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(71)

Applicant: Recreativos Franco, S.A.
28037 Madrid (ES)

(72)

Inventor: FRANCO MUÑOZ, Jesús
28037 Madrid (ES)

(74)

Representative: Cabinet Plasseraud
66, rue de la Chaussée d'Antin
75440 Paris Cedex 09 (FR)

(54)

VIDEO BINGO MACHINE

(57)

The device is based on the conventional structure of video bingo machines, in which the game proceeds at a much greater speed than in machines with physical ball extraction elements, with the advantage that this implies, with the inclusion of a physical ball extraction device (13) that can be used at the most important times of the game, as in the case of the option for buying extra balls, in which large prizes are at stake and where the randomness of the game may be doubted by the players. To this effect, the ball extraction device (13) must contain a number of physical balls (15) equal to the total number of virtual balls played minus the number of virtual balls extracted, such that it is necessary to generate before the physical draw a list (14) with the numbers or graphic representations of the physical balls (15) of the physical ball extraction device (13) and their equivalence with the numbers or graphic representations still to be played, so that a ball that has already been drawn in the virtual game is not extracted during the physical draw.

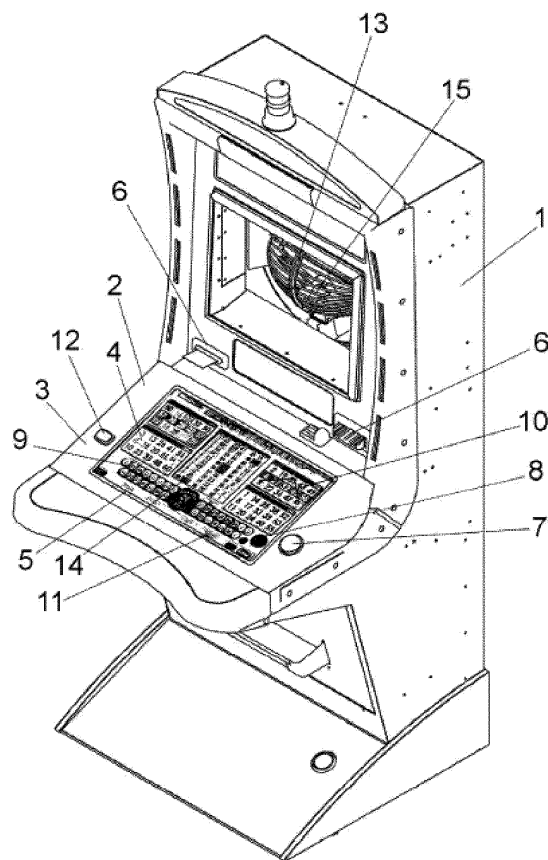


FIG. 1

Description

Object of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to a recreational gambling machine with prizes, of the so-called video bingo type, in which from a digital interface, the traditional bingo game and other types of draws/prizes proceed.

[0002] The object of the invention is to provide a machine which, still being based on a digital interface, at the most important times of the game, that is to say, when the highest prizes are chosen, such as for example by means of acquiring extra balls, said extra balls are obtained totally at random such that the programming software of the machine cannot interfere in the result obtained, as said ball can be obtained, at the player's choice, from a physical extraction device.

[0003] The object of the invention is thus to avoid suspicions on the part of the players concerning suspicions of deliberate rigging of the results at crucial times of the game.

Background of the invention

[0004] Recreational machines with prizes are known in which the game of bingo proceeds such that the means for carrying out the draw and extraction of the balls can be carried out both by means of a digital interface and a physical interface.

[0005] The problem with the machines with a physical interface is that the extraction of the balls entails a process that is too slow, which obviously goes against the interests of the manufacturer of the machines since in these types of games, the extraction of 30 balls is envisaged, in addition to the possible extra balls offered by the machine, depending on the conditions arising throughout the game such that a single game entails quite a considerable amount of time which is lost in said random extraction process of the balls.

