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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0059446 A1****Kaminkow**(43) **Pub. Date:****Mar. 17, 2005**(54) **GAMING DEVICE HAVING A SEGMENT
ELIMINATION GAME****Publication Classification**(76) **Inventor:** Joseph E. Kaminkow, Reno, NV (US)(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** A63F 9/24(52) **U.S. Cl.** 463/7; 463/16

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(57)

ABSTRACT

A wagering gaming device having a game including a set of segments displayed by a display device and a segment activator. Engagement of the segment activator with the segments removes the segment from the display device in one embodiment. In one embodiment, the player receives an award value for each removed segment. In this embodiment, the object of the game is to remove a maximum number of segments from the display device. A positionable blocking member is provided to direct or redirect the movement of the segment activator. Multiple apparatuses and methods are also taught, that provide a perceived skill segment elimination game.

(21) **Appl. No.:** 10/934,682(22) **Filed:** Sep. 2, 2004**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/503,021, filed on Sep. 15, 2003.

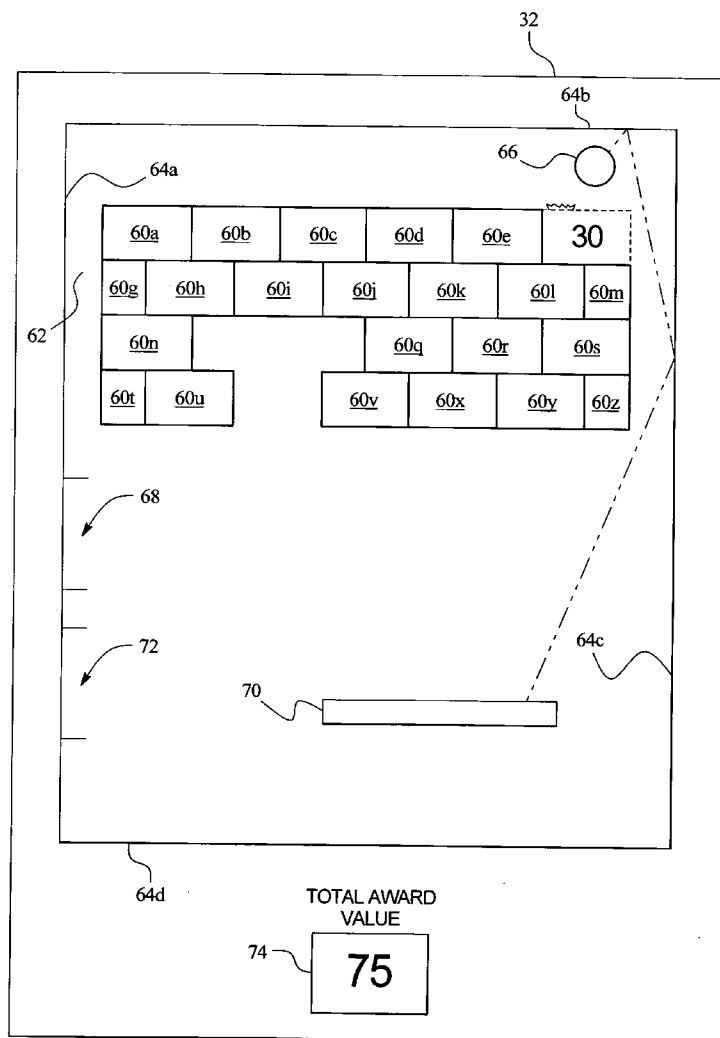


FIG. 1A

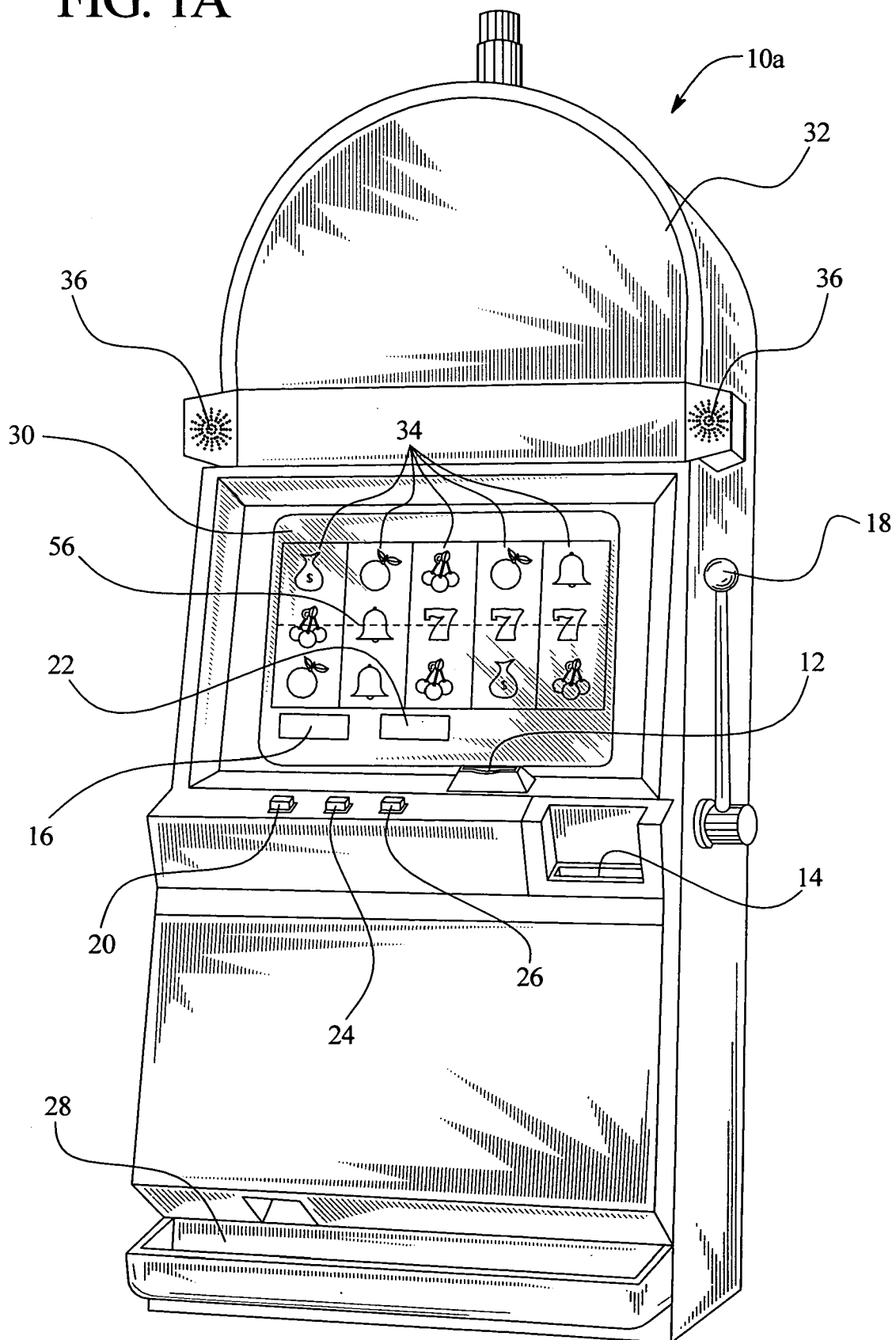


FIG. 1B

