



US 20050197180A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0197180 A1**  
(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 8, 2005**(54) **GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE GAME****Publication Classification**(76) Inventors: **Joseph E. Kaminkow**, Reno, NV (US);  
**Bayard S. Webb**, Sparks, NV (US)(51) **Int. Cl.<sup>7</sup>** ..... **A63F 9/24**(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **463/16**

Correspondence Address:

**BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC****P. O. BOX 1135****CHICAGO, IL 60690-1135 (US)**

(57)

**ABSTRACT**(21) Appl. No.: **11/122,719**(22) Filed: **May 5, 2005****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) Continuation of application No. 10/210,540, filed on  
Jul. 31, 2002.

A gaming device having a game with a grid which has a plurality of segments. The grid segments are defined by a plurality of independently selectable first coordinates and second coordinates. The gaming device provides the player with a number of opportunities to select segments of the grid and obtain awards by independently selecting both a first coordinate and a second coordinate.

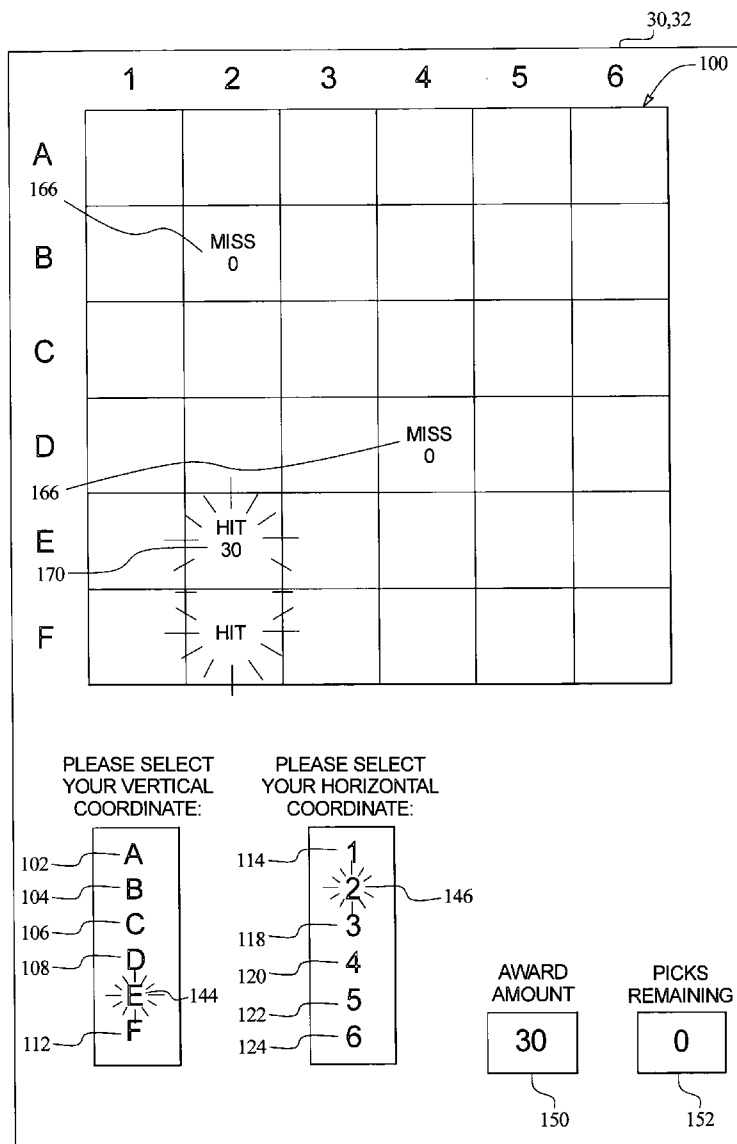


FIG. 1A

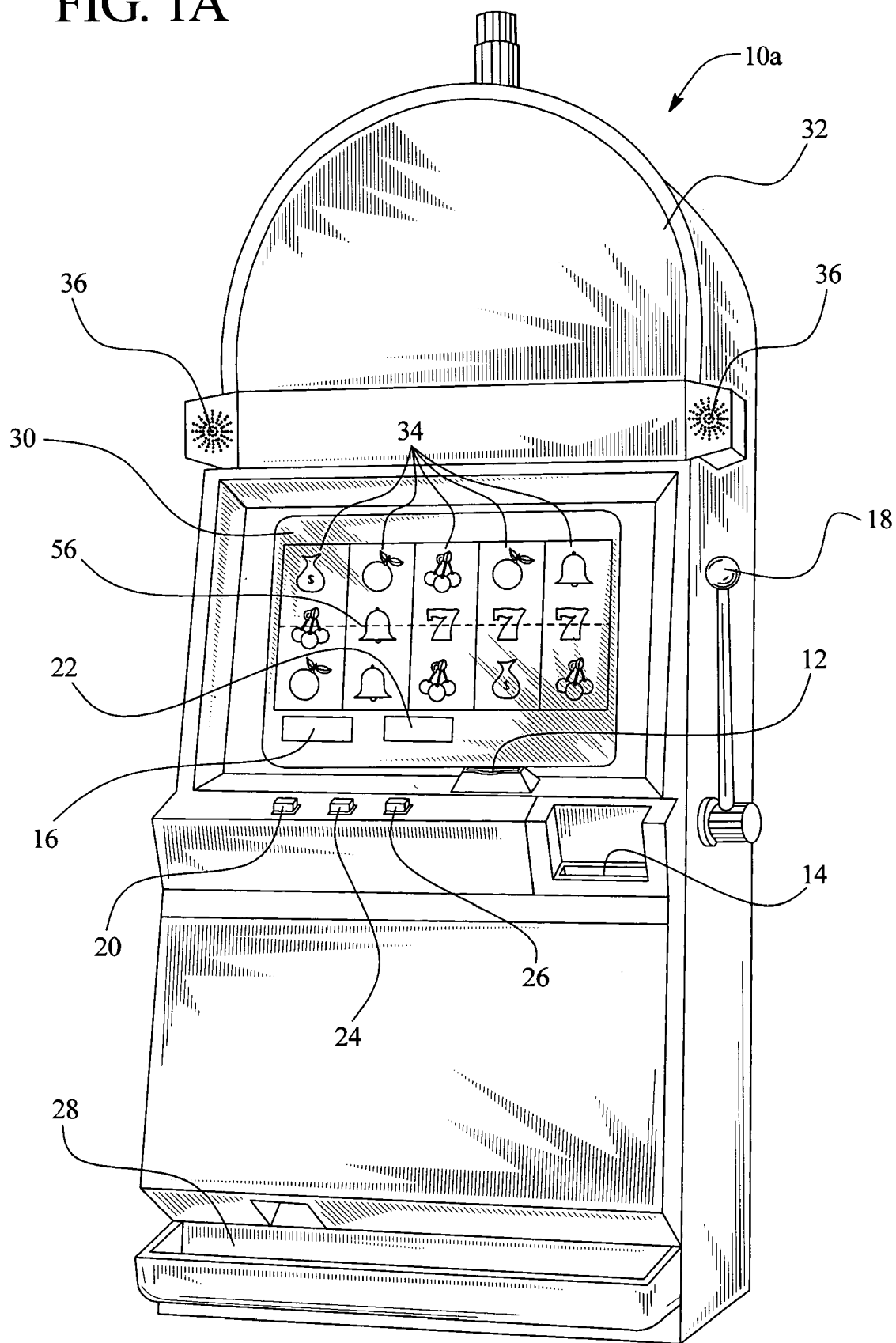


FIG. 1B

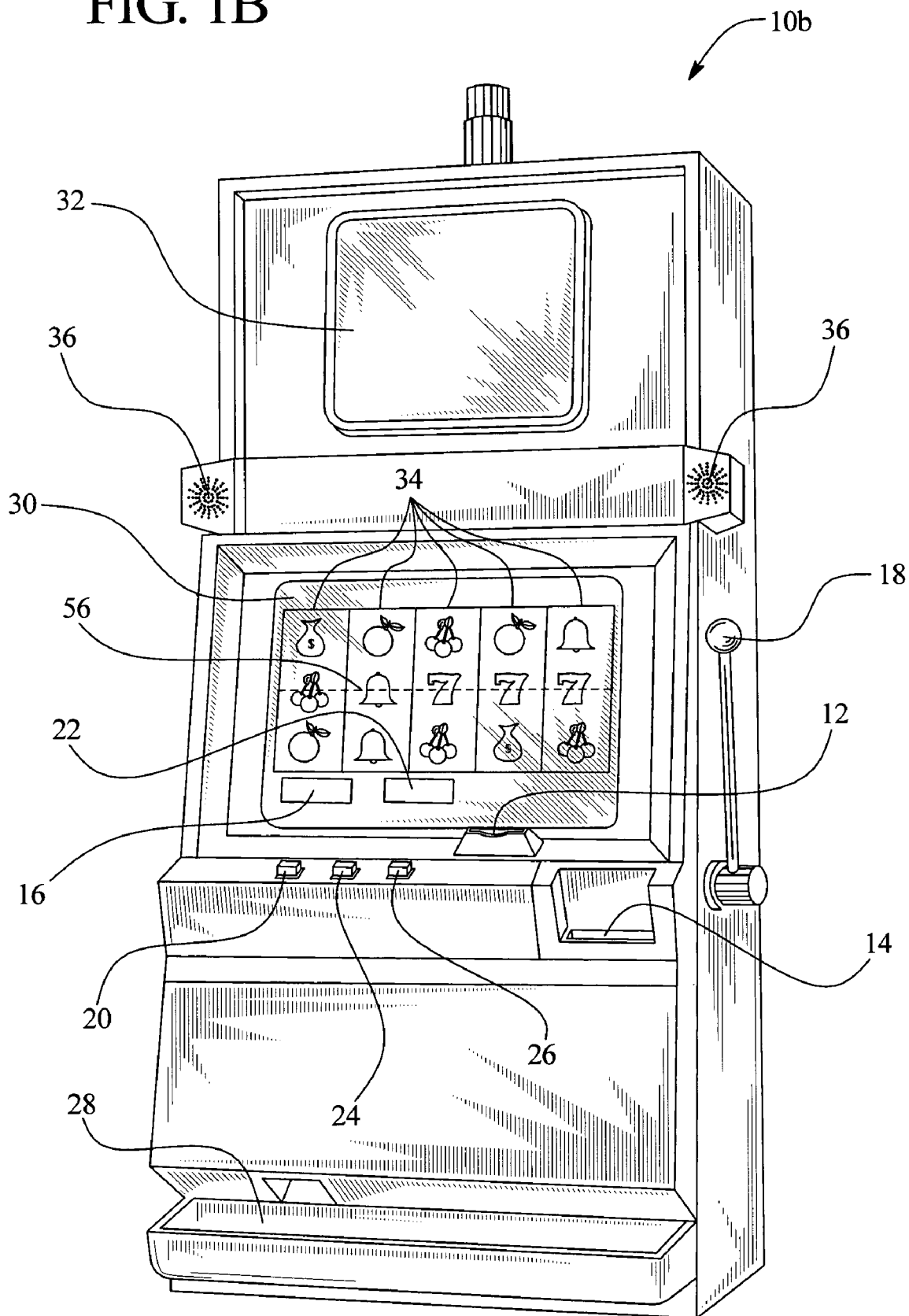


FIG. 2

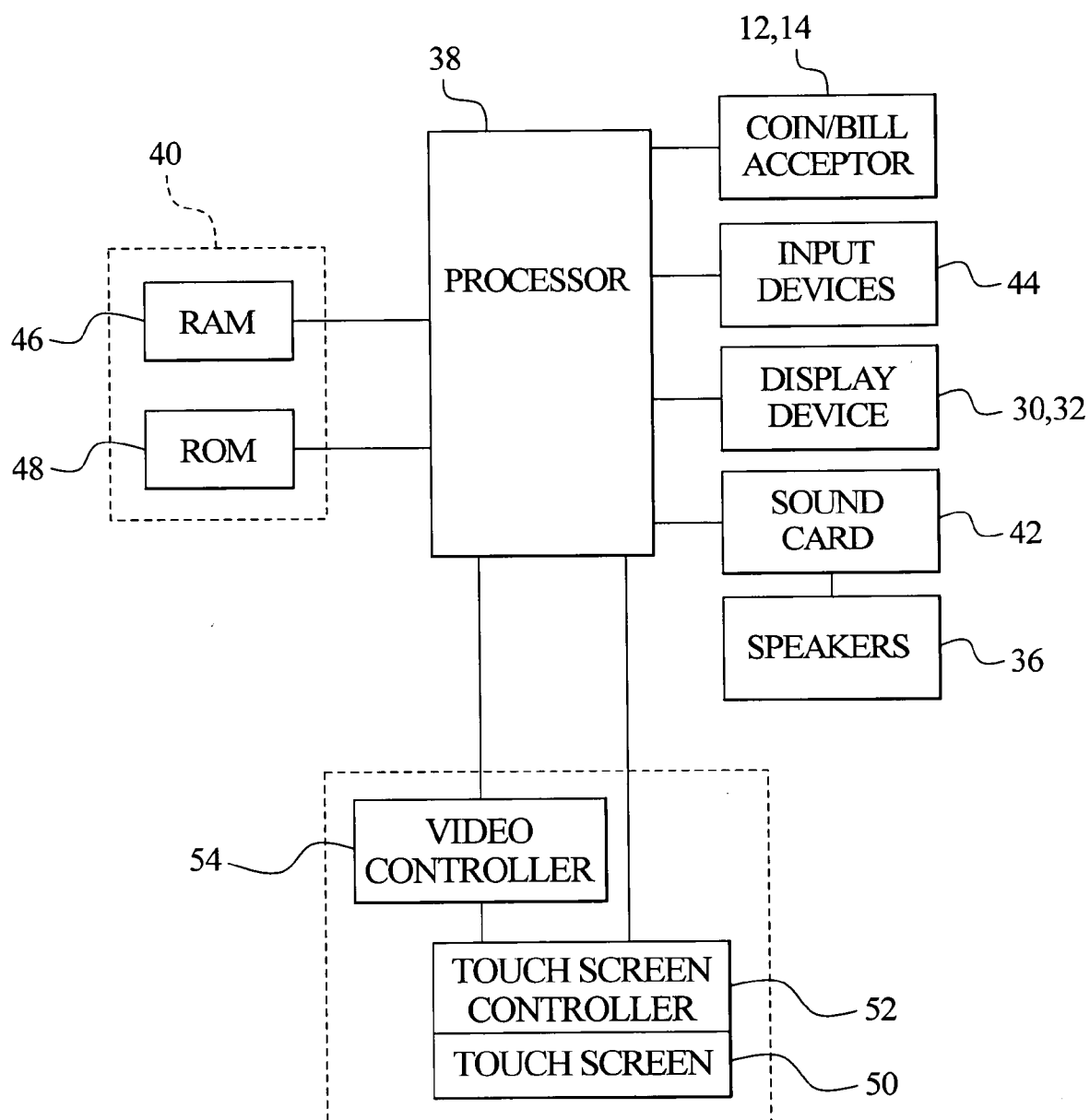


FIG. 3A

30,32

100

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						

PLEASE SELECT  
YOUR VERTICAL  
COORDINATE:

102 — A

104 — B

106 — C

108 — D

110 — E

112 — F

PLEASE SELECT  
YOUR HORIZONTAL  
COORDINATE:

114 — 1

116 — 2

118 — 3

120 — 4

122 — 5

124 — 6

AWARD  
AMOUNT

0

150

PICKS  
REMAINING

2

152

FIG. 3B

30,32

100

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						

PLEASE SELECT YOUR VERTICAL COORDINATE:

102 A  
106 B  
108 C  
110 D  
112 E  
130 F

PLEASE SELECT YOUR HORIZONTAL COORDINATE:

114 1  
116 2  
118 3  
132 4  
122 5  
124 6

AWARD AMOUNT

0

150

PICKS REMAINING

1

152

FIG. 3C

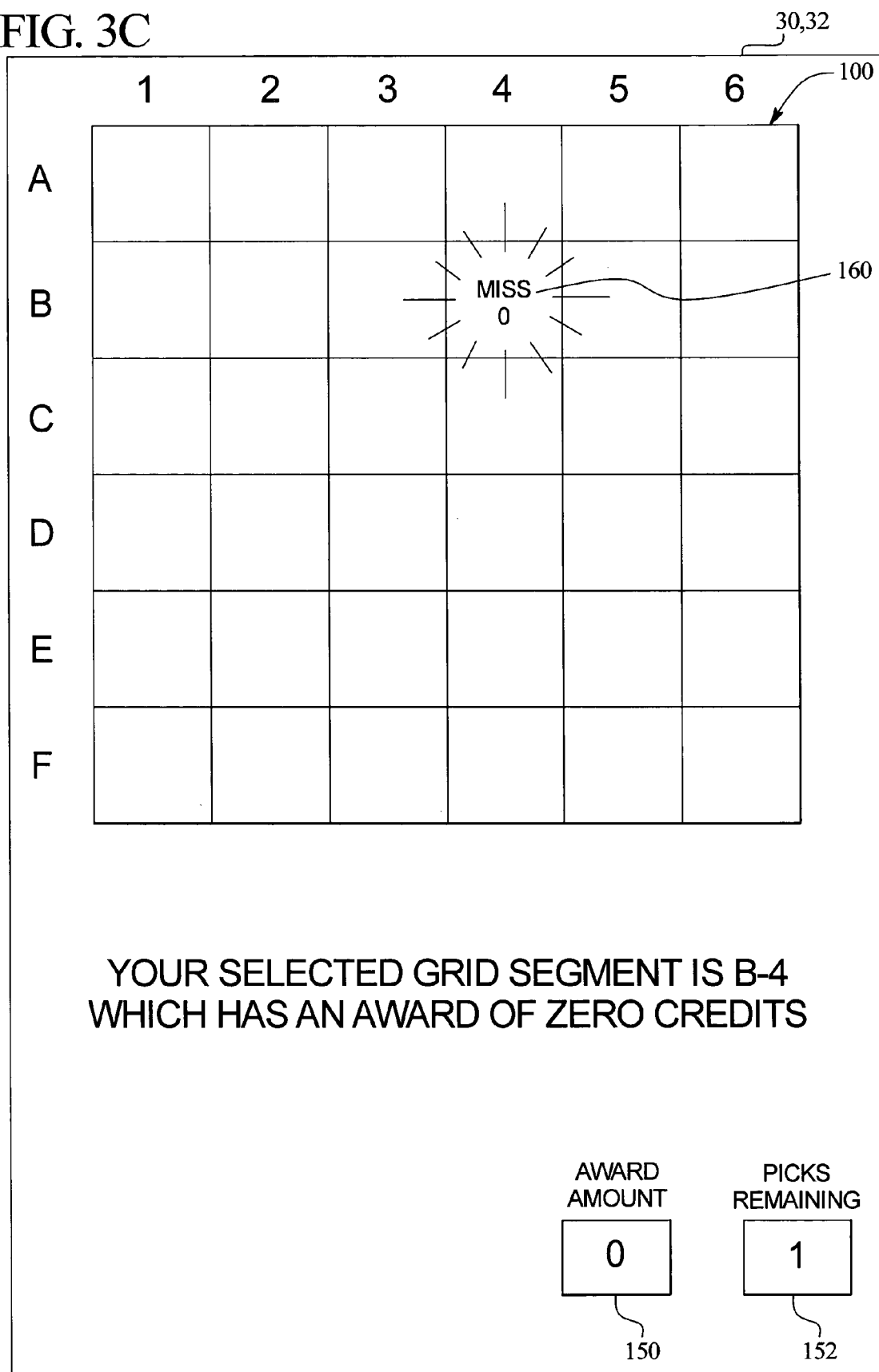


FIG. 3D

1
2
3
4
5
6

A						
B			MISS 0			
C						
D						
E						
F						

PLEASE SELECT  
YOUR VERTICAL  
COORDINATE:

102 — A

104 — B

106 — C

108 — D

112 — E

112 — F

134

PLEASE SELECT  
YOUR HORIZONTAL  
COORDINATE:

