

gaming device **10** displays each initially hidden symbol of a symbol stack **72** or **82**, and the player does not accept any of these, gaming device **10** provides any award created by the final initially hidden symbol and returns the player to regular gaming activities.

[0061] Referring now to **FIG. 4**, another embodiment of the present invention is illustrated, wherein the originally hidden symbols are configured in a shape with the originally displayed symbol so that the shape or set of symbols rotates to sequentially reveal the initially hidden symbols. The rotating shapes are illustrated in combination with a slot machine reel **34**.

[0062] The reel **34** in **FIG. 4** represents one reel of a slot machine game and in a preferred embodiment operates with other reels **34**, which may have one or more rotating symbol sets. The reel **34** includes the symbols **70**. The reel **34** also includes one or more and in the illustrated embodiment three different rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104**. The reel **34** also includes other symbols that are not illustrated.

[0063] As illustrated, the rotating symbol set **100** includes a six-sided or hexagonal shape. The rotating symbol set **102** includes a four-sided square or rectangular shape. The rotating symbol set **104** includes a three-sided or triangular shape. The rotating symbols can include any suitable number of sides. Gaming device **10** can or alternatively does not reveal the shape or the number of hidden symbols **108** associated with a set. Further, not every face of the set has to include a symbol **106** or **108**.

[0064] Each of the rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104** includes, like the symbol stacks described above, an initially displayed symbol **106** and a plurality of initially hidden rotatable symbols **108**. The rotating symbol set **100** includes five initially hidden rotatable symbols **108**. The rotating symbol set **102** includes three initially hidden rotatable symbols **108**. The rotating symbol set **104** includes two initially hidden rotatable symbols **108**.

[0065] In operation, the rotating symbol sets rotate either in a clockwise or counterclockwise manner about a central axis **110**. The rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104** rotate in a direction that is generally perpendicular to the direction that the reel strip **34** moves along the display device **30** or **32**. The rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104**, like the symbol stacks described above, provide the game implementor with an additional degree of freedom in designing random combination possibilities. The rotating symbol sets also provide the game implementor with a variety of visual display options that make the gaming device more fun and entertaining for the player.

[0066] One display option that is available includes some type of action that occurs in a horizontal (or non-vertical) direction across the display device **30** or **32**. The reels generally spin in a vertical direction and come to a stop, displaying a plurality of the standard symbols **70** and the rotating symbol sets, such as sets **100**, **102** and **104**. In one embodiment, gaming device **10** displays an object or sprite that moves horizontally across the screen and hits or clips one or more of the rotating symbols, so that the symbols rotate in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction about the axis, such as axis **110**. The symbols can rotate for less than one full rotation. Otherwise, the rotating symbols can rotate for multiple rotations. In one alternative embodiment, the

initially displayed symbol **106** and possibly one or more of the hidden symbols **108** of the rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104** may reappear one or more times. That is, the spinning action may randomly reveal the initially displayed symbol **106** multiple times.

[0067] The triggering events described above for the symbol stacks **72** and **82** can also be implemented with the rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104**. In an embodiment, the rotating symbol sets automatically rotate upon being generated along one of the reels **34**. In another embodiment, the player determines when to rotate one of the sets. For example, in an embodiment, each of the symbols on the display device **30** or **32** is potentially a rotating symbol set, wherein when the player selects one of the symbols cooperating with a touch screen or contacts an input device **44**, gaming device **10** randomly chooses one of the sets to rotate to display one of the initially hidden symbols **108** or to redisplay the initially displayed symbol **106**. In a further embodiment, the rotating symbol sets rotate upon some other random generation by gaming device **10**, such as the generation of one or more of the standard symbols **70**.

[0068] Each of the payout evaluation embodiments described above for the symbol stacks **72** and **82** also applies to the rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104**. For example, gaming device **10** in an embodiment pays out for each winning combination generated by each initially hidden rotated symbol **108** that is displayed on the display device **30** or **32**. In another embodiment, the gaming device **10** pays out the first winning combination generated by a display of one of the originally hidden rotated symbols **108**. In this latter embodiment, the gaming device **10** in an embodiment rotates the symbol in either the clockwise or counterclockwise direction about the axis **110** until one of the originally hidden symbols **108** creates a winning combination for the player. At this point, gaming device **10** no longer rotates the rotating symbol set.

[0069] The rotating symbol sets **100**, **102** and **104** may also be employed in a keep or trade type game. Here, the player operates with the keep and trade input devices **44**, which enable the player to either keep or trade the originally displayed symbol **106** or one of the originally hidden rotated symbols **108**. In this manner, the player may rotate the symbol set **100**, **102** or **104** to attempt to make a winning combination or attempt to upgrade a winning combination. In this embodiment, gaming device **10** does not allow the originally displayed symbol **106** to be redisplayed or the rotating symbol set to rotate past one turn.

[0070] In the keep or trade game, the player in one embodiment does not know how many sides or faces the shape of the rotating symbol set has, so that the player cannot readily gauge whether to accept a lesser paying combination. In another embodiment, the display device **30** or **32** graphically enables the player to see whether the shape is for example a hexagon, square or triangle, so that the player has some idea of whether or not to take or discard a lesser paying winning combination.

[0071] Referring now to **FIG. 5**, an embodiment of gaming device **10** employs reels **34** that include only rotating symbol sets, in this case the four-sided rotating symbol sets **102** (of **FIG. 4**). The sets could include other shapes and other numbers of symbols. Each of the symbol sets **102** of the reels **34** includes an initially displayed symbol **106** and