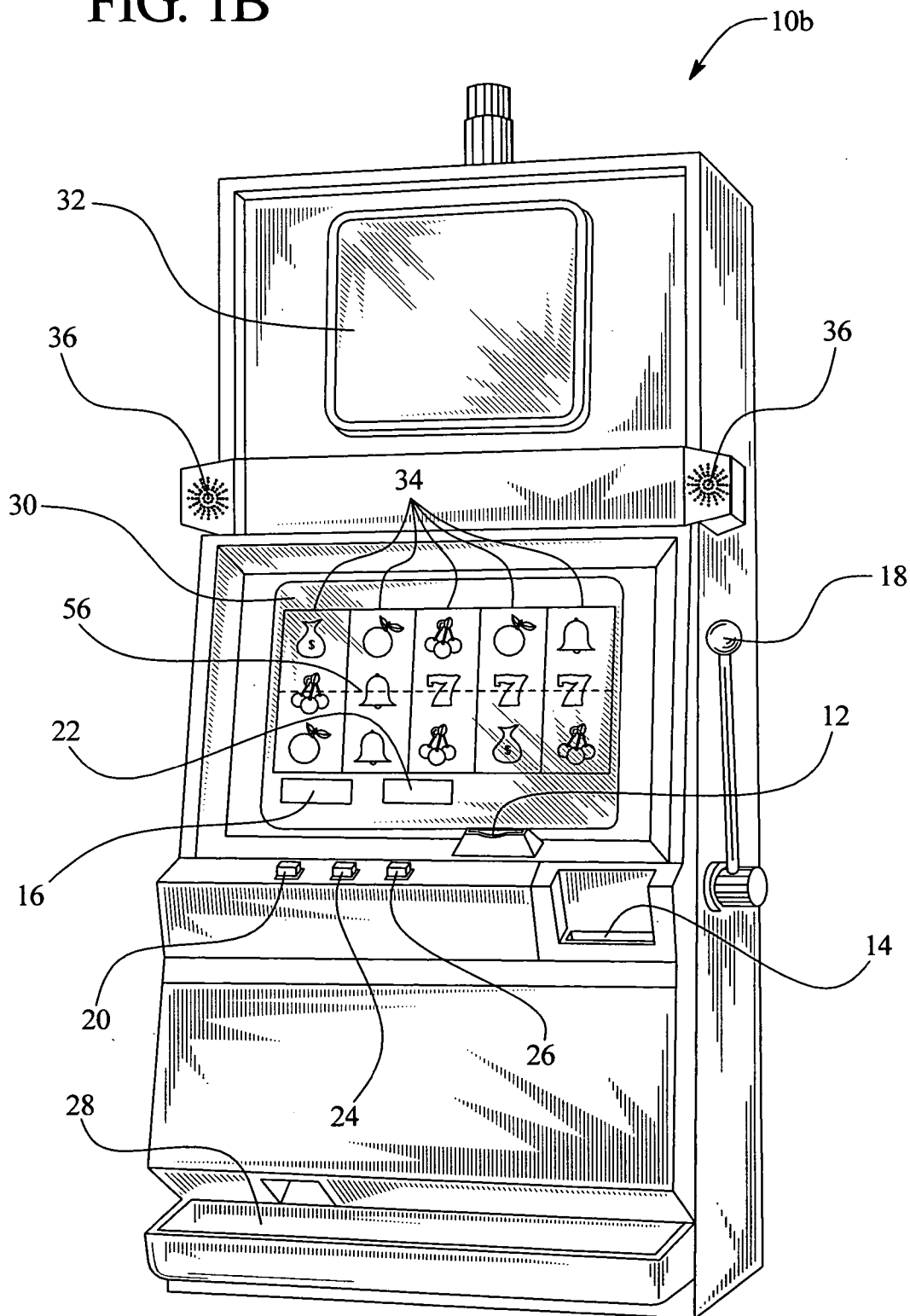


FIG. 2

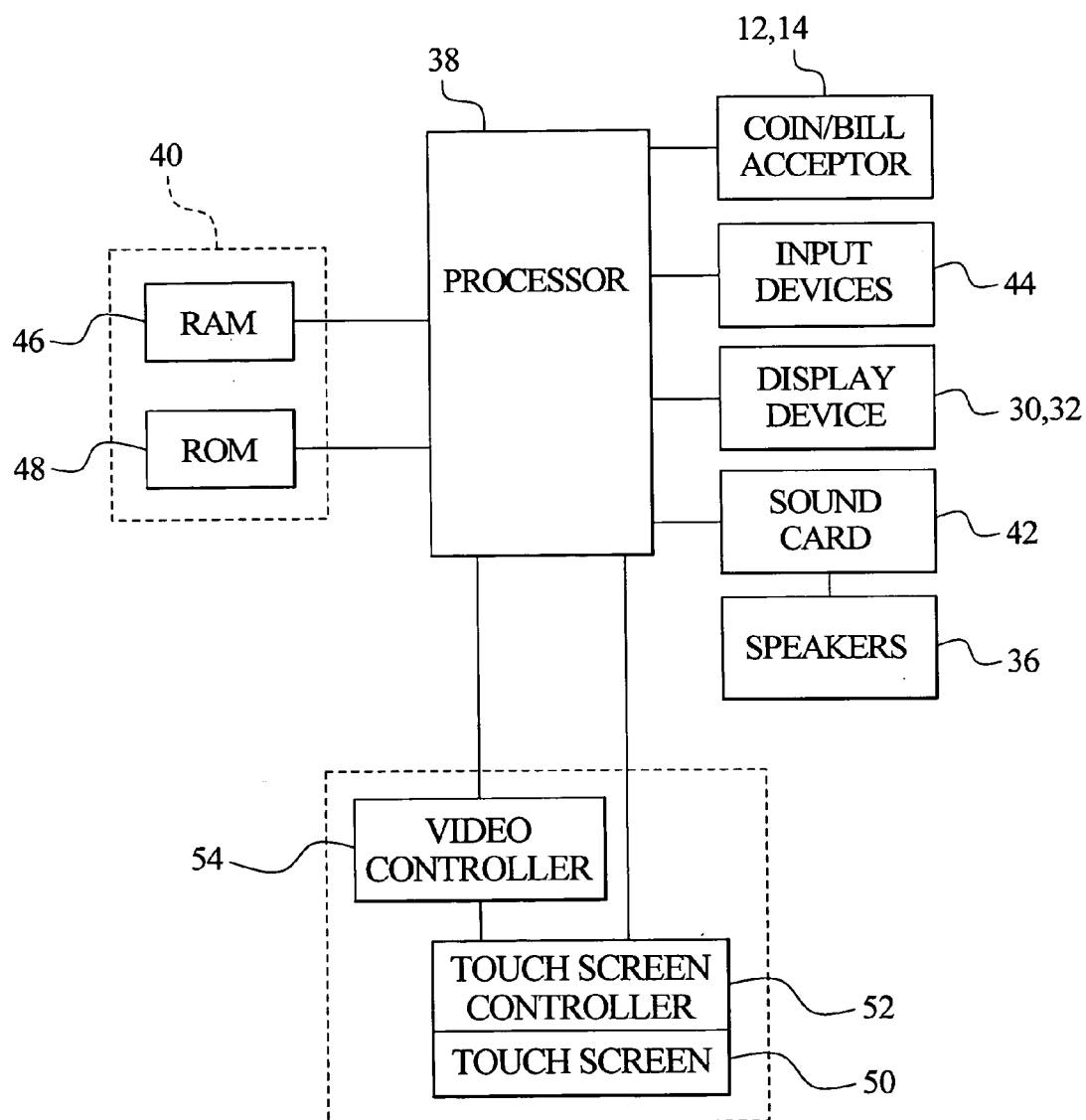


FIG. 3

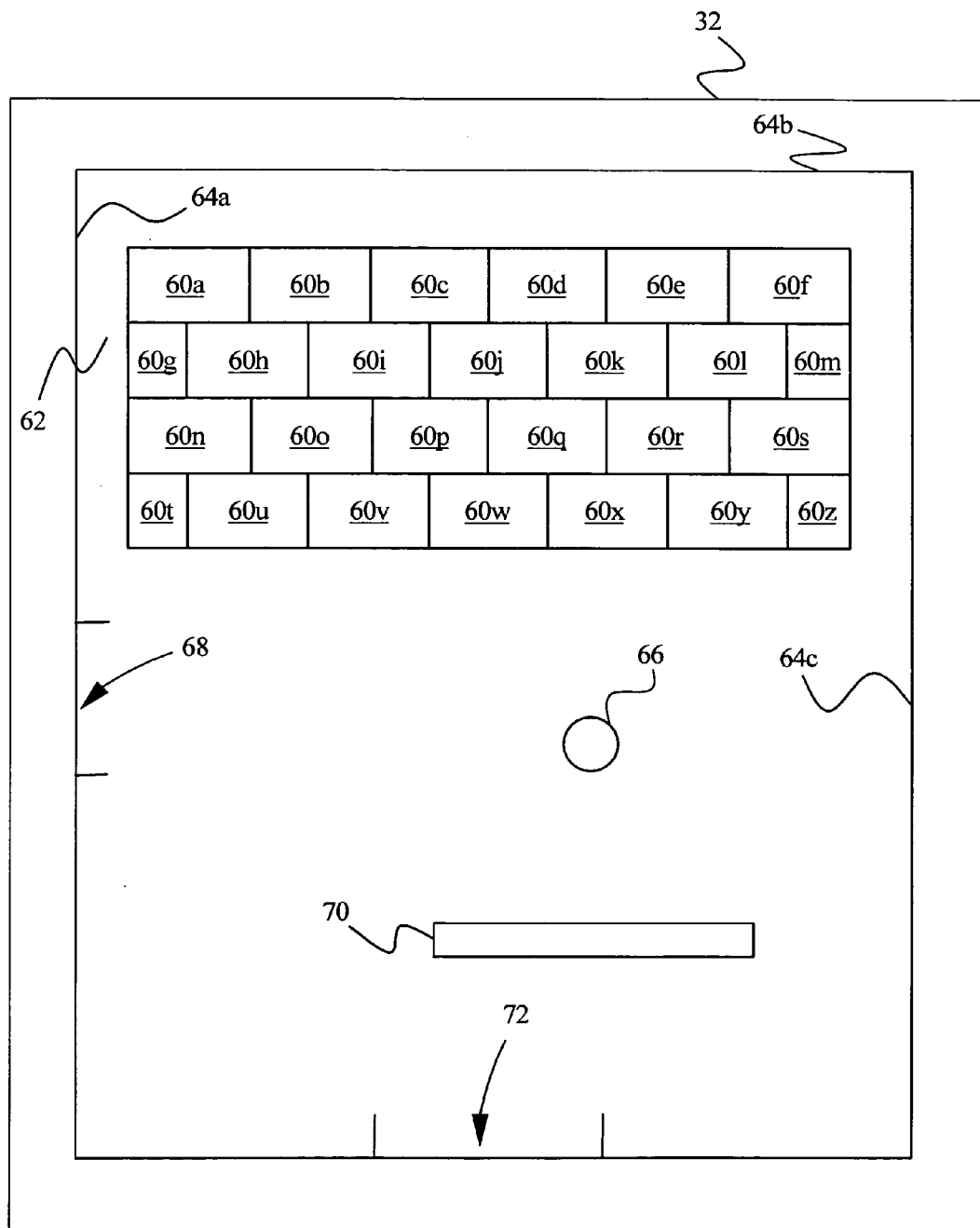


FIG. 4A

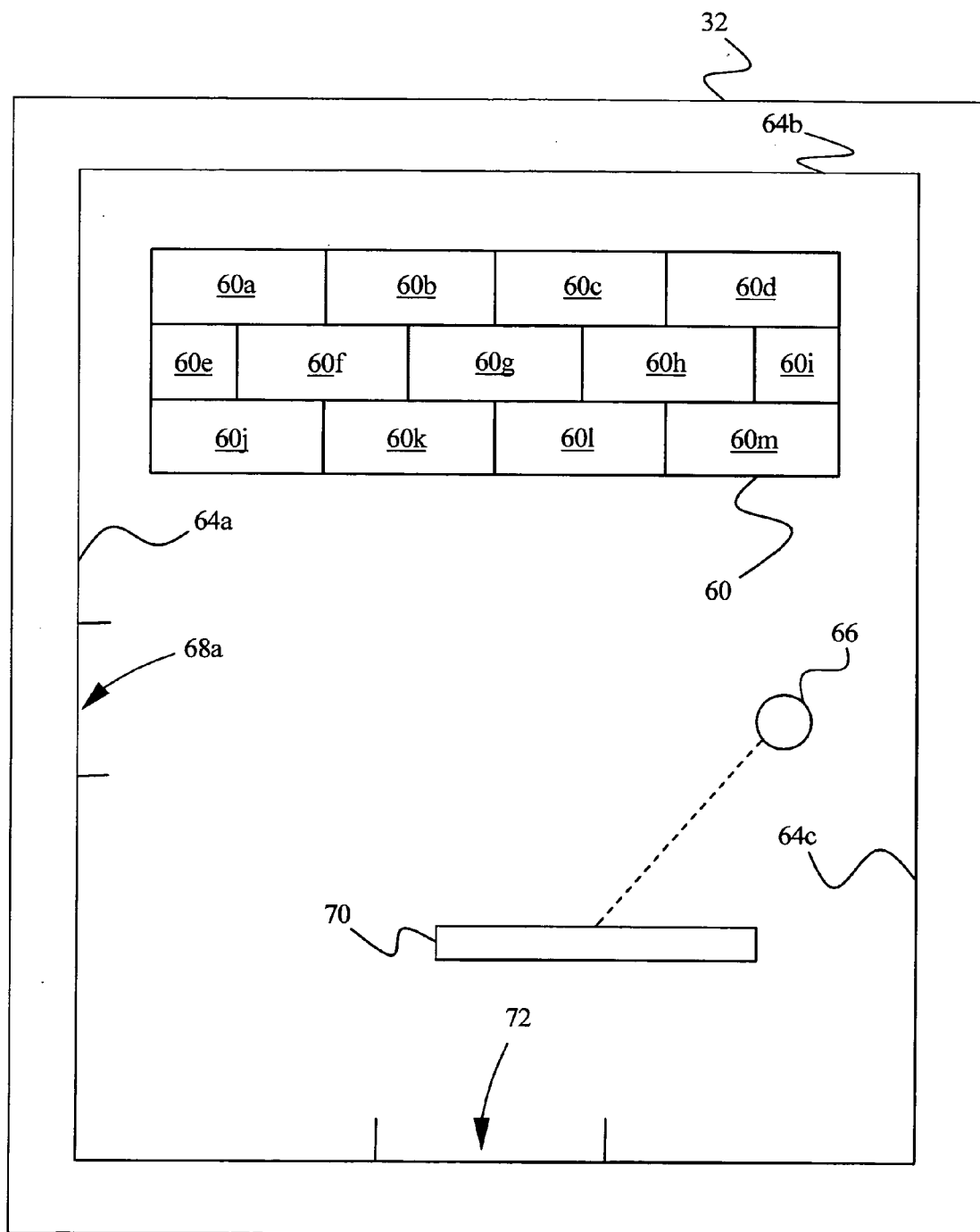


FIG. 4B

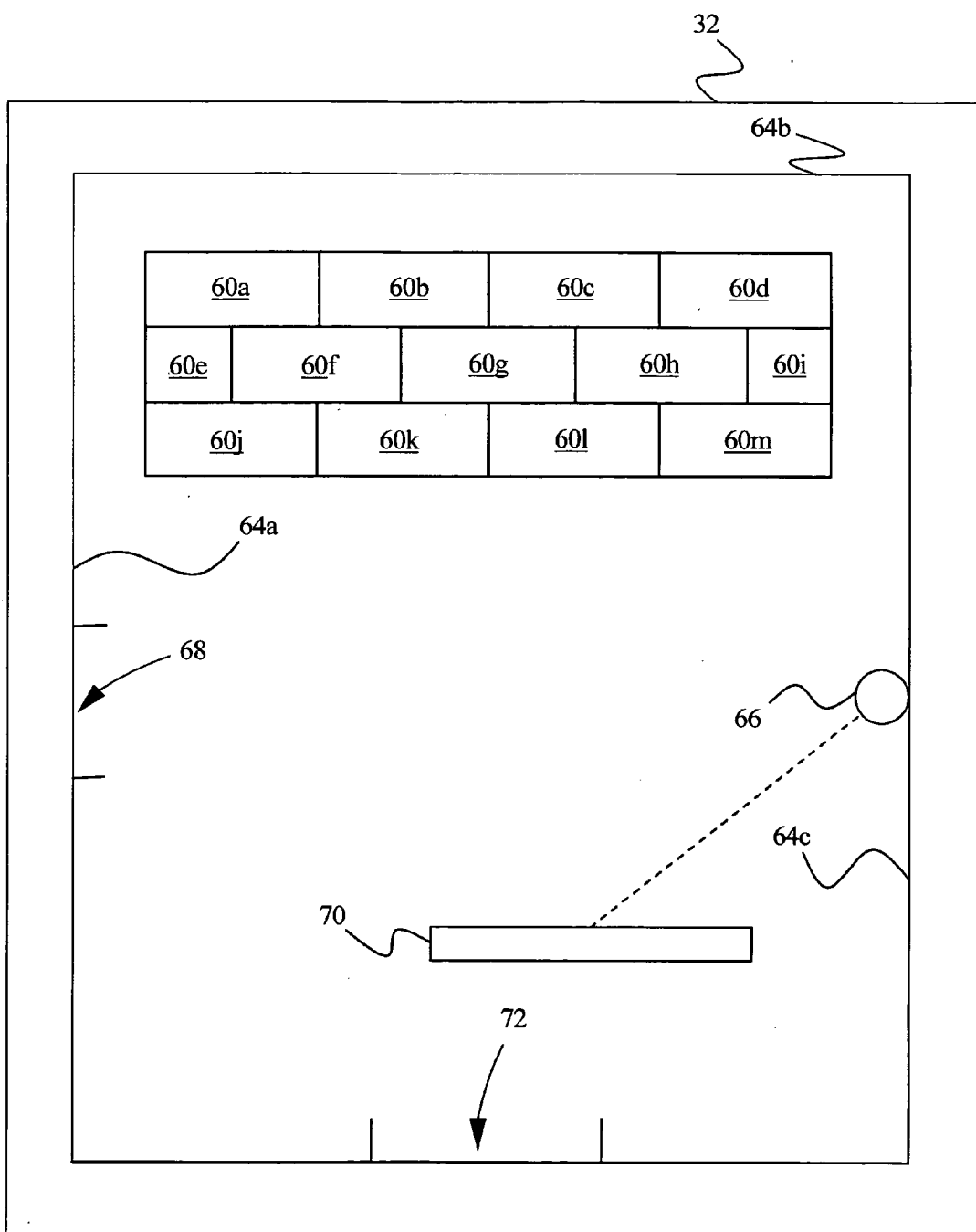


FIG. 4C

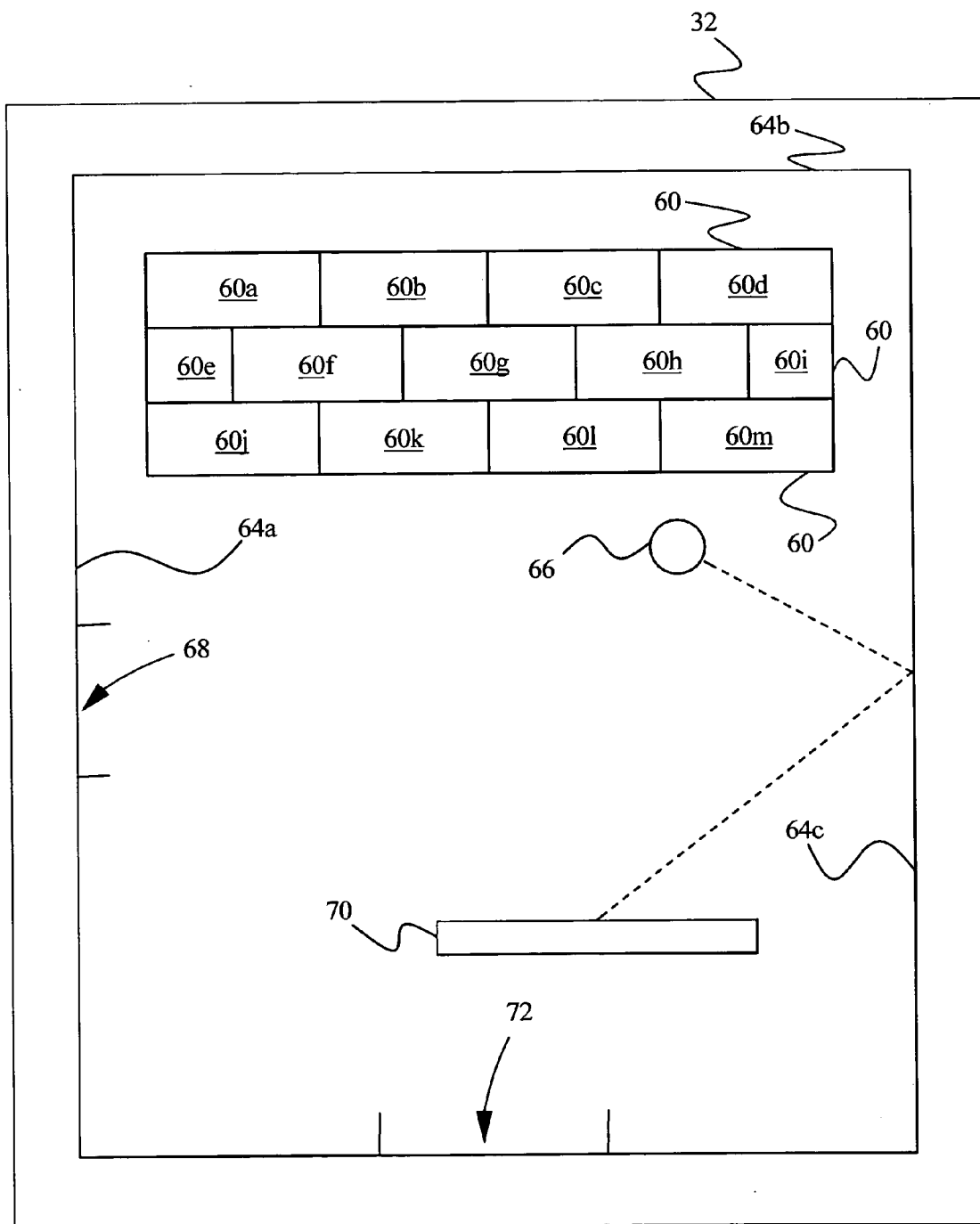


FIG. 5A

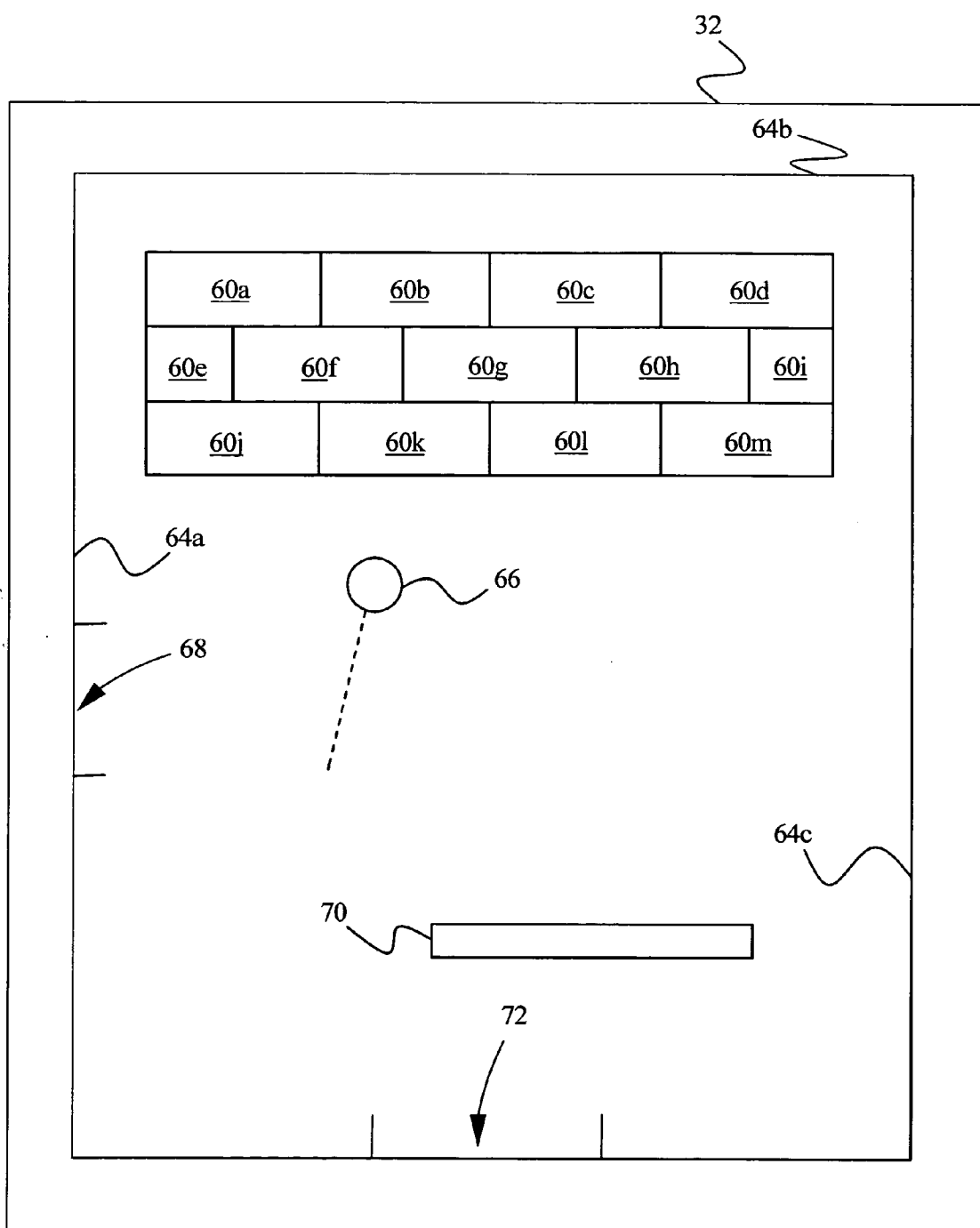


FIG. 5B

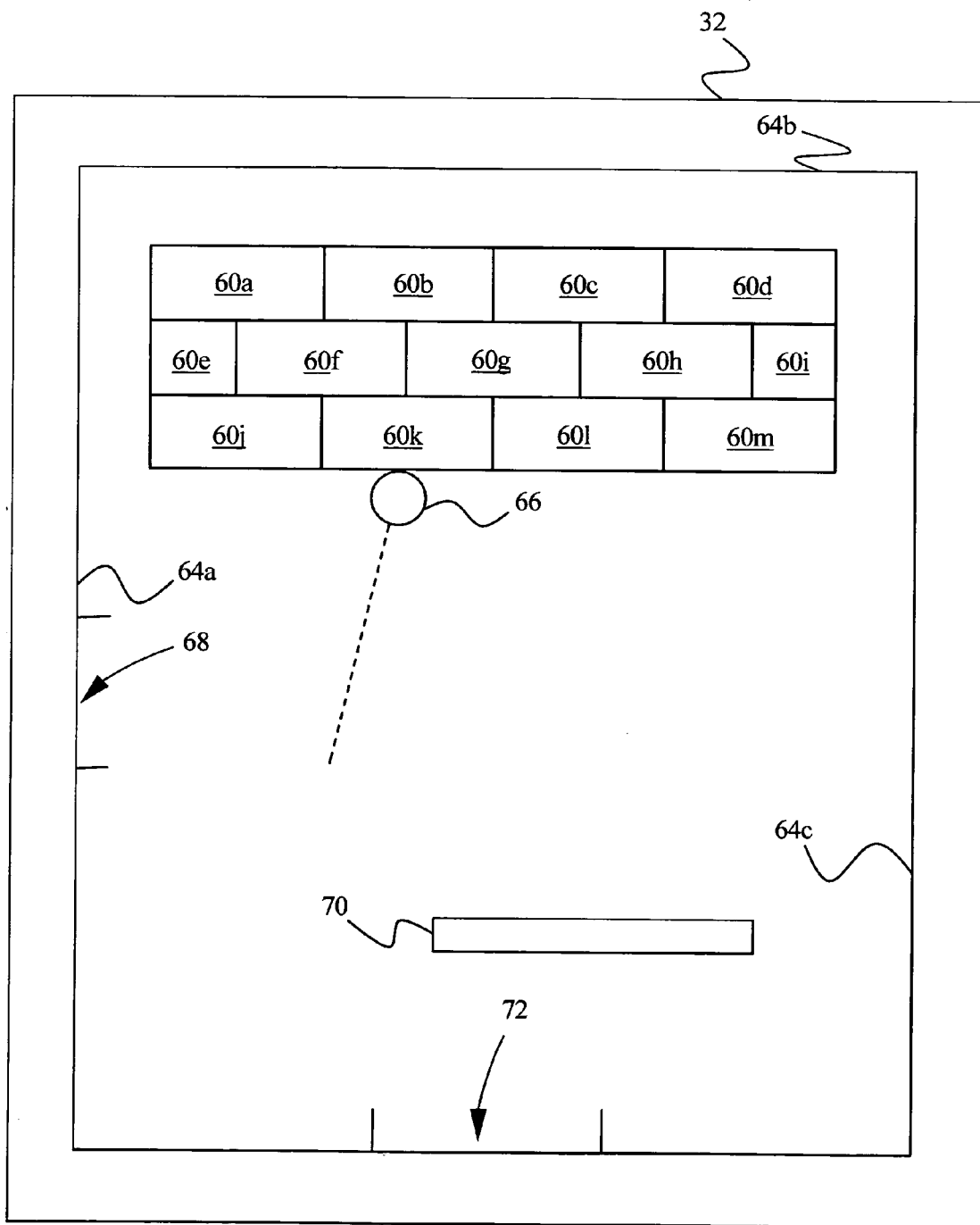


FIG. 5C

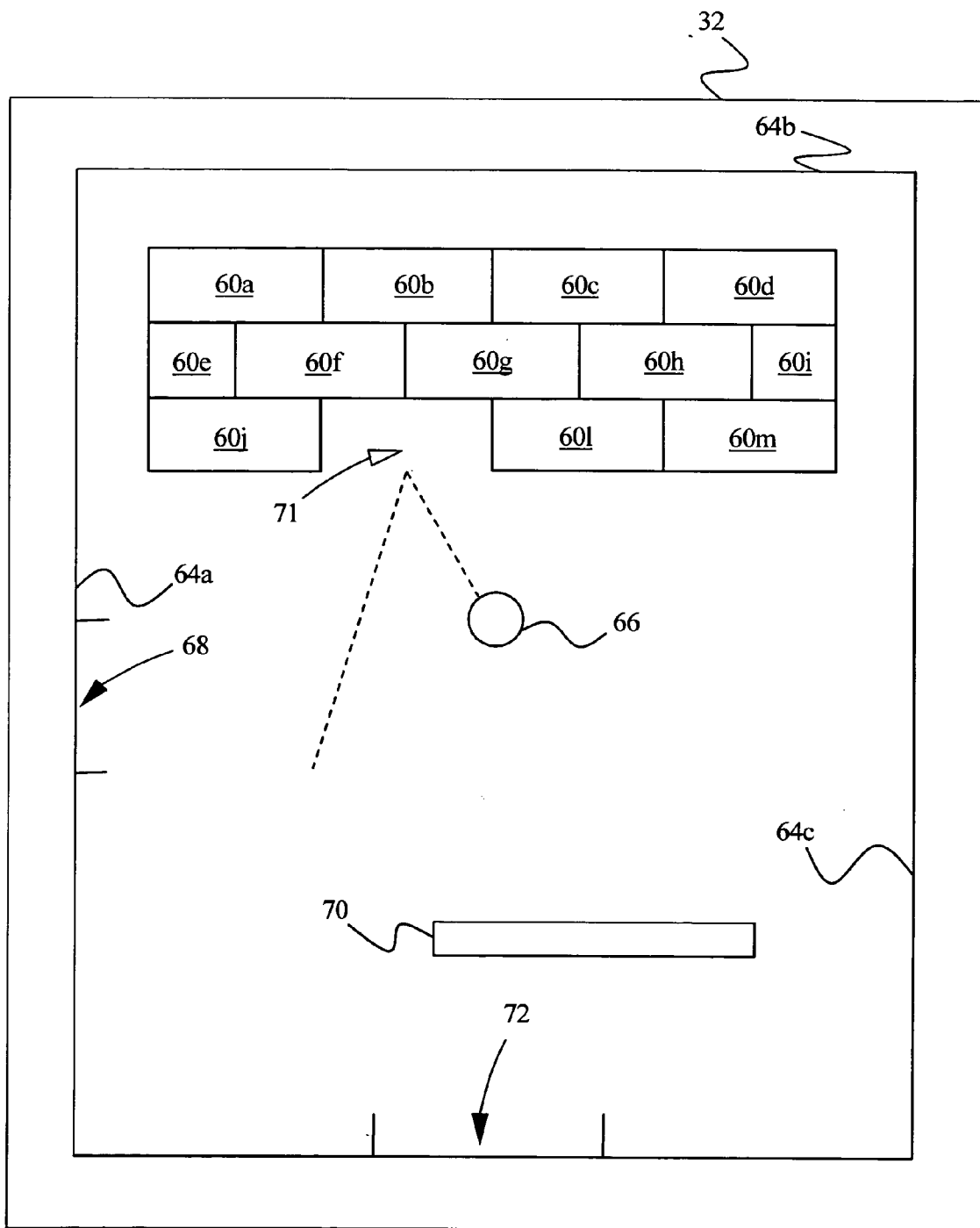


FIG. 6A

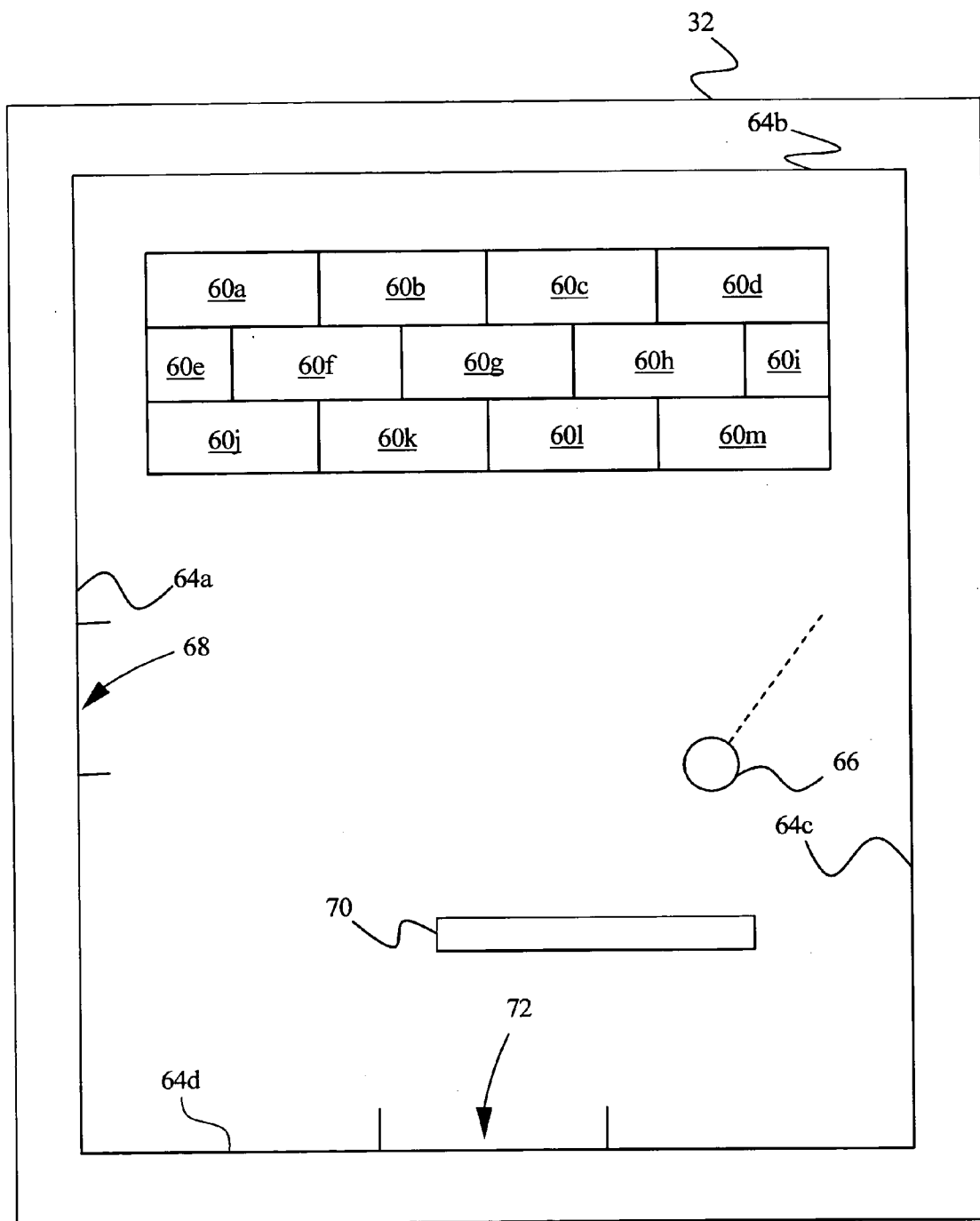


FIG. 6B

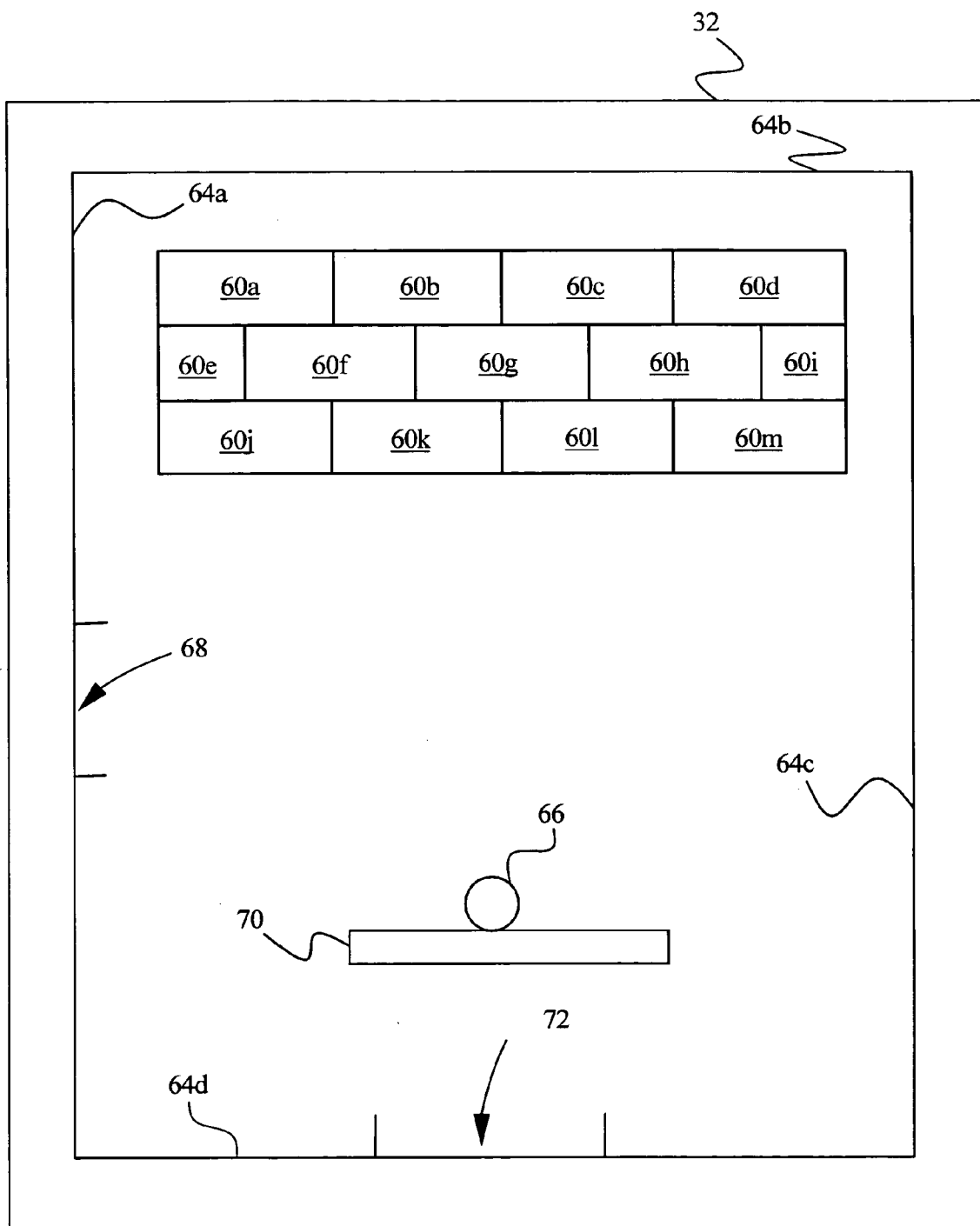


FIG. 6C

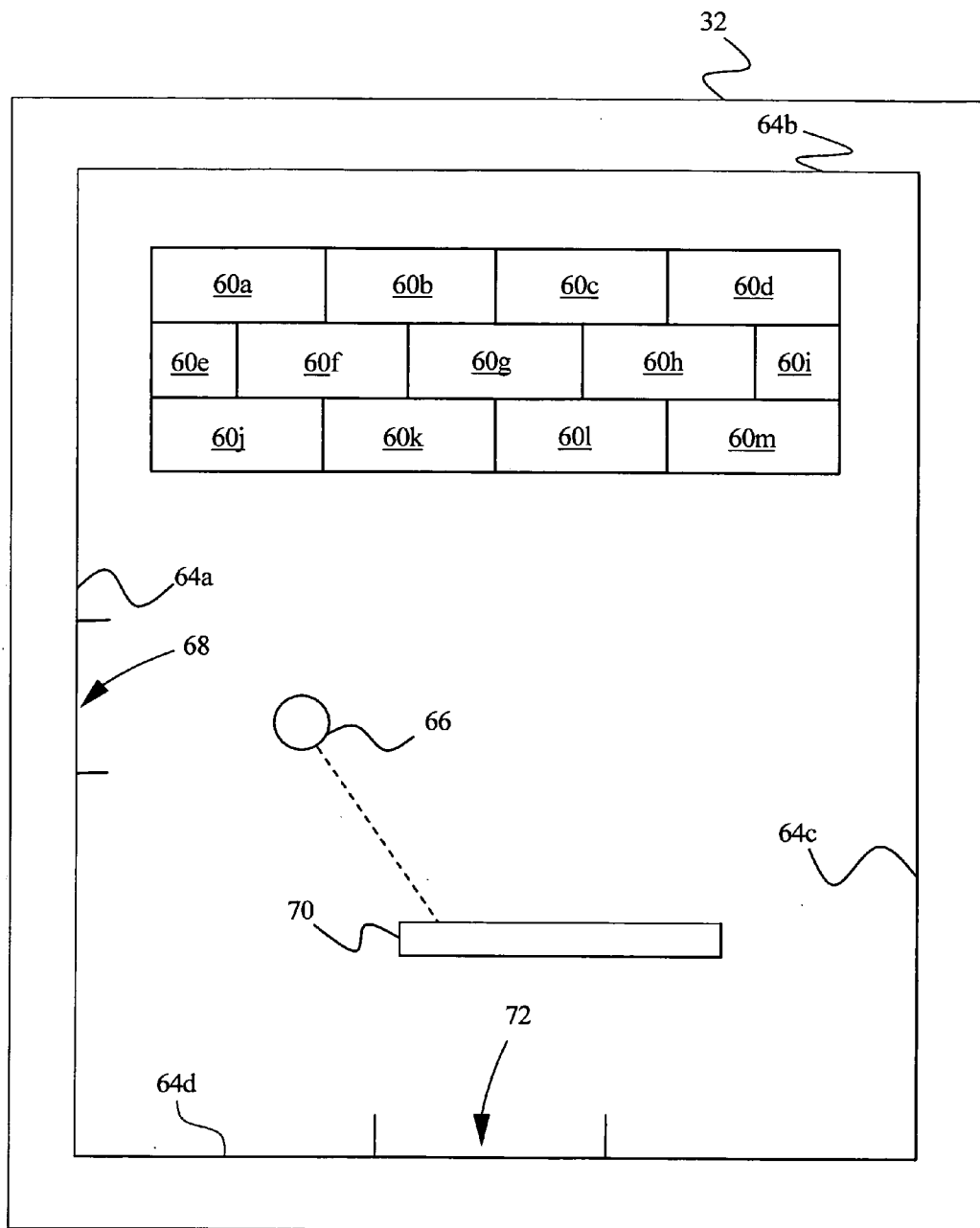


FIG. 7

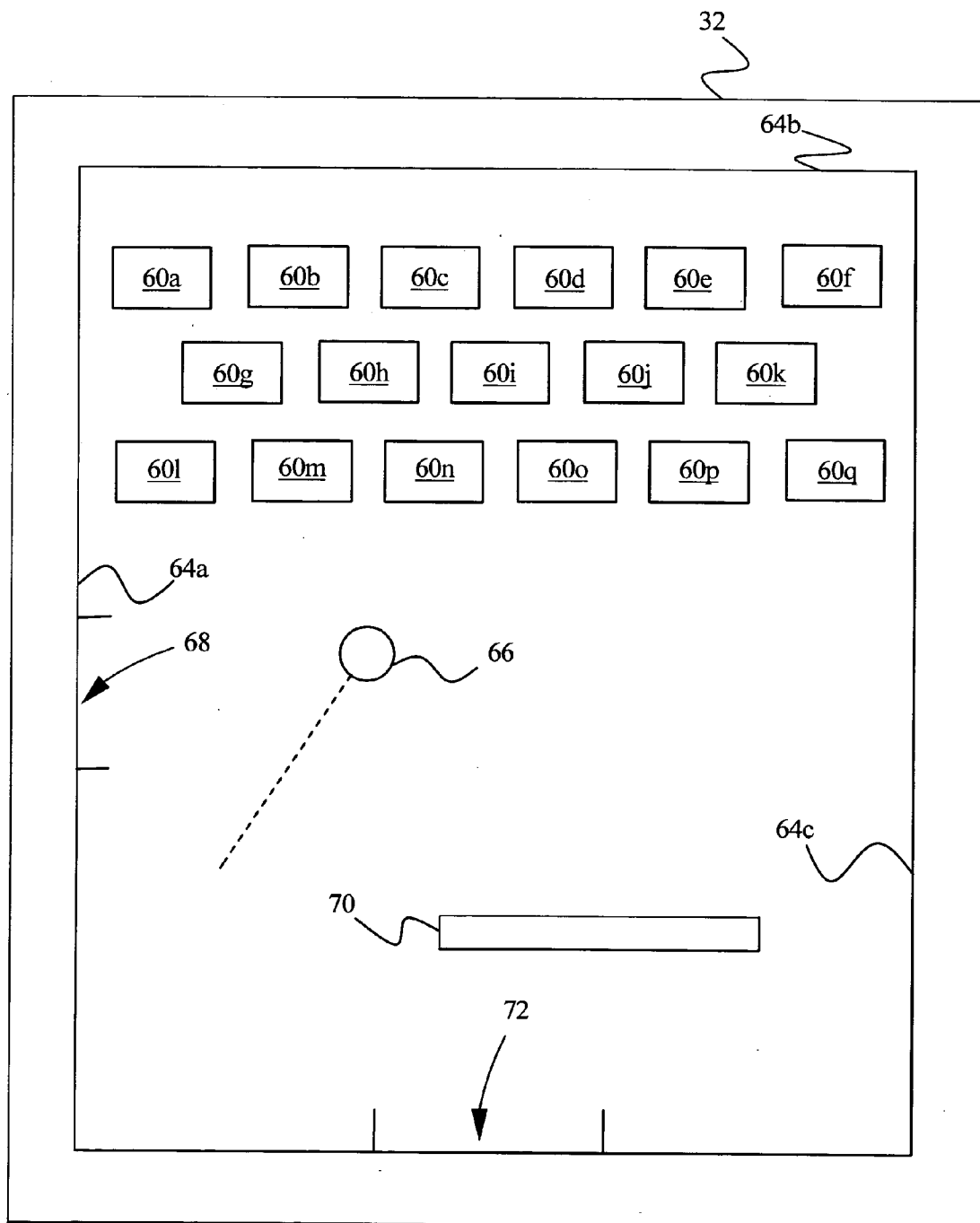


FIG. 8A