114 — 1

118 — 2

120 — 3

122 — 4

124 — 5

124 — 6

136

AWARD  
AMOUNT

0

150

PICKS  
REMAINING

0

152



FIG. 3E

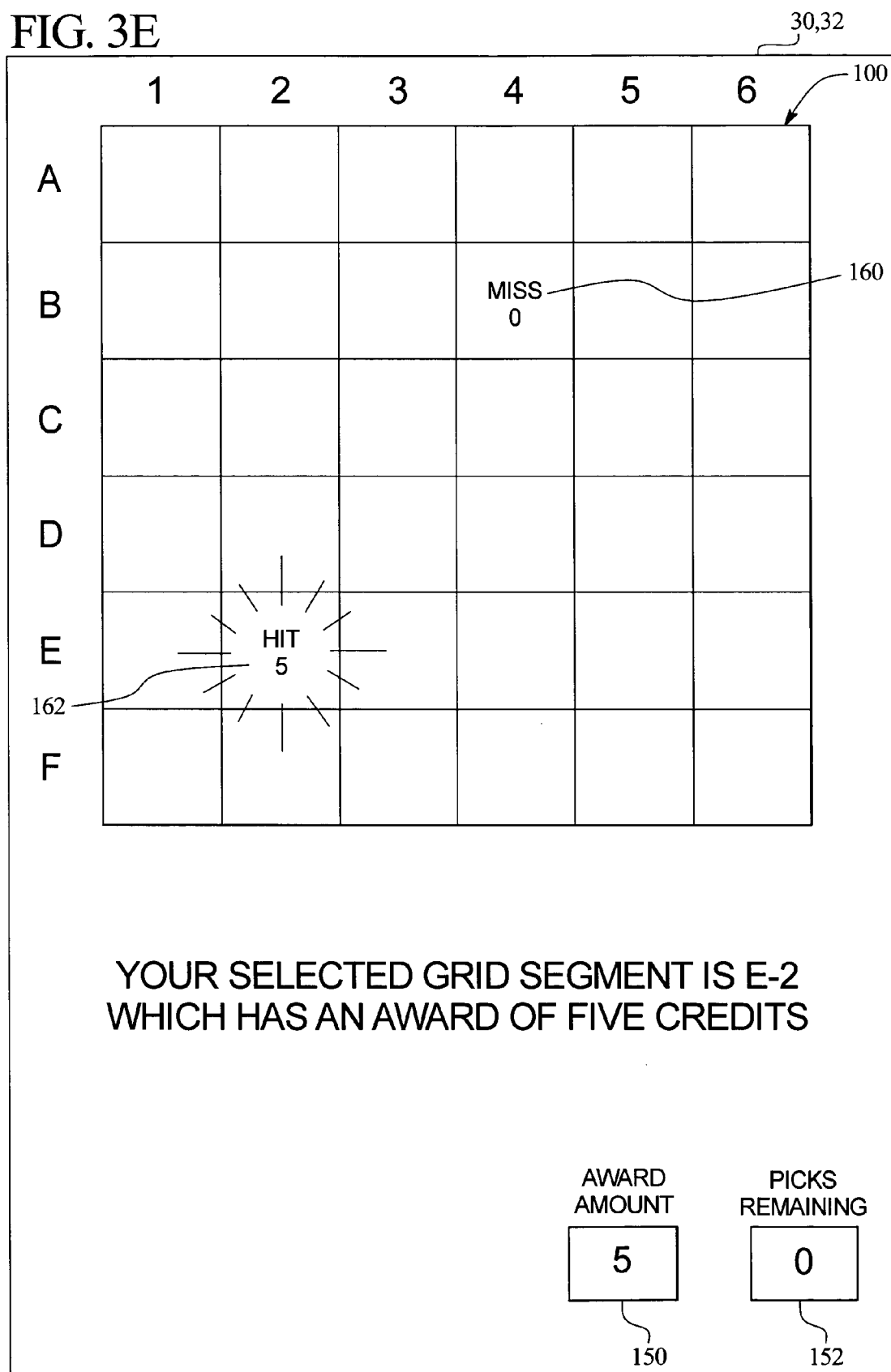


FIG. 3F

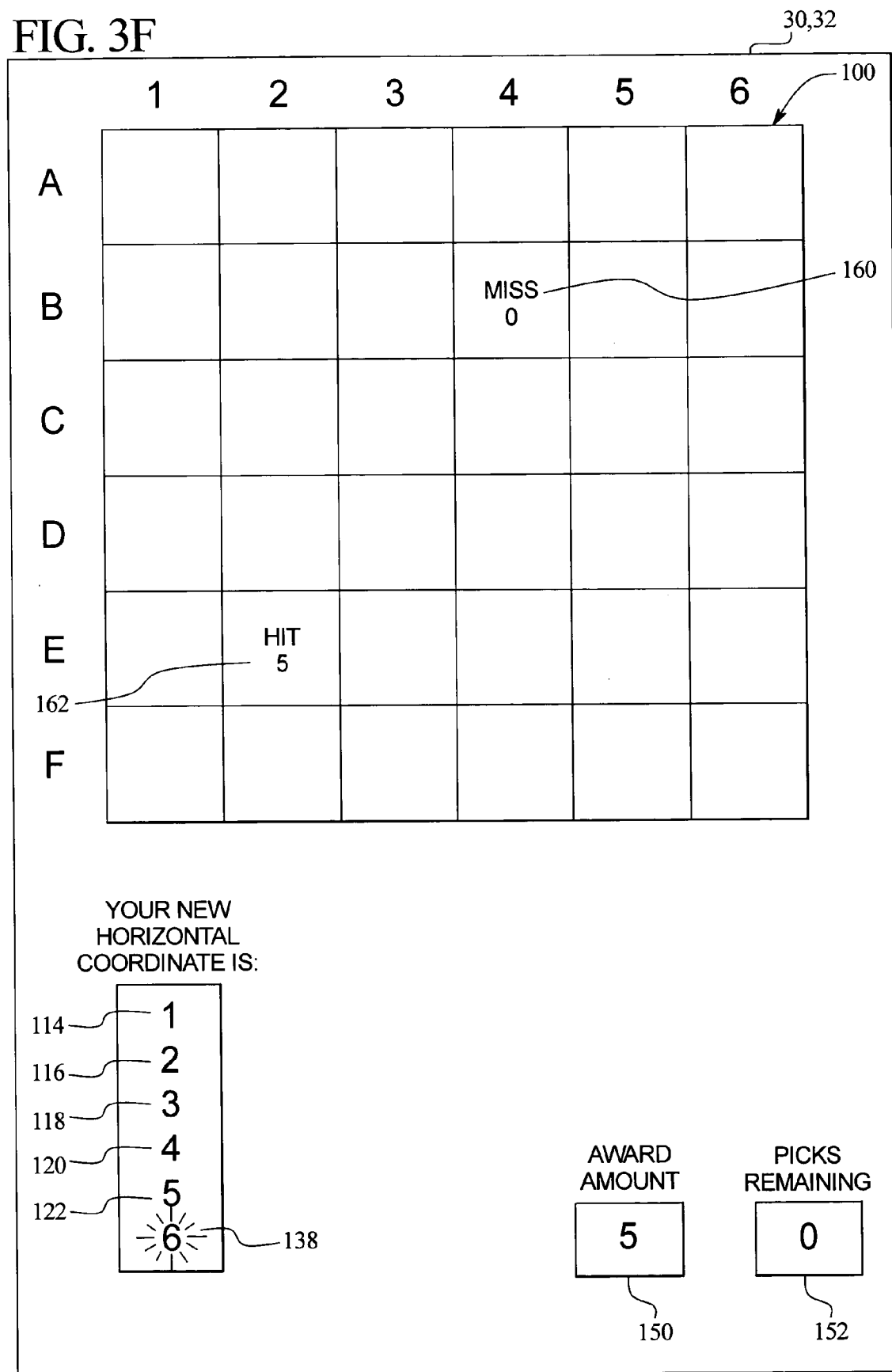


FIG. 3G

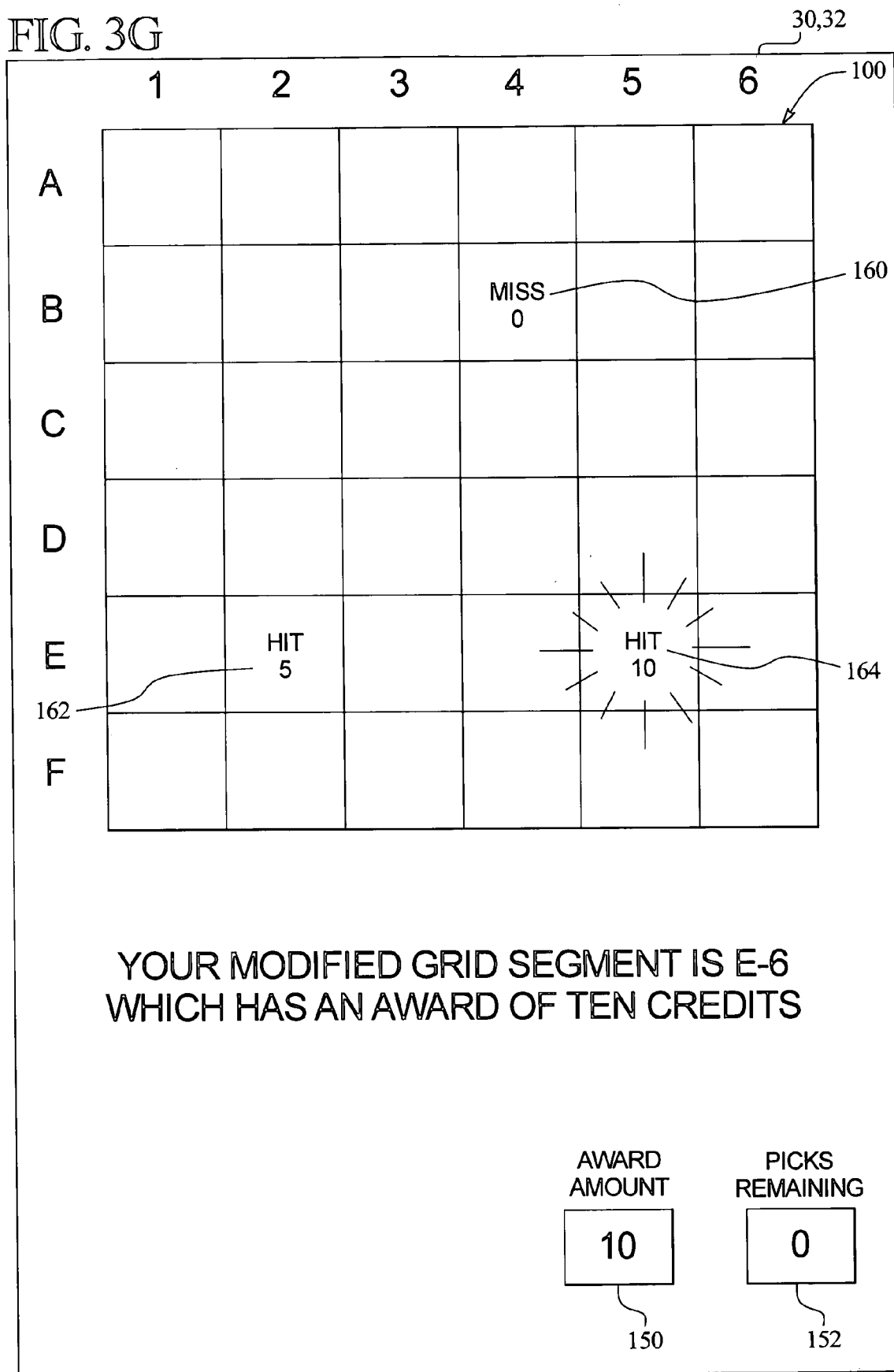




FIG. 4B

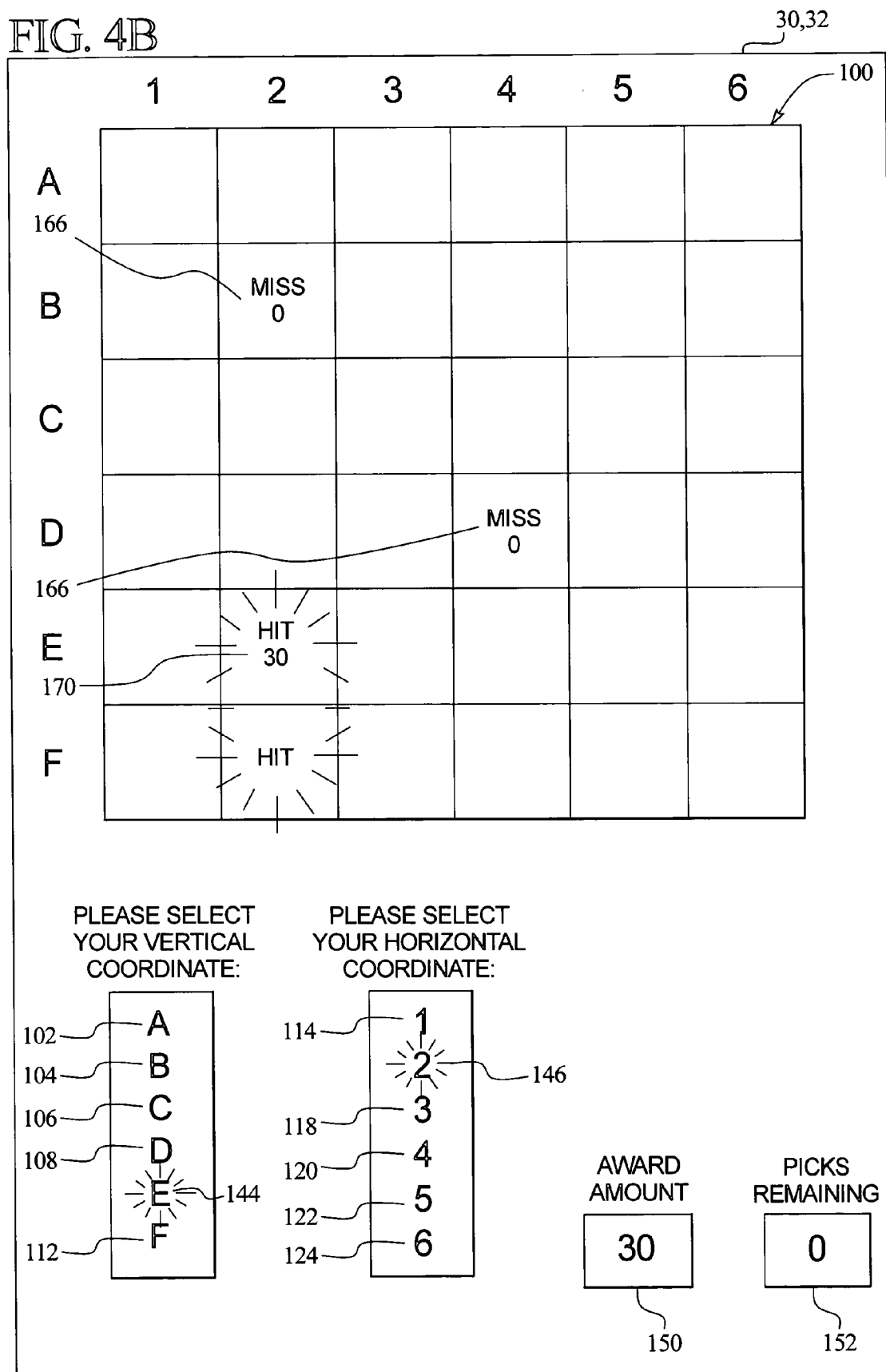


FIG. 5A

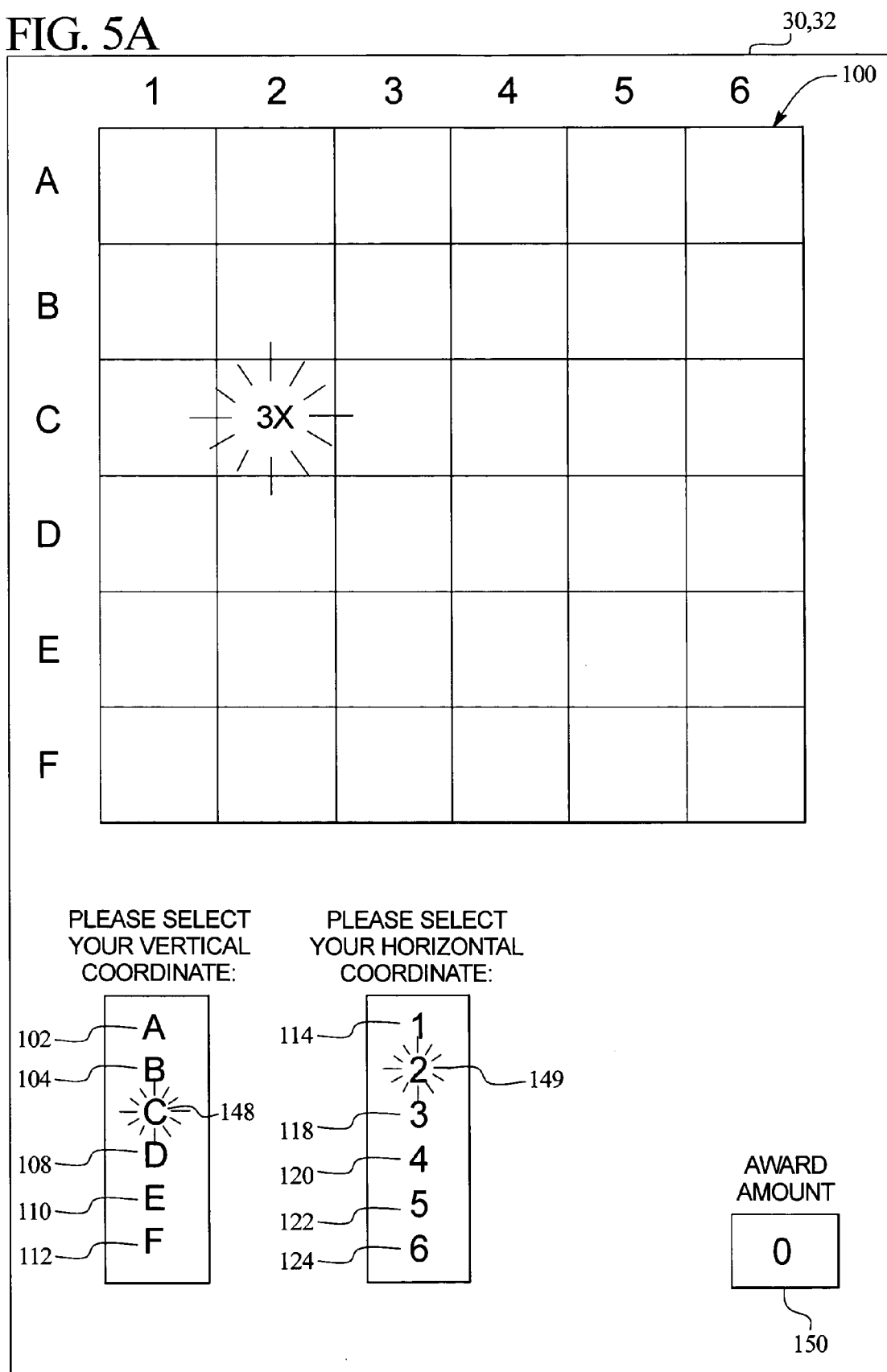


FIG. 5B

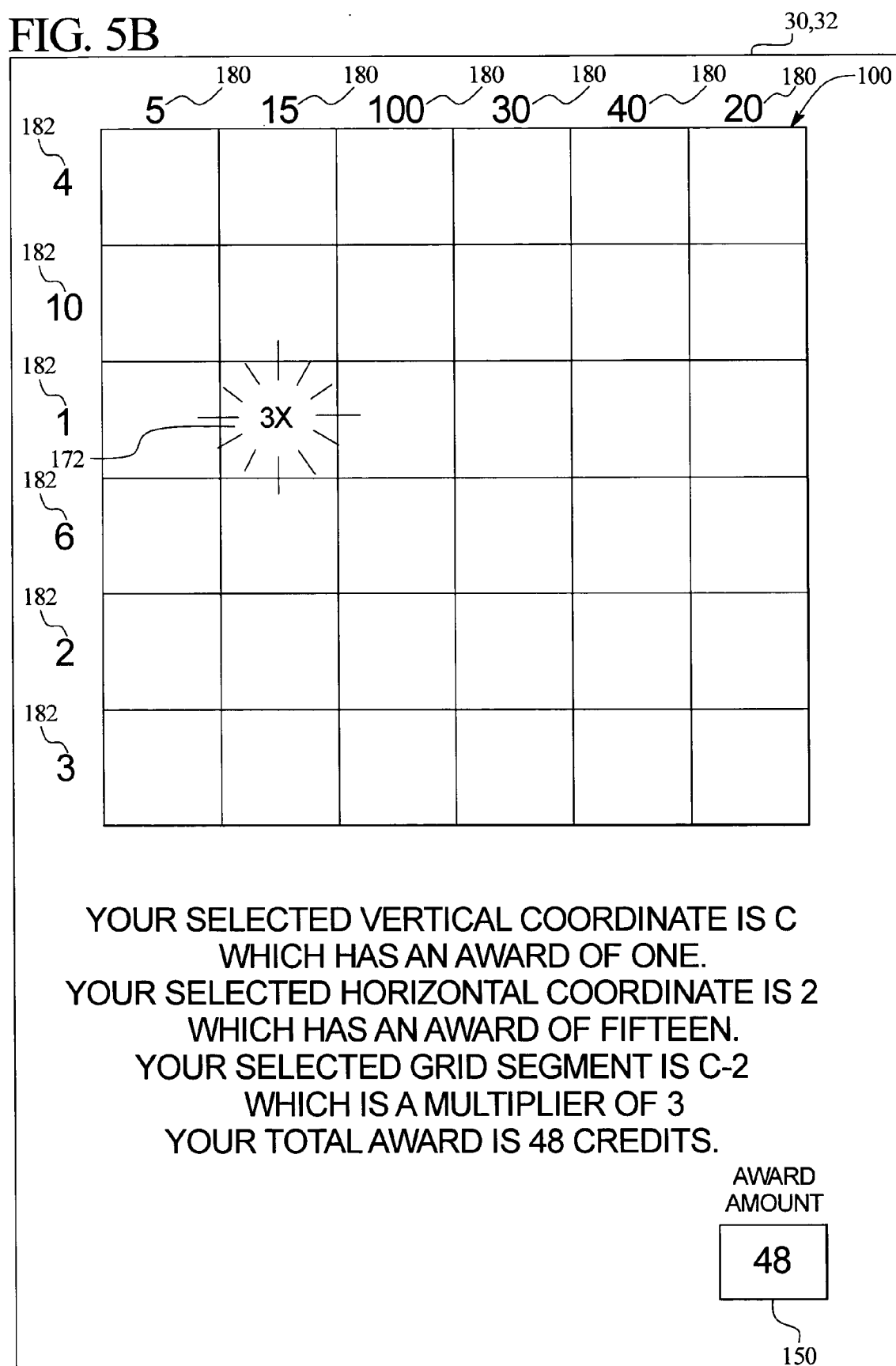


FIG. 6A

30,32

	1	2	3	4	5	6
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						

100

SELECT A VERTICAL COORDINATE AND  
A HORIZONTAL COORDINATE .

AWARD  
AMOUNT  

0

150



FIG. 6B

30,32

	1	2	3	4	40	6
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						

100

YOUR HORIZONTAL COORDINATE IS 5.  
WHICH HAS A VALUE OF 40.

NOW SELECT YOUR VERTICAL COORDINATE!

AWARD  
AMOUNT  

0

150

FIG. 6C

	1	2	3	4	40	6	30,32
A							100
B							
C							
D							
E							
20					5X		
							172

YOUR SELECTED VERTICAL COORDINATE IS F  
WHICH HAS A VALUE OF 20.  
YOUR SELECTED HORIZONTAL COORDINATE IS 5  
WHICH HAS A VALUE OF 40.  
YOUR SELECTED GRID SEGMENT IS F-5  
WHICH IS A MULTIPLIER OF 5.  
YOUR TOTAL AWARD IS 300 CREDITS.

YOU MAY KEEP THIS AWARD OR  
CHANGE ONE OF THE COORDINATES  
TO OBTAIN ANOTHER AWARD.

