

Thunderbirds



Pachislo Player's Handbook

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

When I first started out on this hobby, I knew very little about the operation of a pachislo machine. I knew to plug the machine in, put in the tokens, hit the spin knob, and press the stop buttons to stop the reels. Through playing it, I learned there was a big and regular bonus rounds.

However, I did not know how to change the odds in the machine, that there were two parts to the big bonus round, what the bonus count meant, what a Jac-In was, what assist time (AT) was, or how to really play the machine during the big bonus. I learned the answers to all these questions, but the information is spread out and it took me awhile to find them.

One of the most frequently questions asked by new pachislo owners is: Is there an instruction book for my machine? The short answer is “no”. There are generic pachislo instruction books that provide a general overview of pachislo machines. There are also promotional guidebooks put out for these machines by the manufacturer, but they are in Japanese and are pretty hard to find. The Pachislo Information Database website contains scanned copies of many of them. GAK Trading Inc. has put out a number of guides as well, including one on Thunderbirds, which was very helpful to me when I got my machine.

The publication of this handbook changes that answer from “no” to yes. It adds to the existing material on this specific machine and it also puts some basic reference material in one place to make it easier for the new and experienced pachislo owner alike.

I have played this machine extensively. However, there maybe things I haven’t seen yet. As I learn more, I will add it to this handbook.

I would like to thank the wonderful people at the Pachislo Information Database website. They have been extremely helpful and always happy to answer any questions I had. Their past and present posts provided an excellent foundation for my pachislo education. I would also like to thank GAK Trading INC. and Arraking, the former for their Thunderbirds guide and the latter for his extremely informative Pachislo Repair Guide.

A Few Basic Facts

Congratulations on owning the Thunderbirds pachislo machine! I am a huge fan of Gerry Anderson's 1960's series and I hope you enjoy playing this game as much as I do.

Thunderbirds was produced by Gerry Anderson. Puppets and highly detailed models were used to tell the story of the Tracy family, a wealthy family, who were secretly members of the organization known as International Rescue; a group committed to saving those who were moral danger. Thunderbirds aired between 1965 and 1966.

Your Thunderbirds Pachislo was manufactured by Fuhikow (Fuji) in 2003. It is a Type-B machine, with five pay lines, and is max bet (3 tokens) only. For a brief breakdown of pachislo machine types, please see the table at the end of the handbook.

Not Slot, Pachislot!

Your Thunderbirds machine is a pachislo or pachislot (pachinko-slot) machine*. While the pachislot *is* a slot machine, it is not the same as an American slot machine. The gaming laws in Japan explicitly dictate how these machines operate. As a result, their play and payout methods are very different than their American counterparts.

Thunderbirds and other pachislo machines have two modes of play: normal play and bonus rounds.

In terms of payout, pachislo machines are limited to awarding a maximum of fifteen tokens per winning spin. Additionally, they can only hold a maximum of fifty tokens in credit before the machine *must* start paying out. However, the gaming laws do permit the machines to have periods where they can have a large number of consecutive winning spins; in other words, bonus rounds.

Pachislo machines are also known by the misnomer skill stop machines. The name implies that you have the ability to stop the reels where you want them to stop. Sadly, that is not the case. A random number generator dictates where the reels will stop. During normal play, you essentially have no control over where the reels will stop. During bonus rounds however, that's another story and it will be discussed later.

*While pachislo and pachislot are used interchangeably, I will be using the term pachislo for this handbook.

Getting Started

What Does What



- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1) Token Payout Button | 2) Single Bet Button | 3) Spin Knob |
| 4) Max Bet Button | 5) Reel Stop Buttons | 6) Token Slot |
| 7) Token Return | 8) Key Hole/Soft Reset | 9) Credit Window |
| 10) Bonus Count Window | 11) Win Window | |

Changing the odds on Thunderbirds

Open the door, turn the power switch off, insert the reset key into the key hole on the power box, and turn it to on position. Turn the power back on. A warning graphic will appear on the screen; ignore it. The odds number will appear in the credit window outside the door. The number displayed will be 1-6; 1 being the hardest odds and 6 being the easiest odds. Push reset button on the power box until desired number appears. Push the spin knob for at least five seconds to set it. Turn reset key to the off position. You should hear a click and the insert medal light will start flashing. If not, then repeat the procedure. When the odds have been reset, remove the reset key and close the door.

Turning the Volume Down

The volume on the Thunderbirds machine is incredibly loud. It's designed to compete with its fellow machines in the pachislo parlor. The machine has built-in volume controls, but even at their lowest level, they are totally inadequate to lower the volume to acceptable levels. I live in an apartment, so getting the volume down is a must. I disconnected one of the two speakers and installed three additional aftermarket volume controls on the other in order to get the volume down to where I wanted it.

Playing The Game

Normal Play

Thunderbirds alternates between three scenes during normal play: Industrial complex, the Tracy's swimming pool, and Jeff Tracy's office.

Industrial Complex

The scene has buildings in the background and the Firefly goes by periodically.



