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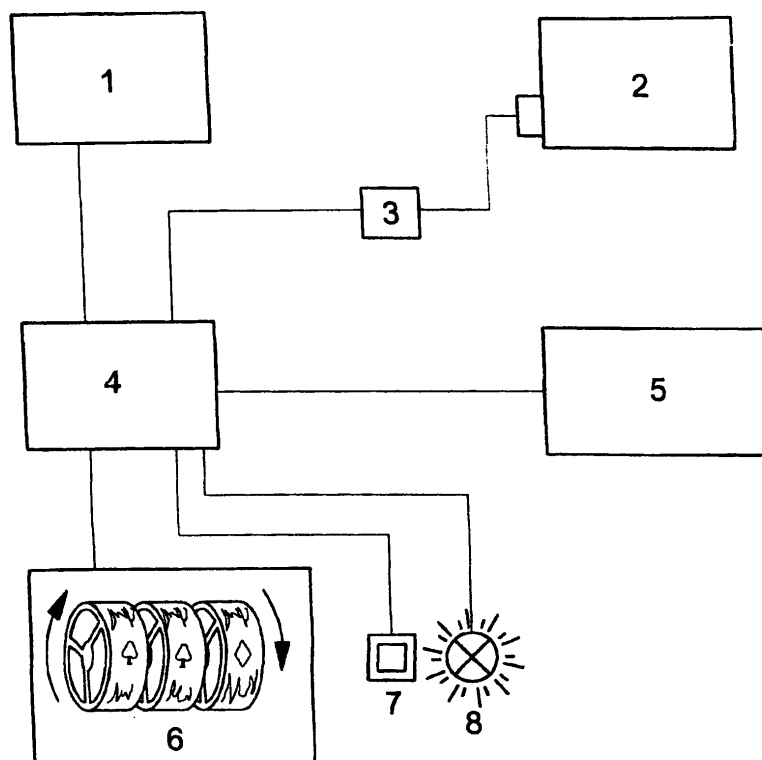
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(54) **Amusement machine provided having playing time distribution device**

(57) The machine has rotating rollers (6) bearing figures making up a combination line as a result of each play (3), a combination susceptible to a cash prize and, on the basis of the legal regulations establishing a minimum duration time for each play (3), the invention consists in that in those plays (3) in which a situation of advance, figure permutation etc., does not occur, as well as in those plays in which the payment of a prize is not applicable, the operative control (4) of the rollers (6)

causes interruption thereof in their rotating movement within the play (3) itself, which allow the player to restart the rotation again with the collaboration of an auxiliary push button (7) operatively established for that purpose, thus achieving that the type of majority plays, in which neither of the two previously mentioned situations occurs, maintain an operational dynamic with greater participation of the player, making the course of the game more active and dynamic.



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Description

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention refers to an amusement machine of the type commonly known as slot machine, which are those machines in which, in exchange for the price of the game, the user is granted a use or playing time and possibly, according to the game program, a cash prize, which is provided with a time distribution or coupling device for the purpose of prolonging the time of certain plays, if necessary.

[0002] Said machines use circular bands bearing symbols or figures, commonly known as rollers, as a main means for attaining different games; at the beginning of each game, said rollers rotate simultaneously or in a series of steps until remaining at rest when the game has concluded; they are installed in a row in a usual number of three and show as a reference for the qualification of the result of the game, the alignment of a combination of figures visualized through respective transparent windows at the front of the machine.

[0003] Said resulting combination in the play may or may not be a winning combination, according to a list of prize combinations shown on the machine itself and known as a Winnings Plan.

[0004] The object of the invention is to provide greater dynamism and versatility to the rotation of the rollers, making a time span in the play more playful and which usually has a non-prize combination as a final result, and therefore lacking interest.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0005] This type of machines is known in the state of the art in which, after inserting the amount of the game, the player is required to actuate a mechanism for starting the game; a game usually characterized by the controlled rotation of a cluster (usually three or four) of reels, rollers or any other type of similar mechanism, bearing symbols or figures on their peripheral bands and which, situated in a row and visible to the player, will form in their alignment a combination of symbols or figures once they have stopped, which will be the result of the play.

[0006] Said combination could be a winning or losing combination, according to the values specified in a predetermined table known as the Winnings Plan, so that if the resulting combination is one of the winning combinations, the machine then either pays the amount of said winnings or else retains it in a "deposit" accounted for in the machine for its subsequent collection or conversion into fractioned credits, according to the player's wishes.

