Feb. 4, 1969 C. M. SVAGERKO 3,425,697

GAME APPARATUS FOR PLAYING "TIC-TAC-TOE" OR THE LIKE

Filed Sept. 16, 1966

Sheet 1 of 2

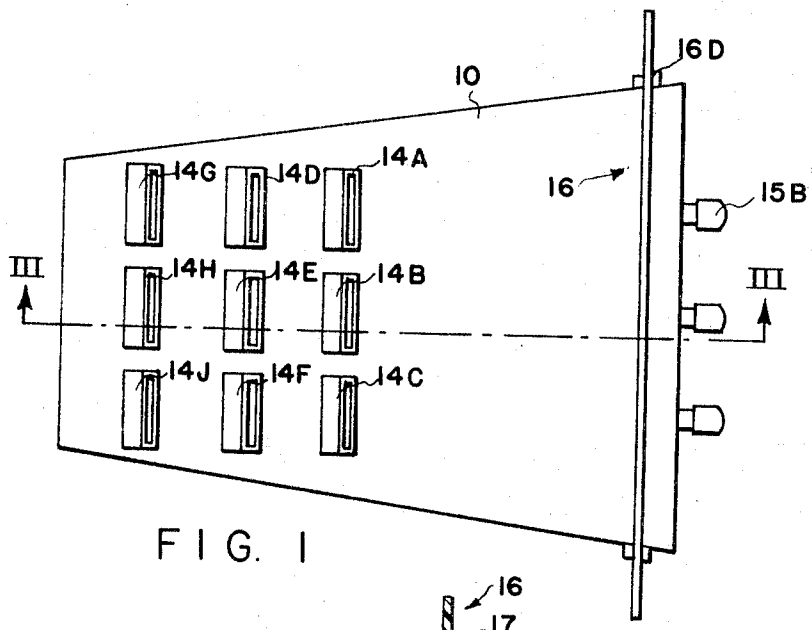


FIG. 1

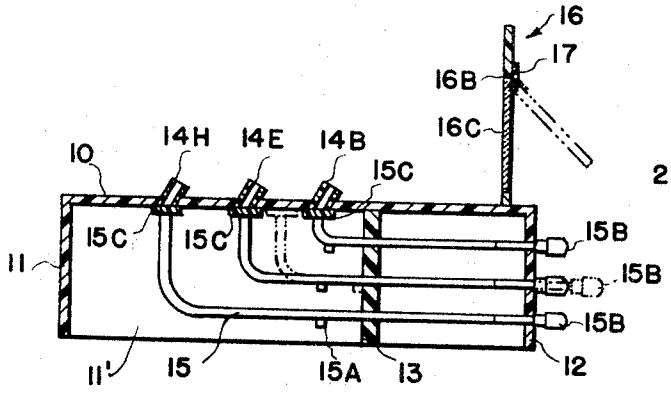


FIG. 3

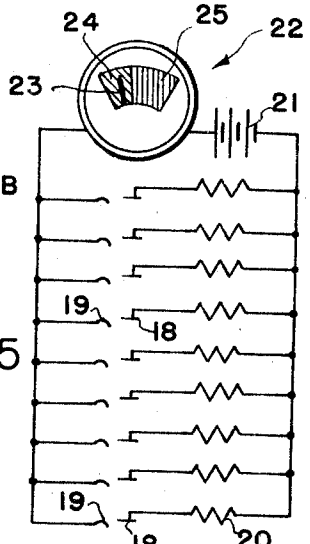


FIG. 5

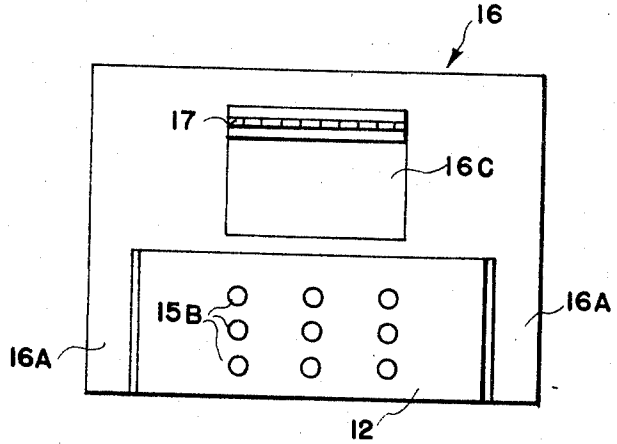


FIG. 2

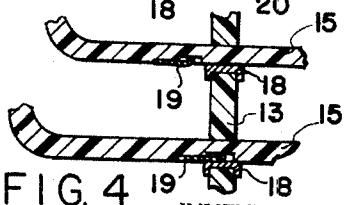


FIG. 4

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GAME APPARATUS FOR PLAYING "TIC-TAC-TOE" OR THE LIKE

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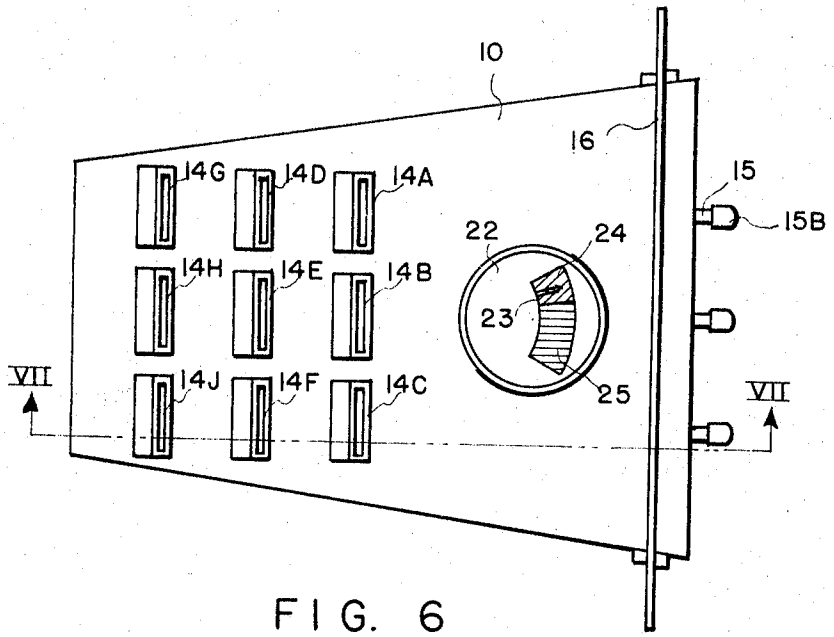


FIG. 6

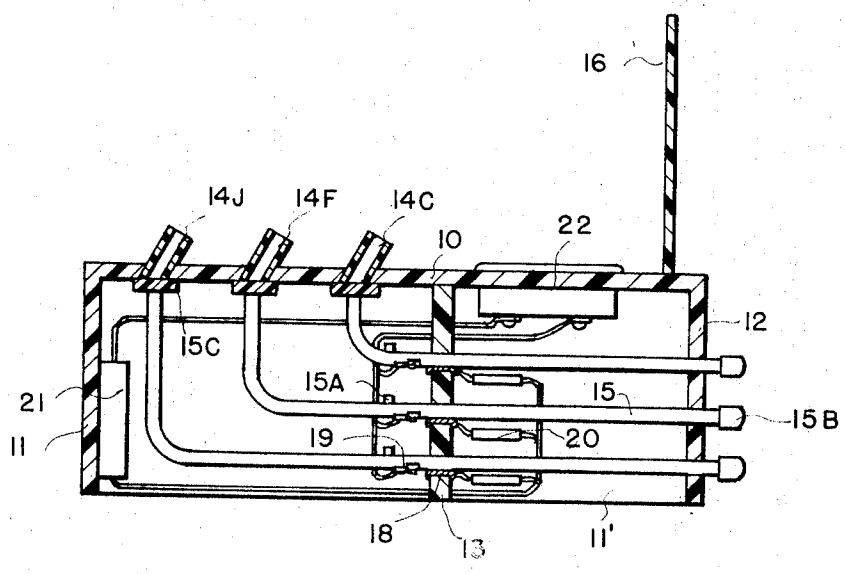


FIG. 7

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GAME APPARATUS FOR PLAYING "TIC-TAC-TOE" OR THE LIKE

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U.S. Cl. 273—130 5 Claims

Int. Cl. A63f 3/00

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An amusement device for playing the game of tic-tac-toe. A three-by-three matrix of rectangular tubes is provided on the top surface of a box-like enclosure. The tubes are mounted so that a player positioned adjacent one end of the enclosure cannot see the lower ends of the tubes. Each of the tubes is closed at its lower end by a movable gate controlled by a second player, the control means being disposed at the other end of the enclosure. A shield is provided intermediate the ends of the enclosure so that the first player is unable to see the gate controls. The shield may be provided with a mirror which may be pivoted from its normal position to one allowing the first player to view the gate controls, or the device may be provided with an ammeter visible to the first player and connected in circuit with a resistance which varies in accordance with the number of gates which have been opened. The object of the game is to arrange three tokens in closed tubes in a straight line.