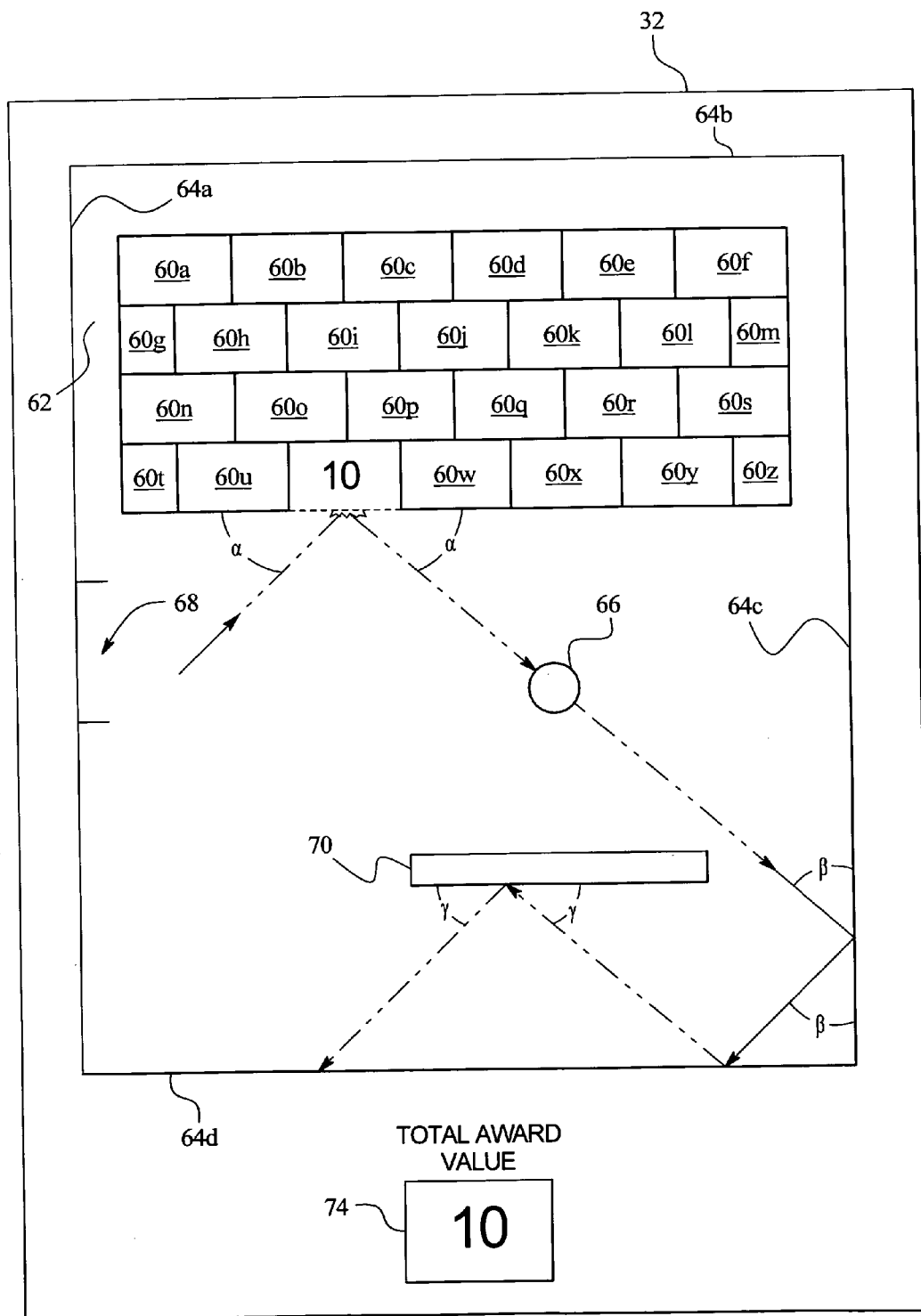


FIG. 8B

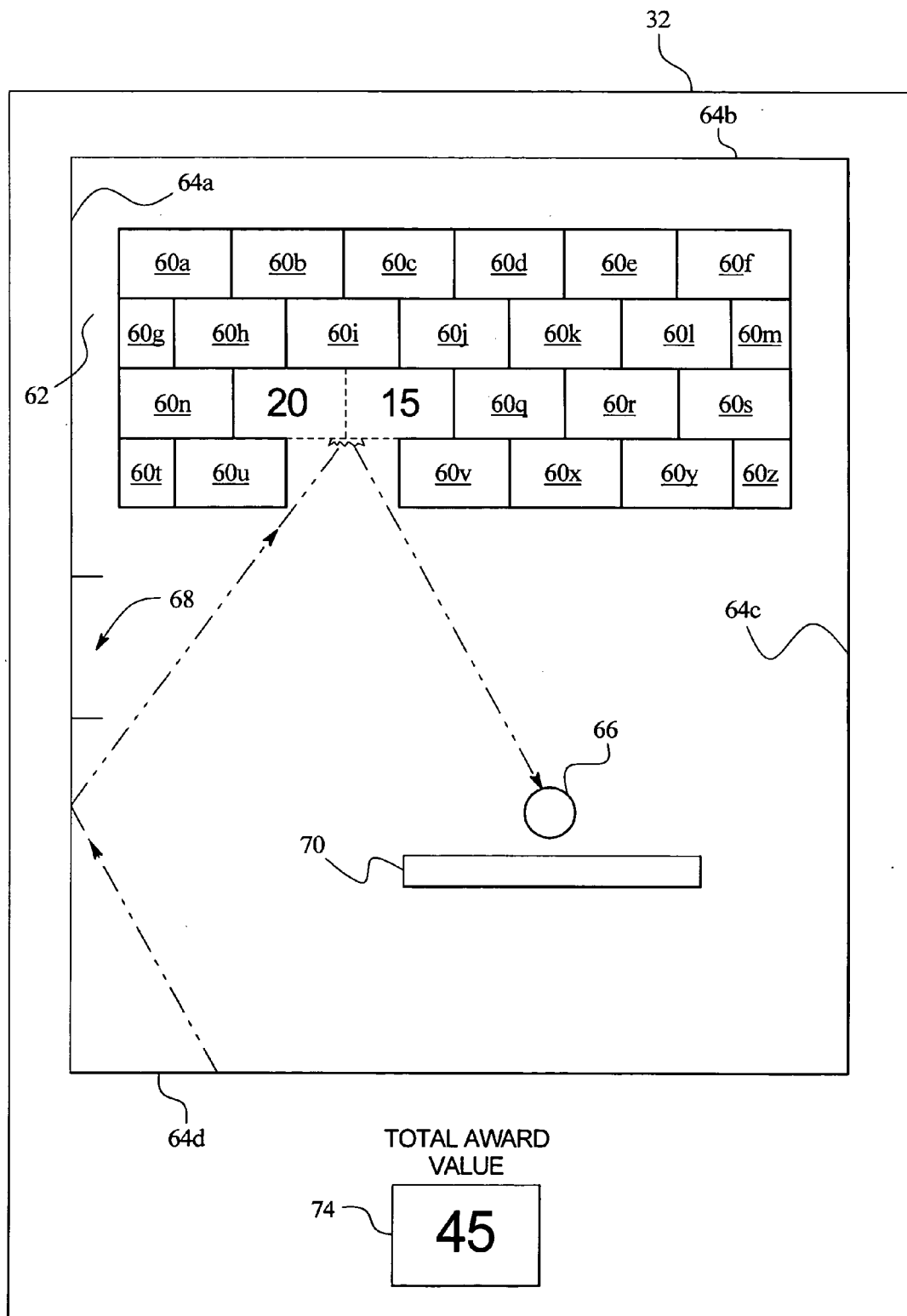


FIG. 8C

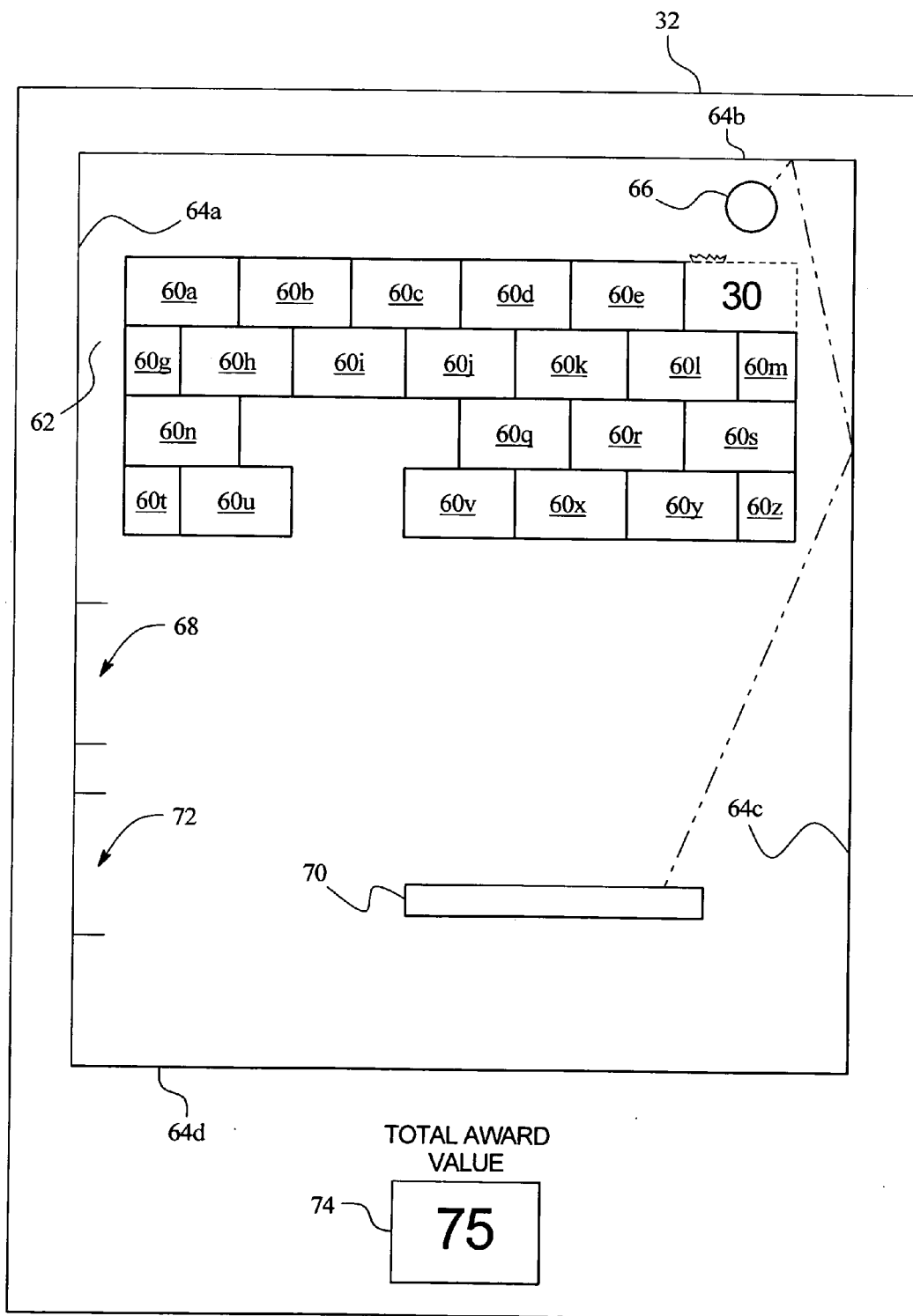


FIG. 8D

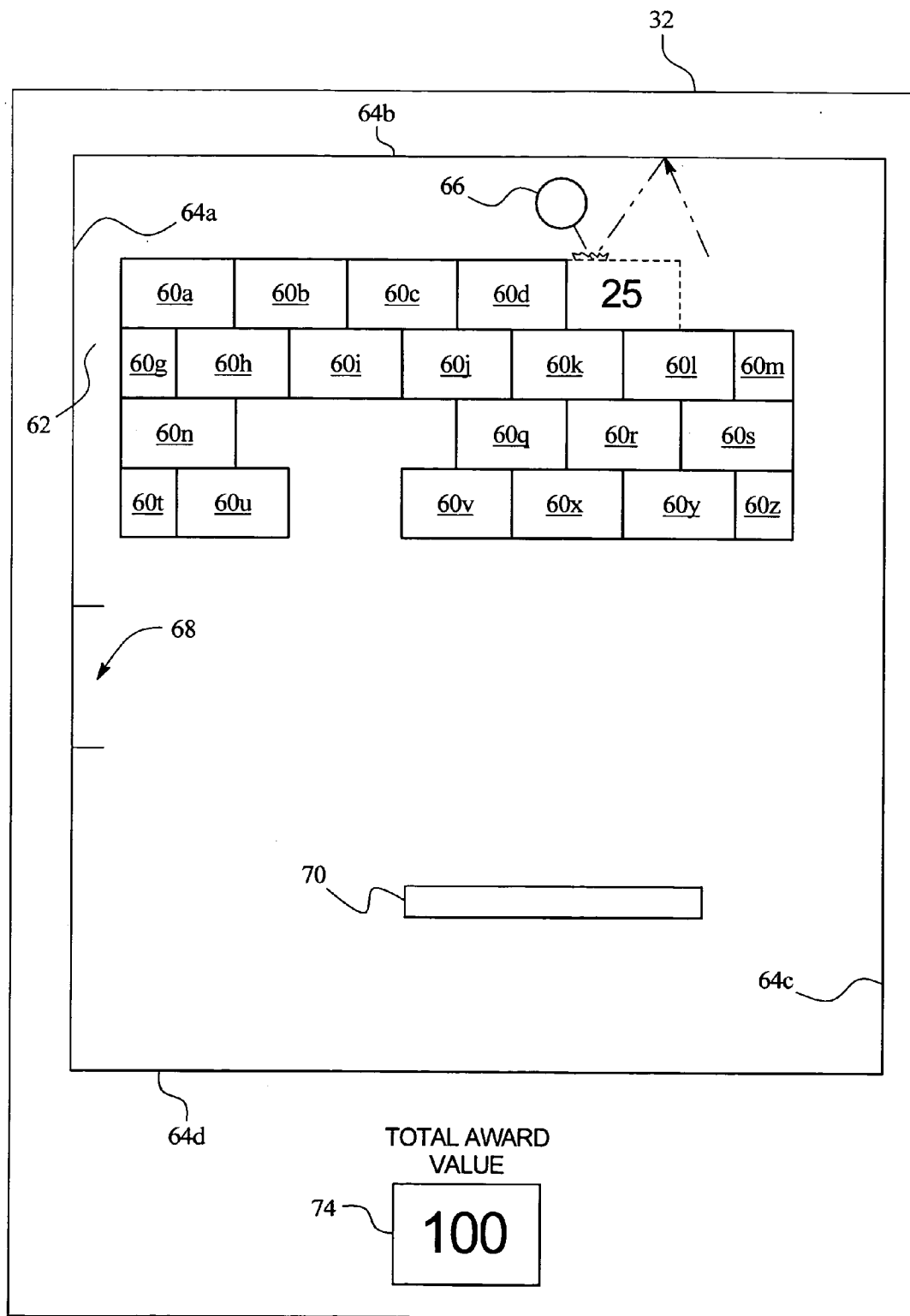


FIG. 8E

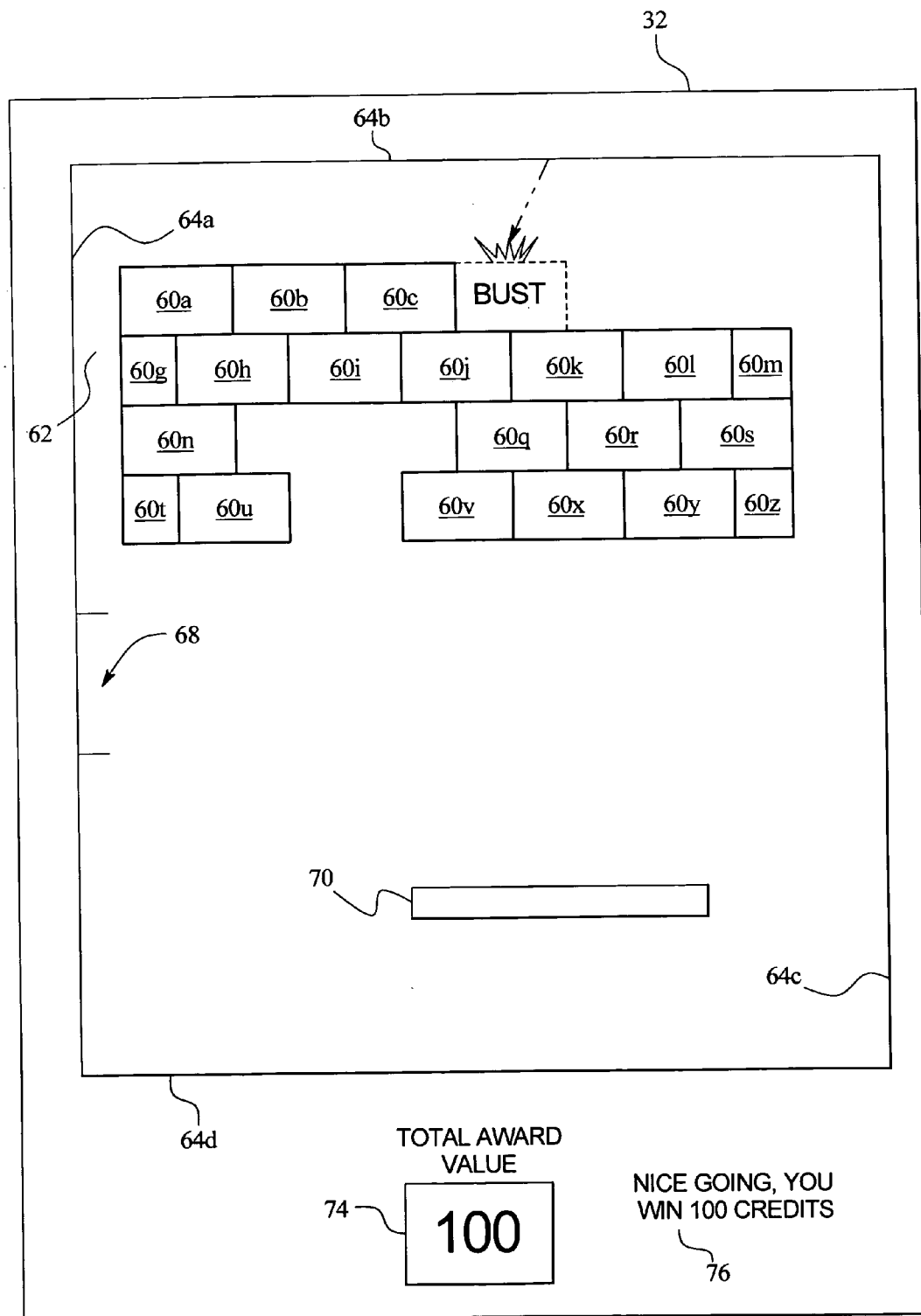


FIG. 9A

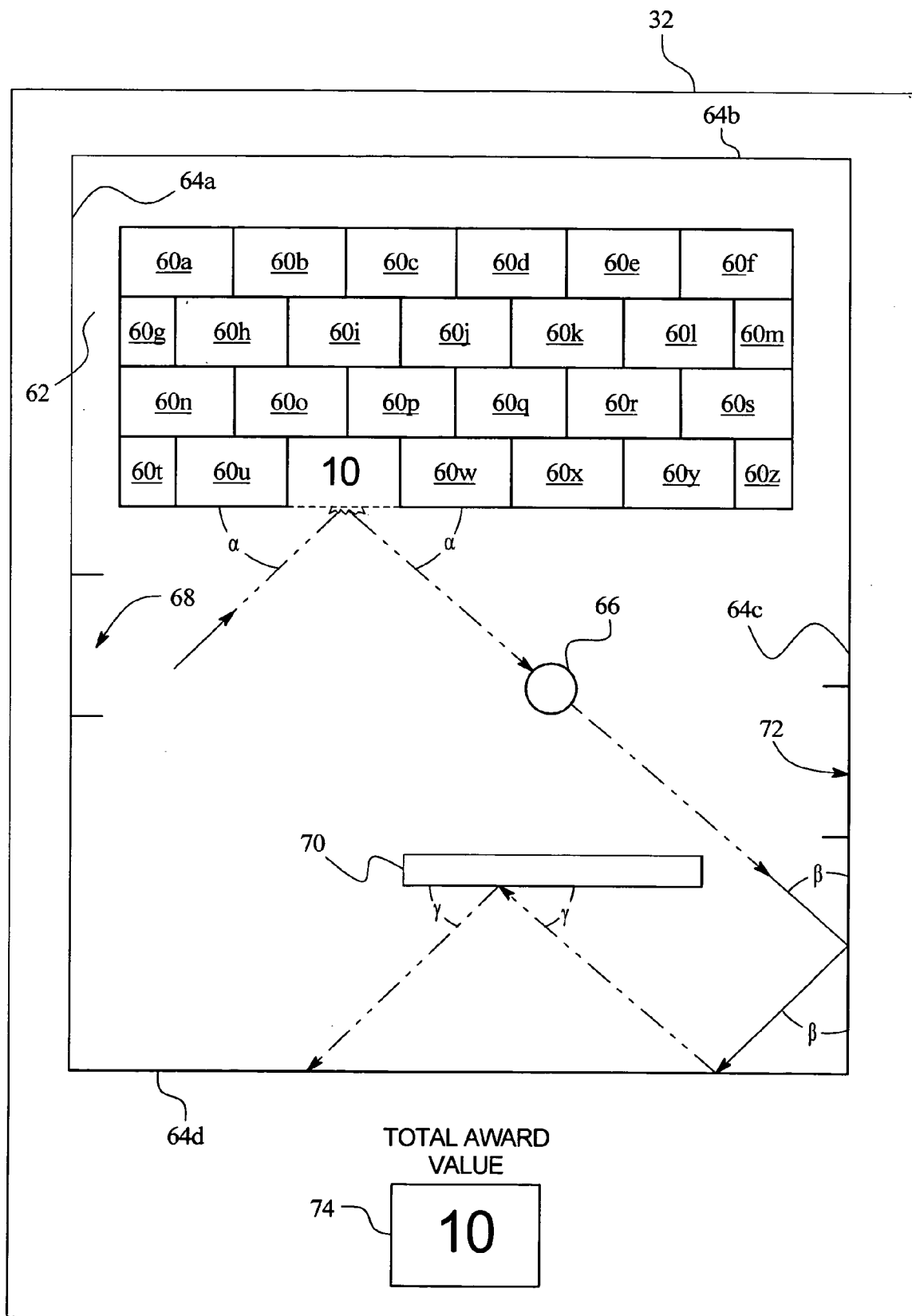


FIG. 9B

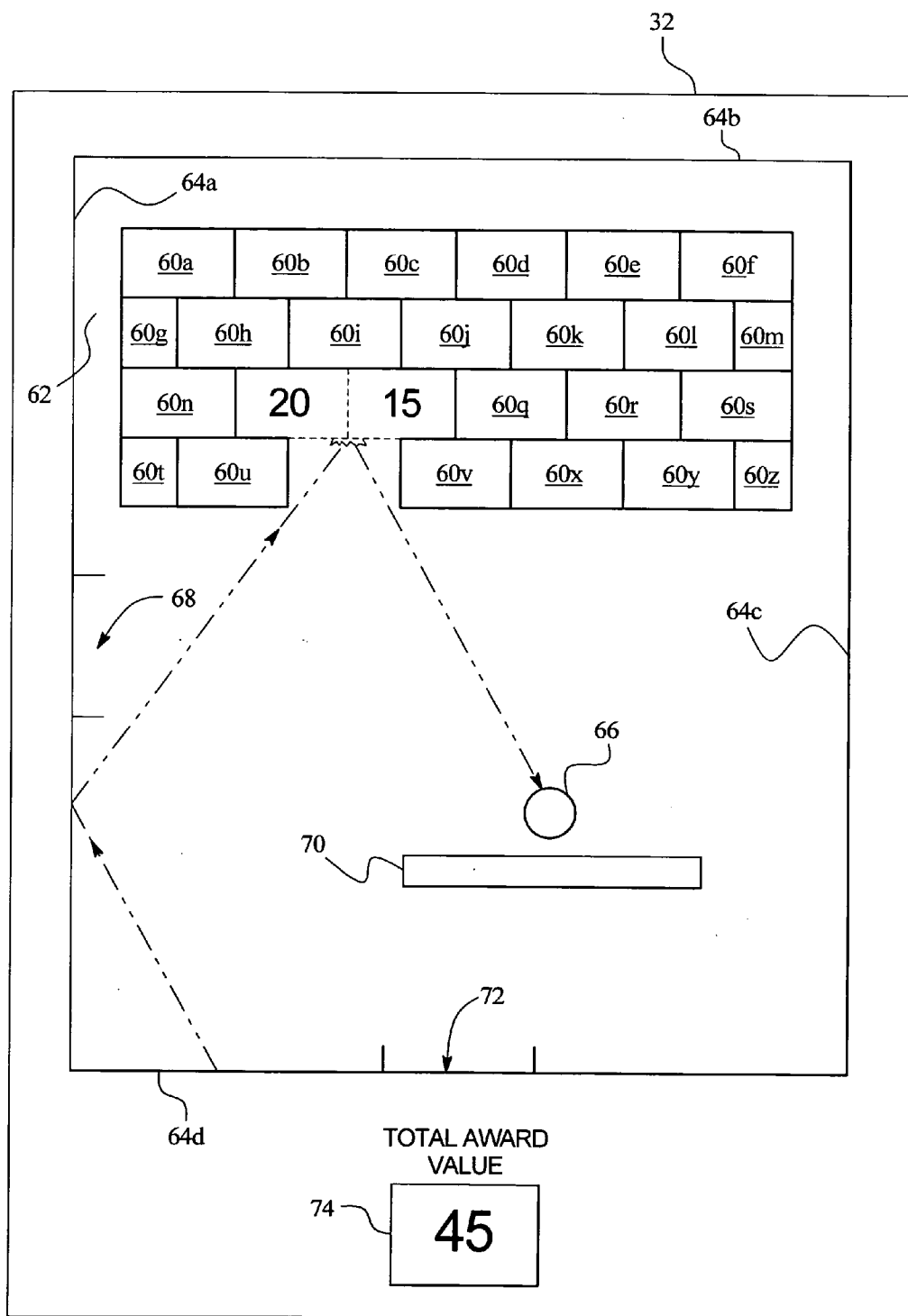


FIG. 9C

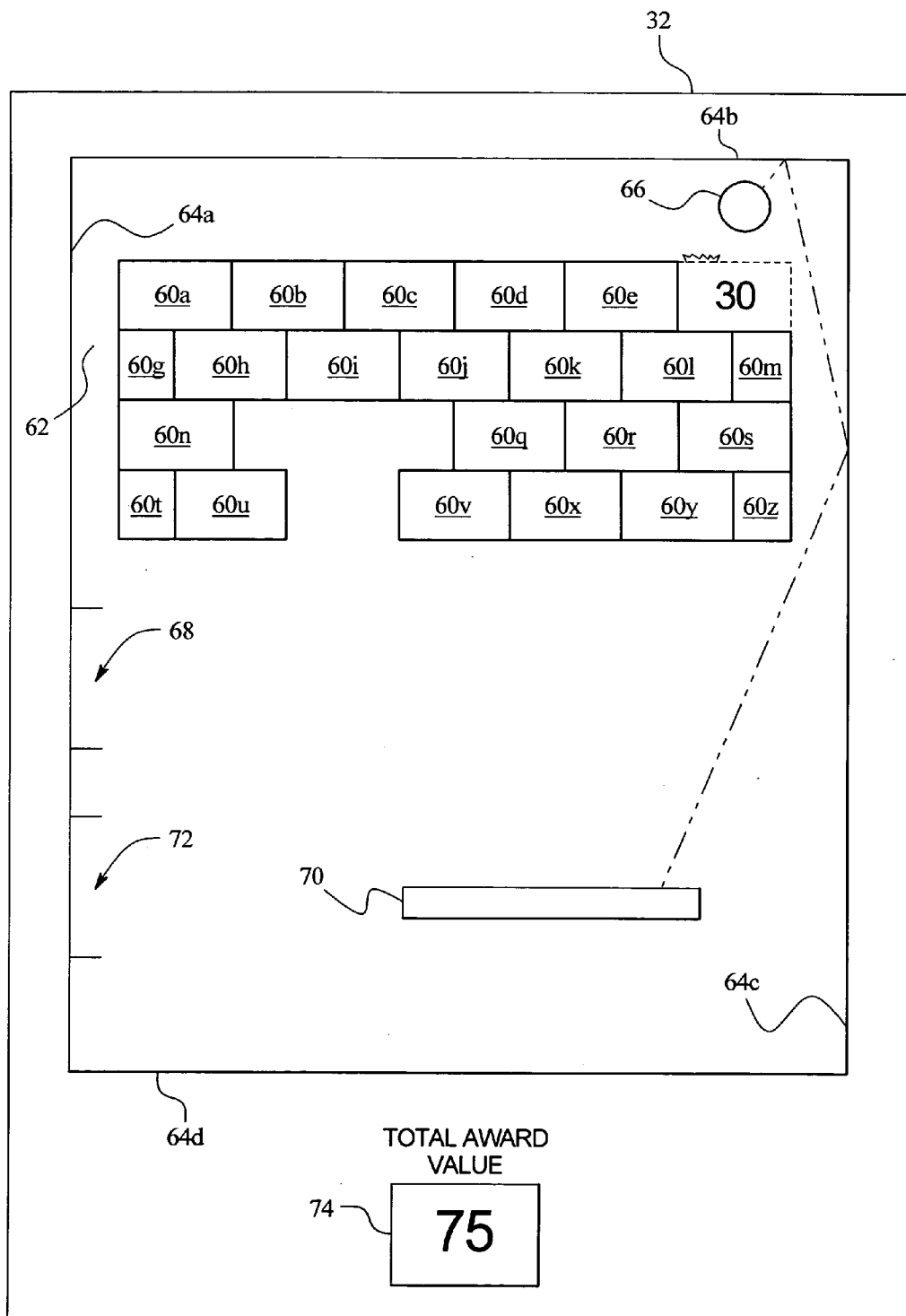


FIG. 9D

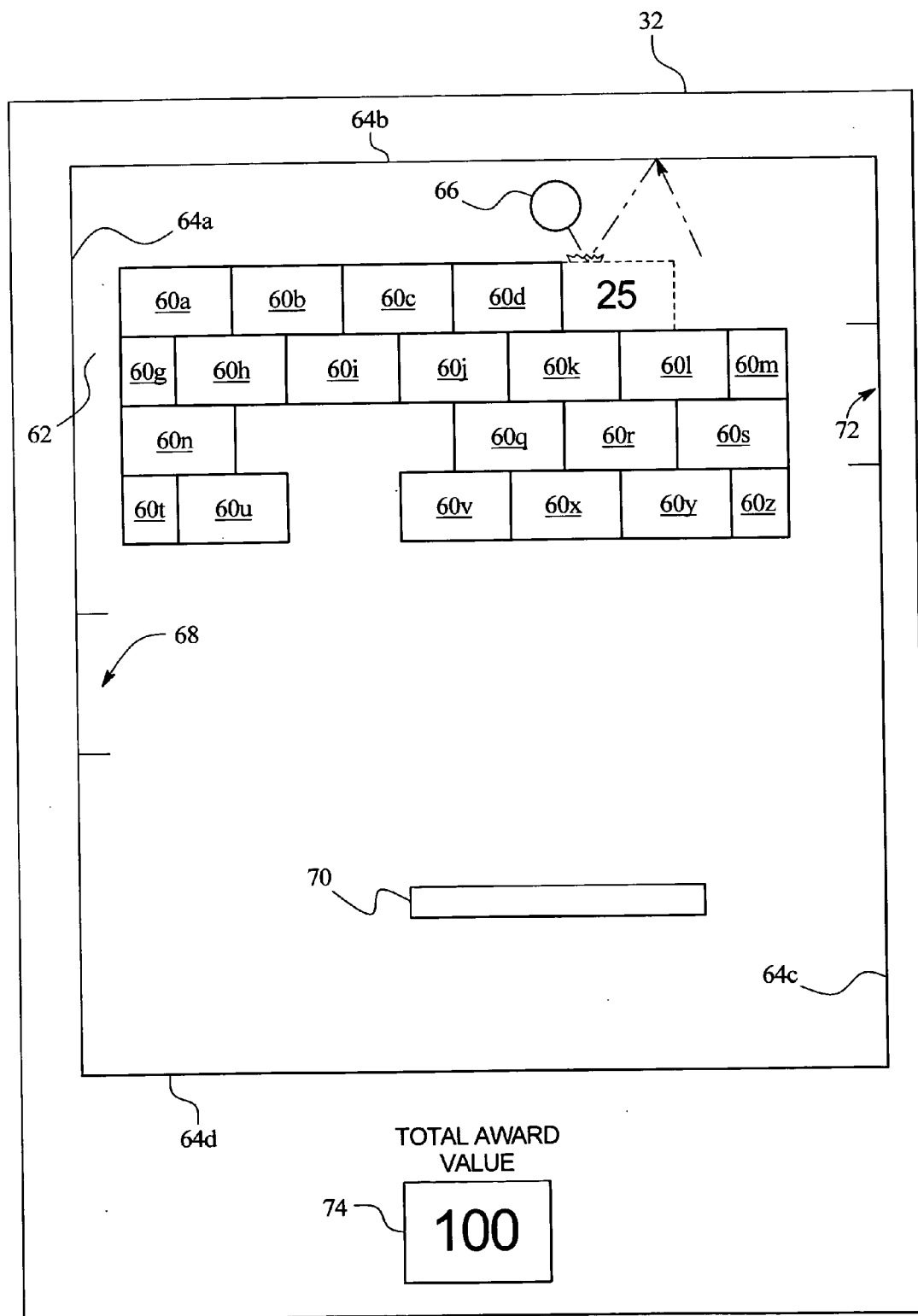


FIG. 9E

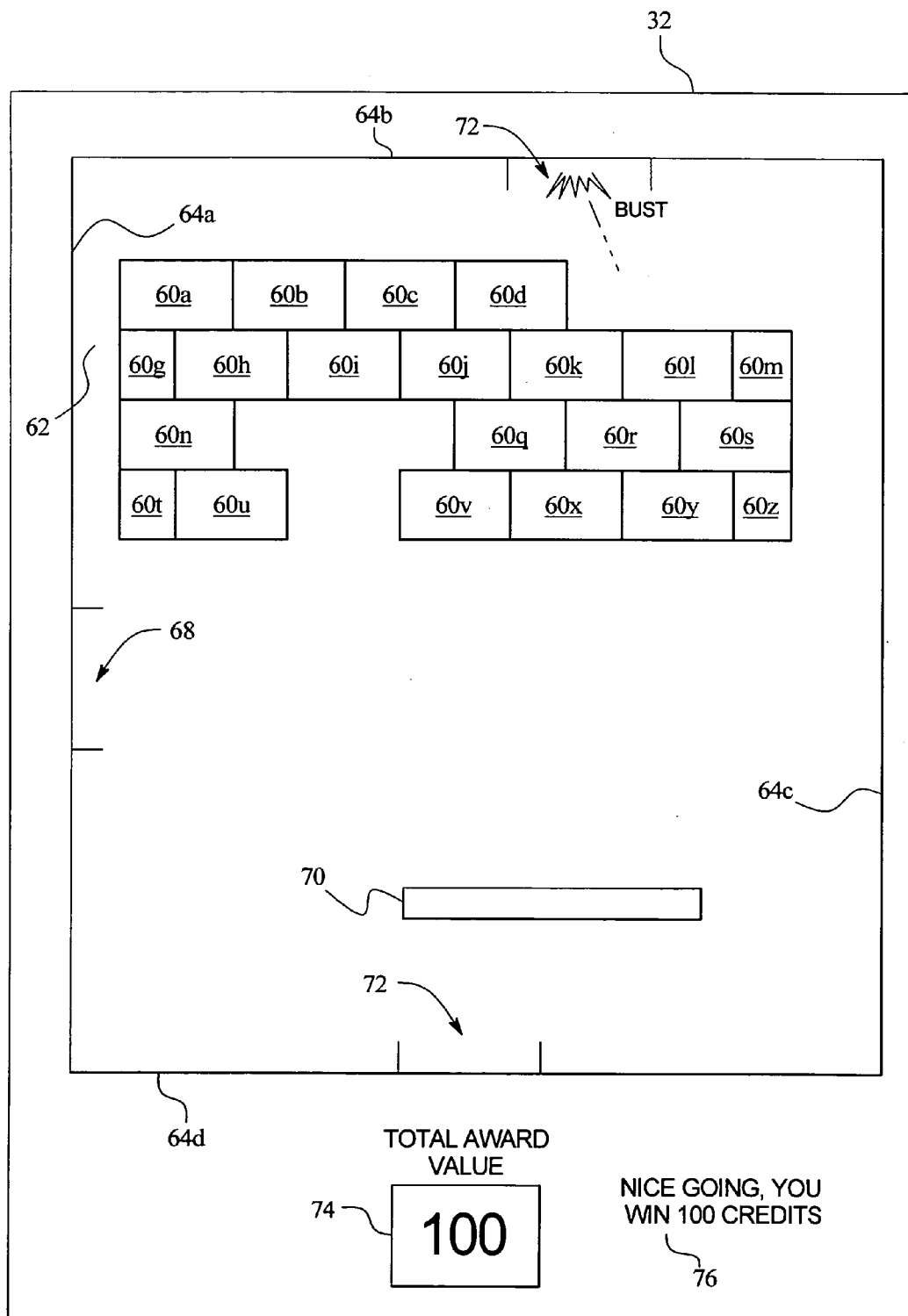


FIG. 10A

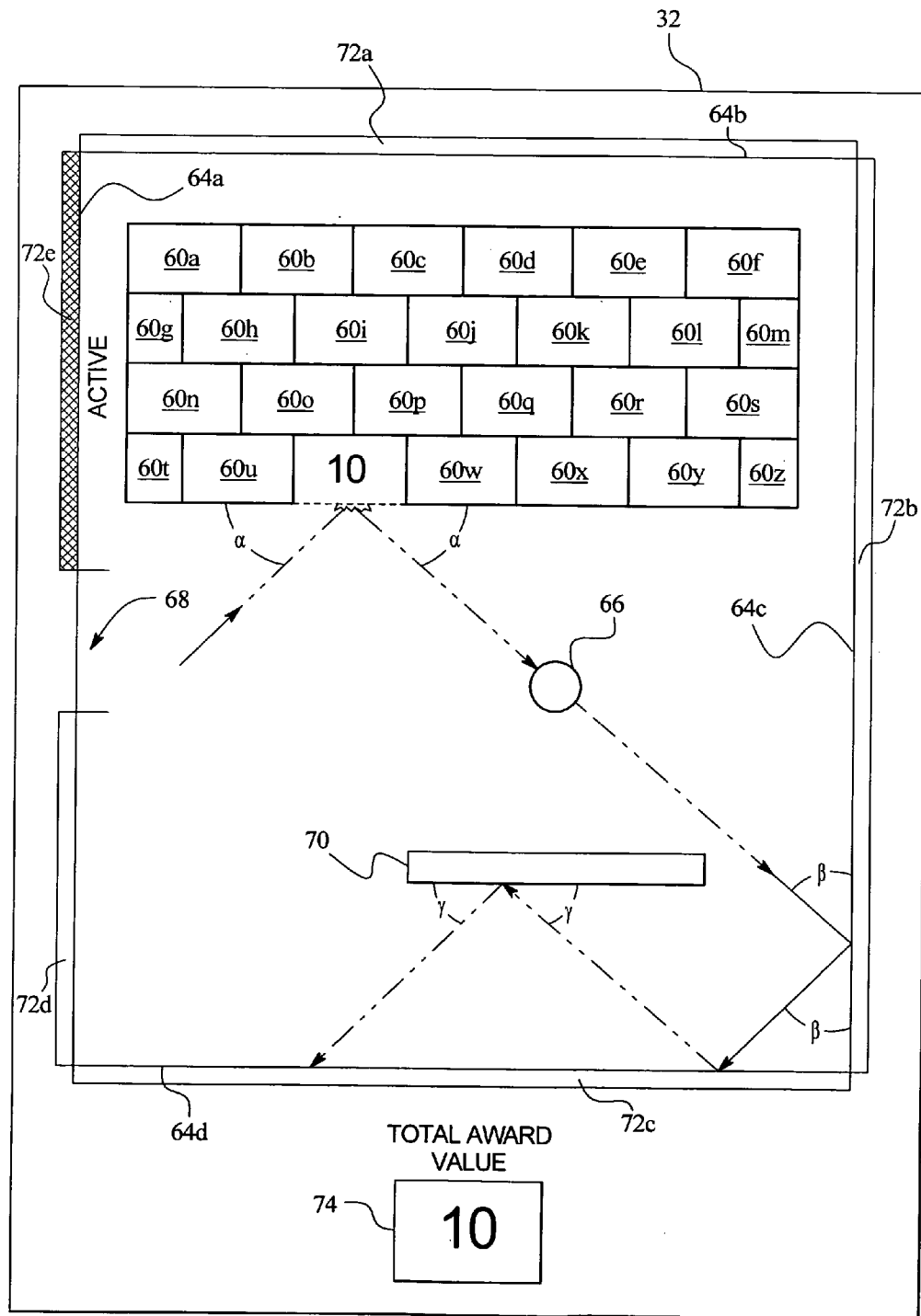


FIG. 10B

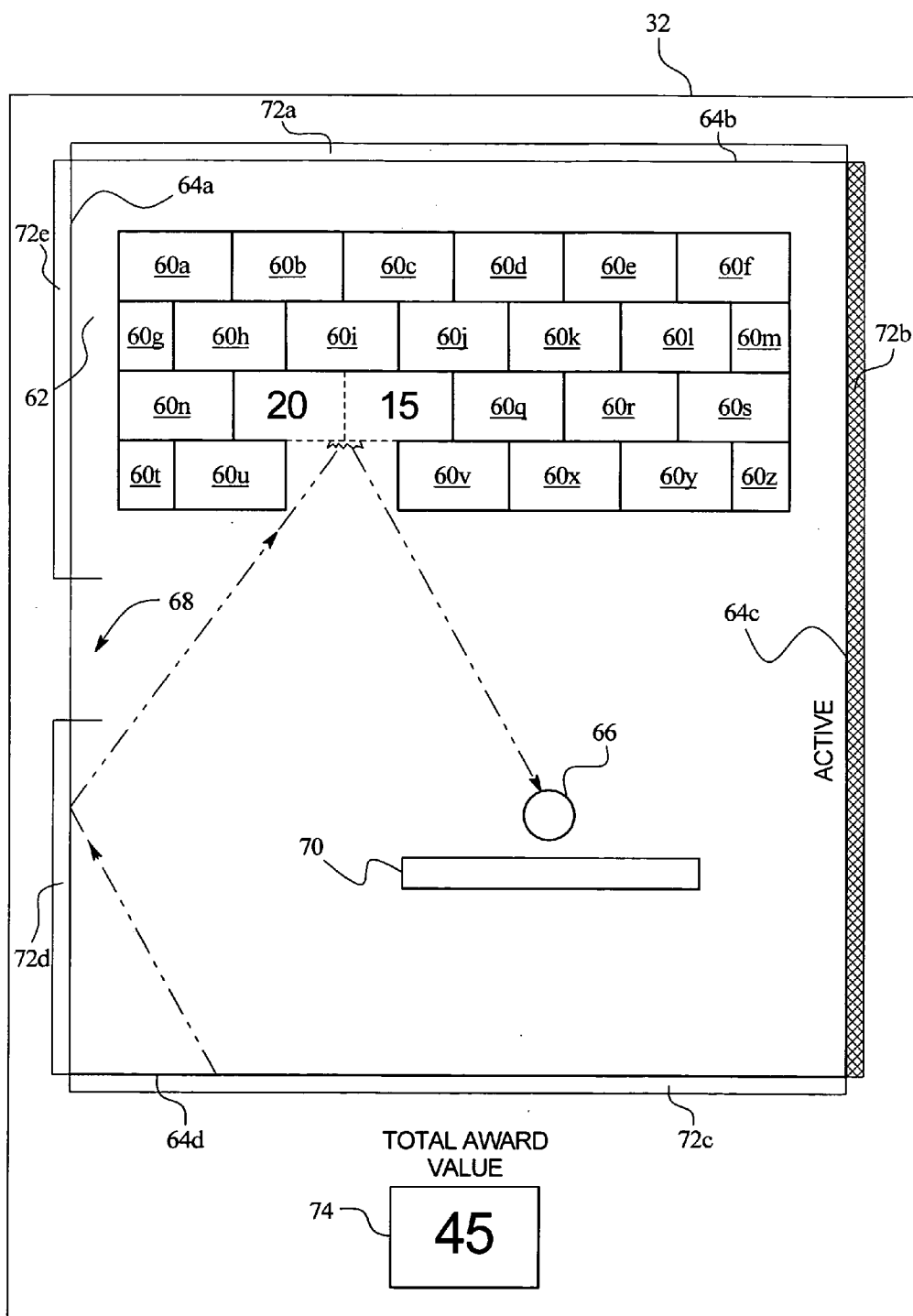


FIG. 10C

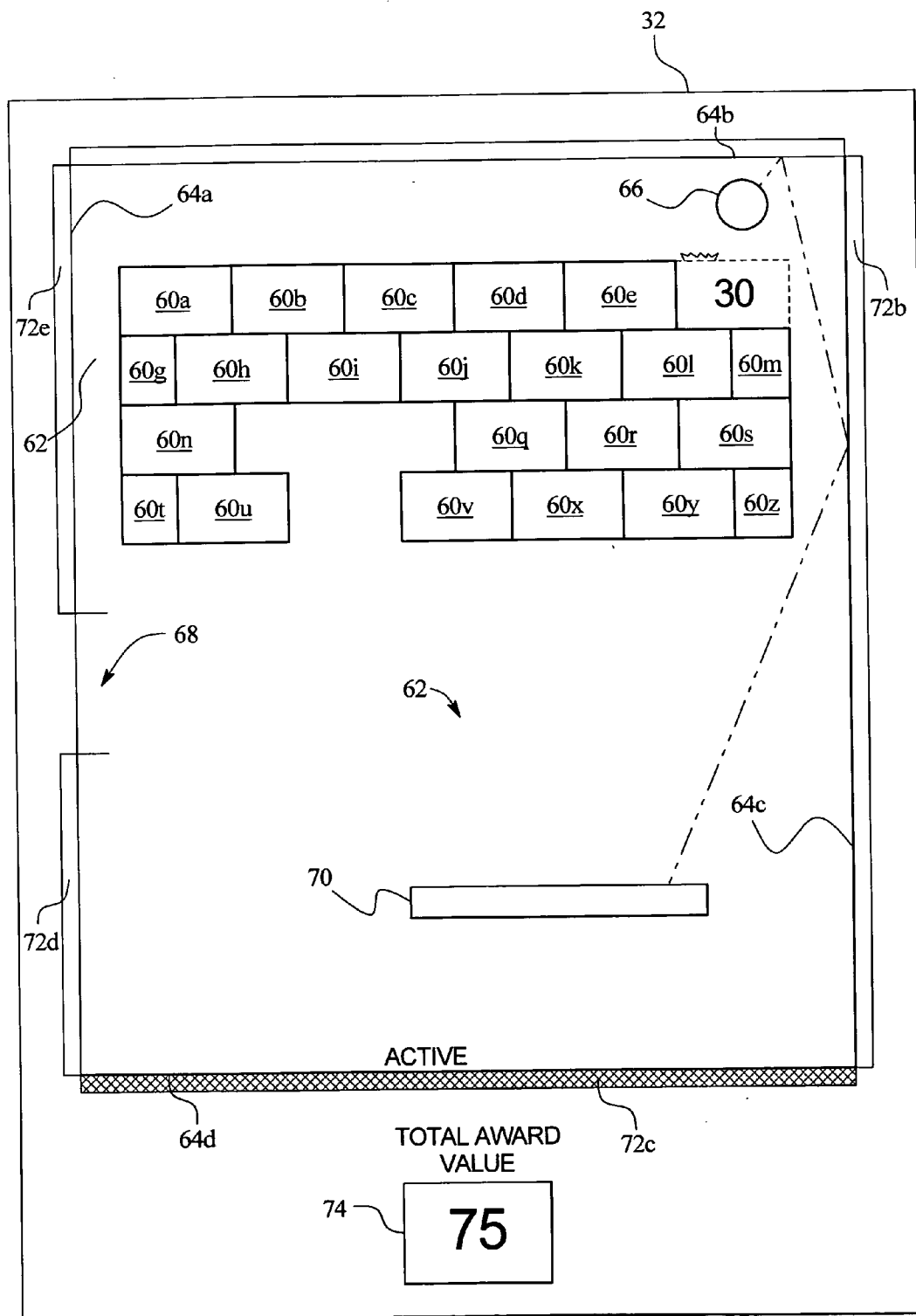


FIG. 10D

