from that of the marking diametrically opposed to said common indicia marking on the adjacent rotatably mounted balls, whereby an array of indicia formed on one side of the board from said common indicia is different from that formed on said opposing side.

2. The game device of claim 1, wherein the indicia bearing members protrude outwardly from each side of the board through an opening in the board.

3. The game device of claim 1, wherein the openings in the board are arranged in a series of rows and columns, and the markings on each ball comprise a plurality of uniquely colored spots, with said common indicia being a common colored spot and said different indicia being a different colored spot, whereby an array of colored spots formed on one side of the board of all the same color results in an array of different colored spots on said opposing side.

4. The game device of claim 3 wherein the game board includes mounting means extending above the protruding indicia bearing members, and an overlay means removably mountable on said mounting means, said overlay having a plurality of target areas arranged in a grid-like array which is substantially congruent to an array of centers of said arranged plurality of openings in said board, each of said target areas being substantially congruent to one of said colored spots and located at the center of a corresponding one of said plurality of openings, whereby the alignment of said spots within said target areas may be verified.

5. The game device of claim 4 wherein said overlay is transparent.

6. The game device of claim 5 wherein said target areas are transparent.

7. The game device of claim 4 wherein said target areas are transparent.

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