This invention relates to an amusement device of the mechanical type and more particularly to a device wherein two players, as opponents, can play the well-known game of "tic-tac-toe" in a much easier and expeditious manner, in a more interesting manner, and without the use of writing or noting materials heretofore required in the playing of this game.

An object of the invention is the provision of apparatus for the purpose and of the nature indicated which is highly attractive and interesting in appearance and which may form its own base when in use so that it may be based on a table top or on the knees of the players.

Another object of the invention is the provision in apparatus of the kind described of various selected arrangements whereby the moves of the player controlling the apparatus may be made in secrecy while the other player may subsequently determine the number of moves made.

The above and other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent upon consideration of the following specification and the accompanying drawing wherein there is disclosed a preferred embodiment of the invention.

In the drawing:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of apparatus constructed in accordance with the principles of the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a right end view of the apparatus of FIGURE 1 and showing in end elevation one arrangement for maintaining the above mentioned secrecy;

FIGURE 3 is a longitudinal section, taken along the line III—III of FIGURE 1, on a reduced scale, of the apparatus of FIGURES 1 and 2;

FIGURE 4 is a fragmentary section of a modification of the apparatus of FIGURES 1–3, the view showing part of a second embodiment for maintaining the aforesaid secrecy;

FIGURE 5 shows a schematic circuit used in the embodiment of FIGURE 4;

FIGURE 6 is a plan view similar to that of FIGURE 1 but showing the second embodiment of my invention; and

FIGURE 7 is a longitudinal section, taken along the line VII—VII of FIGURE 6.

Referring now to the drawing, I provide a box-like structure constructed of plastics or other suitable materials and having a top surface **10**, side walls **11'**, rear wall **11**, and front wall **12**. In the top surface **10** are nine holders **14A** through **14J** for receiving playing tokens and arranged in a three-by-three matrix. As can be seen in FIG. 3, each of these holders is positioned in such a manner that a person looking at the box from a position to the left of rear wall **11** is unable to see the lower ends of the openings of the token holders. Parallel to and located between the front wall **12** and the rear wall **11** is an intermediate wall **13**. Carried in suitable openings in the front wall **12** and the intermediate wall **13** are nine rod-like members **15** which are upwardly curved at one end and fitted with suitable handles **15B** at their opposite ends. Secured to the first mentioned ends of rods **15** are flat members or gates **15C** which underlie each of the token holders **14A** through **14J** and which, when in a position immediately under said token holders, prevent the passage of a token completely through the token holder. Thus, if a token is placed in a holder whose bottom is closed by a gate **15C**, the upper portion of the token will project above the top of the token holder. If a rod **15** is moved to the right, gate **15C** no longer obstructs the passage of a token through the token holder. In order to prevent any gate **15C** from being moved so far to the right as to obstruct the adjacent token holder, I provide stops **15A** secured to rods **15** in such a manner that when stop **15A** abuts intermediate wall **13**, gate **15C** secured to that rod does not obstruct any token holder.

To prevent the player on the left of the box from seeing which rods have been moved by the player on the right, I provide a shield **16** positioned intermediate front wall **12** and rear wall **11**. Shield **16** is provided on its lower edge with legs **16A** which engage in grooves **16D** on the side walls **11'**. Shield **16** may be provided with a window-like opening **16B** in which a mirror **16C** is hinged by means of hinge **17**. When the player to the left of the box has placed a token in one of said token holders, he may push the mirror to its open position, as shown in broken outline in the drawing (see FIG. 3), and determine the number of gates which were opened by the player on the right.