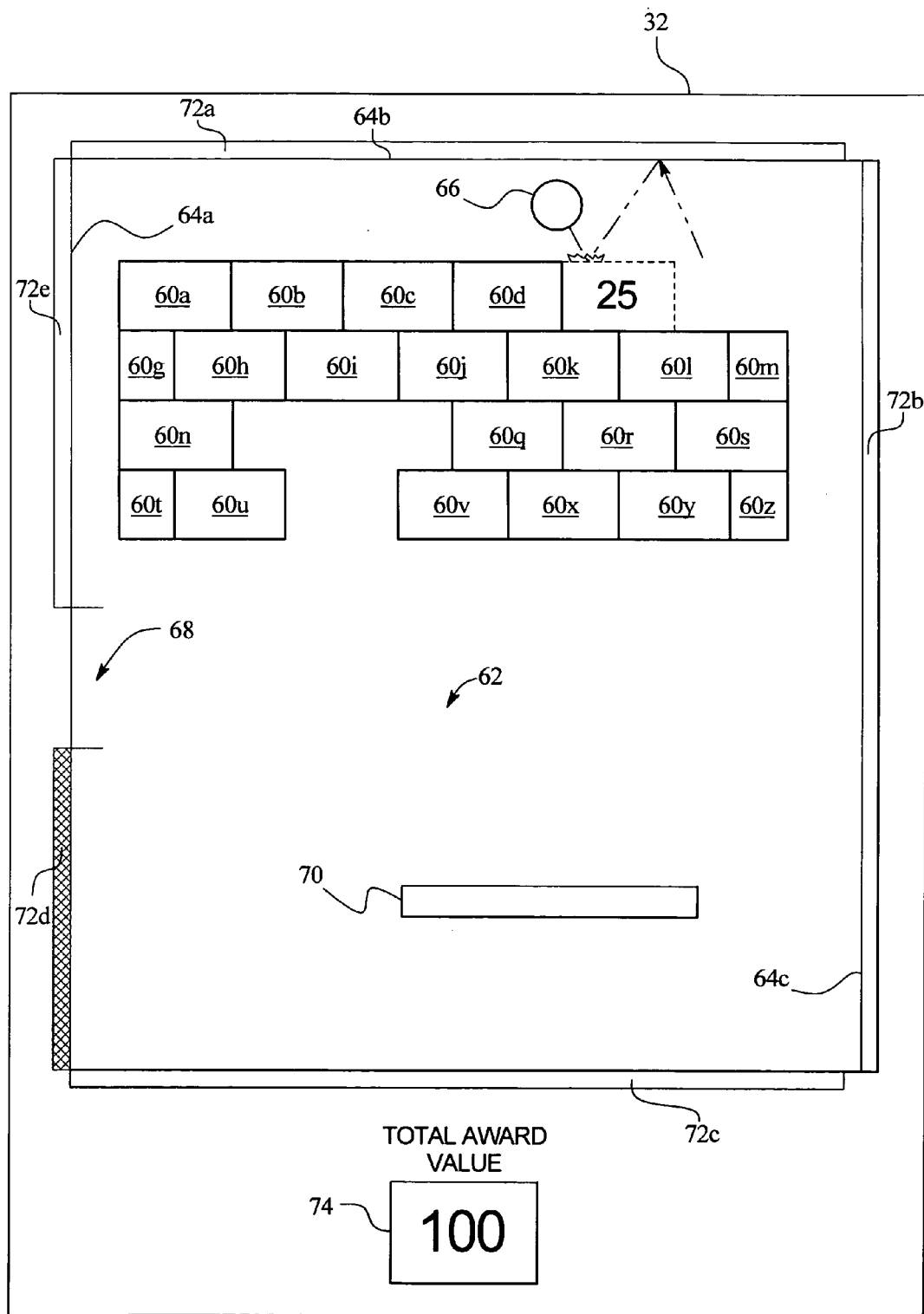


FIG. 10E

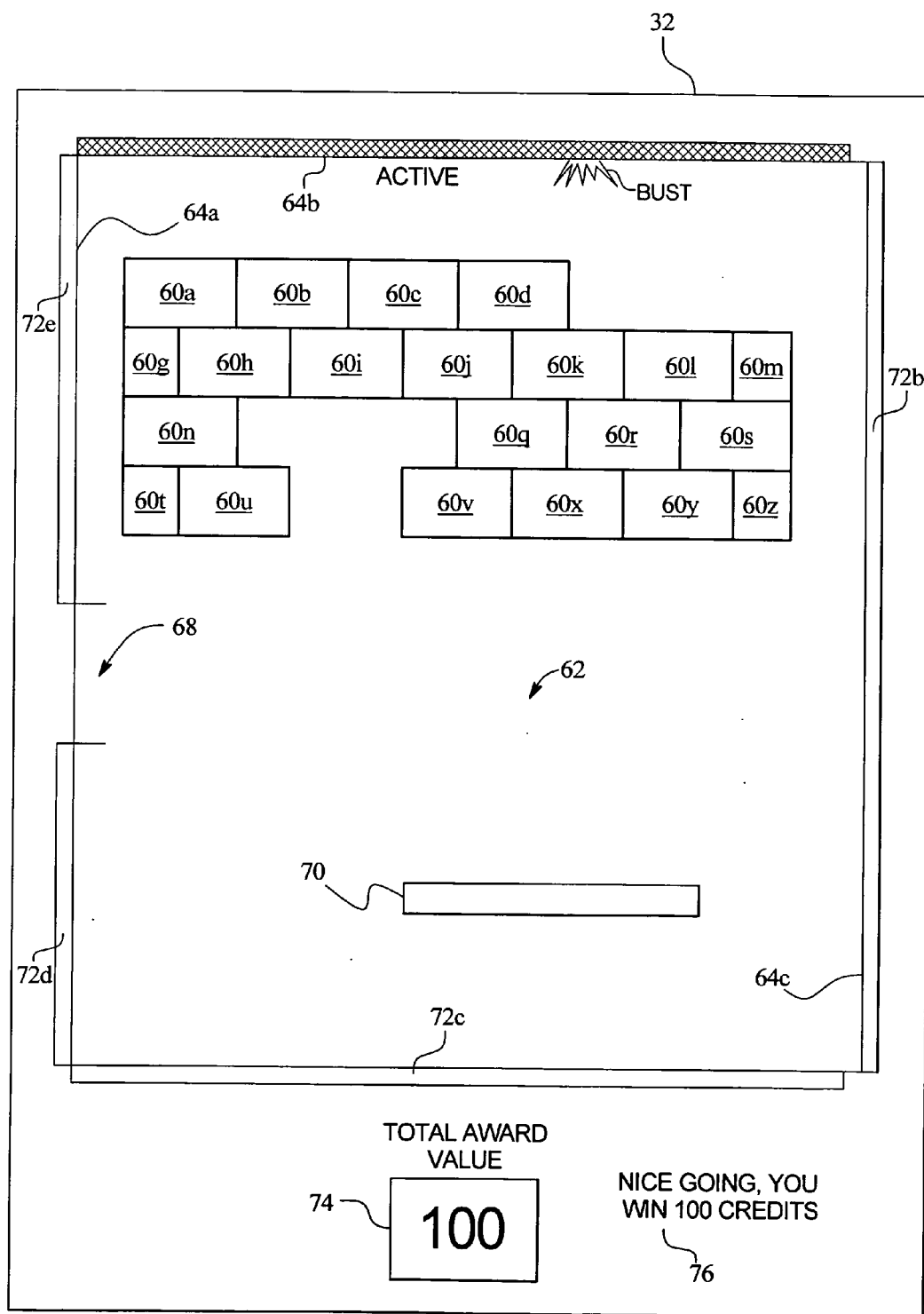


FIG. 11A

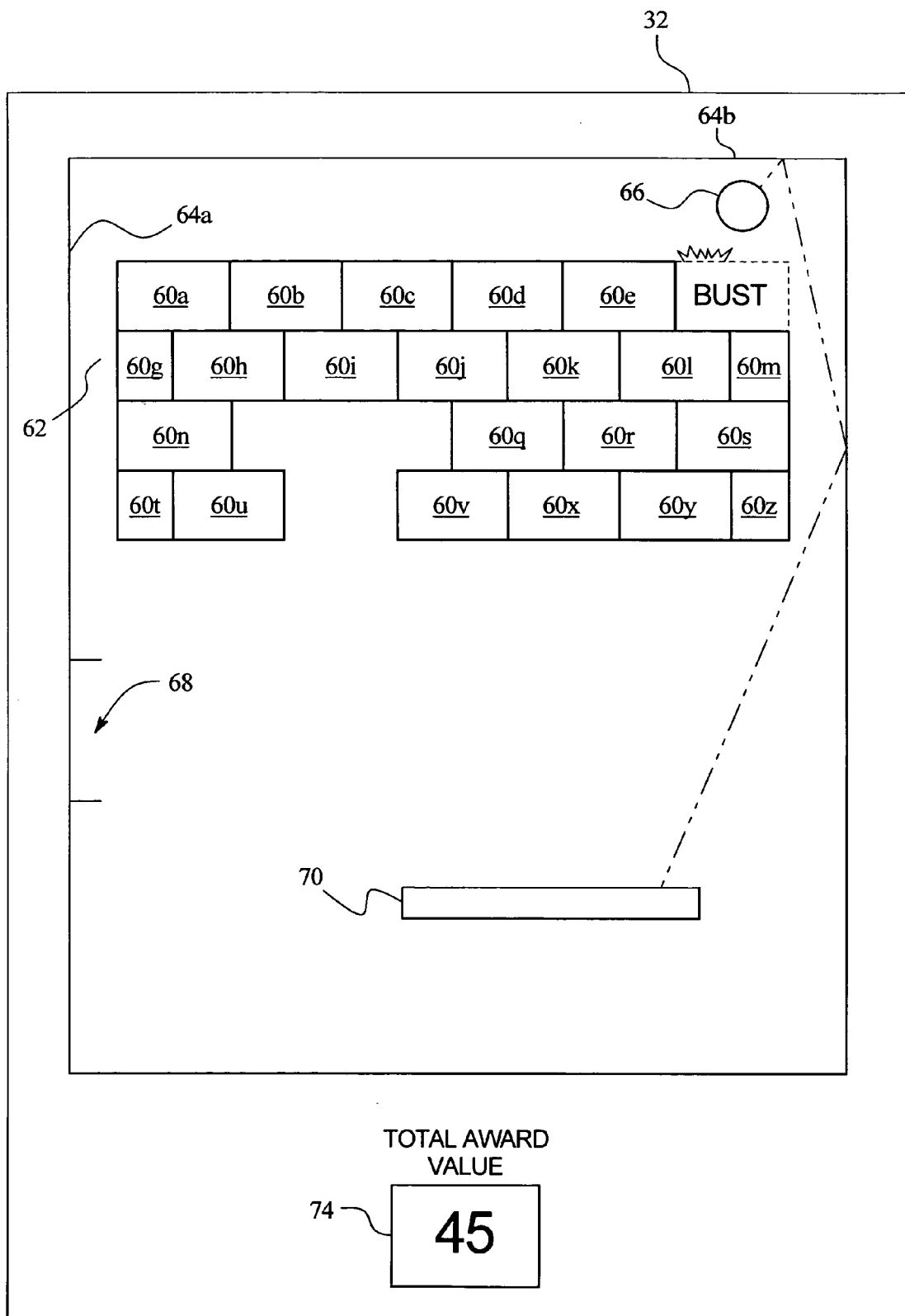


FIG. 11B

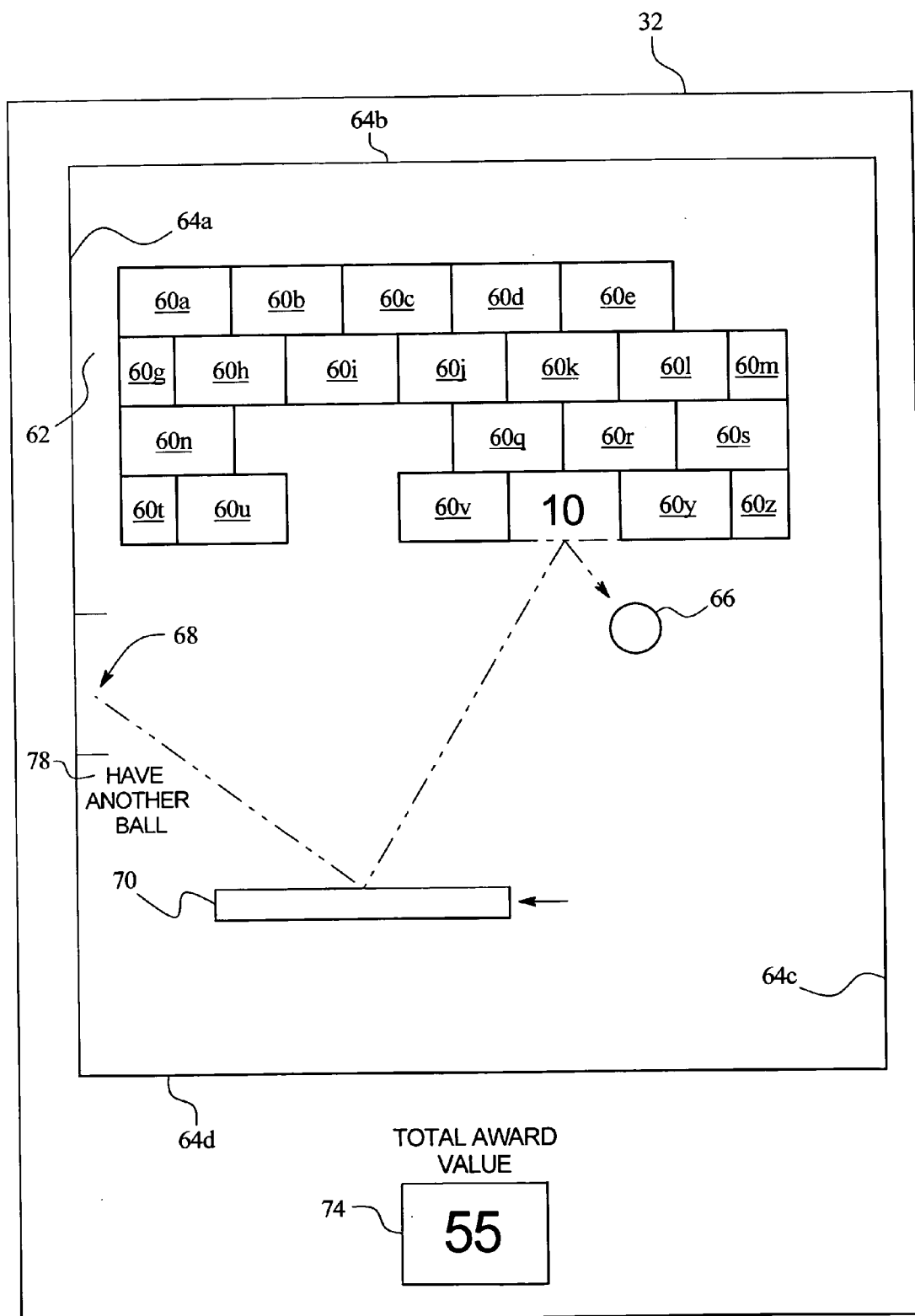


FIG. 11C

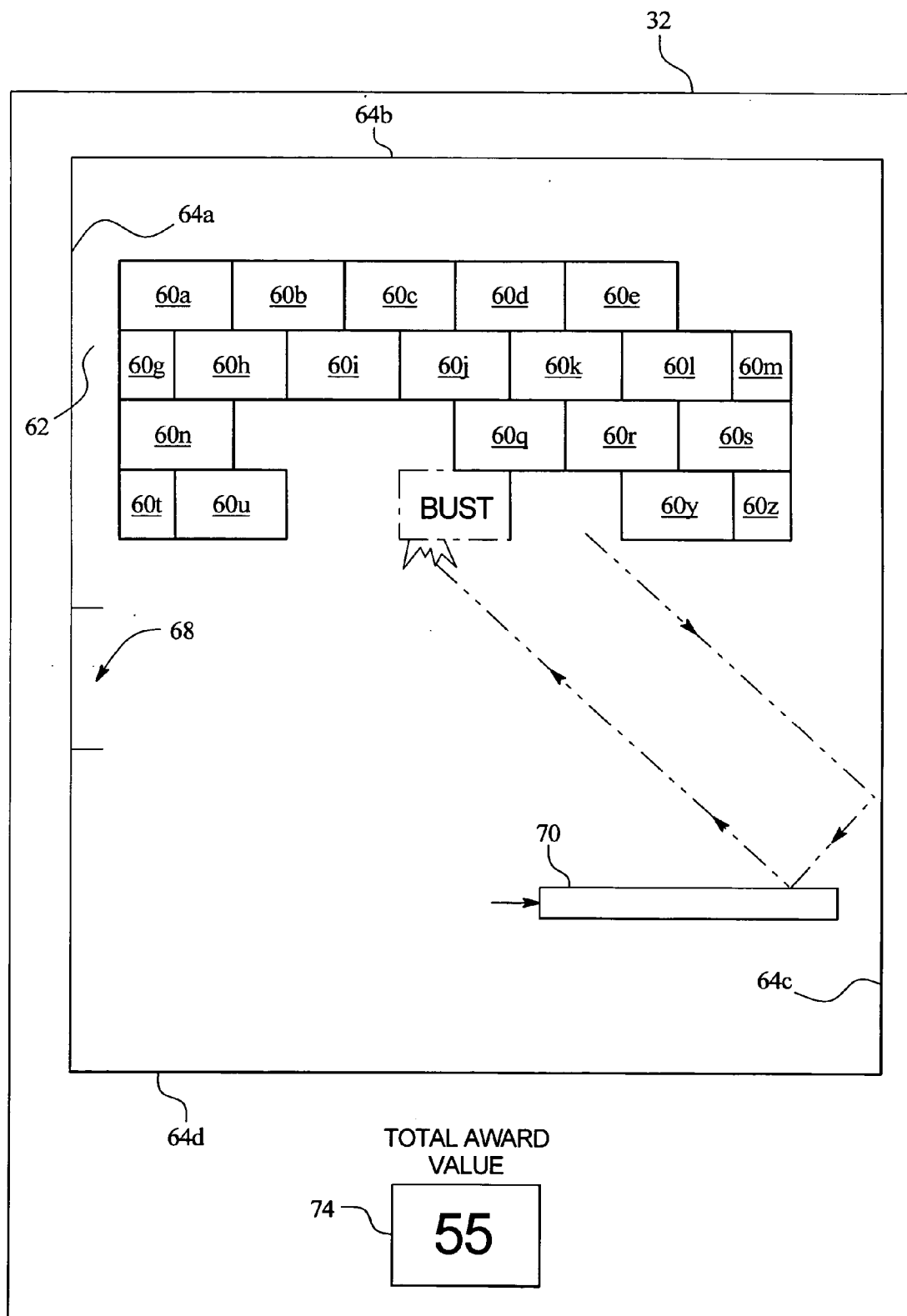


FIG. 11E

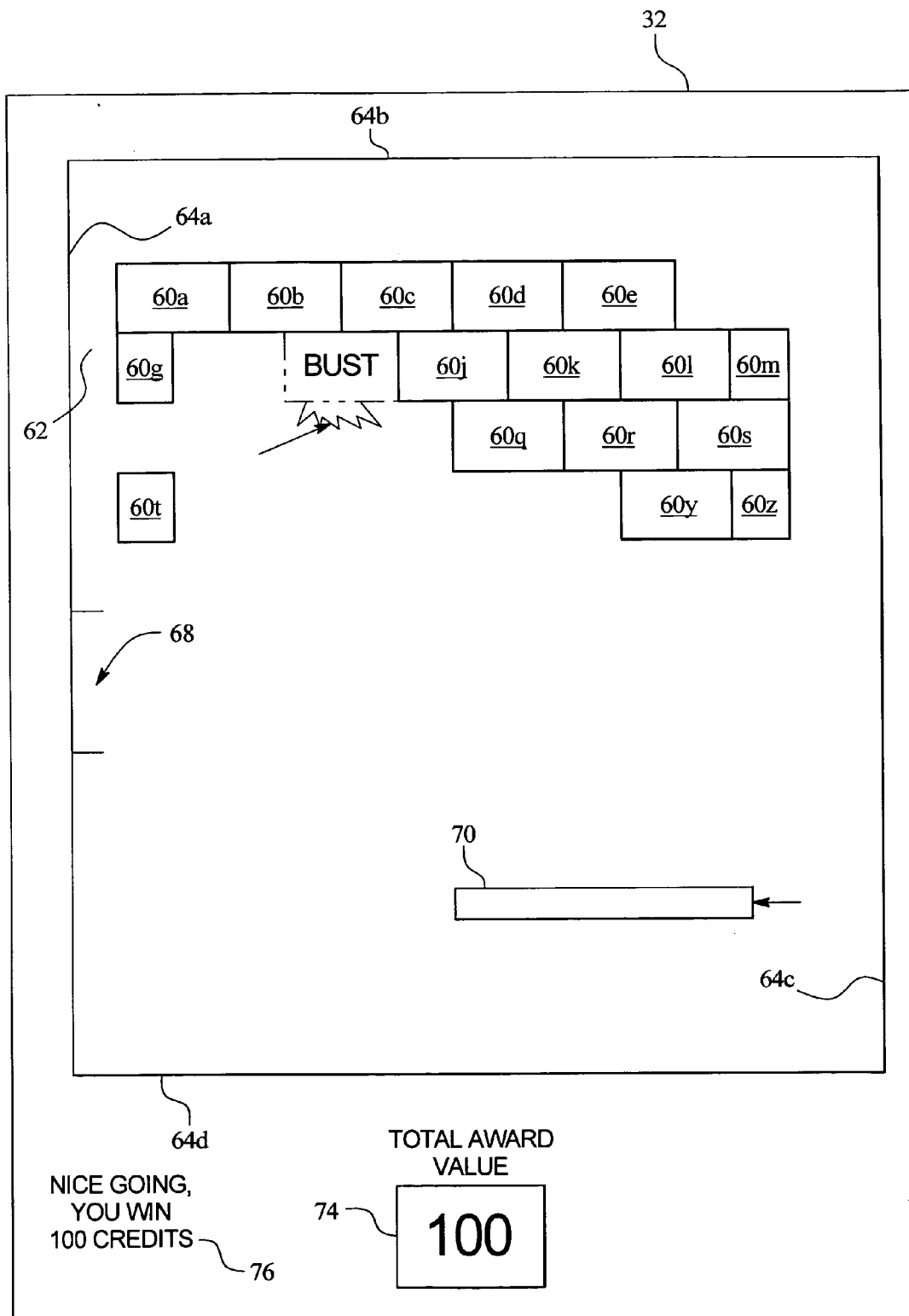


FIG. 12A

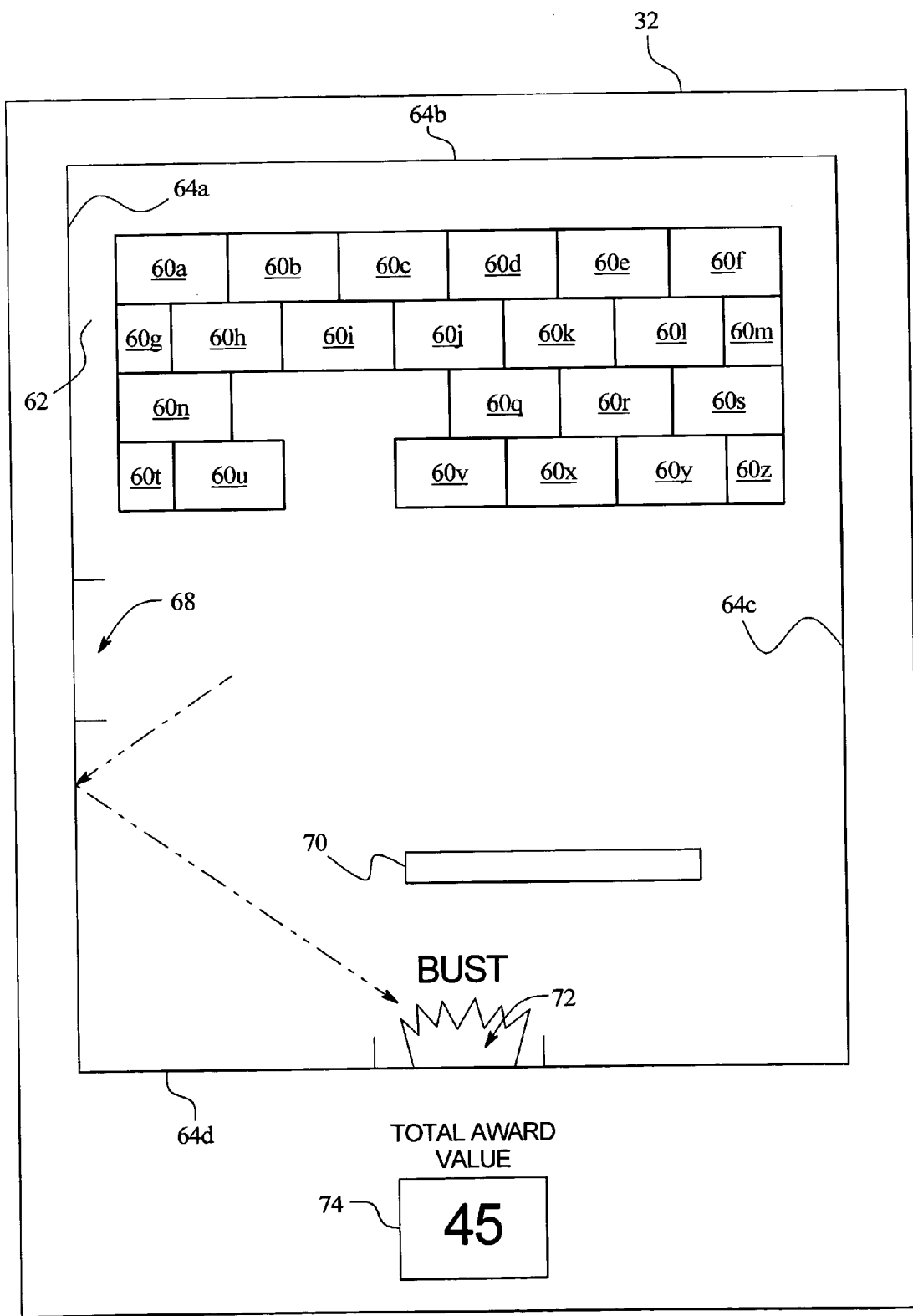


FIG. 12B

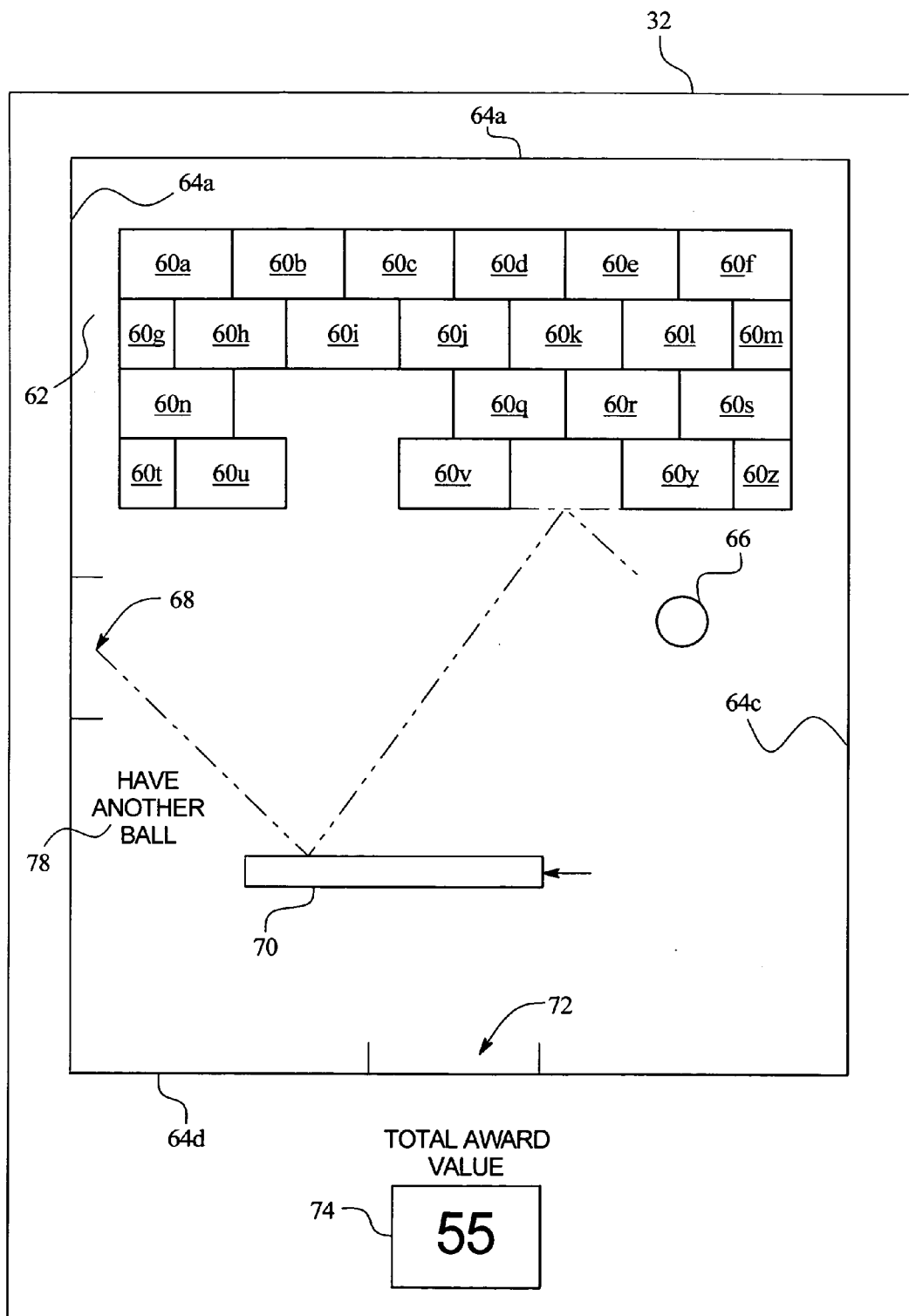


FIG. 12C

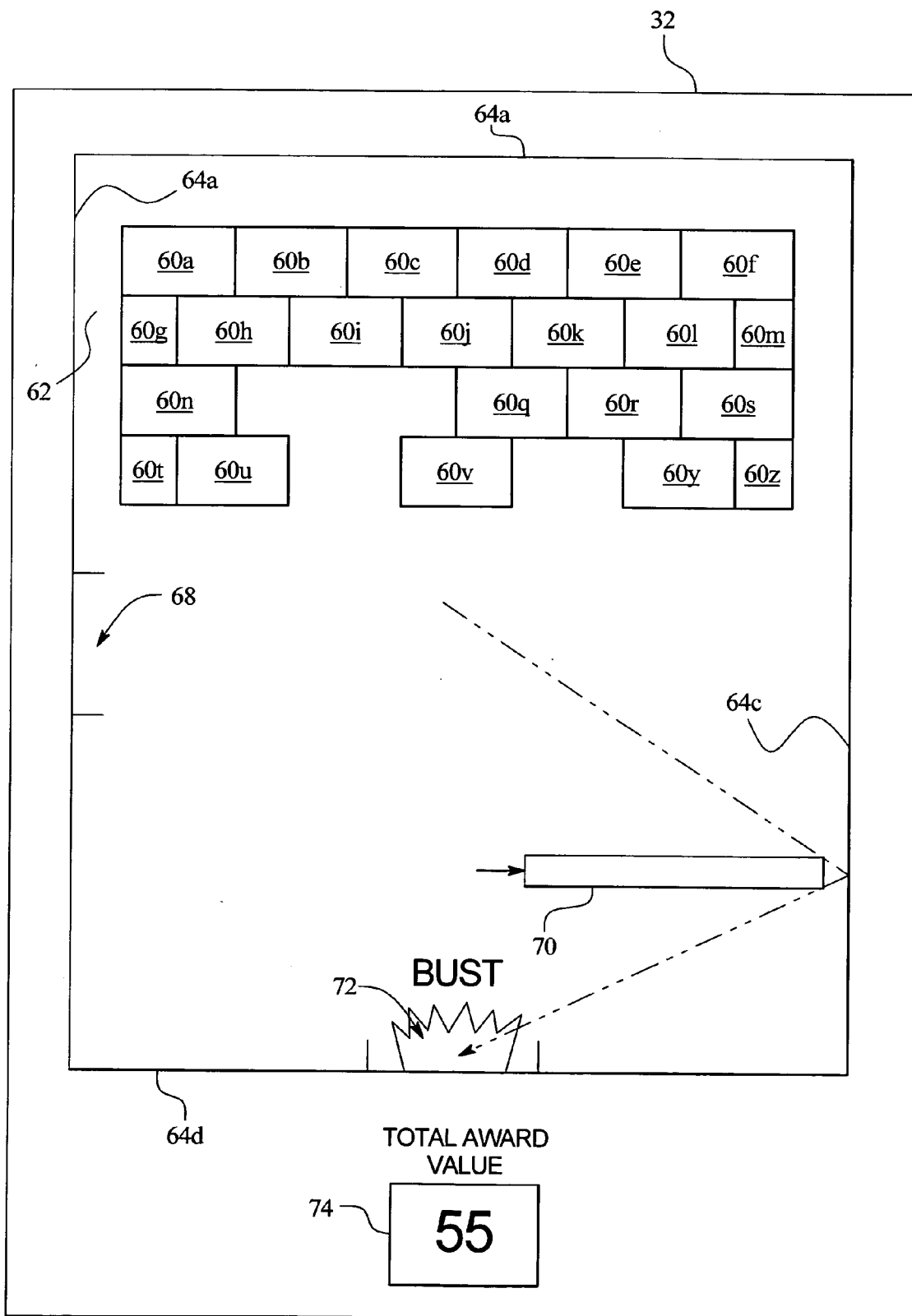


FIG. 12D

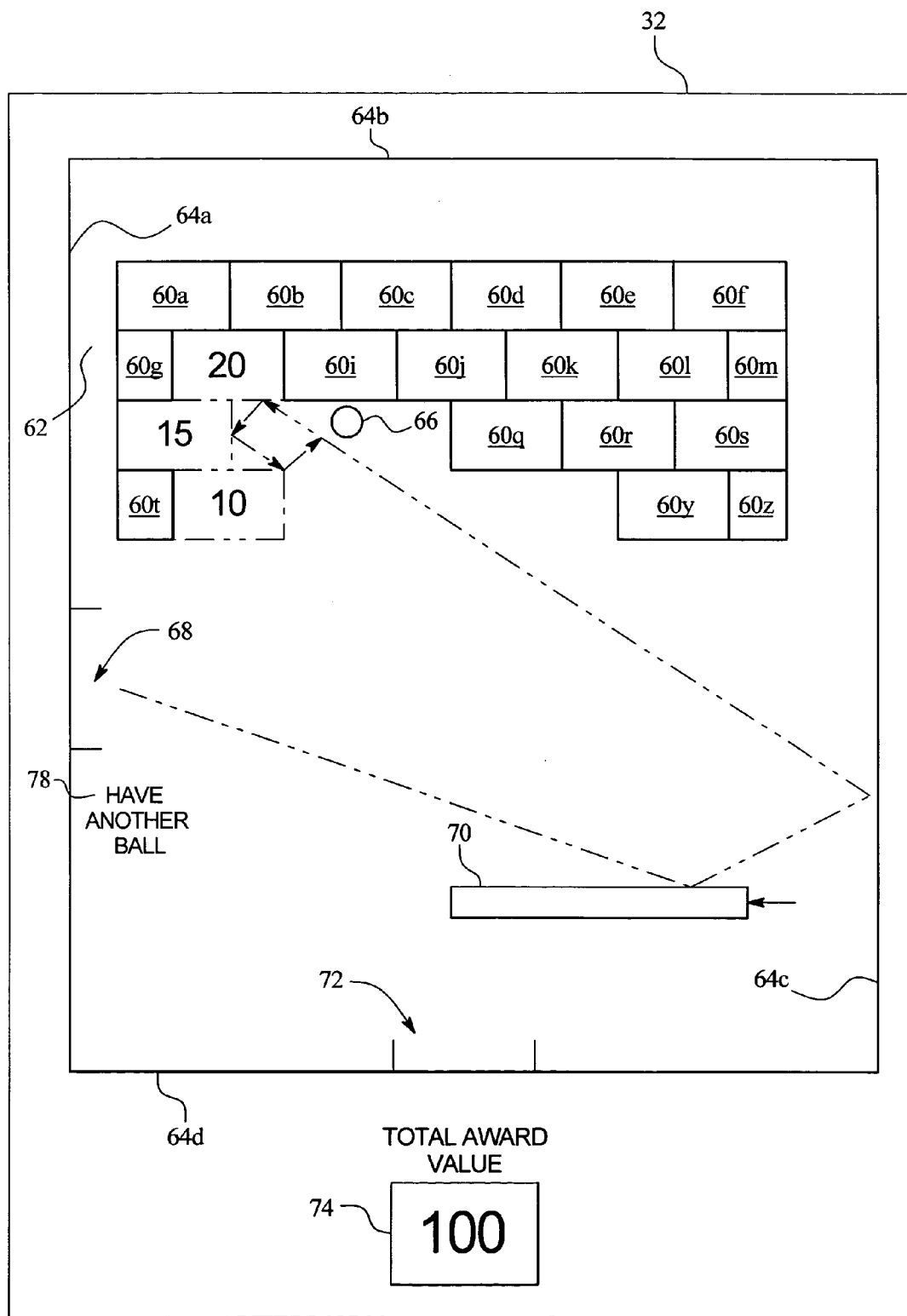


FIG. 12E

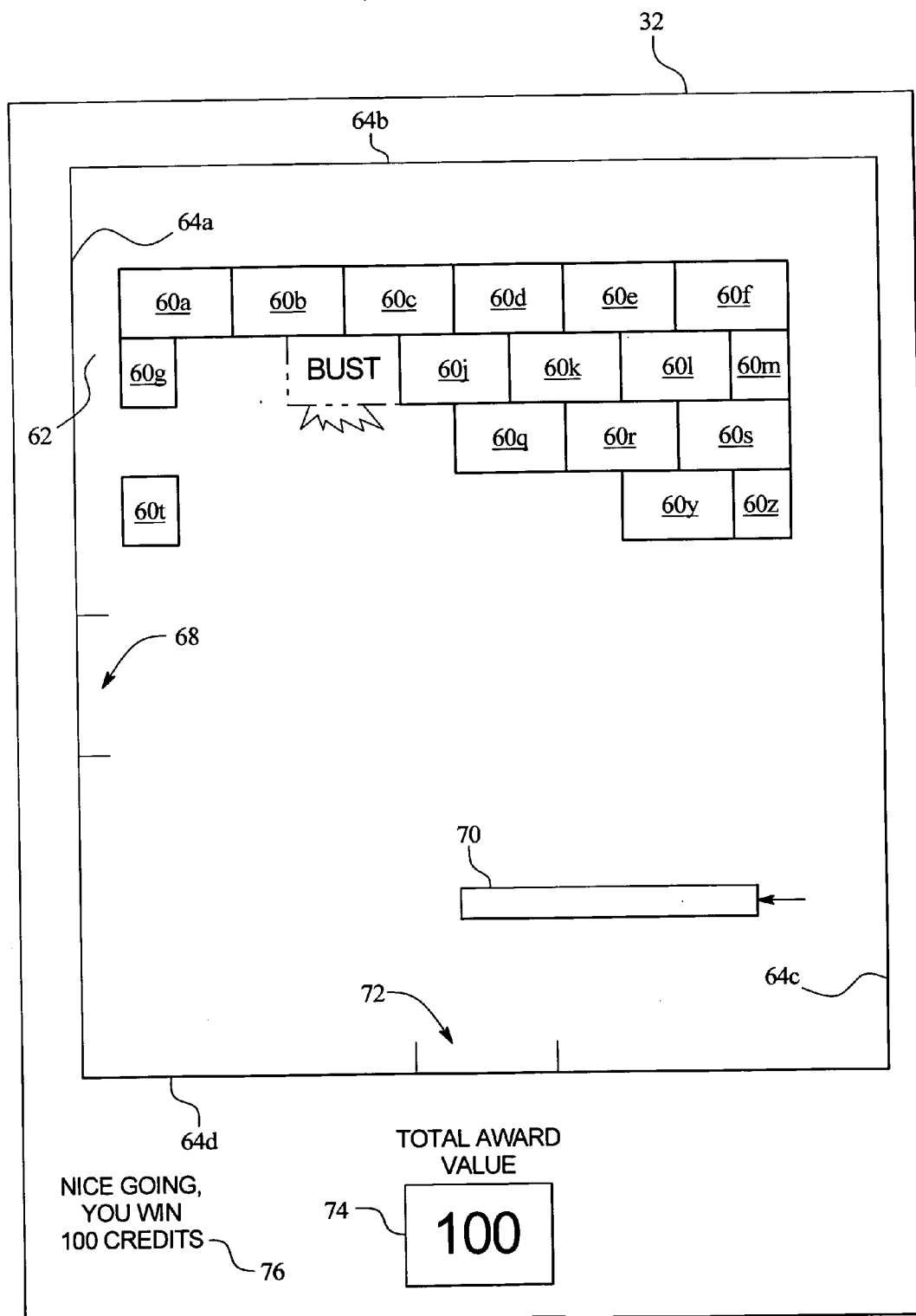
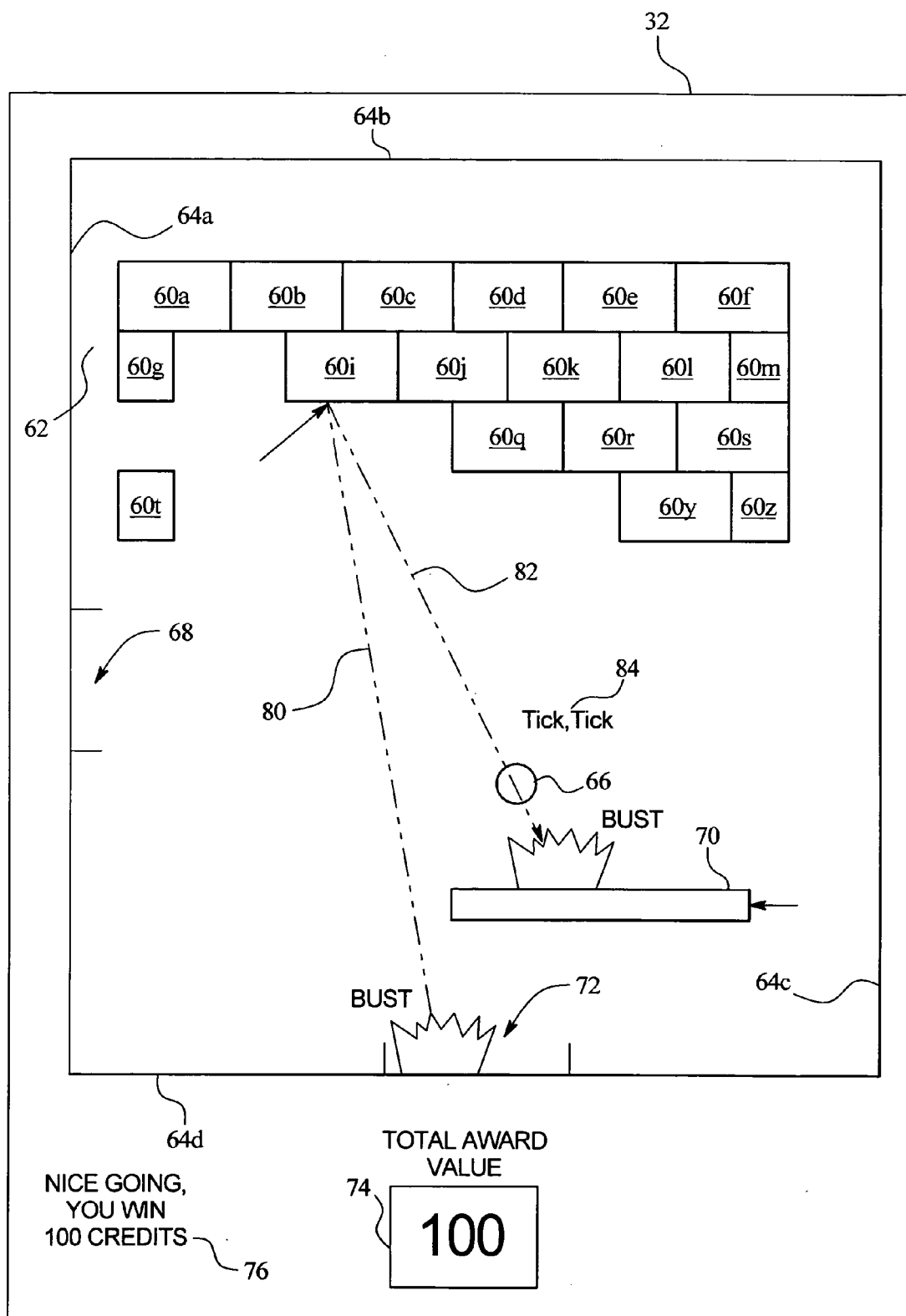


FIG. 12F



GAMING DEVICE HAVING A SEGMENT ELIMINATION GAME

PRIORITY CLAIM

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/503,021, filed Sep. 15, 2003, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated and relied upon.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Wagering gaming machines are generally games of chance, not skill. Slot machines owe certain of their popularity to the fact that a player can play a slot machine at the player's own pace with no required skills. Most slot machines are set to pay off on average between 80 and 99 percent of the amounts wagered by the players. Nevertheless, players constantly try to inject skill or know-how into gaming devices with the hope of turning the odds in their favor.