[0007] It is considered that in the process of a succession of games, each play begins when the player actuates the start-up mechanism and ends when the machine remains at rest after concluding a play and ready to begin the next play; it is obvious to point out that, even

if the roller rotation time is carried out in the same time in all the plays, the playing time in the winning plays would increase as the machine consumed an additional time used for paying said prize, and since all the prizes are not of the same magnitude, nor do the hoppers behave with the same speed and efficacy, all the plays with a prize do not consume the same time; it is worth mentioning separately the option that the machine gives to the player to allow him or her to immediately collect the prize for the play or to transfer said prize to the prize reserve "bank" to be collected or transferred in fractions to the credit bank, whereby in either case, the times consumed in each play will be variable in each case.

[0008] Therefore, it must be assumed that each play has controllable processes or operations and other uncontrollable operations, according to its course.

[0009] Those operations having an execution which occurs automatically in the machine and without the intervention of any manipulating action of the player are controllable.

[0010] Those plays in which the action of the player intervenes are uncontrollable in their calculation and time control.

[0011] Gambling machines are subject to Rules regulating the General Regulations which must be complied with in the development of games, and in each case always according to the current Regulations of the country where said machines will be used.

[0012] Among these Regulations is the one concerning the minimum playing time which must elapse in the course of the games; or in other words, a maximum number of plays in a limited time.

[0013] The most common regulation required in Spain is that of 120 games in 10 minutes; which is translated into a mean time of 5 seconds per game.

[0014] These 5 seconds, applied to games in which operations in addition to the rotations and stop of the rollers occur, such as: permutation or change of figures, prize payments, etc., allow for a fast rotation of the rollers, encouraging the player to think that the game is dynamic and entertaining. However, 5 seconds in a play in which only the rotation of the rollers exists obliges slowing down the speed of the rotations and even creating dead times, having as a result that, if one 5 second game with only rotations is repeated again and again (as occurs in most cases during the plays of a machine, in which a large amount of plays without a prize and with a simple rotation of rollers occurs), the game in this machine may become slow, monotonous and even tedious for the player's spirit.

[0015] Said Regulation previously set forth is an example and therefore applicable and comparable in its results to any other similar Regulation of those established in the different States of the European Union.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0016] The invention consists of a recreational ma-

chine of the type commonly known as slot machine, which are those machines provided with a group of rollers (generally three) for attaining plays, and which in exchange for the price of the game, grant the user a use or playing time and possibly, according to the game program, a cash prize, which is provided with a time distribution or coupling device basically consisting in maintaining the same fast and constant rhythm of rotation of the rollers in all the plays, which is translated into a homogenous manner of carrying out and visualizing said plays, such that when there is a necessity to make a play longer, it is not at the cost of slowing down the operations thereof; to this end, the rotation of the rollers is interrupted with brief retentions, giving the player the opportunity to restart the rotation thereof by means of push buttons situated for that purpose on the machine.

[0017] For the player, this implies greater operational capacity over the plays, since it is possible to cause the attainment of new rotations for the rollers by means of the action of said push button within the same play; i.e. the rollers start up, rotate, stop, start up again and stop again, as many times as necessary until the minimum and predetermined time for a play has elapsed, giving the player the impression that the machine is "giving away" new drawing options within the same game.

[0018] In the event that the player does not wish to intervene in the play, inhibiting himself or herself from actuating the rotation push button, the machine will do this automatically once a brief time has elapsed.

[0019] It has also been provided that the operational capacity described for said push button is accompanied by acoustic and light elements to provide the device with greater visual notoriety.

[0020] All that remains is to lastly point out that the greater dynamism in the course of the play will in no case affect the result of the play itself, the obtainment of the prize thereof, and in the case of a prize, the amount thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] To complement the description being made and for the purpose of aiding to better understand the features of the invention according to a preferred practical embodiment thereof, a single figure is attached as an integral part of said description, in which, with an illustrative and nonlimiting character, a block diagram of the playing time distribution device object of the invention has been schematically shown.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

[0022] To put into practice the playing time distribution device in an amusement machine constituting the object of the invention, it is necessary to use electromechanical means and electronic means.

[0023] The electromechanical means are already contained in a conventional machine of this type and

they consist of the classical rotating rollers (6) bearing figures making up a combination line as a result of the play, and the rotation of which, of a certain number of turns, can be interrupted and restarted several times, and as a result, the time of the game (3) in play lengthened or shortened.