As an alternate method of determining the number of gates opened, I provide first contacts **18** in each of the openings in intermediate wall **13** and second contacts **19** on each of the rods **15**. Mounted in a suitable position on top surface **10** is an ammeter **22** having an indicating pointer **23**, a first zone **24**, which may be colored green, and a second zone **25**, which may be colored red. In series connection with the ammeter **22** is a battery or other suitable source of current **21**. Connected in series with each of the contact pairs **18**, **19** is a resistor **20** and each group comprised of a contact pair **18**, **19** and a resistor **20** is connected in parallel with the ammeter **22** and the battery **21**. The ammeter **22** is preferably mounted on the top surface **10** between the first row of holders **14A–C** and the shield **16** while the resistors **20** and battery **21** may be housed in any convenient space within the enclosure. When none of the rods **15** is in its rightmost position, no contacts are closed and pointer **23** rests at the leftmost edge of the first mentioned zone **24**. When one rod is moved to its rightmost position (i.e., when one gate is opened) the contact pair associated with that rod is closed and the pointer **23** moves to a position intermediate the left and right boundaries of the first mentioned zone **24**. If a second rod **15** is moved to its rightmost position, a second pair of contacts is closed and the pointer **23** moves to a position further to the right.

The device of my invention is used by two players. The first player takes a position to the right of the device (as seen in FIG. 1) and the second player takes a position to the left of the device. The first player opens any gate or gates **15**C by moving the corresponding handle or handles **15**B to the right. The second player then places a token in one of the holders **14**A thru **14**J. If the token is placed in a holder which is closed by its gate, the token will project above the upper edges of the holder. When the second player has placed his token, the first player again opens or closes any gate or gates as he may desire. However, he may not open a gate which corresponds to a holder in which the second player has placed a token. It is again the second player's turn to place a token in one of the token holders. Play continues in this manner until the second player either places three tokens in a straight line, that is, in three of the holders **14**A through **14**J in a straight line, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal, which are closed by their respective gates, as in "tic-tac-toe," or makes a stated number of turns. I have found that the game is most fairly played if the first player is permitted to open at most two gates at a time. In order that the second player has placed his token, the first player again may, after placing a token in a holder and before the first player has opened or closed any gates, move the mirror **16**C to its open position and count the number of open gates. If the device is provided with an ammeter **22** it is not necessary to provide the mirror **16**C. The zones **24** and **25** of the indicating face of meter **22** are so designed that if two or less gates are open the needle **23** will remain in zone **24**, while if more than two gates are open the needle will be in zone **25**. Zones **24** and **25** are preferably of contrasting colors.

From the above description it is clear that I have invented a novel device which two players may use for playing a version of the well-known game of "tic-tac-toe," which does not require writing materials, and which prevents cheating on the part of either player.

Having described my invention what I claim is:

1. An amusement device, comprising: a box-like structure having a top surface, side walls, and end walls, said top surface being provided with a plurality of openings arranged in a three-by-three matrix; each of said openings being provided with a rectangular tubular element positioned at an acute angle to the top surface in such manner that the lower end of the opening of said element is not visible from a playing position adjacent one of the end walls of said box-like structure; a gate adapted to underlie each of said openings, obstructing passage through said opening; means associated with each of said gates to move said gate to a position such that said gate does not obstruct said opening; and means disposed between said gate moving means and said one end wall of said structure to conceal said gate moving means from the view of a player positioned adjacent said end wall.

2. An amusement device according to claim **1** further characterized in that said means to move said gate comprises a rod-like member secured to said gate and extending through the other end wall of said structure; an additional wall intermediate said end walls and parallel thereto, said additional wall having apertures to slideably receive and guide said rod-like members; and stops secured to said rod-like members to prevent movement of said gates by an excessive amount so as to block the lower end of the tubular element adjacent that element which the gate controls.

3. An amusement device according to claim **2** further characterized in that said means to conceal comprises a shield extending above said top surface and parallel to said end walls.

4. An amusement device according to claim **3** further characterized in that said shield includes a mirror hinged therein for movement to and from a position reflecting to said playing position an image of the portions of said rod-like members projecting beyond said other end wall.

5. An amusement device according to claim **3** further including a first contact element secured in each of said apertures of said additional wall, a second contact element secured to each of said rod-like members, a resistor in series connecting with each set of said first and second contact elements, a current source, an ammeter, positioned so as to be visible to a player at said playing position and having its indication face divided into first and second zones, said current source being in series connection and having its indicating face divided into first and combination being in parallel connection with said first and second contact elements and resistor combinations, the arrangement being such that when less than a predetermined number of gates are in open position said ammeter will read in said first zone and when at least said predetermined number of gates are in open position said ammeter will read in said second zone.

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