

masking operation assumes a display state shown in **FIG. 12**. Symbols in the respective non-mask areas NM are highlighted, whereas symbols in the mask areas MS become unnoticeable. In the embodiment shown in **FIG. 12**, a portion of the RED 7 symbol is visible through the non-mask area NM located in the middle row of the display window **4a**. The entirety of the RED 7 symbol is visible by way of the non-mask area NM in the middle row of the display window **4b**. A portion of the RED 7 symbol is visible by way of the non-mask area NM in the middle row of the display window **4c**.

[0133] The advantage of masking operation is as follows. First, the masking operation is started when a win for the BB prize is determined through the internal lottery. Hence, the player can ascertain that a win has been determined for the BB prize, by glancing at the panel display section D. In other words, the player can be informed that a win has been determined for the BB prize. Further, this mode of report enables a reduction in a distance over which the line of sight of the player is to move, thereby diminishing eye fatigue on the part of the player.

[0134] Report of determination of a win for the BB prize has hitherto been performed by use of the liquid-crystal display device **62** attached to an upper section of the slot machine **1A**. However, the player who is playing games stares at symbols appearing in the respective display windows **4a**, **4b**, and **4c**. In contrast, in the present invention, the report of determination of a win for the BB prize is a report of conditions advantageous for the player to acquire a win. For this reason, the report attracts the player's attention, and the player shifts his/her line of sight to the liquid-crystal display device **62**, thereby ascertaining whether or not a report has been issued. In the case of an impatient player, the player shifts his/her line of sight to the liquid-crystal display device **62** from the panel display section D for ascertaining a report for each game. In this way, frequent shift of line of sight places strain on the players eyes within a short period of time, thereby hindering the player from enjoying playing games for a long period of time.

[0135] In this regard, according to the embodiment, the mask areas MS and the non-mask areas NM appear in the panel display section D at which the player stares during the course of a game. Hence, the player does not need to move his/her eyes, hence, the player can enjoy playing games over a long period of time.

[0136] Second, if the masking operation is performed, the non-mask areas NM become translucent, whereby the geometries of the non-mask areas NM are highlighted. Since the geometries of the non-mask areas NM substantially coincide with the contours of specific symbols, even when the player does not know rules of a game in detail, the player can infer rules that a win is achieved when symbols matching in profile the non-mask areas NM ("7+" in the embodiment) are stopped along the paylines L1 through L5. In other words, rules of the game can be communicated to a player intuitively without literal or linguistic descriptions of the rules. Further, the player infers rules during the course of progress in a game. Hence, the player can readily comprehend a game during a short period of time. Further, even a beginner who has no knowledge of rules can quickly enjoy playing games.

[0137] Third, when masking operation is performed, symbols in the non-mask areas NM are highlighted. In contrast,

symbols in the mask areas MS become unnoticeable. At this time, the player's interest lies in whether or not symbols whose contours coincide with the geometries of the non-mask areas NM can be stopped in the non-mask areas NM.

[0138] During the period of time in which the left reel **R1**, the center reel **R2**, and the right reel **R3** are spinning, symbols sequentially pass through the non-mask areas NM. When specific RED 7 symbols or specific BLUE 7 symbols pass through the non-mask areas NM, the specific symbols momentarily become clear. When the masking operation is not performed, a highly-skilled player can stop specific symbols at the paylines L1 through L5, by actuating the reel stop buttons **7a**, **7b**, **7c** at the moment the specific symbols pass through the paylines L1 through L5, whereas a beginner cannot determine symbols which are spinning and encounters difficulty in stopping specific symbols at the paylines L1 through L5.

[0139] When the masking operation is performed, specific symbols which pass through the non-mask areas NM are viewed clearly. Hence, even a beginner can stop specific symbols on the paylines L1 through L5. Consequently, a difference in level of skill among players is diminished, thereby enabling all players to enjoy playing games.

[0140] Fourth, a process in which specific symbols are stopped at non-mask areas NM is analogous to a case where specific pieces are fitted into predetermined holes or frames in a puzzle game. The player can feel satisfaction by completing an object by fitting specific symbols into the non-mask areas NM. In addition, stoppage of specific symbols in the non-mask areas NM coincides with winning requirements of rules of the game. Hence, a great feeling of enjoyment can be imparted to the player. At a point in time when a certain winning combination has not yet been established, a mask is formed by boring such that contours of symbols satisfying requirements for establishing a winning combination are arranged along paylines. As a result, the slot-machine **1A** provides the same presentation as in a puzzle game, thereby augmenting the player's feeling when a win is achieved.

[0141] When a win for a BB prize has not been determined through internal lottery, the masking operation is not performed. Processing of the CPU proceeds to step **S27**. In step **S27**, the CPU **31** acquires a button number BN assigned to a currently-pressed reel stop button (step **S27**). Acquisition of a button number is performed in accordance with the following procedures. First, the CPU **31** assigns button numbers BN=1, BN=2, BN=3 to the left reel stop button **7a**, the center reel stop button **7b**, and the right reel stop button **7c**, respectively. Second, the CPU **31** detects a pressed button in accordance with a detection signal output from the left reel stop button **44**, a detection signal output from the center reel stop button **45**, and a detection signal output from the right reel stop button **46**. Third, the CPU **31** stores the button numbers BN corresponding to the detected buttons into a predetermined memory location of the RAM **34** specified by the control program CP.

[0142] Next, in accordance with the internal lottery data ISD and the button number BN, the CPU **31** selects one stop table from the stop table group TBL2 (step **S28**).

[0143] The CPU **31** determines stop positions of the reels by reference to the thus-selected stop table (step **S29**). In the