

**GAMING DEVICE HAVING A MULTIPLE
COORDINATE AWARD DISTRIBUTOR
INCLUDING AWARD PERCENTAGES**

PRIORITY CLAIM

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of and claims the benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/630,529, filed Jul. 30, 2003 which is incorporated herein in its entirety.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Gaming device manufacturers strive to make gaming devices that provide as much enjoyment and excitement as possible. Providing a secondary or bonus game in which a player has an opportunity to win potentially large awards or credits in addition to the awards associated with the primary or base game of the gaming device is one way to enhance player enjoyment and excitement.

[0004] Gaming devices having bonus games generally employ a triggering event that occurs during the base game operation of the gaming device. The triggering event temporarily stalls or halts the base game play and enables a player to enter a second, different game, which is the bonus game. The player plays the bonus game, likely receives an award, and returns to the base game.

[0005] One known bonus game is in the WHEEL OF FORTUNE® gaming device manufactured by the assignee of this application. In this game, a multi-colored award wheel is attached to a cabinet of the gaming device. The award wheel is divided into several sections. Each section includes an award that ranges in value from twenty to one thousand. In this game, a player plays a base game that includes spinning reels and a central payline. When the wheel symbol is positioned along the central payline on the third reel, the player enters the bonus game.

[0006] In the bonus game, the player obtains one opportunity or spin of the award wheel. The player spins the award wheel by pressing a button on the gaming device. Once the award wheel starts spinning, the player waits until it stops. An indicator located at the top of the award wheel points to a section of the wheel. The player receives the award on that section for the bonus game. After the player receives that award, the bonus game ends and the player can resume playing the base game.

[0007] Another known game is described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,059,658 to Mangano et al. This patent relates to a spinning award wheel game. The game includes a display having five concentrically arranged wheels. Each wheel has indicia designated with an Ace, King, Queen, Jack, Ten and a wild symbol along the outer edge of the circles. Once a player enters the game, the player initiates the spinning of the wheels. Each wheel rotates independently of the other

wheels. The object of the game is to align winning combinations of indicia, which in this game are winning hands in poker. A indicator points to a sequence of five indicia formed from each of the five rotating wheels. If the sequence equals a winning combination, the player receives an award.

[0008] To increase player enjoyment and excitement, therefore, it is desirable to provide new bonus games having award wheels that provide larger awards to players with minimal risk.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention provides a gaming device and in particular a bonus game of a gaming device that enables players to accumulate awards by obtaining sections on an award distributor such as an award wheel based on the coordinates of the sections.

[0010] In one embodiment, the award wheel includes several annular areas or groups that are each divided into a plurality of sections. The sections are each defined by first and second coordinates on the award wheel and include award symbols that are associated with awards. The coordinates define the location of each section on the award wheel. Initially, the gaming device alternately illuminates each annular area, which defines the first coordinate of the groups of sections in the annular areas. In one embodiment, the gaming device picks one of the annular areas. In another embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to pick one of the annular areas where the awards associated with the annular areas are approximately equal. Once the first coordinate is defined by selecting one of the annular areas on the award wheel, the gaming device or player activates or spins the award wheel. When the wheel stops spinning, a section indicator indicates a second coordinate which together with the first coordinate, defines the determined section in the annular area. The player receives the award associated with the section that is defined by the indicated first and second coordinates. In one embodiment, the player continues to play the bonus game until the player is out of activations or spins of the award wheel.

[0011] In one preferred embodiment, the award wheel is divided into several groups or annular areas where each of the annular areas is further divided into several sections. The first coordinate of a group of sections is represented by the radial distance from the center of the award wheel to the annular area. The second coordinate of one of the sections in the group is defined by the angular location of a section along the annular area. Each section includes a symbol such as an award symbol. A plurality of awards are associated with the award symbols. In one embodiment, the awards associated with the sections in the innermost annular areas of the award wheel are substantially lower awards than the awards associated with the sections located in the outermost annular areas of the wheel. Each annular area is alternately highlighted or illuminated at the start of the bonus game by an illumination device. The annular areas alternately light up, one at a time, until only one area is randomly selected and remains illuminated. In one embodiment, the gaming device (i.e., the processor) determines the indicated annular area. In another embodiment, the gaming device enables the player to pick the annular area as described above. Next, the gaming device or player activates or spins the award wheel. Once the wheel stops spinning, the section indicator indi-