

(NM). The remaining area is referred to as a masked area (MS). Since liquid crystal is not present in the non-mask areas NM, light transmits through those areas at all times. In contrast, liquid crystal is present in the mask area MS, and hence the mask area MS becomes translucent when the voltage V is applied across the transparent electrodes of the left reel liquid-crystal panel 21. When a player views the display window 4a while the voltage V is applied across the transparent electrodes, a symbol on the left reel R1 is clearly viewed via the non-mask areas NM. In contrast, the symbol becomes blurred in the mask area MS.

[0069] The geometries of the non-mask area NM coincide with the contour of a specific symbol. In this embodiment, a red "7" symbol and a blue "7" symbol are specific symbols. As will be described later, when, among the symbols displayed on the left reel R1, those displayed on the center reel R2, and those displayed on the right reel R3, the red "7" symbols or the blue "7" symbols are aligned with a valid payline, a big bonus is determined. The big bonus provides the player with a chance of acquiring a large gaming value. Consequently, specific symbols provide the player with a special meaning.

[0070] FIG. 4 shows example symbols to be displayed on the left reel R1, those to be displayed on the center reel R2, and those to be displayed on the right reel R3. As illustrated, the symbols are appended symbol numbers PN=1 to 21. Here, a solid "7" depicts a red "7" (e.g., a symbol appended PN=1 on the left reel), and a hatched "7" depicts a blue "7" (e.g., a symbol appended PN=8 on the center reel).

[0071] In a play to be performed by the slot machine 1A, when a predetermined combination of symbols is aligned with any of the paylines L1 through L5 that has been made valid by insertion of tokens, tokens are ejected in a number corresponding to the winning combination. Tokens are to be inserted into the slot machine 1A before start of a game. Further, tokens are required for a player to continue playing games. In short, tokens can be said to be a medium having a gaming value, such as continuation of a game.

[0072] In the following description, from among combinations of symbols, a combination of symbols that would impart gaming values is called a "winning combination," and a combination of symbols that is worthless is called a "failure." The present embodiment employs the following winning combinations.

[0073] 1) RED 7winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=1 or 10 on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=12 or 14 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=7 on the right reel R3.

[0074] 2) BLUE 7winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=14 on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=8 or 19 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=20 on the right reel R3.

[0075] 3) BAR winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=3 or 9 on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=4 or 7 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=12 or 16 on the right reel R3.

[0076] 4) BELL winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=4, 7, 11, 15, or 20

on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=2, 6, 11, 16, or 21 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=1, 3, 5, 10, 14, or 18 on the right reel R3. The BELL winning combination offers a payout of seven tokens.

[0077] 5) WATERMELON winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=6, 17, or 19 on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=18 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=4, 8, 17, or 21 on the right reel R3. The WATERMELON winning combination offers a payout of 15 tokens.

[0078] 6) CHERRY winning combination is established when any one of the symbols appended symbol numbers PN=12, 16, and 21 on the left reel R1 has stopped at a validated payline of the paylines L1 through L5, and stop positions of the other reels are irrelevant to this combination. The CHERRY winning combination yields a payout of two tokens.

[0079] 7) PLUM winning combination is a combination of a symbol appended symbol number PN=2, 5, 8, 13, or 18 on the left reel R1, a symbol appended symbol number PN=1, 5, 10, 13, 15, or 20 on the center reel R2, and a symbol appended symbol number PN=2, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, or 19 on the right reel R3. Even when a PLUM winning combination has been established, tokens are not paid out; however, the player can play a replay game. Here, a replay game means that a player can again play a game without insertion of new tokens.

[0080] In relation to these winning combinations, gaming values to be afforded to a player are determined in advance for each playing state. Winning combinations are divided into a winning combination for affording payout of 1 to 15 tokens; a winning combination for affording an advantageous gaming state, such as a big bonus or a regular bonus, regardless of whether or not tokens are paid for a win; and a winning combination for affording a replay game which enables a player to play a game again under conditions corresponding to insertion of the same number of tokens. Further, not all these winning combinations are always determined as wins in every gaming state; it may be possible for winning combinations to hold a win in a certain gaming state but to not constitute a win in another gaming state. More specifically, gaming values imparted to a player for each win originating from each winning combination are not always constant as previously determined for each gaming state.

[0081] In the embodiment, a gaming value to be imparted to players in an ordinary gaming state is seven tokens for the BELL winning combination; 15 tokens for the WATERMELON winning combination; two tokens for the CHERRY winning combination; and a replay game for the PLUM winning combination.

[0082] Of various kinds of winning combinations, winning combinations involving relatively low gaming values; e.g., payment of two to 15 tokens or affording of a replay game, as in the case of a BELL winning combination, a WATERMELON winning combination, a CHERRY winning combination, and a PLUM winning combination, are generally called small winning combinations.

[0083] When a win is determined through a BAR winning combination, the gaming state shifts to a specific gaming