[0024] In the same line, classical push buttons-switches (7) used in the machine for the control of the start-up, stop and other game controls, are equally usable with the device of the invention.

[0025] Complementarily to the previous means described, for decorative and informative purposes and in order to better highlight, if possible, the function of the device at hand, there are visualization means, by way of a sign or set of signs associated with the set of rollers, with a text (8') that can light up, and as its very name indicates, having an informative character regarding the opportunity to operate on the extra rotations at the suitable time.

[0026] The electronic means consist in creating a statistical database (1) of time control in the games (3), and an operative control in the rollers (6), all this by means of the corresponding program established in the CPU (5) of the machine and in close collaboration with a future game deposit (2).

[0027] The device is materialized from said means in several forms of using the rotations, which can be: additional, i.e. rotations added to those which the rollers of the machine conventionally give; fractioned, i.e. divided into parts; supplementary, which evidently serve to replace or complete, and finally complementary rotations, which are those necessary for ensuring the movement of the rollers and wholly occupying the time span to be completed.

[0028] The time corresponding to a play is made up of a series of partial and successive times which are the following:

- A).- Commencement of the play by means of roller rotation start.
- B).- Interruption of the rotations when a situation of change or permutation of figures, etc., occurs.
- C).- Continuation of rotations and final stop.
- D).- Checking the play result.
- E).- Payment of prizes, if any.

[0029] Situations a), c) and d) will occur in all the plays and their time differences are minority.

[0030] The frequency of situations b) and e) will occur in a minority manner and simultaneously with the previous ones.

[0031] Therefore, there are two types of plays in an amusement machine, one clearly minority type in which the five previously mentioned situations participate, and in which the play is of interest and entertainment, not only due to the possible prizes but also because they make the player a participant and oblige him or her to make decisions concerning the attainment of the game,

decisions exercised by means of the actuation of push buttons (7). These plays consume the time considered as optimal and pre-established for that purpose.

[0032] The other type of play is that of the majority plays, in which only situations a), c) and d) participate, consuming very little time to be carried out due to the inexistence of a change or permutation of figures, etc., and/or due to the absence of prizes and their corresponding payment.

[0033] In this second type of plays, constituting a volume of the entire playing of the machine which could be estimated to be 90% of the total of the plays, in which the device of the invention operates, interrupting the rotation of the rollers (6) with brief halts so that the player starts them up again by actuating the corresponding push button (7), which makes the play much more dynamic and maintains great interest in the player since the excess time occupied is maintained by actuating the machine control elements, but without this complementary actuation, as previously mentioned, affecting the final result of the play (3).

[0034] In the event that the player does not wish to intervene in the play (3), inhibiting himself or herself from actuating the rotation push button (7), the CPU (5) will do it automatically once a brief time has elapsed.

[0035] On the other hand, the initial movement of the rollers (6) can be carried out by means of the rotation in a direction that is the reverse of that usually used, and then the stop and start-up in the forward direction by means of the collaboration of the auxiliary push button (7).

[0036] It is also contemplated that the operational capacity of the device be the same on a play (3) with a prize, the winning combination being shown after the temporary interruption of one of the rotations of the rollers (6).

[0037] In the same manner, the previously described device is applicable to machines in which the exhibition of the game is carried out by means of a television screen, visualizing the plays by means of the exhibition and rotation of the rollers as well as all the necessary information contained in the front of a machine.

[0038] It is lastly worth pointing out that the actuation of said push button (7) by the player is preceded by acoustic and light elements (8, 8') to provide the device with greater visual notoriety.

Claims

1. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device, of the type of those incorporating rotating rollers (6) bearing figures making up a combination line as a result of the play, susceptible to a prize according to the Winnings Plan established in the machine, which, having the purpose of making the playing more dynamic in those games in which advances, permutations of figures

or the like do not occur, and/or prizes do not occur, is **characterized by** being provided with electronic means for creating a statistical database (1) of time control on the games (3) so that, maintaining the pre-established minimum time for them, the rotational movement of the rollers (6) is interrupted once or several times within each play (3), such that with the collaboration of an auxiliary push button (7) incorporated on the machine for that purpose, the rotation of said rollers (6) restarts, with the resulting operative occupation of the available time.

2. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the initial movement of the rollers (6) is by means of the rotation in the direction that is reverse to the one normally used, and then the stop and start-up in a forward direction by means of the collaboration of the auxiliary push button (7).
3. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to the previous claims, **characterized in that** the operative control (4) of the rollers (6) automatically acts thereon upon request of the CPU (5) once a brief time period has elapsed without the player actuating the corresponding push button (7).
4. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to the previous claims, **characterized in that** the restarting of the rotation of the rollers (6) throughout the game (3) is preceded by acoustic and/or optical signalling (8).
5. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to the previous claims, **characterized in that** it incorporates visualization means (8, 8'), by way of a sign or set of signs with an informative character concerning the opportunity to activate the additional rotations, associated with the set of rollers (6), the lighting of which precedes the possibility of enabling the restart of the rotation of the rollers (6) throughout the game (3).
6. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to the previous claims, **characterized in that** the operative capacity of this device acts in the same manner on a play with a prize, the winning combination being shown after the temporary interruption of one of the rotations of the rollers (6).
7. An amusement machine provided with a playing time distribution device according to the previous claims, **characterized in that** the temporary halts of the rotation of the rollers (6) does not affect the result of the play (3) nor, where applicable, the ob-

taining of a prize therein.

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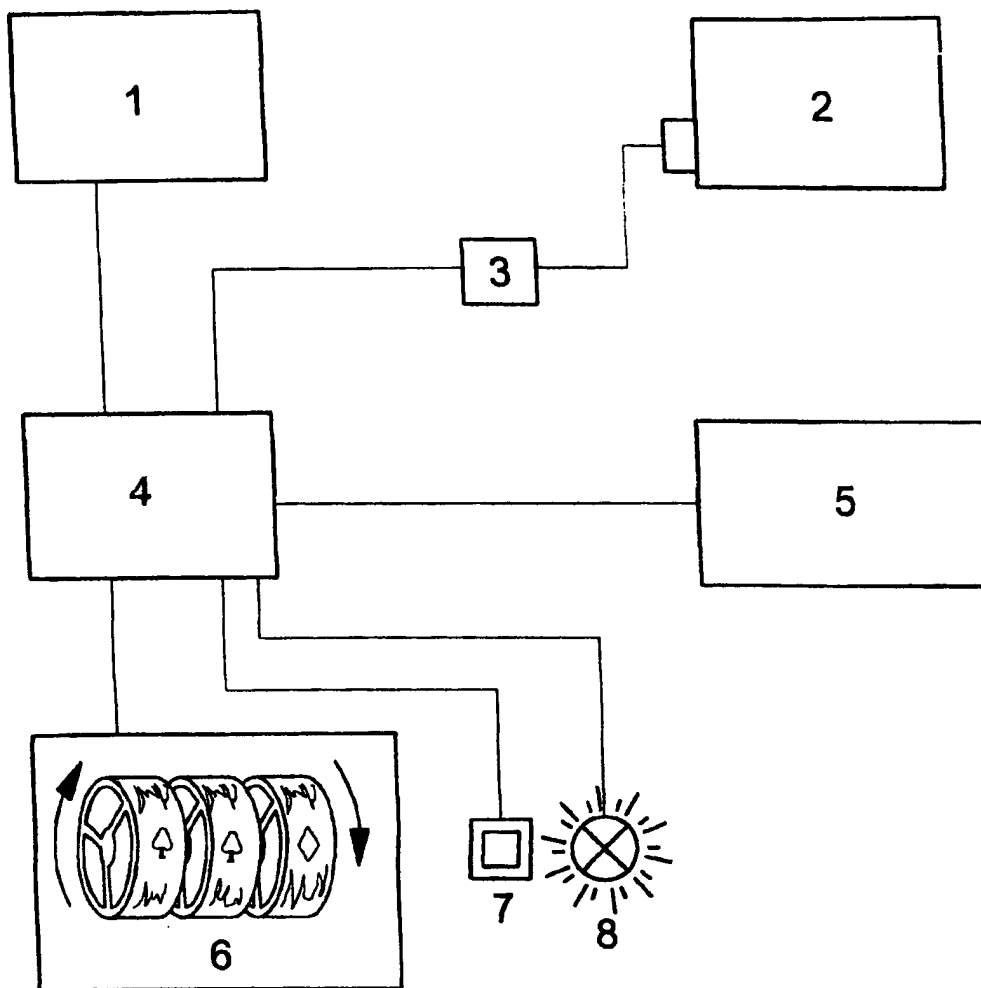
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Application Number
EP 04 38 0109

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Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 6 August 2004	Examiner Lavin Liermo, J
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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