As you play, the sky occasionally will darken and you will hear ominous sounds. When you hit the first reel stop button lightning will strike. If lightning strikes on both succeeding reel stops, the buildings will explode and you will enter a bonus round.



There is nothing in this scene that will indicate you will small prizes, but they will be periodically awarded.

The Tracy Swimming Pool

The scene shows the main building with the swimming pool. From time to time, you will hear an aircraft approach and either Thunderbirds 1, 2, or 3 will appear and you be awarded a small prize. Sometimes two of them will appear at once and it's a toss-up as to which prize will be awarded. Occasionally, the scene will pan over to the swimming pool and after the first stop button is pressed, the pool will partly open. On the second reel stop, you will hear some mechanical sound effects. If you win, Thunderbird 1 will launch on the third reel stop, which will lead to a bonus round. However, I've had the pool partly open, got three gold bells, but no Thunderbird 1 launch. The next spin, however, brought me to the portrait screen. I entered a big bonus round within six spins.



Jeff Tracy's office

In the office, the portraits on the screen will light up and give you the chance to win a small prize. Like in the pool scene, two of the pictures can light up; again making it a toss-up as to which prize you will win. Tin-Tin or Grandma will sometimes walk by and the color of their dress indicates which small prize you will receive. This scene is the only one of the three which usually doesn't award a bonus round. However, recently while playing the office scene, Jeff Tracy suddenly turned around to face me and said "Thunderbirds are go!" I was then brought to the portrait screen, which lead to a big bonus.



Portrait Screen



Standby Games

A standby game is a mini game that pops up randomly. Its successful completion will lead to a bonus round.

Thunder Chance

Thunder Chance is the only standby game on Thunderbirds. Thunder Chance begins with Thunderbird 2 on the ground. The goal is to get three replays on the pay lines. On the first successful spin, Thunderbird 2 lifts up on its legs and the pod door opens, showing the Mole. On the second successful spin, the Mole leaves the pod and travels to its destination and the drill starts to spin. On the third successful spin, the Mole begins tunneling, leading to a bonus round. If you fail to achieve the replays, the challenge starts over. It only lasts for limited number of spins before the Thunder Chance ends with a roller door with the International Rescue emblem on it abruptly closing.



It is not uncommon to get Thunder Chance, win, get a regular or big bonus round, and have it go back to Thunder Chance, win, and get another bonus round.

Lottery and Thunderbirds countdown

While these do not technically count as standby games, the successful completion of these can lead to a bonus round.

Lottery

On the lottery, the screen will show the sky and a number of symbols will rotate in the sky. Depending on where it stops, it could lead to a bonus round. While it's going on, don't hit the spin knob or it will go away.

Countdown

The screen will start to show the classic Thunderbirds countdown. Sometimes it goes in rapid succession in the course of a single spin. Other times, it does one Thunderbird per spin. If you reach Thunderbird 1, you have a shot, but not a guarantee of a bonus round.



Wait for it...wait for it!

The machine has just shown you the bonus screen, which will either be the Mole traveling underground or the portrait of the Tracy family. This is what you, the player, have been waiting for. Here's the catch. Yes, you're about to hit a bonus round, but it's not instantaneous. It can be the next spin, or in the next half-dozen, or the next several dozen. It depends on the machine as to how long it will take, but you get there.

Bonus Round

There are two types of bonus rounds: regular bonus round and big bonus round.

If the screen shows three Bars, you will get a regular bonus round.

If the screen shows either three red or three blue sevens, you will get a big bonus round.

Regular Bonus Round

The regular bonus round consists of eight spins, each costing one token with a guaranteed payout of fifteen tokens per spin. When a regular bonus round begins, you will see 1-8 displayed on the bonus count window located on the front of the machine. This will count down with each successive spin and will show 1-1 for the final spin. You will generally win around 112 tokens.

Regular Bonus Screen



Big Bonus Round

The big bonus consists of two parts. The first part is the big bonus round. The second is the regular bonus round.

The big bonus round consists of two rounds with a maximum of thirty spins. The cost is three tokens per spin. Thunderbirds' big bonus uses an assist time (AT) format, which means that it uses prompts (in this case on the screen), to show you which way to press the reel stop buttons. The directional arrows will be blue. The payouts ranges widely (please see the table at the end of the guidebook), and every spin is not a guaranteed win. After a while, the machine will reverse the direction you press the buttons. The arrows will change to red. This cause you to get three replays, triggering a Jac-In. A Jac-In is the way the machine transitions from the big bonus round to the regular bonus round.

When a big bonus round begins, you will see 2-30 displayed on the bonus count window located on the front of the machine. This will count down with each successive spin until you Jac-In or you hit 2-1. After you Jac-In (an example being at 2-18 on the bonus count), play your first regular bonus round, and begin your second big bonus round, a new number will be shown on the bonus count: 1-18. The second number is the same as the one at the end of your first big bonus round, 18, but the first number is now 1. Like the spin number, the round number counts down backwards. The game count will continue to count down until you Jac-In again or you hit 1-1.