[0003] For example, there is a consensus as to good and bad slot machine locations. Some players believe that the worst slot machines for the player are the machines near the gaming tables, such as the blackjack, baccarat, and roulette tables, because the players of these games do not want to be distracted by the noise and commotion created by large slot machine wins. Some players similarly believe that machines near patrons betting on sporting events and horse races are not good. Some players believe that the best machines are those that are the most visible to others so that other players, or potential players, can see large payouts. Some players believe that the machines near cafes or coffee shops provide large payouts to encourage patrons to finish quicker and return to gaming. Some players believe that machines near change booths have higher instances of large payouts to entice people in line purchasing tokens to buy more.

[0004] Another widely held belief is that slot machines go through a pay cycle, wherein the machines will payout a number of coins to meet the programmed percentage payout after a predetermined period. Certain players that believe a pay cycle exists may also believe that a non-payout cycle exists, wherein the machine does not payout after a larger payout or a pay cycle. The object of players subscribing to these cycle theories is to play the machines at the right time.

[0005] However, it should be appreciated that most gaming machines or slot machines in the United States are programmed or set to randomly pay back a certain average percentage. There are certain known methods to maximizing gaming device payouts. One such method, for instance, is betting the maximum amount which increases the average expected payout.

[0006] Having a gaming machine solely based on skill would open the door to players becoming professionals at such games. Gaming devices of skill would also prejudice unskilled players, and unskilled players would be reluctant to play such games. Even though certain gaming machines such as video poker or blackjack involve certain skill and decision-making, their average outcomes ultimately turn upon mathematics and probabilities.

[0007] Accordingly, to increase player enjoyment and excitement, it is desirable to provide players with new

gaming machines and games for gaming machines that are different, challenging and appealing. In particular, it is desirable to provide players with gaming machines and games for gaming machines wherein it appears to the player as if the player's skill at a particular game determines the player's success in the game, while the outcomes are still randomly determined or determined in another suitable manner.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention provides a gaming device having a primary game operable upon a wager and including a display device operable to display a plurality of or a set of segments. In one embodiment, the segments are part of a secondary game initiated upon an occurrence of a triggering event in the primary game. In one embodiment, the segments are positioned adjacent to each other. In other embodiments two or more of the segments are spaced apart. The display device also displays a segment activator. The gaming device causes the segment activator, which in one embodiment is in the form of a projectile, to move towards one or more of the segments. If the segment activator or projectile engages by contacting or coming within a predetermined range of a segment or otherwise indicating the segment, the segment is activated. In one embodiment of the present invention, when a segment is activated, the segment is removed from the display device. In other embodiments, the segment is moved or otherwise altered after it is activated.

[0009] In one embodiment, the player receives an award based on the number of segments which are activated prior to the end of the game. In another embodiment, the player receives the award, if any, associated with each activated segment prior to the end of the game. One embodiment includes a combination of both such award schemes. Other suitable award schemes are contemplated by the present invention. It should also be appreciated that one or more segments may not have any awards associated with those segments. For instance, in another embodiment, the player receives the award, if any, associated with each remaining segment at the end of the game or a round of the game. In another embodiment, the segments activated and the segments remaining determine the award. In a further embodiment, the award or other outcome is based at least in part on the time it took one, a plurality, or all of the segments to be activated.

[0010] The segments can have any suitable shape, size, format and spacing. The segments can also have different suitable shapes, sizes, formats and spacing. In one embodiment, the segments are rectangular, are adjacent or in contact with each other, and displayed at a first portion of the display device such as the upper portion. In this embodiment, the projectile is displayed within or movable within part or all of the area of the display device not occupied by the segments such as a segment movement area. The projectile may have any suitable shape, size and format. The processor of the gaming device determines the speed of the movement of the segment activator or projectile and causes the segment activator or projectile to move to different positions of the display device.

[0011] While in motion, the projectile may contact none, one or more segments. When the segment activator or projectile engages a segment, the segment is removed from

the display device in one embodiment. In one embodiment, the remaining segments retain their position. In one embodiment, after the segment activator or projectile engages a segment or a designated number of segments, the segment activator or projectile moves away from the area of the segment or the area of the engaged segment. In another embodiment, the segment activator could continue to engage one or more further segments.

[0012] In one embodiment, the display device defines and/or displays one or more boundaries. In one embodiment, when the segment activator or projectile engages (by contacting or coming within a range of the boundary) the segment activator or projectile moves away from the boundary. In one embodiment, the display device displays three boundaries opposite the segments. The boundaries are displayed along an inside perimeter of the display device and the segment activator or projectile appears to bounce off of the boundary after contacting the boundary in one embodiment.

[0013] In one embodiment, the game includes a blocking member positioned near the bottom portion of the display device. The blocking member randomly moves, moves in a predetermined manner, moves in a controlled manner or is alternatively player controlled. In one embodiment, the blocking member moves in a horizontal direction to prevent the projectile from entering a projectile or game termination area lower than or on an opposite side of the blocking member. When the segment activator or projectile contacts the blocking member, the segment activator or projectile moves away from the member in another direction such as an upward direction toward one or more of the segments. The blocking member in one embodiment includes blocking dimensions that varies (either from game to game or within a game) based on at least one of: (i) an amount of the player's wager, (ii) an amount of a component of the player's wager, (iii) a random outcome, (iv) the occurrence of the projectile engaging the blocking member, (v) how many times the projectile has engaged the blocking member or another suitable game element.

[0014] Similarly, alternative embodiments, the size, shape, format, awards associated with the segments and segment activators, like the blocking members, can change. The variations can be based on various different factors such as one or more random events or determinations in another game, a triggering event, or the amount of a wager by the player in a game. Thus, the present invention provides numerous different displayable elements that can all together or each independently be changed depending on one or more factors. This, in part enables this game to be suitable for a primary game or a secondary game of a wagering gaming machine.

[0015] In one embodiment, the object of the game is to engage and eliminate as many segments displayed by the display device as possible using the segment activator or projectile, thus collecting a maximum award. A further object of the game is to prevent the segment activator or projectile from entering a projectile or game segment activator or termination area. In one embodiment, if the segment activator or projectile enters the projectile or game or termination area and the game ends, the segment activator or projectile is removed from the display device and the game ends. In another embodiment, a second segment activator or

projectile is set into motion. The number of segment activators could vary as desired by the game implementor. In this embodiment, the game continues until there are no more segment activator projectiles. The number of segment activators, the awards associates with the segments, and other variables in the game can as mentioned above be based on the wager made by the player in the games or in a primary game which triggers the game or other factors. It should also be appreciated that awards can be associated with the segment activator. For instance, each segment activator used can reduce a modifier such as a multiplier.

[0016] In other alternative embodiments, the object of the game is to engage and eliminate as many segments as possible because the awards provided to the player are based on the remaining segments (i.e., the lower the number, the greater the award). In other alternative embodiments, the object of the game is to engage and eliminate as few segments as possible because the awards are based on values associated with the remaining segments.

[0017] In various embodiments, the processor randomly controls the movements of the segment activator or projectile, the movement is predetermined or the movement is controlled to provide a determined outcome. In another embodiment, the player completely or partially controls the movement. In another embodiment, the player controls the movements of the segment activator in part based on being able to control the direction member.

[0018] In one embodiment, the present invention provides a gaming device with a bonus round that includes an action or event that requires or appears to require skill, wherein the skill element of the round appears to or partially does determine whether the player is successful and achieves one or more award. In certain such embodiments, the awards provided to the player can be predetermined, randomly determined or otherwise determined and displayed based in part on the skill. The present invention thus offers multiple ways of changing the display of the ultimate award because many different displayed variables can change (i.e., the segments, the award or outcomes associated with the segments, the segment activator, the boundaries, and the blocking member and the size, shape, number, format and placement of each of these elements or features).

[0019] The present invention includes various apparatuses and methods for providing a perceived skill game, where the player's outcome is determined randomly, but the game appears to be based on skill, e.g., the ability of the player to block and redirect the moving projectile. For example, after playing the game and accumulating a randomly predetermined award, the next segment (or the segment that yields the award) results in a terminator that ends the game. In another example, a game termination area appears to move randomly about the game boundary but actually is configured to move into the path of the projectile after the player has played the game and accumulated the random award.

[0020] Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following detailed disclosure, taken in conjunction with the accompanying sheets of drawings, wherein like numerals refer to like parts, elements, components, steps and processes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0021] **FIGS. 1A and 1B** are front perspective views of alternative cabinet structures for the gaming device of the present invention.

[0022] **FIG. 2** is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

[0023] **FIG. 3** is a front plan view of a display device displaying one embodiment of the present invention.

[0024] **FIGS. 4A, 4B and 4C** are front plan views of the display device before, during and after a segment activator contacts a boundary.

[0025] **FIGS. 5A, 5B and 5C** are front plan views of the display device before, during and after the segment activator contacts a segment.

[0026] **FIGS. 6A, 6B and 6C** are front plan views of the display device before, during and after the segment activator contacts a direction member.

[0027] **FIG. 7** is a front plan view of a display device displaying a set of segments.

[0028] **FIGS. 8A to 8E** illustrate one embodiment of the segment elimination game of the present invention using perceived skill.

[0029] **FIGS. 9A to 9E** illustrate another embodiment of the segment elimination game of the present invention using perceived skill.

[0030] **FIGS. 10A to 10E** illustrate a further embodiment of the segment elimination game of the present invention using perceived skill.

[0031] **FIGS. 11A to 11F** illustrate yet another embodiment of the segment elimination game of the present invention using perceived skill.

[0032] **FIGS. 12A to 12F** illustrate still another embodiment of the segment elimination game of the present invention using perceived skill.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Gaming Device and Electronics

[0033] Referring now to the drawings, and in particular to **FIGS. 1A and 1B**, gaming device **10a** and gaming device **10b** illustrate two possible cabinet styles and display arrangements and are collectively referred to herein as gaming device **10**. The present invention includes the game (described below) being a primary or base game or a bonus or secondary game. Gaming device **10** can be a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine, or another game such as a video card game such as poker. The player can operate the gaming device while standing or sitting. Gaming device **10** also includes being a pub-style or table-top game (not shown), which a player operates while sitting. The symbols and indicia used for any of the base and progressive games include mechanical, electrical or video symbols and indicia.

[0034] In a stand alone or a bonus embodiment, the gaming device **10** includes monetary input devices. **FIGS.**

1A and 1B illustrate a coin slot **12** for coins or tokens and/or a payment acceptor **14** for cash money. The payment acceptor **14** also includes other devices for accepting payment, such as readers or validators for credit cards, debit cards or smart cards, tickets, notes, etc. When a player inserts money in gaming device **10**, a number of credits corresponding to the amount deposited is shown in a credit display **16**. After depositing the appropriate amount of money, a player can begin the game by pulling arm **18** or pushing play button **20**. Play button **20** can be any play activator used by the player which starts any game or sequence of events in the gaming device.

[0035] As shown in **FIGS. 1A and 1B**, gaming device **10** also includes a bet display **22** and a bet one button **24**. The player places a bet by pushing the bet one button **24**. The player can increase the bet by one credit each time the player pushes the bet one button **24**. When the player pushes the bet one button **24**, the number of credits shown in the credit display **16** decreases by one, and the number of credits shown in the bet display **22** increases by one. A player may cash out by pushing a cash out button **26** to receive coins or tokens in the coin payout tray **28** or other forms of payment, such as an amount printed on a ticket or credited to a credit card, debit card or smart card.

[0036] Gaming device **10** also includes one or more display devices. The embodiment shown in **FIG. 1A** includes a central display device **30**, and the alternative embodiment shown in **FIG. 1B** includes a central display device **30** as well as an upper display device **32**. The display devices display any visual representation or exhibition, including but not limited to movement of physical objects such as mechanical reels and wheels, dynamic lighting and video images. The display device includes any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other static or dynamic display mechanism. In a video poker, blackjack or other card gaming machine embodiment, the display device includes displaying one or more cards. The display device also displays the indicia associated with any suitable additional base game, such as craps, keno, checkers, bunco and any combination of the above-listed games.

[0037] The slot machine base game of gaming device **10** displays a plurality of reels **34**, such as three to five reels **34**, in mechanical or video form on one or more of the display devices. Each reel **34** displays a plurality of indicia such as bells, hearts, fruits, numbers, letters, bars or other images which preferably correspond to a theme associated with the gaming device **10**. If the reels **34** are in video form, the display device displaying the video reels **34** is preferably a video monitor. Each base game, especially in the slot machine base game of the gaming device **10**, includes speakers **36** for making sounds or playing music.

[0038] Referring now to **FIG. 2**, a general electronic configuration of the gaming device **10** for the stand alone and bonus embodiments described above preferably includes: a processor **38**; a memory device **40** for storing program code or other data; a central display device **30**; an upper display device **32**; a sound card **42**; a plurality of speakers **36**; and one or more input devices **44**. The processor **38** is preferably a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform which is capable of displaying images, symbols and other indicia such as images of people, char-

acters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device **40** includes random access memory (RAM) **46** for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device **40** also includes read only memory (ROM) **48** for storing program code, which controls the gaming device **10** so that it plays a particular game in accordance with applicable game rules and pay tables.

[0039] As seen in **FIG. 2**, the player preferably uses the input devices **44** to input signals into gaming device **10**. In the slot machine base game, the input devices **44** include the pull arm **18**, play button **20**, the bet one button **24** and the cash out button **26**. A touch screen **50** and touch screen controller **52** are connected to a video controller **54** and processor **38**. The terms “computer” or “controller” are used herein to refer collectively to the processor **38**, the memory device **40**, the sound card **42**, the touch screen controller and the video controller **54**.

[0040] In certain instances, it is preferable to use a touch screen **50** and an associated touch screen controller **52** instead of a conventional video monitor display device. The touch screen enables a player to input decisions into the gaming device **10** by sending a discrete signal based on the area of the touch screen **50** that the player touches or presses. As further seen in **FIG. 2**, the processor **38** connects to the coin slot **12** or payment acceptor **14**, whereby the processor **38** requires a player to deposit a certain amount of money in to start the game.

[0041] It should be appreciated that although a processor **38** and memory device **40** are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention also includes being implemented via one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's), one or more hard-wired devices, or one or more mechanical devices (collectively or alternatively referred to herein as a “processor”). Furthermore, although the processor **38** and memory device **40** preferably reside in each gaming device **10** unit, the present invention includes providing some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like.

[0042] With reference to the slot machine base game of **FIGS. 1A and 1B**, to operate the gaming device **10**, the player inserts the appropriate amount of tokens or money in the coin slot **12** or the payment acceptor **14** and then pulls the arm **18** or pushes the play button **20**. The reels **34** then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels **34** come to a stop. As long as the player has credits remaining, the player can spin the reels **34** again. Depending upon where the reels **34** stop, the player may or may not win additional credits.

[0043] In addition to winning base game credits, the gaming device **10**, including any of the base games disclosed above, includes a bonus game that gives players the opportunity to win credits. The bonus game includes a program that automatically begins when the player achieves a qualifying condition in the base game.

[0044] In the slot machine embodiment, the qualifying condition includes a particular symbol or symbol combination generated on a display device. As seen in the five reel slot game shown in **FIGS. 1A and 1B**, the qualifying condition includes the number seven appearing on three

adjacent reels **34** along a payline **56**. It should be appreciated that the present invention includes one or more paylines, such as payline **56**, wherein the paylines can be horizontal, diagonal or any combination thereof.

[0045] In another embodiment, the qualifying condition includes a particular card combination in a video poker or blackjack game.

Segment Elimination Game

[0046] Referring now to **FIG. 3**, a display device **32** displays a set of segments **60a** to **60z** in one embodiment of the present invention. The segments can vary in shape, size, number, format and other factors. In one embodiment, the segments are rectangular and are displayed in a variety of colors (not shown).

[0047] In one embodiment, the segments are positioned in one or more portions of the display such as an upper portion **62** of the display device and may be positioned spaced apart or adjacent to each other as illustrated in **FIG. 3**. In the illustrated embodiment, the segments are in contact with each other. The segments are displayed within a plurality of boundaries such as boundaries **64a**, **64b** and **64c**. In the illustrated embodiment, the boundaries extend along the inside perimeter of the display device. These illustrated boundaries consist of a left wall, a top wall and a right wall in the illustrated embodiment. In an alternative embodiment, the boundaries can reside in any suitable position. A bottom boundary may also be provided in this embodiment. The confined space defined by boundaries **64** (referring collectively to boundaries **64a** to **64c**) may therefore be completely closed or have one or more openings to an area located outside of the confined space.

[0048] A segment activator or projectile **66** is also displayed by the display device **32**. The segment activator can vary in shape and size. The segment activator or projectile **66** can also be a symbol or based on a symbol used in the base game or other gaming device. In the illustrated embodiment, the segment activator **66** is a circular.

[0049] In one embodiment, the segment activator or projectile **66** is set into motion in or from a game initiation area **68** of the display device. The game initiation area can be along any suitable portion of the display device. In the illustrated embodiment, the game initiation area is along the left boundary. After the segment activator or projectile **66** is set into motion, it is capable of contacting one or more of the boundaries such as boundaries **64a**, **64b** or **64c**, one or more of the segments **60a** to **60z**, or a directional member **70**. If the segment activator **66** contacts a boundary, in one embodiment the segment activator or projectile **66** is propelled or moves away from the boundary (in a bouncing-type motion in one embodiment), as illustrated in **FIGS. 4A, 4B and 4C**. The segment activator or projectile **66** may then come into contact with or engage another boundary, a segment, a directional member or another element of the game. It should be appreciated that the movement of the segment activator before, during and after engagement with a boundary can be randomly determined, predetermined or base on a suitable factor or pattern.

[0050] If the segment projectile engages a segment such as segment **60k** as illustrated in **FIGS. 5A, 5B and 5C**, the segment **60k** will be removed from the display device **32**,

leaving a void **71**. In one embodiment, the segment **60k** disappears from the display device **32** as illustrated in **FIG. 5C**. The other segments displayed on the display device maintain their position within the display device in one embodiment. In another embodiment, one or more of the segments are rearranged. The segment activator **66**, after coming in contact with the segment **60k**, moves away from the segment area in the same bouncing-like motion illustrated. It should be appreciated that because the game of the present invention can in one embodiment be randomly based, other factors or variations may be employed such that exact laws of physics do not have to be strictly followed.

[0051] In one embodiment, when the segment activator **66** engages a segment, the player is awarded a value associated with that segment. The values or awards associated with the segment may be predetermined, randomly determined or otherwise suitably determined. In one embodiment, the segment transforms momentarily into a value or award before disappearing. In this embodiment, the object of the game is to remove as many segments from the screen or display as possible, thus earning the award associated with each removed segment. In an alternative embodiment, the player only receives a bonus award when a designated number such as a designed plurality or all of the segments are removed. The other award schemes mentioned above may also be employed in conjunction with this award scheme or instead of this award scheme.

[0052] In one embodiment, the display device also displays a game termination area **72**. In an embodiment, the game termination area is represented by an area positioned near the bottom of the display device. If the segment activator enters this area (which can function to terminate the segment activator or as a game termination area), the segment activator is removed from the display device.

[0053] In one embodiment, the game enables the player to use at least one direction or blocking member **70** to try to prevent the segment activator from entering the game termination area **72**. The blocking member **70** may have any size and shape which in one embodiment may be based on other factors such as the wager made by a player in a primary game. In the illustrated embodiment, the blocking member **70** is rectangular and positioned near the bottom of the screen, above the game termination area **72**. The direction or blocking member **70** has a horizontal length that is greater than its vertical length in the illustrated embodiment.

[0054] In one embodiment, the player positions the direction or blocking member **70** by using one or more control features or input devices (not shown). The control feature may for instance include a plurality of buttons such as three buttons corresponding to movement to the left or right, as well as stoppage of movement. In one embodiment, the player moves the direction member by pressing the touch screen at the location the player desires the direction member to move to. In one embodiment, the member is moveable in a one direction, however the direction member may be moveable in a plurality of directions. Gaming device **10** in various embodiments provides one or more dials, knobs, joysticks, trackballs or other suitable type of player input device **44** for moving blocking member **70**.

[0055] In alternative embodiments, the player can only partially control the movement of the direction member, or the direction member is completely controlled by the pro-

cessor. For instance, in alternative embodiments, the processor causes the direction member to continuously move or intermittently move. This enables the processor to control the outcome. The movement of the blocking member may also be random, be in a predetermined pattern or be made in a non-player controlled manner. A suitable input device **40** and prompt can also be provided to initiate the introduction of projectile **66** into the confined space defined by boundaries **64**.

[0056] Referring now to **FIGS. 6A, 6B** and **6C**, the blocking member **70** may be positioned underneath a segment activator **66** when the segment activator is travelling in a downward direction. If the segment activator comes in contact with the direction member **70**, the segment activator will move or propel away from the blocking member **70** in an upward manner as illustrated in **FIGS. 6A, 6B** and **6C**. The segment activator may then engage or come in contact with a segment or boundary. If during the downward motion of the segment activator, the direction member **70** does not make contact with the segment activator **66**, the segment activator **66** can enter the game termination area **72** or engage an additional boundary **64d** as illustrated in **FIGS. 6A, 6B** and **6C**. In one embodiment, the blocking member is divided into a plurality of sections. For example, if the direction member is rectangular, it is divided into two smaller rectangles which are spaced apart. The smaller rectangles move in a synchronized manner. In an alternative embodiment, each rectangle is controlled separately.

[0057] If a segment activator enters a termination area, and additional segment activators are available, the next segment activator is then set into motion. In various embodiments, the number of segment activators may be predetermined, randomly determined, based on an event in a game, based on the player's wager, skill or otherwise suitably determined.

[0058] In an alternative embodiment, the segments are not in contact with each other, but are in proximity, as illustrated in **FIG. 7**. Thus, a segment activator travelling in the direction of the segments may not necessarily engage or contact a segment. In one embodiment, the segments are in the form of symbols, such as hearts, cherries, etc., and are spaced apart and the combination of symbols which are engaged determines the award.

[0059] In one embodiment, the processor controls the segment activator and member and simulates a game. The game is played until the player receives an award amount that the processor predetermines. In another embodiment, the processor controls the segment activator and member, but the award amount is randomly determined.

[0060] In one alternative embodiment, the player is able to control the direction blocking; however, the award amount a player receives is predetermined. For example, during a game, a player controls the blocking member and accumulates awards as the segment activator engages or contacts the segments. The processor predetermines the total award amount the player receives. Accordingly, as a player approaches the predetermined award amount, the processor reduces the amount of control a player has on the member. For example, a player may require the blocking member to move horizontally to the left to prevent a segment activator from entering the termination area. The processor increases or decreases the speed of the blocking member to increase the difficulty of achieving an award. As a result, the player

may attempt to move the blocking member with proper timing; however, the processor can prevent contact between the direction member and the segment activator. Likewise, the processor can decrease or increase the speed of the blocking member to help the player contact a segment activator and achieve the predetermined amount. Thus, in this embodiment, there is a perception of skill on the part of the player; however, the player's skill only determines how quickly the player attains the predetermined award amount.

[0061] In one embodiment, the processor controls the speed of the segment activator. The processor increases or decreases the speed of the segment activator to raise or lower the difficulty of attaining an award. It is appreciated that the processor can increase or decrease the speed of the segment activator, direction member, or both in a particular game.

[0062] In one embodiment, the processor varies the award values assigned to one or more particular segments based on the awards the player attains. For example, the processor predetermines the total award amount a player receives. If the player has already earned a portion of the total award amount, the processor varies the values for each segment based on the amount the player has already attained in order for the player to eventually achieve the predetermined award amount.