[0006] Attempting to circumvent this problem, classic video bingo machines are known in which the physical interface in which the draw is carried out is replaced with a digital interface such that the extraction process of the balls is quite significantly accelerated, reducing the playing time of a game quite considerably.

[0007] In this type of game, it is common for the machine to offer the acquisition of extra balls for a determined amount, especially if the player has to get just one number on one of their cards to obtain a prize after the draw, an acquisition which will involve an amount being deducted from the player's available credits or from the amount of the prizes accrued up to that point.

[0008] Therefore, given that the draw of said ball or extra balls in these types of machines is carried out by way of a programming software, the mistrust on the part of the players that said software is rigged is quite a frequent occurrence, especially taking into account that large prizes are at stake in the case of the extracted ball

being the appropriate one.

Description of the invention

[0009] The envisaged video bingo machine resolves, in a fully satisfactory manner, the problem previously set out, combining the best of these two types of machines, that is to say, achieving a higher game speed and ensuring the randomness of the draws at crucial moments of the game, such as when an extra ball is obtained on the part of the player.

[0010] To this end, and more specifically, the envisaged machine forms part of the conventional structure of a video bingo machine in which a digital interface is defined, specifically a touchscreen, said interface may be mixed, that is to say that some of the game buttons are implemented as physical buttons arranged next to the screen, without this affecting the essence of the invention, a screen in which the bingo game development takes place by way of a programming software in which a series of cards, bets, etc. are provided, the draw of the balls proceeding by way of said software as is conventional in these types of video bingo machines, up to the extraction of the pre-established number of game balls, usually 30.

[0011] After reaching this point and as usually occurs in video bingo machines, once all the pre-established balls are extracted, the machine can offer the player the purchase of extra balls, although said draw, in which large prizes are usually chosen, can take place by means of a physical device in order to ensure the total randomness of said draw.

[0012] To this end, it has been envisaged that preferably in the upper part of the machine, a physical ball extraction device is arranged, that is to say a device allowing, from a determined number of balls contained within it, one of said balls to be extracted totally randomly, which could be a drum or any other conventional mechanism used in physical bingo recreational machines.

[0013] The device has means to identify the extracted ball in order to be able to be interpreted by the programming software such that said draw is totally transparent for the player, thus avoiding any type of suspicion in the randomness of the draw.

[0014] Given that the balls contained in the physical device, whether it is a drum or similar element, in the case that they contain numeric elements, they could coincide in their extraction with a number which has already been extracted previously in the "digital" draw, it is envisaged that a lower number of balls are involved in the drum or physical element in question, specifically the total of the balls played minus the balls extracted in the conventional draw, which in practice is usually 30 balls, of the 60 played (although the number of balls could be different) such that the machine, by way of its programming software before the physical extraction of the ball generates a table of equivalence which assigns the numbers still to be played to the numbers contained in said

ball extraction device.

[0015] A much quicker machine is thereby achieved in the course of the game and which offers the possibility of the players being assured of the randomness of the draws at the most important times, as in the case of obtaining extra balls.

Description of the drawings

[0016] In order to complement the description made below and for the purpose of helping to make the characteristics of the invention more readily understandable, in accordance with a preferred practical exemplary embodiment thereof, said description is accompanied by a set of drawings constituting an integral part thereof, which by way of illustration and not limitation represents the following:

Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a video bingo machine implemented according to the object of the present invention.

Figure 2 shows a front elevation view of the machine of the previous figure.

Preferred embodiment of the invention

[0017] In view of the outlined figures, it can be observed how the envisaged video bingo machine is formed, as is conventional in these types of machines from a casing (1) in which an intermediate game area (2) is established in which a touchscreen (3) is integrated associated with digital control electronics in which a programming software is involved to offer a digital bingo game by way of said screen in which a series of cards (4) are defined.

[0018] In the figures, and only by way of example, it can be seen how four cards are offered which, in said example, have 15 numbers per card in a 3x5 grid such that the numbers on the card are ordered from the top down and left to right such that the draw of the bingo game is carried out with 60 different numbers, all proceeding digitally, by way of the mentioned programming software of the machine.