Big Bonus Screen



The regular bonus round portion of the big bonus round is exactly the same as the one in the normal regular bonus round, except you get two of them. When a regular bonus round begins, you will see 2-8 displayed on the bonus count window located on the front of the machine. This will count down with each successive spin and will show 2-1 for the final spin. On the second regular bonus round, you will see 1-8 displayed on the bonus count window located on the front of the machine. It will countdown the same way as the previous round. When the second regular bonus round finishes, a game over screen will appear, telling you how many tokens you won. The Fuji emblem will appear and the game will change over to regular play mode. Your big bonus payout will average between 360 and 380 tokens.

Taking Control

As previously mentioned, you have virtually no control of the machine during normal play. However, you do have an element of control during a big bonus round.

The goal here is to eke out as many extra tokens as possible by extending the big bonus round, and that means avoiding the Jac-In. The way to avoid the Jac-In on Thunderbirds is when the game reverses the direction that you are supposed to hit stop buttons (red arrows), hit them opposite of what the machine is directing. That will prevent the Jac-In and continue the big bonus play. Conversely, when you want to manually Jac-In (blue arrows), hit the stop buttons in the reverse order of what the machine is directing.

As you continue to play, watch your game count. If you're at eight spins or lower, it's time to get to the final regular bonus round. You can do that one of two ways. Either let the machine switch reel stop directions and Jac-In that way or hit the stop buttons opposite of what it is directing, manually triggering a Jac-In. If you don't and you fail to Jac-In on the final spin, the bonus round is over. You lose the final regular bonus round and the machine switches back to regular play mode. Through trial and error, you can judge how close you want to cut it.

A Few Interesting Facts

After finishing a bonus round, the chances are extremely good that you will hit another big or regular bonus within the next 100-200 spins. They can happen back to back.

Depending on the setting on the power box, after the game over screen, you will get a different screen and chime-like music. To return the game to normal play mode, you will need to perform a soft reset by putting the key in the door and turning it to the left.

During the first two consecutive big bonus rounds, the music played is from the Thunderbirds series. On the third big bonus round, music not related to the series will play. The three big bonus rounds have to be within fairly close succession for this to occur.

If you put in a coin that is not the same size as the token, you will get an error screen showing the Hood from Thunderbirds. You will need to perform a soft reset.

Finishing Up: Turning the Machine Off

The best way to turn Thunderbirds off is to unplug the machine when it's not in use, or plug it into a power strip with a switch and turn the power strip switch off. If you leave the machine

plugged in and turn the power switch off, the transformer will continue to draw current from the outlet. It can overheat and become a fire hazard.

Machine Specific and General Reference Material

Thunderbirds Payouts

Normal Play Payouts

<u>Reels</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Payout</u>
Watermelon Watermelon Watermelon	Small Prize	12
Gold Bell Gold Bell Gold Bell	Small Prize	8
Cherry - -	Small Prize	1-4
Replay Replay Replay	Replay	0

Bonus Round Payouts

Big Bonus Payouts

<u>Reels</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Payout</u>
Blue or Red 777	Big Bonus	15
Gold Bell Gold Bell Gold Bell	Big Bonus Small Prize	10
Watermelon Watermelon Watermelon	Big Bonus Small Prize	15
Replay Replay Replay	Jac-In/Regular Bonus	9
Cherry - -	Big Bonus Small Prize	4

Regular Bonus Round Payout

<u>Reels</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Payout</u>
Bar Bar Bar	Regular Bonus	15
Replay Replay Replay	Regular Bonus Small Prize	15

Machine Types

<u>Machine Type</u>	<u>Years in Production</u>	<u>Bonus Features</u>
Type A	1982-2007	Three Big Bonus Rounds and Three Regular Bonus Rounds.
Type B	1997-2007	Two Big Bonus Rounds and Two Regular Bonus Rounds.
Type C	2001-2006	Single Game Theme Based Bonus Round.
Type 5	2005-Present	Single Regular, Middle, or Big Bonus Round.

Error Codes

<u>Error Code</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Solution</u>
E-0/ (CE/CJ)	The token slot is jammed.	Push the token return button by the token slot. Press the reset button.
E-1/ (HE/ HJ)	The token hopper could be jammed.	Turn off your machine. Disconnect and remove the hopper. Empty the hopper and look for the object that has jammed it. Reconnect the hopper and press the reset button.
E-2/ (HE/ HJ)	Token hopper dysfunction.	Check the token hopper.
E-3/ (HE)	The token hopper is empty.	Refill the token hopper and press the reset button.
E-4/ (RR)	RAM error.	Press the reset button.
E-5	Reel error.	Restart the machine and press the reset button.
E-6/ (CO)	Prize error.	Press the reset button.
E-7	Hopper Overflow.	Check the hopper or the overflow sensors located to the right of the hopper.
E-8	Hopper is disconnected.	Check the cable.
CE/ CJ/ C2	The token slot is jammed.	Clear the obstruction. Clean the coin track with alcohol, then press the reset button.