

Furthermore, a game status monitoring timer 97 is connected to the I/O port 87. This timer 97 is set at the time of starting a game by the sub-CPU 82, and measures an elapsed time since the start of the game.

[0052] An image control IC (integrated circuit) 90 and a sound source IC 91 are also connected to the I/O 87. The image control IC 90 has connected thereto a character ROM 92 for storing character data and a video RAM 93 serving as a memory for color display representation. The image control IC 90 displays an image on the liquid crystal panel 39d of the reel display window unit 39 under the control of the microcomputer 81. The microcomputer 81 fetches such information as the current game status and the type of winning flag from the main control board 61 via the main control unit communication port 80, and selects an image effect pattern to be displayed on the basis of the fetched game status and winning flag. It then controls the image control IC 90 for causing the liquid crystal panel 39d to display the selected pattern. The liquid crystal panel 39d may be caused to display information desired by a player through the operation of the cross key 23, A-button 24 and B-button 25.

[0053] The sound source IC 91 has connected thereto a sound ROM 94 for storing sound data. Under the control of the microcomputer 81, the sound source IC 91 causes a speaker 96 via a power amplifier 95 to emit a sound. In accordance with the instructions inputted from the main control board 61 via the main control unit communication port 80, the microcomputer 81 controls the sound source IC 91 and power amplifier 95 for causing the speaker 96 to produce such sound effects as a medal insertion sound, a start lever operation sound, a stop button operation sound, and a game sound during a bonus game.

[0054] In the slot machine 1 in accordance with this embodiment having the configuration described above, when a player operates the start lever 30, this operation leads to a turn on of the start switch 30S. This ON signal is detected by the main CPU 64 via the I/O port 71. The main CPU 64 then controls the motor drive circuit 73 for driving the stepping motors 45, causing each reel 2-4 to rotate. At the same time as this rotating, the main CPU 64 performs probability lottery processing. By making reference to a lottery probability table deposited in the program ROM 65, a lottery of the internal winning mode is drawn. The type of the drawn internal winning mode and the current game status are transmitted to the sub-control board 62 via the sub-control unit communication port 79.

[0055] As each reel 2-4 rotates, a moving sequence of symbols is variably displayed in each window 5-7. The player tries to adjust the timing of operating each stop button 31-33 while observing this variable display, and performs a push operation of each stop button 31-33 at an appropriate timing. The operation of each stop button 31-33 is detected by the main CPU 64 via the reel stop signal circuit 78. At the time of this detection, supply of driving pulses to each stepping motor 45 is stopped by the control of the main CPU 64. When the supply of driving pulses to each stepping motor 45 is stopped, each reel 2-4 stops rotating, and symbols corresponding to the operation timing of each stop button 31-33 are stop-displayed in each window 5-7. At this time, if any predetermined combination of symbols shown in the payout table is stop-displayed in the windows 5-7, a

winning occurs. When a winning occurs, the main CPU 64 controls the hopper drive circuit 76 for driving the hopper 72, and a predetermined number of medals are paid out of the payout opening 35 into the receiving tray 34.

[0056] The type of internal winning mode and the game status transmitted from the sub-control unit communication port 79 to the sub-control board 62 is received by the sub-control board 62 via the main control unit communication port 80 of the sub-control board 62. During the slot machine game described above, effects of the slot machine game are performed under the control of the sub-CPU 82 which has detected the type of internal winning mode and the game status, such as blinking reel back lamps 47a, 47b, and 47c embedded in the reels 2-4 or displaying character designs on the liquid crystal display 39d provided below the display windows 5-7 of the reel display window unit 39. Furthermore, in this embodiment, effects are displayed in accordance with the type of internal winning mode and the game status also on the liquid crystal display 39d provided in reel display window unit 39 in front of the reels 2-4.

[0057] According to the slot machine 1 in accordance with this embodiment as described above, the liquid crystal panel 39d disposed in front of the reels 2-4 for variably displaying symbols serves as a new machine component for performing game effects. Therefore, new effects for the slot machine game can be performed on the liquid crystal panel 39d, which facilitates maintaining the novelty of effects for the slot machine game.

[0058] Furthermore, in the slot machine 1 in accordance with this embodiment, the reel glass base 39b and bezel metal frame 39c are interposed between the transparent acryl plate 39a on the machine surface and the liquid crystal panel 39d. As a result, the display unit of the liquid crystal panel 39d for displaying game effects is disposed in a position recessed from the transparent acryl plate 39a. Therefore, the display unit of the liquid crystal panel 39d is provided with depth feeling. In addition, blind spots in viewing this display unit are eliminated, and thus the liquid crystal panel 39d can be clearly viewed up to the edge of its display unit.

[0059] As described above, according to this invention, the liquid crystal display panel disposed in front of the variable display means for variably displaying designs serves as a new machine component for performing game effects. Further, a base frame and a panel frame are interposed between the transparent plate on the machine surface and the liquid crystal display panel. As a result, the display unit of the liquid crystal display panel for displaying game effects is disposed in a position recessed from the transparent plate. Accordingly, new game effects can be performed on the liquid crystal display panel, which facilitates maintaining the novelty of game effects. Moreover, since the liquid crystal display panel is located in a recessed position, its display unit is provided with depth feeling. In addition, blind spots in viewing the display unit are eliminated, and thus the display unit can be clearly viewed up to its edge.

[0060] Although only some exemplary embodiments of this invention have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible in the exemplary embodiments without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of this invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention.