

device, is constituted of a lower display device to display various game information, such as a payout table, the symbol of a character, and a title logo. In the lower display device, a liquid crystal display, a CRT display, electroluminescence, a plasma display and the like may be utilized.

[0019] According to the above-described construction, it is possible to avoid disadvantages such as dead stock and increased assembly steps which may occur when a physical acrylic plate and a symbol cell sheet are used for the lower display panel, whereby it is possible to provide a gaming machine having superior cost performance.

[0020] In a second aspect according to the present invention, an optically transmissive electrical display device is provided in front of the variable display means.

[0021] In general, many types of reel display panels have a central display panel which is made of a transparent glass or acrylic plate so that rotating reels provided in the inside of a cabinet become visible. In the present invention, a transparent liquid crystal display device may be provided in front of the rotating reels to improve display effects. This liquid crystal display device displays various images according to variations in game status.

[0022] According to the above-described construction, although the reel display panel has heretofore been provided with still display symbols, various symbols can be displayed and controlled if it is necessary. In addition, since an optically transmissive liquid crystal display device may be utilized for the electrical display device, it is possible to provide a reel display panel which ensures the visibility of reel symbols.

[0023] According to the present invention, the gaming machine may also be provided with special game control means for generating a special game state advantageous to the player on the basis of a predetermined condition. The optically transmissive electrical display device is controlled for shielding an optical view through the device during the above-described special game state on the basis of the predetermined condition.

[0024] The optically transmissive liquid crystal display device may be controlled effectively to show effects, which include graphics, animation, and/or sound effect, in relation to a variable control of the reels when the game is controlled to shift into the special game state advantageous to the player. Thus, the effects may include one or more effect images. For example, in an effect showing method, only a reel to be stopped becomes visible by controlling the optically transmissive liquid crystal display device for making at least a part of the device transparent and the other reels become invisible by controlling the optically transmissive liquid crystal display device for shielding an optical view through at least a part of the device if the special game is in the ST for notifying a stop order advantageous to the player.

[0025] According to the above-described construction, when the player is to perform a stop operation during the game in the ST, the player can play the game in the ST without moving his/her eyes toward the respective reels from the electric display device which shows a stop order, whereby the player may suffer less fatigue. In addition, it is possible to switch back and forth instantaneously between controls for making the device transparent and for shielding an optical view through the device (or making the device

opaque) in accordance with on-going game states and to control a shielding area with software so that more precise effect control may be made. The control of the optically transmissive liquid crystal display device may be made by a main and/or sub-control circuit for controlling the effects. It is usually required to obtain an internal winning state of a winning combination and/or game information about the stop states of the respective reels.

[0026] In another aspect of the present invention, a gaming machine comprising a variable display device and a stop button is provided such that the variable display device and the stop button are visible to and optionally operable by a player. The gaming machine may further comprise an optically transmissive electric display device displaying an effect image in the special game mode. The effect image in the special game mode may be determined by an operation order of one or more stop buttons.

[0027] Further features of the invention, its nature, and various advantages will be more apparent from the accompanying drawings and the following detailed description of the invention.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0028] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an external appearance of a pachislot according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0029] FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of a front door and surroundings thereof.

[0030] FIG. 3 is a block diagram showing a main control circuit.

[0031] FIG. 4 is a block diagram showing a sub-control circuit.

[0032] FIG. 5 is a block diagram showing an image control circuit.

[0033] FIG. 6 shows each display panel (upper display panel, reel display panel, and lower display panel).

[0034] FIG. 7A shows an example of pay line.

[0035] FIG. 7B shows another example of pay lines.

[0036] FIG. 7C shows yet another example of pay lines.

[0037] FIG. 8 is a schematic front view of reels and back lamps.

[0038] FIGS. 9A, 9B, and 9C show symbol arrays drawn on circumferential surfaces of left, center, and right reels, respectively.

[0039] FIG. 10 shows winning symbol combinations and the numbers of payout coins.

[0040] FIG. 11 shows a stop table to be selected in an internal winning state of a "bell" winning combination.

[0041] FIG. 12 shows a winning probability table.

[0042] FIG. 13 shows a list of commands to be transmitted to the sub-control circuit.

[0043] FIGS. 14A, 14B and 14C are front views of a reel display panel with components.

[0044] FIG. 15 is a front view of the reel display panel in a shielded state.