[0019] The player can choose to play one, two or three or whichever number of cards and can change these an unlimited number of times. By way of example, the numbers of each draw could be 30 extractions and they will be shown on the game screen (3).

[0020] Optionally, the price of the bet can be chosen by the player, a bet button (5) being defined by means of which the bet per card is selected.

[0021] Once the player has enabled the terminal, their credits being transferred by way of the corresponding payment means (6), they can start to play.

[0022] They can choose the number of cards with which they are going to play, by actuating the underside of the card; if it is deactivated, it will be activated and, conversely, by pressing on the screen on the label to deactivate, the corresponding card is deactivated show-

ing its underside. They can thus choose between one, two, three or four cards. Once the chosen cards are displayed, the player can add more bets to the cards up to the limit, or lower the bet for each card using the betting arrows.

[0023] It will be possible to change the active cards. When the bets have been decided, the play button (7) can be pressed to initiate the game such that the terminal will perform consecutive plays. At the end of each game, the player can modify the number of cards and bets.

[0024] The terminal shows on the screen the numbers (9) which are coming out and automatically marks the matches on the cards (4), the terminal also gives "alerts" of the possible prize configurations on the cards with a special marker (10) on the same and on the payment plan.

[0025] By keeping the button (7) pressed and releasing, the player can regulate the exit of the balls at their discretion. The interface also offers means to vary the exit speed of the balls.

[0026] The prize combinations obtained on the game cards are marked on the winnings plan on the screen and the total amount goes to the prize counter.

[0027] Lastly, the payment of the prize is carried out in the credit counter (11).

[0028] When the player decides to withdraw from the terminal, they press the cash button (12) and the operation of cashing the credits accumulated up to then is initiated.

[0029] The interface provides a help button by means of which the player views the game instructions, the payment plan and the development of the prize configurations.

[0030] Thus, according to the essence of the invention, once the simulated extraction of the 30 game balls is carried out, whose random control is carried out by way of the programming software, it is envisaged that the machine, as a function of the final status of the cards, that is to say, in the case that they are on the threshold of obtaining a prize, missing one number, the machine can offer the purchase of one or more extra balls.

[0031] For the draw of said extra balls, it has been envisaged that the machine has a physical ball extraction device (13), preferably established in the front and upper part of the casing of the machine, perfectly visible to the player such that the draw process of the ball can be seen by the player, assuring them of the total randomness of said draw.

[0032] This mechanism can be any type of known conventional mechanism, be it a drum or another random ball extraction system, being able to have or not have means to remove the balls obtained in the draw so that they are not repeated, in the case of offering more than one extra ball, a mechanism which would not be necessary in the case of offering only one extra ball.

[0033] Obviously, the ball extraction device (13) has means to identify the ball obtained in the draw, a signal which will be sent to the control electronics to conse-

quently act on the digital interface of the machine.

[0034] In any case and as mentioned previously, given that the physical balls (15) contained in the ball extraction device (13) must not coincide with those which have already appeared in the "virtual" draw, it has been envisaged that in said drum, only 30 balls are involved, instead of the 60 which are played, since 30 balls have already been previously extracted "digitally", consequently the programming software of the machine will generate a list (14) before for the draw with the numbers of the balls of the mechanical drum or element in question and its equivalence with the numbers still to be played. This list can be viewed directly on screen, as in the exemplary embodiment chosen, or based on the same, the equivalence with the numbers included in the physical balls can be represented next to the numbers of the cards which have not appeared in the draw.

[0035] The price of the extra ball will be deducted from the credits available to the player at the time. In the case of not having enough credits for the purchase, it can be purchased using part of the prize obtained up to that time. If they did not have enough money with the total of the credits and the prize obtained up to that time, the option will be given to introduce credits by means of AFT, cash, etc.