AWARD  
AMOUNT

300

150

FIG. 6D

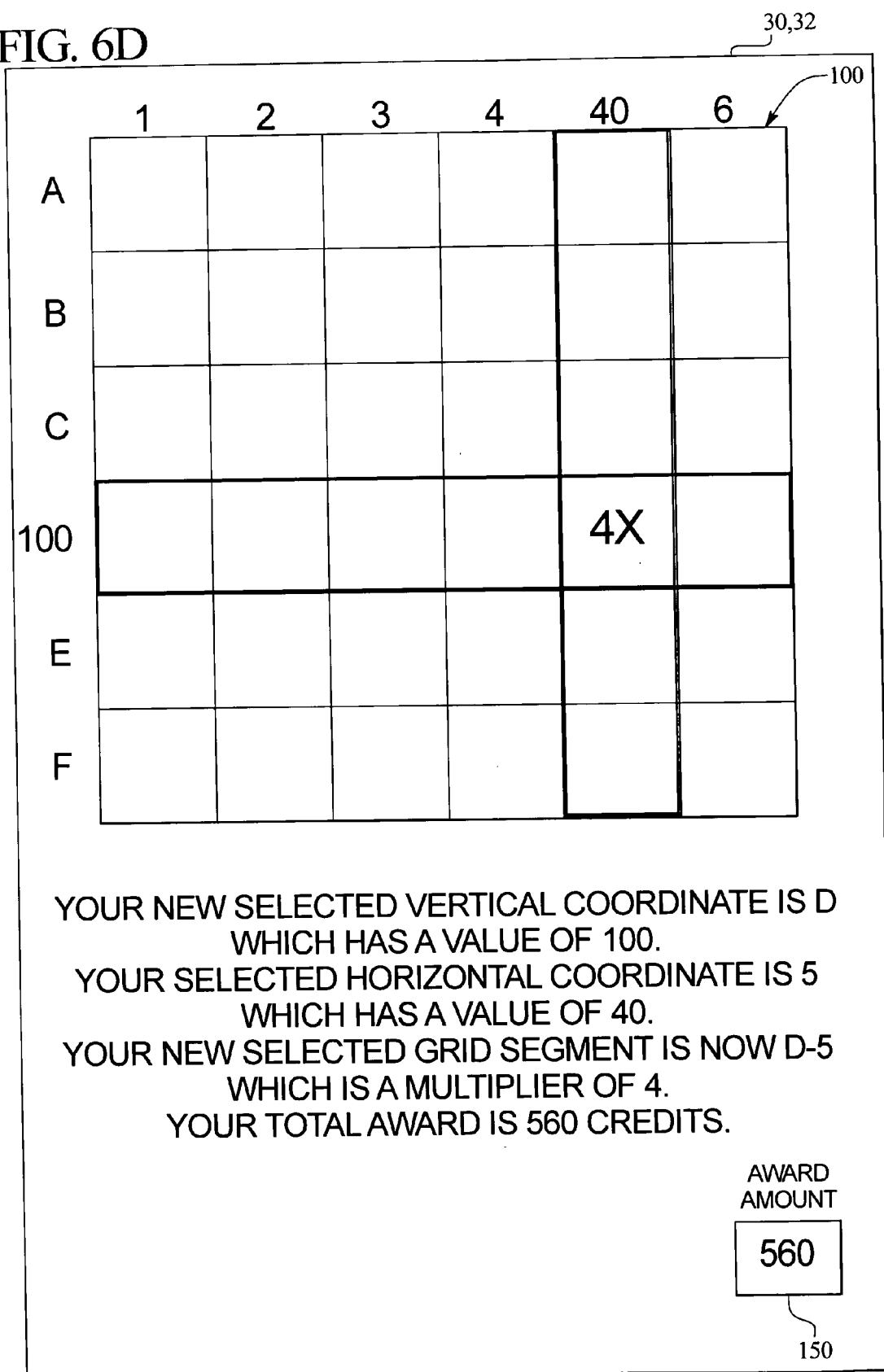


FIG. 7A

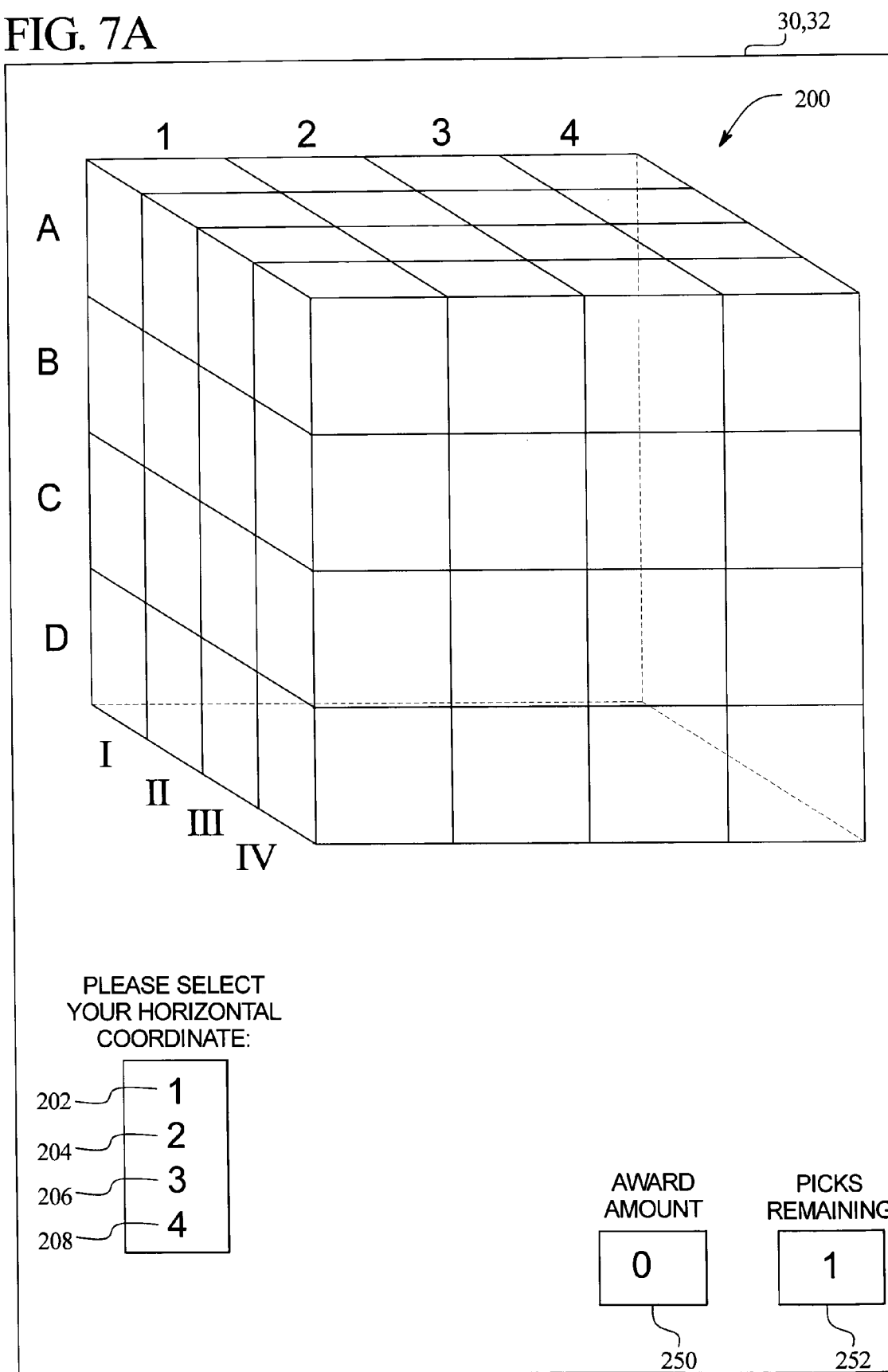


FIG. 7B

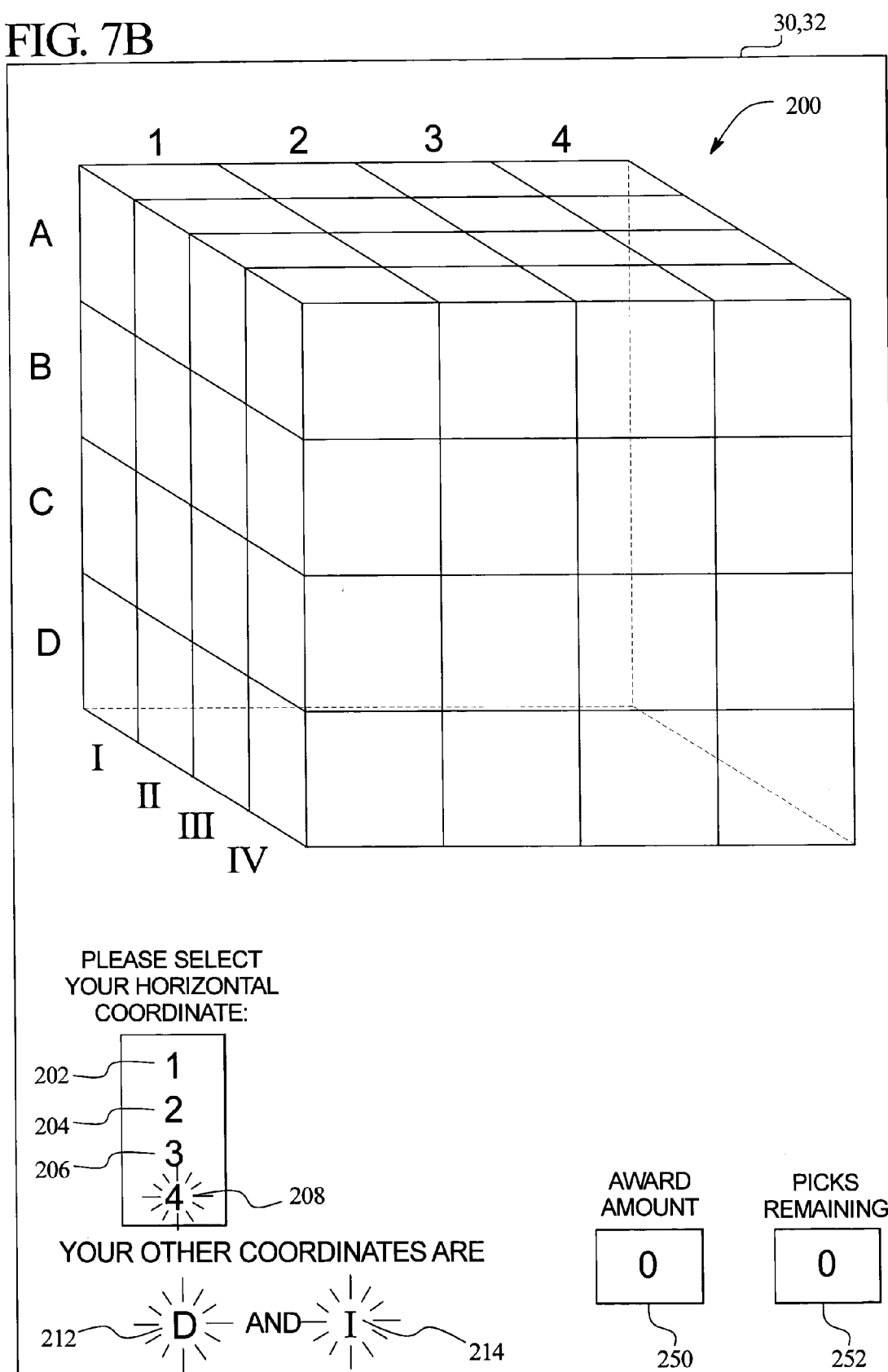
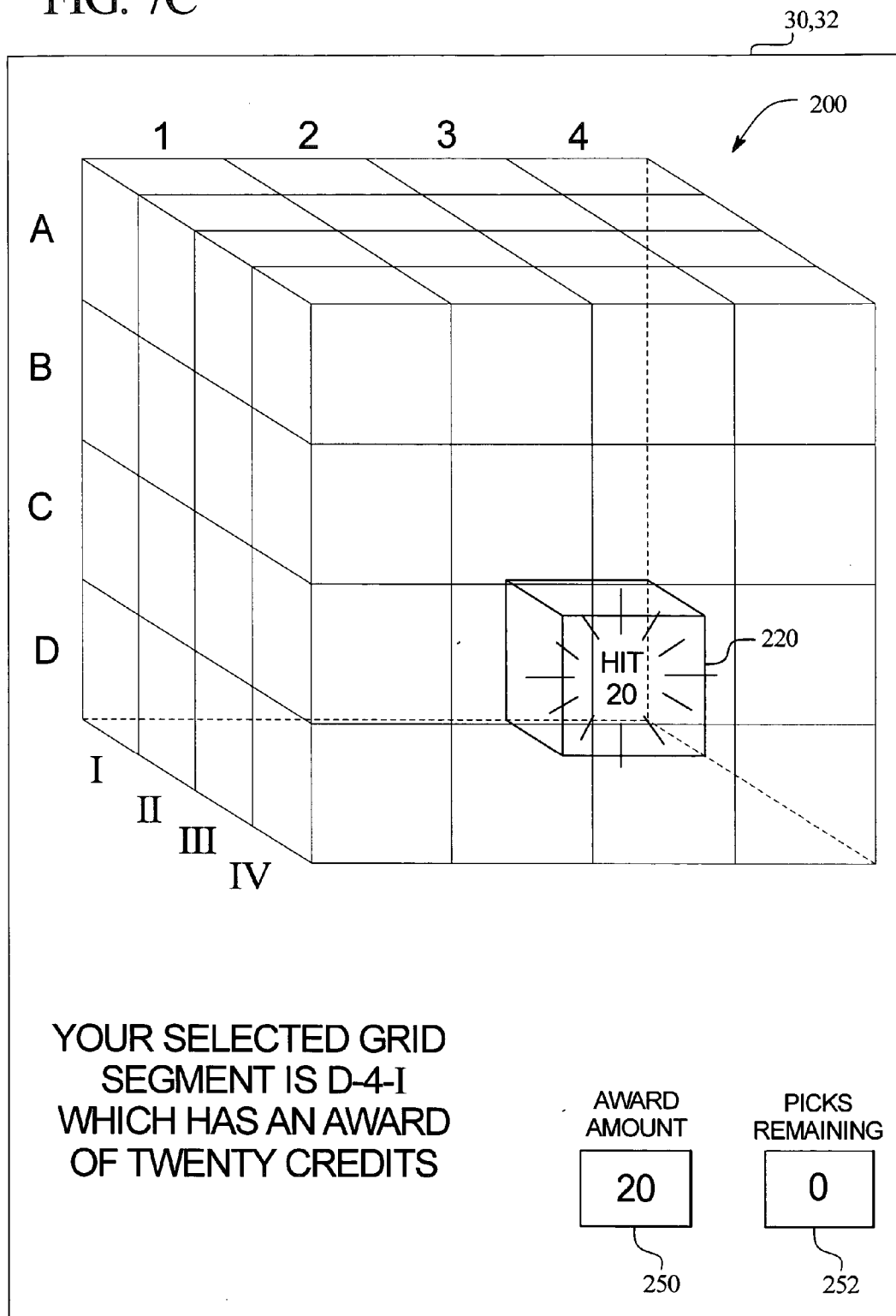


FIG. 7C



## GAMING DEVICE HAVING AN OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE GAME

### PRIORITY CLAIM

[0001] This application is a continuation of and claims the benefit of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/210,540, filed Jul. 31, 2002, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein.

