

stop buttons 15L, 15C, and 15R. In general, a stop operation to be performed while all the reels are rotating is, called a "first stop operation", the next stop operation to be performed is called a "second stop operation", and the last stop operation to be performed is called a "third stop operation". In this embodiment, to operate the left stop button 15L as the first stop operation is called "forward press", to operate the center stop button 15C as the first stop operation is called "center press", and to operate the right stop button 15R as the first stop operation is called "reverse press".

[0078] In the case of the gaming machine provided with such three stop buttons, there are a total of six kinds of stop operation orders: To operate the left stop button 15L as the first stop operation, the center stop button 15C as the second stop operation and the right stop button 15R as the third stop operation is called "left-center-right press"; to operate the center stop button 15C as the first stop operation, the left stop button 15L as the second stop operation and the right stop button 15R as the third stop operation is called "center-left-right press"; to operate the center stop button 15C as the first stop operation, the right stop button 15R as the second stop operation and the left stop button 15L as the third stop operation is called "center-right-left press"; to operate the left stop button 15L as the first stop operation, the right stop button 15R as the second stop operation and the center stop button 15C as the third stop operation is called "left-right-center press"; to operate the right stop button 15R as the first stop operation, the left stop button 15L as the second stop operation and the center stop button 15C as the third stop operation is called "right-left-center press"; and to operate the right stop button 15R as the first stop operation, the center stop button 15C as the second stop operation and the left stop button 15L as the third stop operation is called "right-center-left press".

[0079] A lower display panel 18 which displays images such as the title of the slot machine 1 and the characters included in the game is provided below the stop control panel 14. A liquid crystal display device is provided on the inside of the lower display panel 18 so that various image effects are controlled on the basis of image data stored in a sub-control circuit to be described later.

[0080] FIG. 2 is a schematic cross-sectional view of the front door 3 and surroundings of the slot machine 1. The front door 3 is provided with three display panels arranged in the order from top to bottom, that is to say, the upper display panel 6, the reel display panel 7, and the lower display panel 18, and each of the display panels displays a title logo, characters, and effects relative to individual gaming situations. The reel display panel 7 includes a touch panel 28 for detecting a coordinate position touched by the player and a transparent acrylic cover 19 which serves as a protective cover, and further includes a picture sheet 20, and a reel liquid crystal display device 21 and an electronic shutter 22, all of which are stacked on the inside surface of the transparent acrylic cover 19. The picture sheet 20 has various pictures printed on its transparent film material, the reel liquid crystal display device 21 is a transparent liquid crystal display device using an ITO film or the like, and the electronic shutter 22 is made of a similar kind of liquid crystal film. Cold cathode tubes (CRTs) 23, each of which serve as a backlight for the reel liquid crystal display device 21 and an illumination device for illuminating symbols on the reels 24, are respectively provided at upper and lower

positions on the inside of the reel display panel 7. The operations of these individual display elements are as follows. The symbols drawn on the picture sheet 20 are always visible to the player independently from the effect control state of the slot machine 1. The reel liquid crystal display device 21 serves as a display area for displaying image effects such as a jackpot effect (or big hit effect) and various preview effects. The electronic shutter 22 is capable of making an effect image shown on the reel liquid crystal display device 21 between in a normal display mode (in a state where only the effect image is visible since the electronic shutter 22 shields an optical view from the reels 24) and in a semitransparent-display mode (in a state where reel symbols are visible through the device 21 since the electronic shutter 22 is open). Such alternating modes can be achieved by switching the reel display panel 7 back and forth between in transparent and opaque states so that the symbols on the reels 24 become visible through a predetermined area of the reel display panel 7 or blocked by the electronic shutter 22 in accordance with applied voltages to the electronic shutter 22.

[0081] The upper display panel 6 is provided above the reel display panel 7. The upper display panel 6 includes a transparent acrylic cover 19 which serves as a protective cover, and includes, on the inside of the transparent acrylic cover 19, an upper liquid crystal display device 26, cold cathode tubes 23 serving as a backlight source, and a light guiding plate 25 which directs light from the cold cathode tubes 23 toward the entire surface of the upper liquid crystal display device 26.

[0082] The lower display panel 18 is provided below the reel display panel 7. The lower display panel 18 includes a transparent acrylic cover 19 which serves as a protective cover, and includes, on the inside of the transparent acrylic cover 19, a lower liquid crystal display device 27, cold cathode tubes 23 serving as a backlight source, and a light guiding plate 25 which directs light from the cold cathode tubes 23 toward the entire surface of the lower liquid crystal display device 27.

[0083] FIG. 3 is one example of a circuit block diagram for realizing the operation of the slot machine 1 shown in FIG. 1. Game control means of this embodiment generally includes two control circuits: a main control circuit 101 and a sub-control circuit 201. Here, the game control means may also include a computer executable program. The main control circuit 101 controls electrically connected various peripheral devices on the basis of input signals from various detection means, while the sub-control circuit 201 controls, game information transmitted from the main control circuit 101 effect images to be displayed on various liquid crystal display devices, and effect sounds to be emitted from the speakers 5L and 5R, on the basis of operation inputs from the touch panel 28 provided in the reel display panel 7.

[0084] The main control circuit 101 includes as its main constituent element a microcomputer 102 disposed on a printed circuit board, and further includes a circuit for sampling a random number. The microcomputer 102 includes a ROM 104 in which game programs and data are stored in advance, a CPU 103 which performs control operations in accordance with the game programs stored in the ROM 104, and a RAM 105 which provides the work area necessary for control process.