Claims

1. A video bingo machine, which being of the type formed by a casing (1), in which a video game area or digital interface is established in which a touch-screen (3) is integrated, associated with digital control electronics in which programming software is involved to offer a digital bingo game by way of said screen on which a series of game cards (4) are defined, the draw of the virtual balls being carried out by way of said software until the extraction of the pre-established number of game balls, with the machine including means for offering the continuation of the game by means of using one or more extra balls, **characterised in that** the machine includes, as means for obtaining the extra ball or balls of the game, a physical ball extraction device (13) arranged in a visible area of the machine, fitted with means to identify the extracted ball for its interpretation by the control electronics of the digital interface, with only a number of physical balls (15) being involved in said ball extraction device equal to the total number of virtual balls played minus the number of virtual balls extracted, with the particular feature that, in the digital interface, means are defined for the generation of a list (14) prior to the extraction of the extra ball, with the number or graphic representations of the physical balls (15) of the physical ball extraction device (13) and their equivalence with the numbers or graphic representations still to be played.

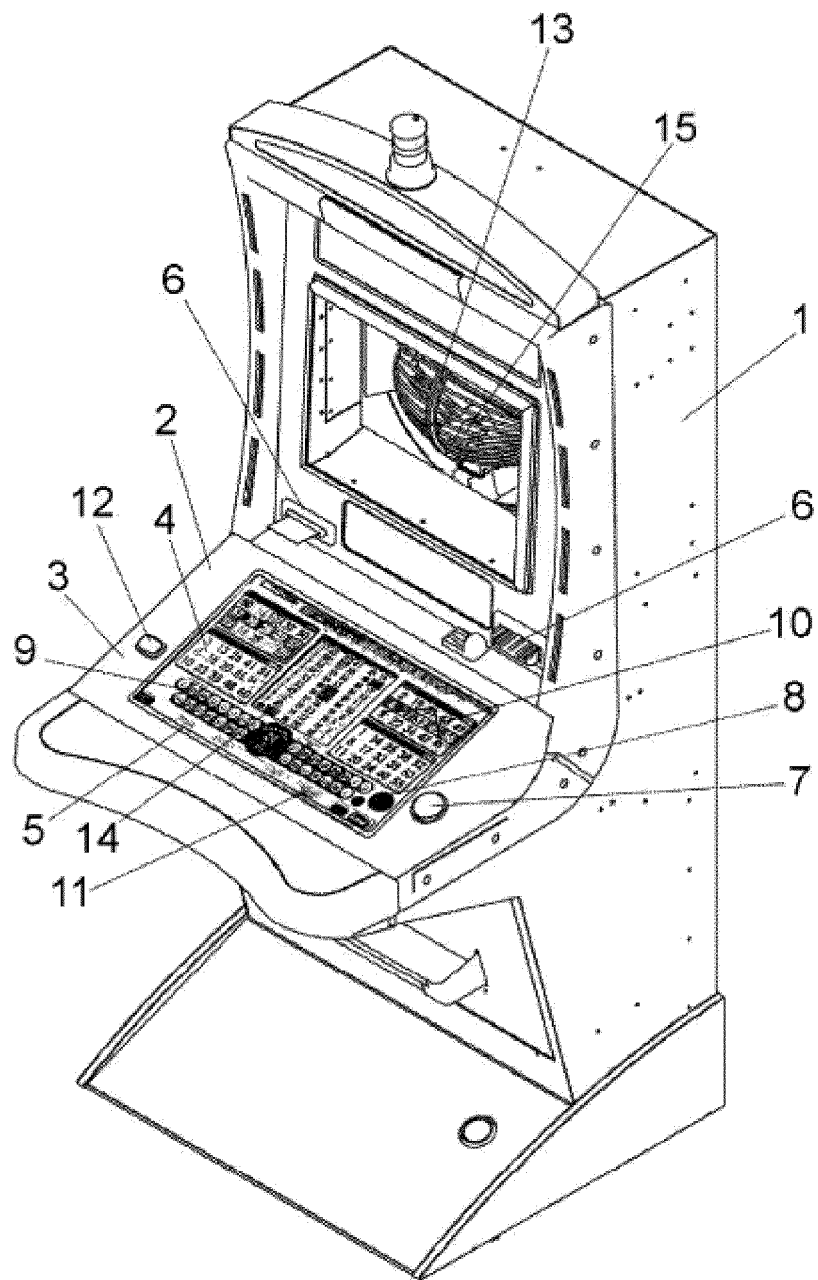


FIG. 1

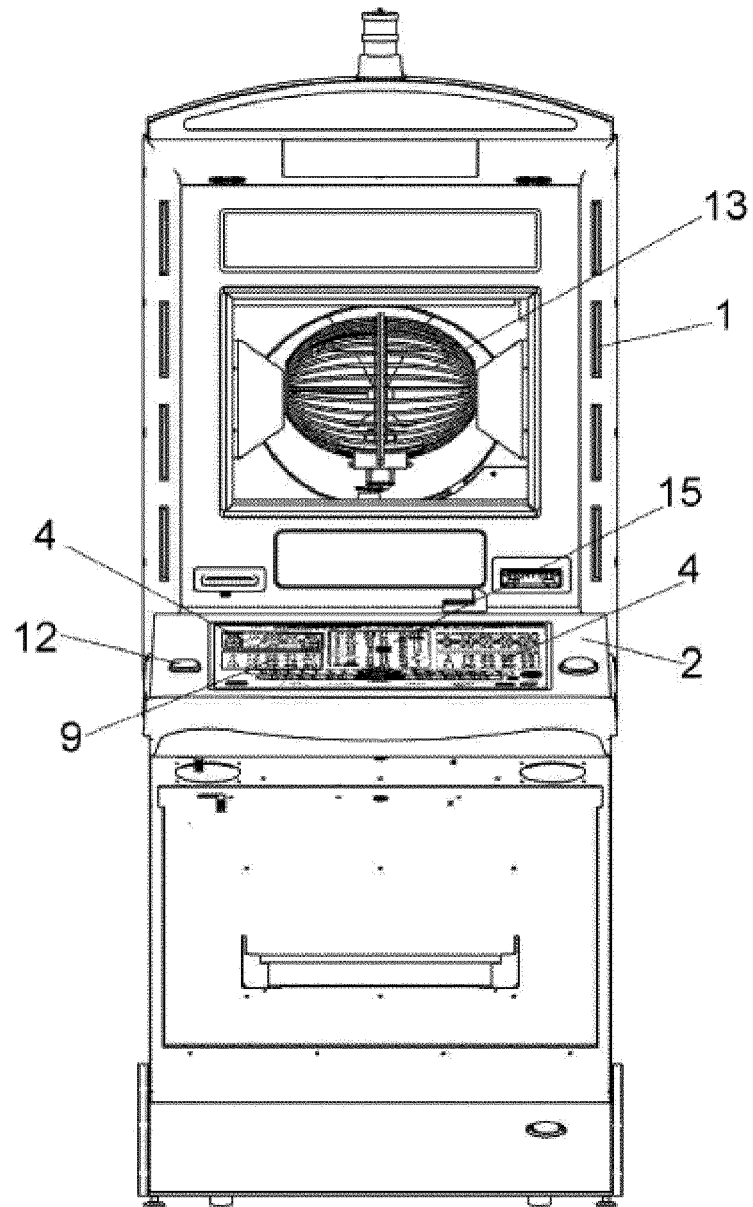


FIG. 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/ES2016/070751

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

G07F17/34 (2006.01)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

G07F, G07C, A63F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPODOC, INVENES, WPI

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
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☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

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| * Special categories of cited documents: | "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention |
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| "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed | "&" document member of the same patent family |

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08/05/2017

Date of mailing of the international search report
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Name and mailing address of the ISA/

Authorized officer
P. Alonso Gaston

OFICINA ESPAÑOLA DE PATENTES Y MARCAS
Paseo de la Castellana, 75 - 28071 Madrid (España)
Facsimile No.: 91 349 53 04

Telephone No. 91 3495323

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 2015)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/ES2016/070751

Information on patent family members

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