### COPYRIGHT NOTICE

[0002] A portion of the disclosure of this patent document contains or may contain material which is subject to copyright protection. The copyright owner has no objection to the photocopy reproduction by anyone of the patent document or the patent disclosure in exactly the form it appears in the Patent and Trademark Office patent file or records, but otherwise reserves all copyright rights whatsoever.

### DESCRIPTION

[0003] The present invention relates in general to a gaming device, and more particularly to a gaming device having a masked award game.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] Gaming devices, such as slot machines, having primary and secondary or bonus games or schemes are well known. One well known bonus game provides a player with a series of potential awards consisting of credits or dollars. For example, in U.S. Pat. No. 6,102,798, the processor of the gaming device or the player selects a segment from a grid of player selectable segments. The selected segments reveals whether or not a prize value is associated with that segment.

[0005] Another known game is Hasbro, Inc. board game "Battleship." This game consists of a two players each receiving an identical pegboard and a plurality of ships. The provided plurality of ships consists of a fleet of ships of various sizes, each ship with a plurality of pegs that engage the pegboard. Each player arranges their ships around their respective pegboard. The game proceeds with each player attempting to determine the location of the other players ships on the pegboard. By selecting and announcing a specific location on the pegboard, each player attempts to discover the arrangement of the other player's ships on the pegboard. If the announced location corresponds with at least one of the pegs of the other player's ships, it's a "hit". An opponent's ship is eliminated or "sunk" by selecting the location of all the pegs on which the ship sits. The first player to eliminate all the opposing players ships wins the game.

[0006] Furthermore, U.S. Pat. No. 6,309,299 discloses of a gaming device with a video display configured as a matrix upon which scores can accumulate. Specifically, U.S. Pat. No. 6,309,299 provides a grid with icons located on the grid itself. The gaming device selects one of the segments on the grid and if the gaming device selected location is associated with an icon, the player is awarded a bonus score. In another embodiment of U.S. Pat. No. 6,309,299, the icons are obscured and a player attempts to locate the obscured icons on the grid. If the player successfully reveals an obscured icon, the player is awarded a score for the revealed icon. A shortcoming of U.S. Pat. No. 6,309,299 is that it does not allow the gaming device to select locations of obscured

icons on the grid. Additionally, U.S. Pat. No. 6,309,299 does not allow a combination of the gaming device and the player to select locations of obscured icons on the grid. There is a need for new and different gaming devices related to this type of masked award game.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention provides a gaming device having a game with masked awards associated with segments of a grid. The game of the present invention may be provided in a primary or base game or a secondary or bonus game. The present invention is discussed and illustrated primarily with respect to a two dimensional grid, however it should be appreciated that a three dimensional grid may be employed in accordance with the present invention. In one embodiment of the present invention, upon the initiation of the game, the gaming device randomly associates a plurality of awards, such as a credit amount, a dollar amount or a modifier, with a plurality of segments of a grid. The associated awards are not initially revealed to the player. It should be appreciated that in one preferred embodiment, the number of awards are less than the number of segments of the grid resulting in a plurality of grid segments, each with no associated award. The gaming device provides a player with a number of opportunities to select segments of the grid by independently indicating both a first or horizontal coordinate and a second or vertical coordinate. It should be appreciated that the coordinates may be other than horizontal and vertical in accordance with the present invention. The number of opportunities may be pre-determined, randomly determined or determined during the play of, for example, a base game. The processor of the gaming device reveals the award, if any, associated with the player selected grid segment. If no award is associated with the selected grid segment, the processor of the gaming device will reveal a 'miss' or other no award indication. It should be appreciated that the no award or 'miss' indication associated with a player selected grid segment remains revealed for subsequent player grid segment selections. When the player has no remaining opportunities to select grid segments, the game ends and the player obtains an award based on any revealed awards.

[0008] In an alternative embodiment, the player independently selects the first or horizontal coordinate of the grid segment to be revealed and the processor of the gaming device randomly selects the second or vertical coordinate. Alternatively, the player independently selects the vertical coordinate of the grid segment to be revealed and the processor of the gaming device randomly selects the horizontal coordinate. In another embodiment, the gaming device randomly, but independently, selects each of the first and second or vertical and horizontal coordinates of the grid segment to be revealed.

[0009] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, after the gaming device has revealed the award, if any, associated with a segment of the grid, the processor of the gaming device may independently change either the first or horizontal coordinate, the second or vertical coordinate or both coordinates of the player fully or partially selected grid segment. The modified grid segment corresponding to the changed coordinate(s) replaces the player's initial selected segment. This would result in the player no longer obtaining the initial revealed award, if any, associated with the previ-

ously revealed segment, but rather the player obtaining the award, if any, associated with the revealed modified grid segment. Alternatively, the player may obtain both awards, if any, the higher award or the lower award. In an alternative embodiment, the processor of the gaming device may change the coordinates of a player selected grid segment a number of times. In a further alternative embodiment, each award associated with a selected grid segment is offered to the player. The player may accept the award and end the game or may reject the award in hope of achieving a higher award associated with another grid segment. In one such embodiment, after a plurality of changes to the offered awards, a final award is provided to the player. The awards offered to the player may be determined using any of the alternative embodiments set forth herein. Thus, it should be appreciated that the present invention may be employed in an offer/acceptance type primary or secondary game of a wagering gaming device.

[0010] In an alternative embodiment, a plurality of usable symbols are associated with a plurality of awards. In this embodiment, each usable symbol may be associated with more than one grid segment. This embodiment proceeds as described above, however a player may obtain an award only from a completely revealed usable symbol. This embodiment allows the player to partially reveal a usable symbol and not obtain the award associated with the usable symbol until the usable symbol is completely revealed. It should be appreciated that in one such embodiment, if the player has no remaining opportunities to select grid segments, the player will not obtain any award for any partially revealed usable symbols.

[0011] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, a plurality of first or horizontal coordinates and a plurality of second or vertical coordinates are associated with a masked value, such as a credit or dollar amount. Additionally, a plurality of grid segments are associated with an award, such as a modifier. The value, if any, associated with each horizontal and each vertical coordinate is not initially displayed to the player. Upon the initiation of the game, the gaming device prompts the player to independently select each of a horizontal and a vertical coordinate that corresponds to a grid segment. Once selected, the gaming device reveals the award associated with the selected grid segment. The gaming device also reveals the values, if any, associated with the selected horizontal and vertical coordinates. The player's award, if any, is a combination of the value associated with the selected horizontal coordinate, the value associated with the selected vertical coordinate and the revealed award associated with the selected grid segment.

[0012] It is therefore an advantage of the present invention to provide a gaming device with a masked award game.

[0013] 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.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] FIGS. 1A and 1B are perspective views of alternative embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the electronic configuration of one embodiment of the gaming device of the present invention.

[0016] FIGS. 3A to 3E are front elevational views of a grid of one embodiment of the present invention illustrating the player selected grid segments revealing an associated award.

[0017] FIGS. 3F to 3G are front elevational views of a grid of an alternative embodiment of the present invention illustrating the gaming device modifying the player selected grid segments.

[0018] FIGS. 4A and 4B are front elevational views of a grid of an alternative embodiment of the present invention illustrating the gaming device revealing a partial award.

[0019] FIGS. 5A and 5B are front elevational views of a grid of an alternative embodiment of the present invention illustrating the gaming device revealing awards associated with the coordinates of the grid.

[0020] FIGS. 6A to 6D are front elevational views of a grid of an alternative embodiment of the present invention illustrating values associated with the coordinates and a modifier such as a multiplier associated with the grid segments.

[0021] FIG. 7A to 7C are front elevational views of an alternative embodiment of the present invention illustrating a three dimensional grid.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

##### Gaming Device and Electronics

[0022] Referring now to the drawings, two embodiments of the gaming device of the present invention are illustrated in FIGS. 1A and 1B as gaming device 10a and gaming device 10b, respectively. Gaming device 10a and/or gaming device 10b are generally referred to herein as gaming device 10. Gaming device 10 is preferably a slot machine having the controls, displays and features of a conventional slot machine. It is constructed so that a player can operate it while standing or sitting, and gaming device 10 is preferably mounted on a console. However, it should be appreciated that gaming device 10 can be constructed as a pub-style table-top game (not shown) which a player can operate preferably while sitting. Furthermore, gaming device 10 can be constructed with varying cabinet and display designs, as illustrated by the designs shown in FIGS. 1A and 1B. Gaming device 10 can also be implemented as a program code stored in a detachable cartridge for operating a hand-held video game device. Also, gaming device 10 can be implemented as a program code stored on a disk or other memory device which a player can use in a desktop or laptop personal computer or other computerized platform.

[0023] Gaming device 10 can incorporate any primary game such as slot, poker, blackjack or keno, any of their bonus triggering events and any of their bonus round games. The symbols and indicia used on and in gaming device 10 may be in mechanical, electrical or video form.

[0024] As illustrated in FIGS. 1A and 1B, gaming device 10 includes a coin slot 12 and bill acceptor 14 where the player inserts money, coins or tokens. The player can place



coins in the coin slot **12** or paper money in the bill acceptor **14**. Other devices could be used for accepting payment such as readers or validators for credit cards or debit cards. 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.

[0025] 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.

[0026] A player may cash out and thereby receive a number of coins corresponding to the number of remaining credits by pushing a cash out button **26**. When the player cashes out, the player receives the coins in a coin payout tray **28**. The gaming device **10** may employ other payout mechanisms such as credit slips redeemable by a cashier or electronically recordable cards which keep track of the player's credits.

[0027] 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**. Gaming device **10** preferably displays a plurality of reels **34**, preferably three to five reels **34** in mechanical or video form at one or more of the display devices. A display device can be any viewing surface such as glass, a video monitor or screen, a liquid crystal display or any other display mechanism. If the reels **34** are in video form, the display device for the video reels **34** is preferably a video monitor.

[0028] 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**. Furthermore, gaming device **10** preferably includes speakers **36** for making sounds or playing music.

[0029] As illustrated in **FIG. 2**, the general electronic configuration of gaming device **10** 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, characters, places, things and faces of cards. The memory device **40** can include random access memory (RAM) **46** for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game. The memory device **40** can also include 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.

[0030] As illustrated in **FIG. 2**, the player preferably uses the input devices **44**, such as pull arm **18**, play button **20**, the

bet one button **24** and the cash out button **26** to input signals into gaming device **10**. 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. Touch screen **50** and touch screen controller **52** are connected to a video controller **54** and processor **38**. A player can make decisions and input signals into the gaming device **10** by touching touch screen **50** at the appropriate places. As further illustrated in **FIG. 2**, the processor **38** can be connected to coin slot **12** or bill acceptor **14**. The processor **38** can be programmed to require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

[0031] It should be appreciated that although a processor **38** and memory device **40** are preferable implementations of the present invention, the present invention can also be implemented using one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC's) or other hard-wired devices, or using mechanical devices (collectively and/or alternatively referred to herein as a "processor"). Furthermore, although the processor **38** and memory device **40** preferably reside on each gaming device **10** unit, it is possible to provide 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. The processor **38** and memory device **40** is generally referred to herein as the computer or controller.