[0063] It should also be appreciated that various outcomes can be associated with the segments besides values. For instance, award modifiers such multiplier, additional segment activators, triggers of one or more free games, spins or activations, activation of one or more bonus games, additional segments, and additional blocking members may be associated with one or more segments. It should also be appreciated that each level of segments can have different type or value awards or outcomes.

[0064] In one embodiment, the game of the present invention is a bonus game of a gaming device. In such case, the player usually receives at least some type of award. The game may be played so that success is not judged upon whether the player wins an award but on how much of an award the respectively wins.

[0065] The bonus game payout fits within the overall mathematics or payout percentage of the gaming device. That is, the gaming device pays back to the player a portion of each dollar wagered. Part of that payout percentage is dedicated to the bonus game. To that end, the payout on average is known to and controlled by the gaming device.

[0066] Providing a bonus game based on or controlled by skill would add an element of unpredictability to the payout scheme of the gaming device, which is not desirable in many gaming devices. Moreover, many if not most gaming jurisdictions do not allow wagering games based on skill. The game or bonus game of the present invention, therefore, in one embodiment provides random but predictable or controllable payouts that appear to be determined at least in part based upon player skill but in reality are generated regardless of the player's skill in playing the bonus game. As discussed below, the present invention includes various features for providing such a game.

[0067] Assume for purposes of illustration that gaming device 10 generates randomly but within the payout mathematics of the game an award of one hundred credits for the player. One way to ensure that the player obtains one

hundred credits, regardless of the player's skill level, is to not provide termination area 72 and to make the next or (current) segment 60 (referring collectively to segments 60a to 60z) hit by projectile 66 after the player reaches (or upon the player reaching) one hundred credits yield a terminator or pooper. Gaming device 10 provides a suitable audio, visual or audiovisual message informing the player that the game includes terminators or poopers and to try to hit as many credit yielding segments 60 before hitting a terminating segment.

[0068] The segment elimination game is played in one embodiment in multiple stages. For example, the game could be structured to provide or randomly determine to provide twenty of the one hundred credits in a first stage, thirty credits in a second stage and fifty credits in a final stage. The stages are separated by terminators. In one embodiment, the termination is provided upon hitting a particular segment. In another embodiment, the termination occurs when projectile 66 engages or runs into termination area 72. Still further, a terminator can occur when projectile 66 hits or engages blocking member 70. In other embodiments, termination can occur after a certain amount of time or upon any suitable random event.

[0069] In any of the embodiments described herein, the player's ultimate award value can be dependent upon the player's wager, e.g., number of paylines wagered, wager per payline, total bet, etc. The following discussion illustrates just a few of the possible embodiments for implementing the segment elimination game of the present invention in a perceived skill format.

[0070] Referring now to FIGS. 8A to 12F, one embodiment for implementing the segment elimination game of the present invention in a perceived skill format is illustrated. FIGS. 8A to 12F include many of the elements and features discussed above. Those features have like reference numbers. Additionally, FIGS. 8A to 12F include a total award value display 74 that shows the player how many total credits or other types of award values have been currently accumulated during game play.

[0071] The examples shown in FIGS. 8A to 12F follow the above assumption that gaming device 10 has randomly generated an award of one hundred for the player. Each of the embodiments shown in FIGS. 8A to 12F illustrate a way to make the game appear as if the player is controlling the overall award value, but in reality the player's level of skill in playing the game is not a factor in determining the award.

[0072] FIGS. 8A to 8F illustrate one feature for each of the embodiments of the present invention. That is, the angle at which projectile 66 contacts or engages an item, such as a segment, a boundary, or the blocking member, is approximately equal and opposite to the angle at which projectile 66 departs from the item engaged. In this manner, the game appears to follow the laws of physics and appears less contrived than in a game in which the projectile exits or returns from an item engaged at an unnatural-looking angle. In FIG. 8A, for example, projectile 66 engages or hits segment 60w at an angle alpha and exits or bounces away from segment 60w at an approximately equal but opposite angle negative alpha. Likewise, projectile 66 engages and bounces away from boundary 64c at substantially equal and opposite angles beta and negative beta, respectively. Further, projectile 66 engages and moves away from blocking mem-

ber 70 at substantially equal and opposite angles gamma and negative gamma, respectively.

[0073] In FIG. 8A, projectile 66 engages segment 60w, which yields an award value of ten. Projectile 66 proceeds to engage and move away from boundary 64c, boundary 64d, blocking member 70 and move again towards boundary 64d. In the embodiment of FIGS. 8A to 8E, no termination area 72 is provided. As illustrated below, projectile 66 in essence moves and contacts segments 60 (referring collectively to segments 60a to 60z) until engaging a segment that yields a terminator. In this manner, the player's ability to move blocking member 70 in front of projectile 66 is indeterminative.

[0074] FIG. 8B illustrates the path of projectile 66 from the end of the path illustrated in FIG. 8A. FIG. 8B illustrates another feature of the present invention, namely, that projectile 66 can engage and obtain an award value from two adjacent segments 60 simultaneously. As illustrated, projectile 66 bounces away from segment 64d, engages and exits boundary 64a and engages or contacts segments 60o and 60p simultaneously. Gaming device 10 therefore provides the player with the award value associated with each segment 60o and 60p, namely, the values 20 and 15, respectively. The player's total award value increases to forty-five as seen in award value display 74.

[0075] FIGS. 8C and 8D illustrate another feature of the segment elimination game of the present invention. A path of projectile 66 is shown beginning from the end of the path shown in FIG. 8B. Projectile 66 contacts and rebounds from boundary 64c. Without hitting a segment, the projectile moves upwards and contacts or engages boundary 64b. The angle at which projectile 66 exits initial contact with boundary 64b dictates that projectile 66 will make contact with a plurality of segments 60a to 60f along the upper row of segments 60. FIG. 8C illustrates that projectile 66 contacts segment 60f. Segment 60f is revealed to show that the player obtains an award value of thirty. The player's total award value increases to seventy-five accordingly as shown in display 74.

[0076] FIG. 8D illustrates that projectile 66 rebounds from segment 60f and again contacts boundary 64b after which projectile 66 rebounds from boundary 64b and contacts segment 60e. Segment 60e is revealed to show that the player obtains an additional award value of twenty-five. The player's overall award value increases to one hundred as illustrated by display 74. As discussed above, for purposes of illustration, gaming device 10 is assumed to have generated randomly an award value of one hundred for the player. The total award value in FIG. 8D reaches that total payout. Accordingly, the base or bonus game must end before the projectile 66 contacts an additional award value yielding segment 60.

[0077] FIG. 8E shows one embodiment for ending the game. As illustrated, the next segment 60 engaged after accumulating the randomly determined total award value yields a terminator or pooper. In FIG. 8E, projectile 66 engages segment 60d, which displays a bust or termination indicia. Gaming device 10 also generates an audio, visual or audiovisual message 76 indicating to the player that the base or bonus game has terminated and that the player has achieved the award of one hundred credits.

[0078] In a alternative embodiment, the segment 60 that increases the player's accumulated award value to the ran-

domly determined award value also results in a game terminator or pooper for the player. In the example above, the segment 60e in FIG. 8D that provides twenty-five credits to the player (bringing the player's total to the randomly predetermined total award value) also results in a terminator or bust. In such case, projectile 66 does not continue to move and hit segment 60d as shown in FIG. 8E. In either case, the player's award is randomly determined and controllable even though the game appears to involve player skill.

[0079] In FIGS. 8A to 8E, the award termination area 72 was not employed. In such case, the blocking member 70 could be varied based on any one or more factors, discussed herein, such as (i) the player's overall wager, (ii) an amount of a wager component, (iii) a random outcome, (iv) upon the occurrences of the projectile 66 engaging blocking member 70, (v) after projectile 66 has engaged blocking member 70 a certain number times, (vi) based on a bonus game outcome, or (vii) any combination thereof. The game could appear to become progressively harder as a blocking dimension of blocking member 70 incrementally diminishes. In reality, because no termination area is provided, the player does not have to successfully block projectile 66 to win the randomly determined award value.

[0080] Referring now to FIGS. 9A to 9E, termination area 72 is employed. In FIGS. 9A to 9E, however, the termination area 72 moves about the borders 64 (referring collectively to borders 64a to 64d), so that the player achieves the randomly determined total award value and no more. FIGS. 9A to 9E show the same path taken by projectile 66 that is shown in FIGS. 8A to 8E. In FIGS. 9A to 9E, however, the termination area 72 is displayed at different times and at different locations.

[0081] In FIG. 9A, termination area 72 is displayed along boundary 64c. Projectile 66 narrowly misses termination area 72 by hitting boundary 64c just below the outer range of area 72. Area 72 can be displayed along one of the borders 64 for multiple contacts of projectile 66 with either a border 64, segment 60 or blocking member 70. Alternatively, termination area 72 moves or changes after each such contact.

[0082] FIG. 9B illustrates that termination area 64 has moved to border 64d. The player accumulates an award value in total of forty-five. FIG. 9C illustrates that as projectile 66 contacts segment 60f, bringing the player's total award to seventy-five, termination area 72 has moved to boundary 64a. In FIG. 9D, as projectile 66 contacts and moves away from segment 60e, bringing the player's total award value to one hundred, termination area 72 changes or moves back to boundary 64c, albeit at a different location than that shown in FIG. 9A.

[0083] Because the player has accumulated the randomly determined total award value of one hundred in FIG. 9D, the game must end before the player accumulates any additional credits. FIG. 9E illustrates that at this point, termination area 72 appears to move randomly in front of the path of projectile 66, which terminates at boundary 64b. The projectile 66 enters the termination area 72, prompting the bust or termination indicia displayed by display device 32. In this embodiment, the blocking dimension of blocking member 70 could again vary, (e.g., diminish) as long as termination area 72 is controlled to terminate the game at the appropriate time. As before, gaming device 10 provides message 76

indicating to the player that the game has ended and that the player has won one hundred credits.

[0084] FIGS. 10A to 10D illustrate an embodiment similar to that of FIGS. 9A to 9E. In FIGS. 10A to 10E, however, the termination area does not move, but instead includes multiple segments, one or more of which are active at various times. Termination area 72 (referring collectively to portions 72a to 72e) is divided into five portions. The portions cover all of the boundary 64, except for the game initiation area 68.

[0085] In FIG. 10A, as projectile 66 bounces away from segment 60w and underneath blocking member 70, termination area 72e is active, while termination areas 72a to 72d are inactive. As above, the active areas of termination areas 72 can change upon each impact of projectile 66 or after a number of such impacts. Further, while a single termination area 72 is illustrated in each case being active, gaming device 10 alternatively activates a plurality of termination areas simultaneously. In FIG. 10B, termination area 72b is active, while areas 72a and 72c through 72e are inactive. In FIG. 10C, as the player accumulates a total award value of seventy-five, termination area 72c is active, while termination areas 72a, 72b, 72d and 72e are inactive. In FIG. 10D, when the player achieves the randomly determined total of one hundred, termination area 72d is active, while termination area 72e and areas 72a to 72c are inactive.

[0086] In FIG. 10E, because the player has already achieved the randomly determined total award value, the game must end. Gaming device 10 therefore makes termination area 72a active when projectile 66 contacts that area. The bust or termination indicia is displayed accordingly. In this embodiment, the blocking dimension of blocking member 70 could again vary (e.g., diminish) as long as termination area 72 is controlled to terminate the game at the appropriate time. Further, gaming device 10 provides message 76 indicating that the game is over and that the player has won a total award value of one hundred.

[0087] FIGS. 11A to 12F illustrate alternative embodiments, wherein gaming device 10 provides a plurality of game stages. It should be appreciated that in the previous embodiments, gaming device 10 controls when the player busts for the first time. In that manner, gaming device 10 causes the player to bust for the first time directly after the player achieves the randomly determined total award value. FIGS. 11A to 12F enable the player to bust a number of intermediate times before accumulating the total award value. FIG. 11A, for example, illustrates that after the player has achieved the total award value of forty-five, the projectile 66 contacts segment 60f, which yields a bust. Because the player has not accumulated the randomly determined total award value, the game continues.

[0088] FIG. 11B illustrates that a new projectile is launched or initiated from initiation area 68. A suitable audio, visual or audiovisual message 78 is provided informing the player that the game is continuing. As discussed above, in one embodiment a suitable input device is provided that enables the player to initiate the introduction of a new projectile 66 from area 68. In FIGS. 11B and 11C, game play continues and the player increases the total award value to fifty-five. In FIG. 11B, the player moves blocking member 70 back and forth, while projectile 66 engages segment 60x. In FIG. 10D projectile 66 engages or contacts

segment 60v, which also yields a bust. Again, because the total award value has not reached the randomly determined value of one hundred, game play continues.

[0089] FIG. 11D illustrates that a third projectile 66 is launched from initiation area 68 and is deflected by blocking member 70 up into the second and third rows of segments 60. Here, projectile 66 bounces, contacts multiple segments, and obtains multiple award values, culminating in the randomly determined total value of one hundred as seen in display 74. Accordingly, the game must end before the player achieves any additional award value.

[0090] FIG. 11E illustrates that projectile 66 engages or contacts segment 60i, which is revealed as a bust or termination for the player. Gaming device 10 accordingly displays message 76 indicating that the game is finished and the player has achieved an award of one hundred credits.

[0091] FIGS. 12A to 12F illustrate an alternative multi-stage embodiment. In FIGS. 12A to 12F, the termination area 72 is provided in a stationary position along border 64d. Blocking member 70 is able to block projectile 66 from contacting termination area 72 based on the player's skill. It should be appreciated that termination area 72 can cover any portion of boundary 64d and alternatively portions of boundaries 64a and 64c. The player can therefore play the entire game without an intermediate bust. In such a case the game initially busts or terminates upon the player achieving the randomly determined total award value. FIG. 12A illustrates however that it is possible for the projectile to enter termination area 72 prior to the player achieving the randomly determined total award value of one hundred. Gaming device 10 then introduces another projectile 66 from initiation area 68 along with the message 78 indicating that a new projectile 66 has been provided as illustrated in FIG. 12B.

[0092] FIG. 12C illustrates that the player narrowly misses blocking projectile 66 which careens off border 64c and enters termination area 72 along border 64d. A termination or bust therefore occurs. Because the player has only accrued fifty-five credits in FIG. 12C, FIG. 12D illustrates that gaming device 10 introduces a third projectile 66 from initiation area 68. Projectile 66 proceeds to hit and rebound off of segments 60h, 60n and 60u, which provide awards bringing the player's total to the randomly determined total value of one hundred.

[0093] In this embodiment as well as any other embodiment described herein, projectile 66 can contact and rebound from any apparatus at a different speed than the speed at which the projectile engages the apparatus. Speed changes can be speed increases or decreases and can also occur with or without impact (i) randomly, (ii) after a predetermined time or (iii) after a particular credit accumulation or accumulation of a percentage of the player's total determined award value; (iv) after engaging each of a particular subset of segments; (v) upon engaging a first one of a particular subset of segments; or, (vi) any combination thereof.

[0094] FIGS. 12E and 12F illustrate various embodiments for terminating the game of FIGS. 12A to 12F upon the player achieving the randomly determined total value in the present embodiment. FIG. 12E illustrates the same termination technique illustrated in FIG. 11E, namely, segment 60i engaged directly after the player achieves the award of one hundred yields a bust or terminator, prompting

message 76 as before. FIG. 12F illustrates two other possibilities. In both cases, 60i does not yield either an award or a bust, but instead acts merely as a rebounding member. In any of the embodiments disclosed herein one or more segments can be provided that does not yield either an award or a termination but instead merely deflects projectile 66. In one embodiment, projectile 66 follows path 80 into termination area 72, which ends the game. It should be noted that the rebounding angle is different than the engaging angle for segment 60i. The present invention expressly contemplates the angles being skewed as needed to achieve the desired result (e.g., to hit a desired termination area, segment, boundary, etc.).

[0095] Path 82 illustrates an alternative embodiment. Here, projectile 66 busts upon contacting blocking member 70. In such a case as illustrated, projectile 66 can be a bomb which is lit throughout game play and makes an audio, visual or audiovisual ticking indicia or sound. Thus it can appear to the player that the bomb has finally exploded once the bomb reaches blocking member 70. In any case, the player does not achieve any additional credits after the total reaches the randomly determined total. To that end, blocking member 70 may vary as described above until one of the termination conditions occur. The gaming device accordingly provides a suitable message 76 indicating that the base or bonus game has ended and indicating the player's total win.

[0096] While the present invention is described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, and is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the claims. Modifications and variations in the present invention may be made without departing from the novel aspects of the invention as defined in the claims, and this application is limited only by the scope of the claims.

1. A gaming device controlled by a processor; the gaming device comprising:

- a primary game controlled by the processor activated upon a wager by a player, a display device controlled by the processor;
- a secondary game triggered upon an occurrence of a triggering event in the primary game, said secondary game including a plurality of segments displayed by the display device within a confined space;
- a projectile displayed moving within the confined space and visually engaging at least one of the segments;
- a blocking member manipulable by the player to move in front of the projectile as the projectile travels away from the segments; and
- an award value provided to the player due to the at least one visual engagement of the projectile and one of the segments, wherein the award value is determined independently from the player's ability to manipulate the blocking member in front of the projectile

2. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the confined space is designated by a border displayed by the display device.

3. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein at least one of the segments yields a terminator, and wherein the processor enables the player to move the blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments until the projectile engages the segment yielding the terminator.

4. The gaming device of claim 3, wherein the terminator is generated when the player has achieved the award value.

5. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the award value includes multiple constituent award values provided to the player upon multiple engagements of the projectile and the segments.

6. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein each engaged segment is removed from the display device.

7. The gaming device of claim 6, wherein the segments are arranged in rows and wherein a removed segment exposes an adjacent segment of a different row.

8. The gaming device of claim 7, wherein the different row is a first different row and the adjacent segment is a first adjacent segment, which includes a second different row, and wherein the adjacent segment is removed from the display device upon being engaged by the projectile to expose a second adjacent segment located in the second different row.

9. The gaming device of claim 7, wherein award values associated with the segments of the different row are on average higher than the award values associated with the segments of the row containing the removed segment.

10. The gaming device of claim 7, wherein the projectile engages and departs from the engaged segments, and wherein a speed at which the projectile departs from the adjacent segment is different than the speed at which the projectile departs from the removed segment.

11. The gaming device of claim 7, wherein the rows of segments have at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of: having same size segments, having differently sized segments, having aligned segments, having staggered segments, being spatially engaged, being spaced apart from one another, having segments that are spatially engaged, having spaced apart segments.

12. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein at least one of either the segment engaged by the projectile or the award value yielded by the engaged segment is determined randomly.

13. The gaming device of claim 12, wherein segment engaged by the projectile is determined randomly and the angle at which the projectile departs from the blocking member is selected so that the projectile engages the randomly generated segment.

14. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the projectile contacts at least one wall defining the confined space before engaging one of the segments.

15. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein (i) the projectile is sized and (ii) two adjacent segments are positioned so that the two segments are engaged by the projectile at least substantially simultaneously.

16. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein an angle at which the projectile departs from the blocking member is substantially equal and opposite to an angle at which the projectile hits the blocking member.

17. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein a speed at which the projectile departs from the blocking member is different than a speed at which the projectile engages the blocking member.

18. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the projectile engages and departs from the engaged segments, and wherein a speed at which the projectile departs from an engaged segment is different than a speed at which the projectile engages the engaged segment.

19. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the projectile changes speeds (i) randomly, (ii) after the player accumulates a particular portion of the award value, (iii) after a particular period of time, (iv) after engaging each of a particular subset of segments, (v) upon engaging a first one of a particular subset of segments, (vi) or any combination thereof.

20. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the confined space includes a game termination area, and wherein at least a portion of the secondary game is terminated when the projectile engages the secondary game termination area.

21. The gaming device of claim 20, wherein the secondary game termination area is configured to move along a boundary defining the confined space, the termination area moving to (i) enable the player to achieve the award value and (ii) terminate the game thereafter.

22. The gaming device of claim 20, wherein the secondary game includes multiple stages and introduces a new stage when the projectile engages the game termination area before the player achieves the award value.

23. The gaming device of claim 20, wherein the secondary game includes multiple stages and no longer presents a new stage when the projectile engages the game termination area after the player achieves the award value.

24. The gaming device of claim 20, wherein the game termination area is a portion of a boundary defining the confined space, and wherein the blocking member is capable of screening the projectile from the game termination portion.

25. The gaming device of claim 20, which includes a plurality of the secondary game termination areas, the areas activated selectively to (i) enable the player to achieve the award value and (ii) terminate the game thereafter.

26. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the confined space is defined by a boundary and the segments are positioned between a portion of the boundary and the blocking member, and wherein the game enables the projectile to travel between the boundary portion and the segments to engage multiple segments.

27. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the confined space is defined by a boundary, and wherein the game enables the projectile to travel between the boundary and the segments to engage multiple segments without engaging the blocking member.

28. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the blocking member is a terminator when the projectile engages the blocking member after the player achieves the award value.

29. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the blocking member is configured to have a blocking dimension variable based on at least one of: (i) an amount of the player's wager, (ii) an amount of a component of the player's wager, (iii) a random outcome, (iv) an occurrence of an engagement of the projectile and the blocking member, or (v) how many times the projectile has engaged the blocking member.

30. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the confined space has at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of: (i) being totally enclosed and (ii) including at least one opening through which the projectile may travel outside the confined space.

31. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein the game is a bonus game of a base game selected from the group consisting of: slot, poker, blackjack, craps, keno, checkers, bunto and any combination thereof.

32. A gaming device controlled by a processor, the gaming device comprising:

- a primary game activated upon a wager by a player;
- a display device controlled by the processor;
- a secondary game triggered upon occurrence of a triggering event in the primary game, said secondary game including a plurality of segments displayed by the display device within a confined space;
- a projectile displayed moving within the confined space and visually engaging at least one of the segments;
- a blocking member manipulated by the player to move in front of the projectile as the projectile travels away from the segments;
- a randomly determined total award value provided to the player due to the at least one visual engagement of the projectile and one of the segments; and
- a mechanism that ensures that the player achieves the randomly determined total award value regardless of the skill level of the player.

33. The gaming device of claim 32, wherein the mechanism includes a terminator, wherein at least one of the segments yields the terminator and the game enables the player to move the blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments until the projectile engages the segment yielding the terminator.

34. The gaming device of claim 32, wherein the mechanism includes a game termination area, wherein at least a portion of the game is terminated when the projectile engages the game termination area, and wherein the game termination area is configured to move along a boundary defining the confined space, the termination area moving to (i) enable the player to achieve the total determined award value and (ii) terminate the game thereafter.

35. The gaming device of claim 32, wherein the mechanism includes a game termination area and multiple stages, and wherein the game no longer presents a new stage when the projectile engages the game termination area after the player achieves the total determined award value.

36. The gaming device of claim 32, wherein the mechanism includes a plurality of game termination areas, the areas activated selectively to (i) enable the player to achieve the total randomly determined award value and (ii) terminate the game thereafter.

37. A method of operating a gaming device comprising the steps of:

- (a) displaying a plurality of segments within a confined space;
- (b) displaying a projectile moving within the confined space and visually engaging at least one of the segments;
- (c) determining a total award value for the player due to the at least one visual engagement of the projectile and one of the segments; and
- (d) enabling the player to move a blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments until the

player achieves the total award value after which (i) the projectile engages a segment yielding a terminator or (ii) a segment causing the player to achieve the total award value also yields a terminator.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the terminator is a final terminator, and wherein enabling the player to move the blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments includes multiple additional game stages each initiated when the projectile engages a segment yielding an intermediate terminator in a previous game stage.

39. The method of claim 37, which includes varying a blocking dimension of the blocking member based on at least one of: (i) an amount of the player's wager, (ii) an amount of a component of the player's wager, (iii) a random outcome, (iv) an occurrence of an engagement of the projectile and the blocking member, or (v) how many times the projectile has engaged the blocking member.

40. A method of operating a gaming device comprising:

- (a) displaying a plurality of segments within a confined space;
- (b) displaying a projectile moving within the confined space and visually engaging at least one of the segments;
- (c) determining a total award value for the player due to the at least one visual engagement of the projectile and one of the segments;
- (d) enabling the player to move a blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments; and
- (e) displaying a game termination area, wherein the player is enabled to move the blocking member until the

projectile engages the game termination area, and wherein the game termination area is configured to change along a boundary defining the confined space, the game termination area moving to: (i) enable the player to achieve the randomly determined total award value, and (ii) terminate the game thereafter.

41. A method of operating a gaming device comprising:

- (a) displaying a plurality of segments within a confined space;
- (b) displaying a projectile moving within the confined space and visually engaging at least one of the segments;
- (c) determining a total award value for the player due to the at least one visual engagement of the projectile and one of the segments;
- (d) enabling the player to move a blocking member to direct the projectile towards the segments; and
- (e) displaying a game termination area, wherein the player is enabled to move the blocking member until the projectile engages the game termination area, and providing multiple additional game stages each initiated when the projectile engages the game termination area in a previous game stage, wherein the game no longer presents a new stage when the projectile engages the game termination area after the player achieves the randomly determined total award value.

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