

image may be a roulette ball that “moves” around the roulette wheel and stops over a randomly selected position of the wheel. Additionally, the background may comprise a backlit board, and the foreground image may provide one or more tokens or markers that are moved to positions on the game board. In some implementations, the backlit board may comprise a ladder (i.e. a vertical strip) divided into positions having values. The foreground image may display an indicator or character (possibly animated) that points to a winning position on the ladder. Further, the background may comprise a diorama, and the foreground image may comprise one or more tokens or markers that are moved over positions in the diorama.

[0051] In some embodiments of the invention, superimposed video image 18 may be used to provide additional games instead of or in addition to interacting with a wagering game display on a primary game display 120. In one embodiment of the invention, an additional game played using superimposed video image 18 is a bank symbols game. In general, a bank symbols game operates by identifying certain symbols as “bankable” symbols. When these symbols appear on a reel or other game display, the symbol is collected in a bank symbolically displayed on superimposed video image 18. At some point during game play, if a predetermined symbol (sometimes referred to as a “break the bank” symbol) appears, the banked symbols may be redeemed for credit. Further details concerning the bank symbols game are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,159,098 entitled “Dual-Award Bonus Game for a Gaming Machine,” which is hereby incorporated by reference herein. In an alternative implementation, the banked symbols may be used to play a second game, for example tic-tac-toe.

[0052] Other additional games that may be implemented include but are not limited to horse racing and other animated games, and video bingo, keno, slots etc. that may be displayed on superimposed video image 18.

[0053] If the display area 16 includes a touch screen mounted to either the transmissive display 14a in the direct image embodiment of FIG. 2a or the glass cover in the virtual image embodiment of FIG. 2b, the video image 18 may duplicate some or all of the aforementioned keys on the button panel 24 as touch keys 26 as shown in various Figures. A player can then enable a desired function either by touching the touch screen at an appropriate touch key 26 denoted by the video image 18 or by pressing an appropriate key on the button panel 24. Touch keys 26 may also be used to implement buttons in addition to those appearing on button panel 24. For example, one or more touch keys 26 may be used to select a denomination for the wagering game, call an attendant, solicit help in playing the game, request food or drink, or request “comps.”

[0054] In reel based implementations, one or more touch keys 26 may be used to implement a “skill stop” function. In these implementations, upon pressing a “skill stop” touch key, the reel or reels associated with the skill stop touch key stop rotating.

[0055] Additionally, in implementations having a diorama as a primary game display, the touch screen may be used to indicate one or more elements of the diorama that a player desires to select. The superimposed video image may be used to highlight selected elements, for example by displaying a highlighted box around the selected element.

[0056] In some embodiments of the invention, the gaming machine may be capable of providing a number of different wagering games or variations on a wagering game. In such embodiments, the superimposed video 18 may be used to provide a menu of available games and/or game variations, and a user may use the touch screen to select a desired game or game variation.

[0057] Included among the plurality of basic game outcomes is a start-bonus outcome for triggering play of a bonus game. A start-bonus outcome may be defined in a number of ways. For example, a start-bonus outcome may occur when a special start-bonus symbol or a special combination of symbols appears on one or more of the reels 12a, 12b, 12c. The start-bonus outcome may require the combination of symbols to appear along an active pay line or may, alternatively, require that the combination of symbols appear anywhere on the display, regardless of whether the symbols are along an active pay line. The appearance of a start-bonus outcome causes the central processing unit to shift operation from the basic slot game to the bonus game.

[0058] As shown in FIG. 7, the video image 18 may depict the bonus game and any bonuses resulting therefrom. The bonus game may, for example, include free spins of a new set of video reels included in the video image 18. Winning combinations on the video reels may be defined by the same pay table as used for the mechanical reels or a different pay table altogether. The bonus game may be interactive and require a player to select one or more selectable elements 28 to earn bonuses. Also, the bonus game may depict one or more animated events and award bonuses based on an outcome of the animated events. Furthermore, the bonus game may be depicted by the video image 18 alone or in conjunction with a video image depicted on an optional top box video display 40 (see FIG. 1d). The two video images may be linked to appear like one unified image. Upon completion of the bonus game, the central processing unit shifts operation back to the basic slot game.

[0059] In some embodiments, a bonus game may implement a shuffle feature. In these implementations, symbols on a reel may be converted to a number. The numbers are then displayed on superimposed video 18, and during the bonus game the numbers are shuffled. The resulting shuffled number represents the outcome of the bonus game. Further details on the shuffle feature may be found in U.S. Pat. No. 6,589,114 entitled “Shuffle Feature for a Game of Chance” which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

[0060] In alternative embodiments, a bonus game may be played on the primary game display, and the superimposed video image 18 may be used to highlight symbols on the primary game display to indicate that a bonus game (and not a wagering game) is being played. For instance, in a reel based wagering game, the appearance of the reels or the symbols on the reels may be changed during bonus games. Examples of such appearance changes include changing the color, border highlighting, or shape of the reel or symbol using superimposed video 18 to indicate a bonus game is being played.

[0061] Any number of bonus games can be played, at least in part, on the superimposed video image, such as those bonus games disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,607,437; 6,592,457; 6,589,114; 6,561,904; 6,554,704; 6,551,187; 6,517,432; 6,506,114; 6,443,837; 6,428,412; 6,364,766; 6,358,