[0032] With reference to **FIGS. 1A, 1B and 2**, to operate the gaming device **10** in one embodiment the player must insert the appropriate amount of money or tokens at coin slot **12** or bill acceptor **14** and then pull the arm **18** or push the play button **20**. The reels **34** will then begin to spin. Eventually, the reels **34** will 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.

[0033] In addition to winning credits in this manner, preferably gaming device **10** also gives players the opportunity to win credits in a bonus round. This type of gaming device **10** will include a program which will automatically begin a bonus round when the player has achieved a qualifying condition in the game. This qualifying condition can be a particular arrangement of indicia on a display device. The gaming device **10** preferably uses a video-based central display device **30** to enable the player to play the bonus round. Preferably, the qualifying condition is a predetermined combination of indicia appearing on a plurality of reels **34**. As illustrated in the five reel slot game shown in **FIGS. 1A and 1B**, the qualifying condition could be the number seven appearing on three adjacent reels **34** along a payline **56**. It should be appreciated that the present invention can include one or more paylines displayed in a horizontal and/or diagonal fashion.

#### Masked Award Game

[0034] Referring generally to **FIGS. 3A to 3E**, one embodiment of the masked award game of the present invention provides a screen or display which displays a plurality of segments of a grid. The present invention is discussed and illustrated primarily with a grid composed of six independently selectable first or horizontal and six independently selectable second or vertical coordinates;

however, it should be appreciated that any suitable number of each coordinate may be employed in accordance with the present invention. Each segment has a corresponding horizontal and vertical independently selectable coordinate that indicates its relative position on the grid. The screen or display is preferably a touch screen, which in certain embodiments enables the player to select a grid segment to obtain an award. The screen displays a plurality of segments of the grid. The gaming device preferably provides a plurality of awards, such as a credit amount, a dollar amount, one or more free games, or a modifier, which are randomly associated with a plurality of segments of the grid. Each grid segment preferably does not initially display the award, if any, associated with the grid segment. Alternatively, a plurality of grid segments may be associated with additional player opportunities to select grid segments, usable symbols associated with awards or any combination thereof. It should be appreciated that in one embodiment, there are more grid segments than awards. Thus, a plurality of segments of the grid will each have no associated award. In alternative embodiments, there are less grid segments than awards or the same number of grid segments and awards.

[0035] The gaming device may randomly select the award associated with each grid segment from a pre-determined pool of award. Alternatively, the gaming device may have multiple pre-determined pools of awards. Alternatively, the gaming device may randomly select awards from a pre-determined range of awards. The awards associated with any grid segment are preferably randomly determined each time the game is triggered.

[0036] At the onset of the game, the gaming device determines the number of opportunities the player will have to select segments of the grid. It should be appreciated that the number of opportunities may be randomly determined, predetermined or determined otherwise such as in a primary game if the game of the present invention is employed as a secondary game. For example, the number of opportunities may be related to the player's wager during the primary game. For increased entertainment, the number of remaining opportunities to select grid segments may not be revealed to the player. Each time the player selects a grid segment, the number of opportunities to select a grid segment is decreased by one.

[0037] Upon the triggering of the game, in one embodiment, the gaming device prompts the player to select a grid segment by independently inputting a first or horizontal coordinate and a second or vertical coordinate. The processor of the gaming device reveals the award, if any, associated with the player selected grid segment. If no award is associated with the selected grid segment, the processor of the gaming device will reveal a 'miss' or other no award indication. It should be appreciated that the no award or 'miss' indication associated with a player selected grid segment remains revealed for subsequent player grid segment selections. When the player has no remaining opportunities to select grid segments, the game ends and the player obtains a combination of any revealed awards. A display device displays to the player any award obtained as well as the number of remaining opportunities to select segments of the grid remaining. In an alternative embodiment (not shown), after the player has obtained an award, the gaming device reveals the awards associated with the non-selected grid segments. This provides increased entertainment to the

player by revealing all the potential awards the player could have obtained during the game.

[0038] Referring to FIG. 3A, the gaming device provides a segmented grid 100. Upon the initiation of the game, the gaming device provides the player a number of opportunities to select grid segments. In this case, the gaming device provided the player two opportunities, displayed in the picks remaining display 152. In this embodiment, there are six independently selectable vertical coordinates 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, and 112 labeled A, B, C, D, E and F, respectively. There are also six independently selectable horizontal coordinates 114, 116, 118, 120, 122 and 124 labeled 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, respectively. The gaming device prompts the player to select a grid segment by independently selecting one vertical coordinate and one horizontal coordinate. As seen in FIG. 3B, the player selected grid segment B-4 by individually and independently selecting highlighted vertical coordinate B numbered 130 and highlighted horizontal coordinate 4 numbered 132. The gaming device subsequently reveals the award, if any, associated with the player selected grid segment. As revealed in FIG. 3C, selected grid segment B-4 had no associated award as indicated by the highlighted "miss 0" symbol 160. Accordingly, the award amount display 150 displayed an award amount of zero. Appropriate messages such as "PLEASE SELECT YOUR VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COORDINATES" and "YOUR SELECTED GRID SEGMENT IS B-4 WHICH HAS AN AWARD OF ZERO CREDITS" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

[0039] Since the player had at least one pick remaining 152, the gaming device prompts the player to select another grid segment by independently selecting one vertical coordinate and one horizontal coordinate. It should be appreciated that the "miss 0" symbol 160 of revealed grid segment B-4 remains revealed for subsequent player grid segment selections. As seen in FIG. 3D, the player next selected grid segment E-2 by individually and independently selecting highlighted vertical coordinate E numbered 134 and highlighted horizontal coordinate 2 numbered 136. As revealed in FIG. 3E, selected grid segment E-2 had an associated award amount of five credits as indicated by the highlighted "Hit 5" symbol 162. Accordingly, the award amount display 150 displayed the revealed award amount of five. Appropriate messages such as "PLEASE SELECT YOUR VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COORDINATES" and "YOUR SELECTED GRID SEGMENT IS E-2 WHICH HAS AN AWARD OF FIVE CREDITS" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays. With zero picks remaining 152, the player obtains a combination of all the revealed awards, in this case five, and the game ends. In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the processor randomly associates the values or hits and the non-values or misses with the grid segments or pairs of coordinates after each pair or designated numbers of coordinates is selected by the player.

[0040] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the player independently selects the first or horizontal coordinate and the processor of the gaming device randomly selects the second or vertical coordinate. Alternatively, the player independently selects the vertical coordinate and the processor of the gaming device randomly selects the hori-

zontal coordinate. Thus, each selection of a grid segment is determined in part by the player and in part randomly by the processor of the gaming device. This embodiment provides increased entertainment to the player because the player has only a partial control in selecting the grid segment that represents their award. In another embodiment, the processor of the gaming device randomly, but independently, selects each of the first and second or vertical and horizontal coordinates of a grid segment. It should be appreciated that during the play of a single game, the processor of the gaming device may independently select the first or horizontal coordinate of one grid segment selection and subsequently independently select the second or vertical coordinate of the following grid segment selection. It should further be appreciated that in one embodiment of the present invention, after the value associated with horizontal and vertical coordinates are revealed, such as “O” for coordinate B4 in FIG. 3C, the player or the processor may change one of the coordinates (such as coordinate “4” to coordinate “2”). The gaming device would then reveal the value associated with the new coordinate. The changing of one coordinate could be allowed by the game one or more consecutive times by the player or randomly by the processor.

[0041] Referring in general to FIGS. 3F and 3G, in an alternative embodiment of the present invention, after the gaming device has revealed the award, if any, associated with a segment of the grid, the processor of the gaming device may independently change either the first or horizontal coordinate, the second or vertical coordinate or both coordinates of the player fully or partially selected grid segment. The modified grid segment corresponding to the changed coordinate(s) replaces the player's initial selected grid segment. This would result in the player no longer obtaining the revealed award, if any, associated with the initial revealed segment, but rather the player obtaining the award, if any, associated with the revealed modified grid segment. Alternatively, the player may obtain both awards, if any, the higher award or the lower award. This embodiment provides increased entertainment to the player because the player is shown the revealed awards that the player might have obtained had the gaming device not intervened and selected another grid segment. In an alternative embodiment, the processor of the gaming device may subsequently independently change the coordinates of the revealed modified grid segment. In another embodiment, each time the processor of the gaming device modifies the player's selected segment with a modified grid segment, the player may accept or reject the award associated with the modified grid segment. The player may be given the accept/reject option before or after the award associated with the modified grid segment is revealed to the player.

[0042] As seen in FIG. 3F, after the player independently selected the coordinates for two grid segments (segments B-4 numbered 160 and E-2 numbered 162) that revealed the awards of zero and five, respectively, the processor of the gaming device has randomly, but independently selected new horizontal coordinate 6 numbered 138 as the horizontal coordinate of the player's last selected grid segment. As revealed in FIG. 3G, selected grid segment E-6 had an associated award amount of ten credits as indicated by the highlighted “Hit 10” symbol 164. Accordingly, the award amount display 150 displayed the modified revealed award amount of ten. It should be appreciated that the player may obtain a combination of the award associated with the player

selected grid segment and the award associated with the gaming device modified grid segment. Appropriate messages such as “YOUR NEW HORIZONTAL COORDINATE IS 6” and “YOUR MODIFIED GRID SEGMENT IS E-6 WHICH HAS AN AWARD OF TEN CREDITS” are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays.

[0043] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, the game proceeds as described above, however, the processor of the gaming device prompts the player to select a plurality of first horizontal coordinates and a plurality of second or vertical coordinates. The processor of the gaming device randomly, but independently, selects one horizontal and one vertical coordinate from the player selected pluralities of horizontal and vertical coordinates. The processor selected horizontal and vertical coordinates correspond to the grid segment to be revealed. This embodiment provides increased entertainment to the player because the revealed grid segment is determined in part by the player and in part randomly by the processor.

[0044] Referring generally to FIGS. 4A and 4B, in an alternative embodiment of the present invention, a plurality of usable symbols are associated with a plurality of segments of the grid. Each usable symbol may be associated with more than one grid segment. In this embodiment, each usable symbol is associated with an award amount or a modifier. The game proceeds as described above, however, if a selected grid segment is associated with a usable symbol that is associated with more than one grid segments, then the player obtains no award until the entire usable symbol is revealed. For increased entertainment, the award amount or modifier associated with each usable symbol may not be revealed to the player until the end of the game. This embodiment may result in the player independently selecting the coordinates of a grid segment only to reveal a partial usable symbol, but with no remaining opportunities to select segments, the player will not obtain any award, resulting in increased excitement and entertainment for the player.

[0045] As illustrated in FIG. 4A, after previously selecting two grid segments (segments B-2 numbered 166 and D-4 numbered 166) that revealed no usable symbol, the player next selected grid segment F-2 by individually and independently selecting highlighted vertical coordinate F numbered 140 and highlighted horizontal coordinate 2 numbered 142. As revealed in FIG. 4A, selected grid segment F-2 reveals only a partial usable symbol 168. After revealing a partial usable symbol, the player's next selection would logically be a grid segment adjacent to the partially revealed usable symbol to reveal the entire usable symbol. In this case, as revealed in FIG. 4B, the player next selected grid segment E-2 by individually and independently selecting highlighted vertical coordinate E numbered 144 and highlighted horizontal coordinate 2 numbered 146. The selected grid segment E-2 reveals the other portion of the partially revealed usable symbol in segment E-2. The usable symbol associated with grid segments E-2 and F-2 numbered 170 had an associated award amount of thirty credits, as displayed in the award amount display 150. With zero picks remaining 152 and an entire usable symbol revealed, the player obtains the award associated with the revealed usable symbol and the game ends. It should be appreciated that had the player if zero picks remaining after revealing the partial usable sym-

bol, the game would end with the player receiving no award for any partially revealed usable symbols.

