

the bomb explodes and removes the “7” to reveal one of the hidden symbols. Alternatively, multiple explosions could occur, each explosion resulting in the display of one of the hidden symbols.

[0053] In one embodiment, the symbol stacks 72 and 82 are player activated. For example, the display device 30 or 32 can integrate with a touch screen 50 and a touch screen controller 52 and enable the player to touch one or both of the symbol stacks 72 and 82 to activate same. Otherwise, gaming device 10 provides any suitable known type of input device 44 to allow the player to activate one or both of the symbol stacks 72 and 82. For example, gaming device 10 can inform the player that the symbol “7” is an initially displayed symbol of a symbol stack. The gaming device may then provide the player with, for example, three symbol stack activations, so that when gaming device 10 generates a symbol stack 72 or 82, the player can then decide whether to use one of the three designated activations. Gaming device 10 may otherwise allow the player to purchase symbol stacks for one or more gaming device credits. Any time the symbol “7” appears, the player can then select to initiate one of the player’s accrued symbol stacks. This enables the player to wait until one of the symbol stacks appears in between two like symbols or two symbols of a winning combination, wherein the player determines or hopes that one of the initially hidden symbols provides the missing piece to the winning combination.

[0054] Referring now to FIG. 3B, the gaming device 10 in an embodiment pays for each winning combination provided by the initially displayed symbols 74 and 84 and each of the initially hidden symbols 76 to 80, 86 and 88, etc. For example, if the two displayed “bell” symbols along the active payline 56a form a winning combination, gaming device 10 awards the player a number of credits when the “bell” symbol 76 is in place of the initially displayed symbol 74 of the symbol stack 72. If, for example, both the initially hidden symbols 76 and 80 of symbol stack 72 include the “bell” symbol, gaming device 10 pays the player twice for that combination. The initially displayed symbol 74 may also form part of a winning combination so that the gaming device 10 pays a player a number of credits before removing the initially displayed symbol and revealing one of the initially hidden symbols.

[0055] As illustrated by FIG. 3C, gaming device 10 may sequentially activate more than one symbol stack. FIG. 3C illustrates that each symbol stack has been activated so that the “bell symbol” 76 (from stack 72) appears on active payline 56a and so that the cherry symbol 86 (from stack 82) appears on active payline 56c. The gaming device can pay for any combination caused by the display of symbols 76 and 86 of the symbol stacks 72 and 82. In another embodiment, gaming device 10 activates symbol stacks 72 and 82 regardless of whether they fall upon an active payline.

[0056] In another embodiment, another randomly determined event needs to occur in order for a symbol stack 72 or 82 to be executed. For example, gaming device 10 may require that another symbol or other symbol combination also appear on an active (or inactive) payline 56a to 56c. The gaming device 10 could require that the player randomly receive a symbol stack 72 or 82 and randomly receive an activator such as a separate symbol or symbol combination. For example, gaming device 10 could require the “bar” and

“grape” symbols to appear along an active payline, as seen along the active payline 56c in FIG. 3A, in order for one or both of the symbol stacks 72 and 82 to change, e.g., to the symbols 76 and 86, respectively, in FIGS. 3B and 3C. In another embodiment, it is possible for the player to accumulate the symbol stacks and/or to accumulate the activator symbol or symbol combinations. The gaming device in this instance activates a symbol stack whenever the player has accumulated both a symbol stack and the symbol stack activator.

[0057] In a further embodiment, gaming device 10 sequentially displays the initially hidden symbols 76, 78 and 80 or 86 then 88, until displaying a winning symbol or symbol combination if any can be achieved. Here, gaming device 10 pays out one or a limited number of times. For example, instead of the lucky “7”, the initially displayed symbols 74 and 84 may be a ghost symbol or no symbol. The gaming device 10 then scrolls through a number of initially hidden symbols until one of them produces a winning symbol or symbol combination or until there are no more initially hidden symbols. At this point, gaming device 10 pays out for the winning combination and returns the player to normal gaming operation, regardless of whether one or more initially hidden symbols still remain hidden.

[0058] In a further alternative embodiment illustrated by FIG. 3D, gaming device 10 combines the symbol stacks with a keep or trade type of game. A keep or trade game, commonly referred to as an offer/acceptance game, enables the player to choose whether or not to keep a particular offer, in this case, a particular combination of symbols or whether to continue changing the combination of symbols. In the illustrated embodiment, the initially displayed symbol 74 or 84 does not provide a winning combination or a winning combination suitable to the player, so that the player selects the reject input device 44, which causes the hidden symbol 76 to be revealed after the initially displayed symbol 74 is removed. If the player does not wish to keep the displayed “bell,” “bell” combination caused by the initially hidden symbol 76, the player can select the reject input device 44 again to reveal the initially hidden symbol 78 and so on. Where two symbol stacks 72 and 82 appear in combination with the keep and reject inputs 44 as shown in FIG. 3D, gaming device 10 can activate the symbol stacks 72 and 82 sequentially and let the player play two or more individual offer/acceptance games.

[0059] Gaming device 10 may use one of the symbols of the actual symbol stacks 72 or 82 as either the keep or reject input 44. For example, the player can sequentially select the initially displayed symbol 74 and the hidden symbols 76, 78 and 80 of the stack 72 until finding a desirable combination, wherein the player selects a separate accept or keep input 44. Alternatively, the player sequentially selects the reject input 44 until finding a desirable hidden symbol, wherein the player selects the desired hidden symbol to keep same. Gaming device 10 awards any winning combination produced by the initially hidden symbol that the player has selected.

[0060] FIG. 3D illustrates the accept and reject inputs 44 as being simulated areas that cooperate with the touch screen 50 and controller 52. In an alternative embodiment, the accept and reject inputs 44 are electromechanical input devices that send discrete inputs to the processor 38. If