

least one interactive symbol to perceptibly interact with and transform the at least one other symbol into a different symbol.

[0024] In accordance with another aspect of the invention, another gaming device is provided. The device includes a display configured to exhibit an array of symbols selected from a plurality of symbols including at least one interactive symbol. The device further includes a random number generator for randomly selecting the array of symbols from the plurality of symbols. Additionally, the gaming device includes a device associated with the display and configured to provide a perception to a viewer of the display that the at least one interactive symbol, upon selection by the random number generator, chases at least one other symbol from the array of symbols, catches the at least one other symbol, and transforms the at least one other symbol into either a different symbol or an indicia of an award.

[0025] In accordance with yet another aspect of the invention, another gaming device is provided. The device includes a display configured to exhibit an array of symbols selected from a plurality of symbols including at least one interactive symbol. The device further includes a random number generator for randomly selecting the array of symbols from the plurality of symbols. Additionally, the gaming device includes a device associated with the display and configured to provide a perception to a viewer of the display that the at least one interactive symbol, upon selection by the random number generator, causes all other symbols in the array to be replaced with new symbols, subsequently interacts with at least one new symbol and transforms the at least one new symbol into a different symbol.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings in which:

[0027] FIG. 1 is a schematic of a conventional, prior art electronic gaming machine;

[0028] FIG. 2A is a schematic of an exemplary electronic gaming machine according to one embodiment of the present invention, with FIGS. 2B and 2C showing exemplary interactive controllers utilized with the electronic gaming machine;

[0029] FIGS. 3A through 3D show a display screen with a gaming outcome including an interactive gaming symbol according to one embodiment of the present invention;

[0030] FIGS. 4A through 4C show a display screen with a gaming outcome according to another embodiment of the present invention, with FIG. 4D showing a variation of the embodiment;

[0031] FIGS. 5A through 5D show a display screen with a gaming outcome according to another embodiment of the present invention, with FIGS. 5E through 5G showing a variation of the embodiment;

[0032] FIGS. 6A through 6E show a display screen with a gaming outcome according to yet another embodiment of the present invention; and

[0033] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram showing an exemplary method of conducting a game of chance according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Referring to FIG. 2, an exemplary gaming device 200 used in conjunction with the present invention is shown. The gaming device 200 includes, a microprocessor or other computer 204 having a central processing unit (CPU) 206 and memory 208 which may serve, in part, as a random number generator. The computer may be coupled to a number of peripheral devices such as, by example only, one or more display screens 210 (e.g., a cathode ray tube (CRT), plasma display, liquid crystal display (LCD), and/or a display based on light emitting diodes (LED) or a combination thereof), possibly having a touchscreen input 212 for display of graphics associated with one or more games playable on gaming device 200. Buttons, keys or other user input devices 214 are also operably coupled to CPU 206 for initiating game play and for other functions associated with play of a game. The input devices 214 may include an interactive symbol controller 214A as shall be discussed in greater detail below.

[0035] Preferably a coin, currency or card acceptor device 216 (to accept a credit card, gaming card, smart card and the like) permits a player to enable play of a game by placing one or more wagers. The electronic game may also include a separate scoreboard display 218 to indicate a player's success, such as displaying the player's accumulated winnings. A coin and/or currency dispenser 220 may also be included, or a player's winnings credited back to him or her using the card acceptor 216.

[0036] The electronic game 200 may also be coupled to one or more other computers such as a central computer 230 of a casino, for example, via a network card 222 and link 224, modem 226 and the like for configuration and monitoring of the game 200 by the casino, or alternatively for interconnection of multiple gaming units 200 for tournament style gaming.

[0037] The game parameters 228, such as how, when and where particular images will appear on the display screen 210, how the game works and how to operate the various elements operably coupled to the computer 204, are stored in the memory 208. The electronic game 200 may be housed in a structural and/or decorative housing 202 (shown in broken lines) as is well known and understood by those of ordinary skill in the art.

[0038] Referring to FIGS. 2A, 2B, and 2C, the interactive symbol controller 214A may include a game pad type device such as a joy stick 229 or other directional/control device 231 having individual input devices 229A and 229B and 231A through 231E respectively. The interactive symbol controller 214A may be used in various embodiments of the present invention, as set forth below, for stimulating interaction of various gaming symbols, such as, for example, perceived control of the orientation, motion or other action of an interactive gaming symbol. In an alternative embodiment, existing user input devices 214 may serve dual functions by also serving as the interactive symbol controllers 214A.