[0046] In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, a plurality of first or horizontal coordinates and a plurality of second or vertical coordinates are associated with masked values, such as credit or dollar amounts. Additionally, a plurality of grid segments are each associated with a plurality of awards, such as a modifier. The masked values, if any, associated with each first or horizontal and each second or vertical coordinate are not initially displayed to the player. The awards, if any, associated with each grid segment are not initially displayed to the player. Upon the initiation of the game, the gaming device prompts the player to independently select a first or horizontal and a second or vertical coordinate that corresponds to a grid segment. Once selected, the gaming device reveals the award, if any, associated with the selected grid segment. The gaming device also reveals the masked values, if any, associated with the independently selected horizontal and vertical coordinates. In an alternative embodiment, the gaming device reveals the awards associated with each horizontal coordinate, each vertical coordinate and each grid segment. The player's award, if any, is based on or a combination of the value associated with the independently selected horizontal coordinate, the value associated with the independently selected vertical coordinate and the revealed award associated with the selected grid segment.

[0047] As illustrated in FIG. 5A, the player had already independently selected their horizontal and vertical coordinates. In this case, the player individually and independently selected highlighted vertical coordinate C numbered 148 and highlighted horizontal coordinate 2 numbered 149. As shown in FIG. 5A, the processor of the gaming device revealed the selected grid segment C-2 which had an associated modifier of 3X numbered 172. As revealed in FIG. 5B, the processor of the gaming device revealed the award amounts associated with each horizontal coordinate 180 and each vertical coordinate 182. With zero picks remaining 152, the player obtains an award of forty-eight credits. The player's award is a combination of one 182 (the value assigned to independently selected vertical coordinate C) plus fifteen 180 (the value assigned to independently selected horizontal coordinate 2) multiplied by three (the revealed modifier associated with grid segment C-2) as displayed in the award amount display 150.

[0048] A further example of one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 6A to 6D. In FIG. 6A, the display device displays a plurality of columns labeled 1 through 6 and a plurality of rows labeled A through F. The player is directed to select a vertical coordinate and a horizontal coordinate. As illustrated in FIG. 6B, the player selects horizontal coordinate column 5 and the display device displays the value associated with the horizontal coordinate 5 which is 40. The display device also highlights column 5 and informs the player to select the vertical coordinate. As further illustrated in FIG. 6C, the player selects the vertical coordinate F and the display device reveals the value of 20 associated with the coordinate or row F as well as the multiplier 5X or other modifier associated with the coordinate grid segment F5. The display device informs the player that the player's selected vertical coordinate is F which has a value of 20, the selected horizontal coordinate is 5 which has a value of 40, and the selected grid

segment is F-5 which has a multiplier of 5. The display device also informs the player that the total award is 300 and that the player may keep this award or change one of the coordinates to obtain another award.

[0049] As further illustrated in FIG. 6D, the player changes the vertical coordinate to D and the display device displays the award value of 100 associated with the coordinate D. The multiplier associated with grid segment D5 is 4X. The gaming device display also informs players that the player's new selected coordinate is D which has an award value of 100, that the selected horizontal coordinate is 5 which has an award value of 40, and that the selected grid segment is now D5 which has a multiplier of 4. The display device also informs the player that the total award is 560 credits. In one embodiment which enables the player to make only one change of a coordinate, the player is provided the award after the change if the player decides to make the change.

[0050] In other alternative embodiments, the gaming device may enable the player to change the coordinates more than once. Alternatively, the gaming device may allow one change of each coordinate, multiple changes of one coordinate, multiple changes of both coordinates and variations thereof. The gaming device may also determine the number of changes based on some other random event or player interactive event or otherwise. Alternatively, the processor may randomly make the changes or the player and the processor may each make one or more of the changes. It should also be appreciated that in one embodiment of the present invention, the display device may display to the player or reveal to the player the ranges of values in the rows, or in and/or columns each of the different rows and/or columns and the range of multipliers or other modifiers in the grid segments which enables the player to make informed decisions. Accordingly, it should be appreciated that if the player picks a high value in a row or column, the player may want to change the other coordinate to obtain a maximum corresponding value and corresponding multiplier.

[0051] It should also be appreciated that the modifier could alternatively be other awards such as bonus credits or awards represented by bonus game symbols, bonus games represented by bonus game symbols, free game or spins represented by free game or spin symbols, and other usable or function elements of a game represented by usable symbols.

[0052] In another alternative embodiment, as illustrated in FIGS. 7A to 7C, the gaming device displays more than two coordinates such as three coordinates in a three dimensional grid with first or horizontal, second or vertical and third or depth coordinates. This embodiment proceeds as described above, however since there are three coordinates for each grid segment, in alternative embodiments, the player may individually and independently select zero, one, two or three coordinates of a grid segment to be revealed, with the processor of the gaming device randomly but independently selecting three, two, one or zero coordinates, respectively.

[0053] Referring to FIG. 7A, the gaming device provides a segmented three dimensional grid 200. Upon the initiation of the game, the gaming device provides the player a number of opportunities to select grid segments. In this case, the gaming device provided the player one opportunity, dis-

played in the picks remaining display **252**. In this embodiment, the gaming device prompts the player to select one of four independently selectable horizontal coordinates **202**, **204**, **206** and **208** labeled **1**, **2**, **3** and **4**, respectively. In this embodiment, the gaming device will randomly, but independently, select the other coordinates of the grid segment to be revealed. As seen in **FIG. 7B**, the player individually and independently selected highlighted horizontal coordinate **4** numbered **208**. The gaming device randomly but independently selected coordinates D numbered **212** and I numbered **214**. As revealed in **FIG. 7C**, selected grid segment D-4-I had an associated award of twenty as indicated by the highlighted "hit **20**" symbol **220**. Accordingly, the award amount display **250** displayed an award amount of twenty. Appropriate messages such as "PLEASE SELECT YOUR HORIZONTAL COORDINATE" and "YOUR SELECTED GRID SEGMENT IS D-4-I WHICH HAS AN AWARD OF TWENTY CREDITS" are preferably provided to the player visually, or through suitable audio or audiovisual displays. It should be appreciated that the embodiments described above in relation to the two coordinate grid segment can be employed for grid segments having more than two coordinates.

[0054] 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.

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A gaming device operable under control of a processor, said gaming device comprising:

- a game controlled by the processor;
  - a plurality of different awards in the game, wherein at least one of the awards is a number of free spins of a plurality of reels; and
  - a display device operable to display the game;
- wherein said processor is operable with said display device to control a play of the game by:
- (a) selecting and displaying one of said awards to a player;
  - (b) enabling the player to accept the selected award or reject the selected award;
  - (c) if the player rejects the selected award:
    - (i) selecting and displaying another one of said awards to the player, and
    - (ii) repeating (b) to (c) until the player accepts said selected award or said selected award is a final one of the awards; and
  - (d) if the player accepts the selected award or said selected award is the final award, providing the accepted or final award to the player.
2. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein if the accepted award or final award is one of the number of free spins of the reels, for each of the number of provided free spins, the

processor is operable to generate a plurality of symbols on the reels and provide the player any award associated with the symbols generated on the reels.

3. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein a plurality of the awards are each a number of free spins of the plurality of reels.

4. The gaming device of claim 1, wherein each of the awards is a number of free spins of the plurality of reels.

5. A gaming device operable under control of a processor, said gaming device comprising:

- a game controlled by the processor;
  - a plurality of reels, wherein each reel includes a plurality of symbols;
  - a plurality of numbers of free spins of the plurality of reels; and
  - a display device operable to display the game;
- wherein said processor is operable with said plurality of reels and said display device to control a play of the game upon a triggering event by:

- (a) selecting and displaying at least one of the numbers of free spins to a player;
- (b) enabling the player to accept the selected number of free spins or reject the selected number of free spins;
- (c) if the player rejects the selected number of free spins:
  - (i) selecting and displaying another number of free spins to the player, and
  - (ii) repeating (b) to (c) until the player accepts said selected number of free spins or the selected number of free spins is a final number of free spins; and
- (d) if the player accepts the selected number of free spins or the selected number of free spins is the final number of free spins, for each of the accepted or final number of free spins:
  - (i) generating a plurality of symbols on the reels; and
  - (ii) providing the player any award associated with the symbols generated on the reels.

6. The gaming device of claim 5, wherein a plurality of the numbers of free spins are different.

7. The gaming device of claim 5, wherein each of the numbers of free spins are different.

8. A gaming device operable under control of a processor, said gaming device comprising:

- a plurality of symbol generators controlled by the processor, wherein each symbol generator includes a plurality of symbols;
- a plurality of different numbers of free activations of the symbol generators;
- an offer and acceptance sequence which includes enabling the player to individually accept or reject the plurality of numbers of free activations until the player accepts one of the numbers of free activations or a final number of free activations is offered to the player;
- a display device operable with the processor and adapted to display the offer and acceptance sequence;

at least one generation of symbols on the symbol generators for each of the accepted or final number of free activations; and

an award provided to the player, the award based on the symbols generated on the symbol generators from each of the symbol generations.

**9.** A method of operating a gaming device, said method comprising:

- (a) selecting and displaying one of a plurality of different awards to a player, wherein at least one of the awards is a number of free spins of a plurality of reels;
- (b) enabling the player to accept the selected award or reject the selected award;
- (c) if the player rejects the selected award:
  - (i) selecting and displaying another one of said awards to the player, and
  - (ii) repeating (b) to (c) until the player accepts said selected award or said selected award is a final one of the awards; and
- (d) if the player accepts the selected award or said selected award is the final award, providing the accepted or final award to the player.

**10.** The method of claim 9, which includes, for each of the number of provided free spins, generating a plurality of symbols on the reels and providing the player any award associated with the symbols generated on the reels if the accepted award or final award is one of the number of free spins of the reels.

**11.** The method of claim 9, wherein a plurality of the awards are each a number of free spins of the plurality of reels.

**12.** The method of claim 9, wherein each of the awards is a number of free spins of the plurality of reels.

**13.** The method of claim 9, which is provided through a data network.

**14.** The method of claim 13, wherein the data network is an internet.

**15.** A method of operating a gaming device, said method comprising:

- (a) selecting and displaying at least one of a plurality of different numbers of free spins of a plurality of reels to a player;

- (b) enabling the player to accept the selected number of free spins or reject the selected number of free spins;

- (c) if the player rejects the selected number of free spins:

- (i) selecting and displaying another number of free spins to the player, and

- (ii) repeating (b) to (c) until the player accepts said selected number of free spins or the selected number of free spins is a final number of free spins; and

- (d) if the player accepts the selected number of free spins or the selected number of free spins is the final number of free spins, for each of the accepted or final number of free spins:

- (i) generating a plurality of symbols on the reels; and

- (ii) providing the player any award associated with the symbols generated on the reels.

**16.** The method of claim 15, wherein a plurality of the numbers of free spins are different.

**17.** The method of claim 15, wherein each of the numbers of free spins are different.

**18.** The method of claim 15, which is provided through a data network.

**19.** The method of claim 18, wherein the data network is an internet.

**20.** A method of operating a gaming device, said method comprising:

- (a) displaying an offer and acceptance sequence which includes enabling a player to individually accept or reject a plurality of different numbers of free activations of a plurality of symbol generators until the player accepts one of the numbers of free activations or a final number of free activations is offered to the player;

- (b) generating a plurality of symbols on the symbol generators for each of the accepted or final number of free activations; and

- (c) providing the player an award, wherein the award is based on the symbols generated on the symbol generators from each of the symbol generations.

**21.** The method of claim 20, which is provided through a data network.

**22.** The method of claim 21, wherein the data network is an internet.

\* \* \* \* \*